TEACHER'S EDITION

The Curious Historian

History & Culture of the Medieval World

3A The Early Middle Ages

Elisabeth G. Wolfe, PhD & Alison Hardy, PhD
Aaron Larsen, DA, volume editor

Dedication

To Ann and Randy Blanton, who encouraged my love of all things medieval, and to all the family, friends, and teachers who gave me the tools to explore it for myself —Elisabeth G. Wolfe

To my students, with thanks for all their thought-provoking questions: Stay curious and, as the Old English saying goes, leorna a hwæthwugu *("always be learning something") —Alison Hardy*

To Mom and Dad, my first teachers —Aaron Larsen

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The Curious Historian Level 3A: History & Culture of the Medieval World
The Early Middle Ages Teacher's Edition

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Meet Our Curious Historians

Elisabeth G. Wolfe, PhD

A resident of central Texas, Elisabeth G. Wolfe teaches courses in literature and art appreciation online for the Baptist University of Florida. She is also a freelance translator, and she writes historical fiction, with five novellas currently in print. Her publications include a translation of *The Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction* (Wilhelm Pratscher, ed., Baylor University Press, 2010) and the essay "Þaȝ Hit Displese Ofte: Monastic Obedience in *Patience*," which was the lead article in the Summer 2013 issue of *Christianity and Literature*. Recently, Dr. Wolfe and her writing partner, Enola G. Freeman, released *Sister Muses*, a short story anthology. Dr. Wolfe studied at Baylor University, earning a BA in Chemistry and German and a PhD in Religion and Literature. Her dissertation focused on the influence of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux on the anonymous fourteenth-century poems in the manuscript Cotton Nero A.x, but she enjoys the Anglo-Saxon era as well. Her other interests include the Inklings, Texas history, classic film and television, a number of fandoms, and music from before 1976.

Her contributions to this book include: introduction parts 1 and 2, chapters 1–5 and 7–13, "Life of Tintagel Youths," and the end-of-book review.

Alison Hardy, PhD

Alison Hardy has taught medieval history in Belgium and the UK and currently teaches in Florida at the second-largest university in the United States. She earned a doctorate in 2014 from the University of Oxford with a thesis on monks, saints, and property rights in the early kingdom of England in the tenth and eleventh centuries, before the Norman Conquest. The thesis also featured cowgirls, golden books, and the beer-loving bishops whose handwriting inspired the Times New Roman font. She has published on topics ranging from the multispectral imaging of burnt manuscripts to the impact of North African art and books on the British Isles. Dr. Hardy believes the historian's skills—including analyzing and questioning sources and considering others' viewpoints—are essential for navigating the modern world, and she is delighted that young historians are still curious about the Middle Ages.

Her contributions to this book include: introduction parts 1 and 2, chapters 1–5 and 7–13, "Life of Ibn Fadlan's Translator," and the end-of-book review.

Paul Stephenson, PhD

The author or editor of ten books, Paul Stephenson most recently published *New Rome: The Empire in the East* (Harvard University Press, 2022), which was named a top 25 history book of the year by *The Times* (London). A historian of Greece, Rome, and Byzantium, Dr. Stephenson studied at Cambridge University before being appointed to a fellowship at Keble College, Oxford University. In the past three decades, he has held teaching and research posts at universities, museums, and research institutes in seven countries, including four professorial chairs (Wisconsin, Durham, Nijmegen, Lincoln). His research has been supported by the British Academy, Dumbarton Oaks (Trustees for Harvard University), the Humboldt Foundation, the National Hellenic Research Foundation, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Onassis Foundation, Princeton University, the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, and the University of California.

His contributions to this book include: chapters 6, 15, and 16.

Courtney R. Fu, PhD

A scholar of Chinese history and culture, Courtney R. Fu specializes in women's history and Chinese fashion in the modern to contemporary eras. She currently teaches at the National University of Singapore, Singapore University of Technology and Design, and Lasalle College of the Arts. She obtained her PhD in History and Asian Studies from the Pennsylvania State University in 2017. Since returning to Singapore, Dr. Fu has worked on reconstructing Singapore's fashion history and was awarded a research grant from the government in an effort to establish the fashion heritage of the country. She has published numerous articles, such as "New Fashion Identity and the State in China: A Decolonial Interpretation," in both sinology and fashion studies journals. Dr. Fu's students come from all disciplinary backgrounds, and her greatest joy in teaching is helping students discover fashion in Chinese and Asian histories.

Her contributions to this book include: chapter 14.

Aaron Larsen, DA

Currently teaching history, Latin, logic, and rhetoric at Regents School of Charlottesville in Virginia, Aaron Larsen previously taught at two classical schools in Pennsylvania. In 2001, Dr. Larsen joined a team led by Dr. Christopher Perrin and two other colleagues to help form Classical Academic Press. The motivation behind this endeavor was to produce exceptional Latin and logic curricula for the classical education movement. The first results of this collaboration included the publication of their logic text, *The Art of Argument*, and the three-volume Latin for Children series. Dr. Larsen is also a coauthor of *The Discovery of Deduction: An Introduction to Formal Logic* and The Curious Historian series. He earned a BA in history, with minors in philosophy and education, from Covenant College in Georgia. He completed his coursework for his DA in modern world history from St. John's University in New York and went on to write his doctoral thesis on the Meiji Restoration, which, as he likes to say, is "the most important event in world history that nobody's ever heard of."

He is the volume editor and his contributions to this book include: unit 3 introduction and chapter 17.

Contents

Welcome to The Curious Historian

by Dr. Christopher Perrin

Welcome to History

We are so glad that you are continuing to study history with us! In each book in The Curious Historian series, you will find a rich, engaging presentation of information about important people and civilizations throughout history that still have much to teach us, even in our modern age. You will learn about the language, religion, arts, architecture, monuments, and writing of each of these civilizations. The full-color art and artifacts pictured throughout each book will help you understand what these civilizations created and will give you an appreciation of the wonder and beauty of history.

In *The Curious Historian Level 3A*, you will be delighted with the history and culture of the early Middle Ages. While the medieval period has sometimes been called the "Dark Ages," these years were far from gloomy. We will explore sweeping transformations in culture, politics, technology, and art during the Middle Ages—not only in Europe but also in the Arabian Peninsula, China, and India.

The Curious Historian Level 3 is the third part of our three-level history series. The levels, each consisting of two semester-long texts, will cover the following eras:

Level 1: The Ancient World	*Book 1A: The Early & Middle Bronze Ages* (the Egyptians and Mesopotamians)
	Book 1B: The Late Bronze & Iron Ages (the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Israelites, Assyrians, Persians, etc.)
Level 2: The Classical World	*Book 2A: Greece & the Classical World* (Classical and Hellenistic Periods; the Far East)
	Book 2B: Rome & the Classical World (the Republic and Empire; the Far East)
Level 3: The Medieval World	*Book 3A: The Early Middle Ages* (Migration Era; Carolingian Age; Islamic/Byzantine/Eastern Civilizations)
	Book 3B: The Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Crusades; High Middles Ages; Renaissance and Reformation)

Throughout each book, you will learn about important people, leaders, kings, generals, philosophers, artists, and public speakers. You will read about why we remember them, what they did, and what they tried but failed to do. You will learn about what they have left behind that is still of great value to historians: monuments, writings, personal belongings, and more. You will learn these people's stories.

In fact, history is a story—a very long story with many, many interesting events. It is a record of what people have done, what they have thought, what they have built, what they have written, even what they have hoped for and believed in. History helps us remember some of the remarkable things that humans have achieved over thousands of years, such as learning how to farm

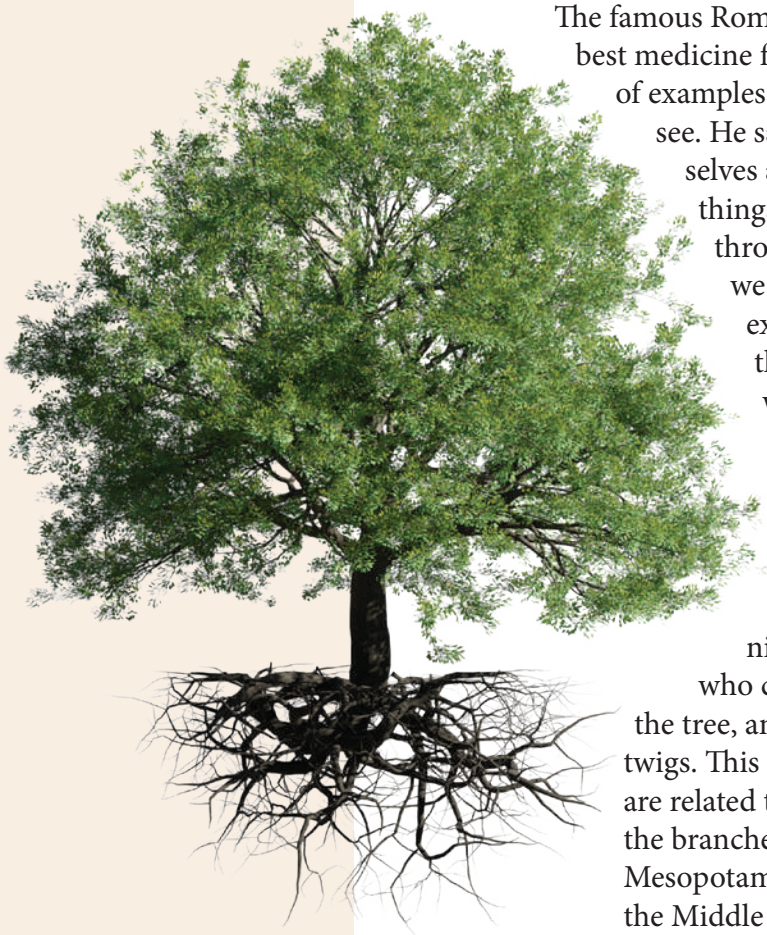
and build large cities, inventing systems of writing, and creating beautiful art and monuments.

History is also a story of conflict and failure. While people in the past achieved great things, they also fought terrible wars that destroyed much that was good. People sometimes struggled to do what was wise and good, and sometimes they were drawn to what was foolish, selfish, greedy, and destructive. The study of history shows us both the wisdom and the flaws of the people of the past, helping us to learn from their successes and mistakes.

Know What Is Excellent

The study of the past has a lot to teach us about what people are like throughout history. This means it teaches us what we ourselves are like, because we are people too. History introduces us to various heroes and villains who teach us something of virtue and vice. It shows us how some people are tempted to become cowardly in times of danger, but also how some people demonstrate courage (fortitude) and bravery. It shows us how people with great power are easily tempted to become cruel and greedy, but also how some people use their power to generously bless and help others. It also shows us how people can be both kind and cruel at different times—for many people are a blend of virtue and vice! In other words, the study of history can serve as a model to help show us how to be virtuous and wise and avoid being selfish and cruel. It provides us with cautionary tales and warnings but also with inspiring stories that encourage us to be brave, generous, kind, and daring.[A]

[A] It is important that we seek to cultivate virtue in our students and point out examples of vice. It is challenging to find specific, concrete traits to emulate or condemn in the historical figures of the Middle Ages. However, we can study how medieval people construed virtue and vice as Christianity spread throughout Europe, as Islam emerged in the Arabian Peninsula, and as Buddhism and other religions continued to evolve throughout the East. See page D of the Introduction to Teachers for more on how we incorporate the discussion of virtues and vices in *Level 3A*.



The famous Roman historian Livy said, "The study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind" because history gives a long record of examples of human behavior and experiences that we can all see. He said that in this record we will find both for ourselves and for our country "examples and warnings: fine things to take as models, base [corrupt] things, rotten through and through, to avoid." As students of history, we should imitate the virtuous (right or excellent) examples we find in history and avoid those things that are cruel and rotten. If Livy is right, then we can work to become better, more virtuous people by studying history.

Know Ourselves

To study history is to study who we once were and to learn why we are the way we are now. You might say that history is the study of our beginning. If we think of history as a tree, then the peoples who came before us are like the roots and the trunk of the tree, and we are like the most recent branches or the new twigs. This means that while we are the most recent people, we are related to those people who have gone before us, just like the branches of a tree are related to its trunk and roots. The Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and the people of the Middle Ages are the roots and trunk of the "history tree."

When we study this tree (these ancient and medieval peoples), we are studying ourselves, because in some important ways we came from these peoples.


The US Capitol building in Washington, DC

We have built our modern cities, governments, and more on the foundations of ancient civilizations. For example, if you visit a major American city, such as Washington, DC, you will find many museums, government buildings, and courthouses with great pillars and columns supporting triangular roofs. The design of these buildings imitates the architectural style of the Greeks and Romans, which in turn were imitating the great columns and angles of Egyptian structures. In other words, the great buildings in American cities are in fact ancient in their style and design!

Know the Future

The study of history helps us to understand ourselves now, but it also helps us to make educated guesses about what might happen in the future. Why is this true? Because humans have shared the same nature over thousands of years! History teaches us that people in all times tend to act in the same ways in similar circumstances.

Here is just one example. Throughout history, when people face threats from an invading army, there are almost always some who wish to surrender out of fear, and others who are willing to betray their own city or country to save themselves or even to make a profit. There are also those who are willing to stand up and bravely fight to protect their country and those in danger. Therefore, we can predict that if, during our time, our country or city is threatened, we will likely find each of these types of people. So, as you can see, the study of history helps us to better anticipate what might happen in the future!

So, welcome back, once again, to the study of history. We hope this study will help you learn more about pursuing virtue and wisdom and avoiding selfishness and greed. We hope it will also help you know more about where you have come from and learn to wisely anticipate the future. And last but certainly not least, we hope this series will capture your curiosity and spark your imagination about the world of the past, leading you to see that the study of history is not only important but also fascinating! B

A Note on the Sidebars, Maps, Images, and Time Lines

History is a story. That's why each chapter in *The Curious Historian Level 3A* is laid out with the historical narrative taking up the most space on each page. However, each chapter lesson is filled with a variety of sidebars, which are boxes

B To study history, as the word implies, is to engage in a story: a story on a large scale that involves individuals, groups of people, and nations in an unfolding narrative of events and ideas. If we believe this to be true, then we should expect the study of history to contain meaningful patterns of cause and effect, and even some dramatic moments that make for long-lasting change.

The records we have for much of early medieval history are sparse, though, making it hard for historians to accurately interpret precisely just what happened and when, and also to pinpoint causes for various effects. We have tried to avoid presenting all of history as a clearly understood series of events. In several cases throughout the text, we have noted events for which there are conflicting dates and interpretations. These notes are intended to help you familiarize your students with the reality that historical interpretation is not an exact science, but rather an interpretive art that requires patience and humility. As new evidence is uncovered, often our historical interpretations will be changed and the narrative of history updated!

History, too, enables students to stretch their wings and exercise the skills they have been cultivating in other aspects of their education: writing, thinking, reasoning, interpreting, assessing, and persuading. In other words, history proves to be an important place in which students can learn to employ and practice the liberal arts they have been studying. Grammar, logic, and rhetoric are fully employed in the study of history.

We hope that as you teach through The Curious Historian series, you will discern the ways in which we have sought to provide you with a curriculum that will assist you in presenting history as an unfolding, meaningful narrative that cultivates virtue and exercises the skills that comprise the liberal arts.

or notes that are placed alongside the main narrative. They provide additional information or summarize key facts, and different icons indicate the different kinds of sidebars.

- *History Bits:* Often in the form of lists or charts, these sidebars usually include summaries of important information presented in the chapter. They can be useful for you to review before you complete the chapter exercises and quiz. Sometimes, though, a History Bits sidebar includes new, interesting information that can help round out your understanding of events.
- *Religion in History:* These sidebars point out how events or figures in the Middle Ages resonate with events or figures in biblical history.
- *To the Source:* Many of our English words come from Latin or another language. When a vocabulary word has interesting or unusual roots, we have supplied this information in a To the Source sidebar. These word origins may be of particular interest if you are also using our Latin for Children series.
- *Question Box:* Curious historians (like you!) ask a lot of questions. That's because history is more than a boring list of dates and facts. Asking thoughtful questions helps you think imaginatively. The Question Box sidebars encourage you to draw connections between different eras and talk with your classmates and teacher about historical patterns that still exist in our own lives today. Such discussion will lead you to ask more questions. Be curious!
- *Quips and Quotes Box:* Many chapters include the funny or clever remarks (quips) or the insightful quotations (quotes) of the famous poets, historians, philosophers, and other figures we are learning about. When you read a quip or quote, pause and think: Do you agree? Does it apply to your own life?

As you know from previous books, The Curious Historian series includes another sidebar—the notebook pages of Archibald Diggs: Archaeologist Extraordinaire! This fictional character is a guide of sorts who supplies interesting historical facts or archaeological tidbits that we hope will add flavor, intrigue, and at times even some humor to the lesson.

In each chapter, an array of maps and full-color images with captions is placed alongside the lesson. Rather than distracting from the main historical narrative, they help you envision the setting, events, and people you are reading about. Similarly, the time lines at the start of each chapter and in each unit introduction not only help you review the lesson but also give you a framework for the story of history. Take a look (right now!) at the end of the book to see what is included in appendix A through appendix G. Do you see the glossary as well? As you learn and enjoy the main story in the book, the sidebars, maps, images, and time lines will focus your attention, and the appendices and glossary will help you remember what you learn. All these elements are offered as sparks for the flame of curiosity within you!

If you are new to teaching history, or would like to deepen your pedagogy and understanding, you may wish to take the ClassicalU "How to Teach History" course, https://www.classicalu.com/courses/how-to-teach-history. In this course, veteran history educator Wes Callihan traces the history of history, explores its purpose and value in the classical tradition, and discusses the best means for growing as a student of history—and thus becoming an effective teacher of history. Lesson topics include "History and the Liberal Arts," "Problems in the Study of History," and "Essential Qualities and Practices of a History Teacher."

C Unless otherwise indicated, the etymologies in *To the Source* were provided by the authors of *TCH3A* or drawn from *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, http://capress.link/tch3a0505 or from *Etymonline*, Online Etymological Dictionary, http://capress.link/tchwel01.

Introduction to Teachers

Welcome back to those of you who have decided to journey with us through the ages of history that we will be exploring in The Curious Historian series! We have attempted to write a text that intrigues as much as teaches—one that will be enjoyable for both those students who say they dislike history as well as those students who are fascinated by stepping through the doors of the past and learning about the people who lived so many years ago.

For digital resources that supplement this book, go to classicalacademicpress.com/pages/subject-history. See pages F–G of this teacher's introduction for more details about what is available.

Sometimes the information about early and medieval civilizations is uncertain, but we have attempted to put together the story of history in a clear, cohesive way that all can enjoy. To help students engage history with interest, throughout the narrative we have incorporated full-color art and pictures of artifacts, time lines, maps, various informative sidebars, and much more. This teacher's introduction will outline our approach to teaching history and our intentions for this course of study. It will also supply an overview of the various elements found in the student edition and teacher's edition and guidance for how best to use them.

Our Approach to Understanding and Teaching History

We have created The Curious Historian series with the following classical approach and pedagogy in mind:

- We believe it is important to teach students to begin thinking like historians rather than just memorizing facts. The study of how human societies have changed over time lays the foundation for seeing history as more than just a list of dates and names.
- It is also important to help students understand that historians must engage in some degree of interpretation or puzzle-solving as they try to understand and then recount what has happened in the past and what the evidence means. Often the available evidence is limited or, in the case of some written records, exaggerated, making historical interpretation difficult and subject to change. Throughout the book, either in the student text or in teacher's notes, we will occasionally note where there are important debates among historians about the meaning, significance, and even basic facts or chronology of various events. Young students of history ought not fret about the point of view that every historian will bring to his or her work, but they should be introduced to the idea that we all bring our personal assumptions to any interpretive work.
- History can be studied for multiple purposes, and those purposes will evolve as students mature. In our view, following the classical tradition, the chief purpose for studying history is to cultivate virtue and wisdom in students. This means that they should learn to praise what is virtuous (right or excellent) and blame that which is not. Various historical figures and events will often exhibit both praiseworthy and blameworthy elements (virtues and vices). We should help students learn to be discerning and not to expect historical figures or events to be categorized easily as just "all good" or "all bad."
- As noted in the series introduction ("Welcome to the Curious Historian" by Dr. Christopher Perrin), another important reason for young students to study history is to know their world and thus to better know themselves. The record of events and persons that have shaped our world is foundational to knowing who we have been, are now, and might possibly be in the future. In dozens of ways, students who have studied the past are well equipped to examine our current cultural moment and make wiser decisions about what is happening and what perhaps could or should happen. If our young students become curious about history—wanting to know the causes of events and movements and hungry to understand the motives of various people and the consequences of their actions—then they will be on their way to becoming thoughtful human beings, family members, workers, and citizens.

Book Introductions

The Curious Historian Level 3A (TCH3A) begins with a robust introduction, which is divided into two parts. This introduction sets the scene for the study of the early Middle Ages. In Part I—"Whose History Is

It, Anyway?"—we confront head-on many of the misconceptions about the Middle Ages as dark and gloomy, and at the same time we invite students to participate in the endeavor of modern historians to define and understand the period. Part II—"The Backstory—Barbarians!"—bridges the content of *TCH2B* and *TCH3A* by covering what was happening beyond the borders of the Roman Empire among the Celts and the *Germani*, the so-called barbarian tribes whose migration would alter the Roman Empire and prove to be a major factor in its decline. While you won't need to spend as much time on these introductions as you will on a chapter, we recommend that you do not allow your students to skip them, as they provide crucial grounding for the content of the entire book.

Unit Introductions

Each unit opens with an introduction that sets the scene for the rest of the unit. Like the unit introductions in *TCH Level 1* and *Level 2*, they provide an overview of and set the historical context for the unit's chapters. While we recommend that you do not skip these introductions, you could read them with your students, discuss them briefly, examine the time lines, and then move on to deeper study of the fully developed chapters with their sidebars, maps, and exercises.

Chapter Elements

Time Lines

Each chapter opens with a time line that records pertinent dates discussed in the chapter, as well as additional "spotlight" events presented for context. It is important to keep in mind two key notes regarding the dates in *TCH3A*. First, when there is no scholarly consensus about dates or date ranges, we use "ca." (circa) before them, indicating our inability to provide an accurate, exact date. As in previous volumes, we have again chosen to round a number of the date ranges, typically to the nearest decade, for the major periods and kingdoms we will be covering. Students are not required to memorize these dates, but a familiarity with the date spans will help them to keep the events in sequence.

Vocabulary

The chapter vocabulary is usually divided into three sections on the first page of each chapter: Important Words (key terms), Important Figures (key people), and Important Highlights (key periods, geographical concepts, and so forth). The vocabulary words are bolded and defined the first time they appear in each chapter lesson, and are included in the chapter exercises and quiz. We recommend beginning each chapter by spending a portion of class time reviewing the words and their definitions. Pronunciation for more challenging words, as well as expanded definitions for some terms, can be found in the alphabetical glossary.

Chapter Lesson

Weekly chapter lessons guide students chronologically through the history of the early Middle Ages from the decline of the Roman Empire in the west to the rise of a patchwork of kingdoms, dukedoms, cities, empires, and caliphates. Students will learn about the corresponding emergence of all sorts of different cultures and languages, as well as the rise of Islam. In unit III, students will both continue their study of the Far East—focusing on a pattern of alternating periods of chaos and consolidation in China and India—and extend their inquiry to the Middle East by exploring the interactions of Islamic and Byzantine civilizations. Interspersed with the chronological history, each chapter of the book delves into the fascinating culture of each civilization.

Throughout each chapter, we keep in mind some of the larger questions and great ideas that apply to all of us, both past and present: the importance of writing and communication, humanity's tendency toward creativity and beautiful art, the value of an effective military for a nation's defense, and our innate desires to be powerful and remembered long after we die.

We have tried to present a chronological narrative that is as simple and understandable as possible; however, striving for clarity often means having longer chapters, as shortening the text would leave too many gaps and make the narrative confusing. Therefore, we recommend that you review each chapter in advance

of teaching it and exercise discernment in determining what content you wish to cover with students and what pacing will work best for your class. If you do choose to skip any chapter(s) entirely, be sure to reference the alphabetical glossary at the back of the book for definitions to review with students for general context as needed.

You might read the chapter narrative aloud, with the student(s) following along, or have your student(s) read the text aloud to you. Either way, be sure to pause throughout to emphasize key points, check for comprehension, and engage in periodic discussions. (The Question Box sidebars, while optional, will be particularly helpful here to prompt further dialogue.)

Other Features in Each Chapter

Culture readings

In *TCH3A*, we continue to include in many of the chapters lengthier spotlight pieces that discuss important literature, technologies, monuments, languages, and religions of the age. These cultural "of the Age" pieces are considered optional but highly encouraged reading material. Depending on your schedule, you might choose to select just one or two to highlight for students, to assign them as homework, or to skip them if needed.

Sidebars

Each chapter lesson is interspersed with a variety of sidebar elements, which are described in more detail at the end of the series introduction on page iv. These sidebar pieces, indicated by icons, are optional but help to provide additional context or summarize information:

- *History Bits*
- *Religion in History*
- *To the Source*
- *Question Box*
- *Quips and Quotes Box*

As noted in the series introduction, the Religion in History sidebars briefly indicate how events or figures in biblical and early church history parallel events and figures in medieval history. If you would like to further integrate biblical and early church history into your study of *TCH3A*, you can purchase *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 3A* (see page F of this introduction), which includes a Biblical Connections PDF with additional content. Icons in the teacher's edition indicate when to reference this optional piece.

Archibald Diggs: Archaeologist Extraordinaire!

The notebook pages of our fictional archaeologist, Archibald Diggs, are another sidebar element that complements the main narrative in each chapter. With his initials of A.D., this character is a guide of sorts to modern historical discoveries as he supplies interesting, factual archaeological or historical tidbits that we hope will add flavor, intrigue, and at times even some humor to the lesson content.

(Example)

Human bones can sometimes tell us just as much as artifacts. Skeletons found during this time period have many severe injuries. This could mean that these people died in battle or in brutal attacks. -A.D.

Maps

We have included a variety of maps in this text because being able to visualize the geographical location of historic places and events is important for comprehension. In the review chapters, we have supplied a Label the Map exercise for students to practice identifying key locations in medieval history. Appendix D

includes an index of maps, so you and your students at any point in the semester can easily find particular maps for reference and review. Look for downloadable PDF versions of the maps and map exercises at classicalacademicpress.com in *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 3A*.

Chapter Exercises

Each chapter includes an array of exercises that provide ways for students to review the material they have learned. We have incorporated many different kinds of review, both written and oral, to help students retain and expand upon the knowledge they have gained in the lessons. Also included in each chapter are exercises that sharpen students' critical thinking and writing skills. You will find in appendix B, Creative Projects, an extra exercise per chapter that enriches the students' experience of the history lesson with a hands-on assignment. Altogether, there is such a wealth of exercises available that you will need to select the ones that best meet the needs of your student(s). Here is a sampling of the types of exercises provided:

- *Talk It Over:* These questions present a topic to explore and discuss either together as a class, in smaller groups, or at home with a parent. Usually the Talk It Over questions give students the opportunity to apply the chapter content on a larger scale.
- *Content Review Exercises:* Chapter exercises vary but typically include a mix of matching, multiple-choice, short answer, fill-in-the-blank, true/false, and other formats to assess students on the specific vocabulary and important events and figures from each chapter.
- *Think About It* and *Write About It:* These questions present additional opportunities for students to think creatively and critically, and at times do some further research, to more deeply apply their knowledge and draw connections between the chapter material and their own modern lives. We have supplied lines for students to write down their answers, but you could also choose to use the Think About It questions as additional in-class discussion prompts.
- *Label the Map:* These exercises included in the review chapters are an optional way to incorporate geography into students' study of history.
- *Creative Projects:* While some hands-on projects are included at the ends of chapters, appendix B provides a wide range of lengthier writing assignments and activities, such as writing fiction and nonfiction compositions, creating and then playing games, and designing and constructing crafts. All of the creative projects offer students a way to apply their knowledge firsthand.

Teacher's Notes

In the teacher's edition, small, lettered icons sprinkled throughout the historical narrative refer you to notes that are found in the teacher pages at the end of each chapter. Many of these notes supply more full explanations and background for material that is in the student edition. Others provide sample answers for discussion questions. Some notes also recommend online resources and even videos that you can share with the students when you might want some *scholé* (or restful learning) in the classroom.

In the first teacher's note of each pertinent chapter, we have indicated a particular virtue that you may wish to highlight or discuss with your students throughout the week as you read the lesson narrative. We have also supplied, on the last page of that chapter's teacher pages, an optional virtue-based discussion question and a sample answer that you can use as a guide (though the sample answers are by no means the full answers or the only ways to answer the questions!). The questions themselves are fully developed in engaging paragraphs that help students relate their own experience to historical understandings of virtue. A downloadable PDF of the questions is available as part of the Bonus Digital Resources found at classicalacademicpress.com/pages/subject-history. Plus, both the editions for students and teachers include a chart that synthesizes the categories of virtues in appendix C, Virtue in Medieval Art.

Unit Review Chapters and Daily Life Pieces

Each unit ends with a review chapter and a "Life of . . ." piece. The unit review provides a short narrative that summarizes the main concepts from the previous unit and introduces the next unit (or next book). This summary is then followed by several pages of review questions and activities.

The "Life of . . ." piece tells the story of a fictional person living in the geographical area students have just studied. The entertaining stories of Titus and Budic, Boris, and Jacob demonstrate, from a student-friendly perspective, more about what life was like, respectively, for Christian, Muslim, and Jewish youths in the early Middle Ages. Titus and Budic are the sons of a copper mineowner in the trading port of Tintagel on the west coast of post-Roman Britain. Boris is a Bulgar translator for an Arabic scholar. On his journey home from Baghdad to Bulgaria, Boris happens to witness the funeral pyre of a Rus' warrior. And Jacob is a young Jewish scholar asked to be the scribe for a famous rabbi who serves as advisor to the caliph in al-Andalus.

End-of-Book Review

TCH3A concludes with an end-of-book review containing a summary of the high-level concepts and a few final Talk It Over questions for discussion. The second half of the review includes short chapter-by-chapter summaries that ask students to fill in the blanks and supply key vocabulary terms or names of key figures. If you wish, you could have these chapter summaries serve as an end-of-book exam for students. If time permits, you may choose to spend an entire week working through this review chapter, as well as building in more extensive review, such as incorporating all the chapter vocabulary terms. This is a thorough, though not exhaustive, way to review the material covered over the course of the semester, and also a good way to more easily review the essence of the book and the flow of the historical chronology without all of the peripheral material.

Alphabetical Glossary

TCH3A includes an alphabetical glossary of all vocabulary words in this book and in the previous four books of the series. The definitions of some terms are expanded versions of those that appear in the vocabulary charts in the chapters, and pronunciations are supplied for Latin words and other challenging words.

Quizzes

If you would like to assess your students' recall of the content, each chapter has a corresponding short quiz that tests them on the most important vocabulary and facts. These quizzes can be found in the teacher's edition in appendix H. You can also download blank versions of the quizzes as a printable PDF found in the Bonus Digital Resources at classicalacademicpress.com/pages/subject-history.

Other Appendices

TCH3A includes a variety of appendices for easy reference. In this introduction, we've already briefly described these appendices: (B) Creative Projects, (C) Virtue in Medieval Art, (D) Maps Index, (E) Unit Time Lines, (H—TE only) Quizzes. The others are as follows:

- *Appendix A, Song Lyrics:* Each unit is accompanied by a song that summarizes its highlights, chapter by chapter, and the full lyrics are provided in this appendix. A song icon in the chapter text will prompt you to introduce each chapter's verse(s) to students at the beginning of each lesson.
- *Appendix F, Timetable:* This Medieval Civilizations timetable is supplied as an alternate way to view the events of history, condensing more information into a smaller space than is possible with a time line. Students need not be expected to memorize the timetable, but it gives them an at-a-glance summary of much of the content of *Level 3*.
- *Appendix G, Reference Archive:* Included here for easy reference is an index to all the charts that are provided throughout the book. Plus, extra charts that supplement specific chapters are provided.

TCH Series Page

We offer a variety of optional, supplemental resources for *TCH3A*, some of which are free. Others are available for purchase either as part of *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 3A* or as part of

the Bonus Digital Resources. (Note: the Bonus Digital Resources are complimentary for those who purchase their books at classicalacademicpress.com.) The Curious Historian series page, classicalacademicpress.com/pages/subject-history, makes it easy to find information and links for all these resources at any time.

Free Resources

- Scope and sequence for the entire series
- **Go Deeper PDF:** We are passionate about history, and at times it can be difficult to limit ourselves to just the most important, large-scale information when there are so many interesting tangents to explore! For those teachers and students who find themselves inspired to dig deeper, we have created a free, supplemental Go Deeper PDF that includes additional information you may wish to share with your students or explore for your own interest. This includes, but is not limited to, fun tidbits, links to museum collections of artifacts, links to virtual tours of ruins and key sites, and much more. Icons in each chapter of the teacher's edition, accompanied by a brief indication of a few of the available resources, remind you to reference the Go Deeper PDF. 
- ***TCH3A* Pronunciation Guide:** While the glossary includes pronunciations for each chapter's vocabulary words, there are many other medieval names and words that may prove difficult to pronounce, especially for students reading the chapters aloud. This downloadable, alphabetized pronunciation guide can be quickly referenced on a computer, projected in the classroom, or even printed to assist readers.
- Printable PDF of the song lyrics
- Suggested weekly and yearly teaching schedules

Available for Purchase: Bonus Digital Resources (complimentary for CAP customers)

- Printable PDF of the chapter quizzes and answer keys (also found in teacher's edition appendix H)
- Printable PDF of the Four Categories of Virtues (and Vices) chart included in appendix C
- The discussion questions from the Spotlight on Virtue teacher's notes, compiled in a printable PDF that can be distributed to students
- Printable PDF of the charts in the Reference Archive (appendix G)

Available for Purchase: *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 3A*

- **Songs (audio files):** It is a well-known fact that students rarely forget what they sing! *TCH3A* includes four catchy and entertaining songs that you and your students will enjoy singing in class and even as you go about the rest of your day. A song for each unit summarizes the key events and cultural pieces of each chapter, and a "Top 12 Things to Remember" tune is a great way for students to impress their friends and family with the most interesting tidbits about the Middle Ages, including medieval history and culture, and the dynasties, empires, and idea systems of the Far East! The lyrics are found in appendix A, and a PDF download of the song lyrics is included for easy reference if your students want to sing in the car, on vacation, or at a friend's house.
- **Profiles and Legends for *TCH3A* PDF:** The further forward we travel in our study of history, the more primary sources we have to tell us about the key figures, legends, and events of many civilizations, and the richer some of the stories become. Since our curriculum is, first and foremost, an overview of world history, we have chosen to privilege a chronological, historical narrative. The Profiles and Legends PDF is a collection of optional readings intended to complement the *TCH3A* chapters by shedding further light on interesting historical achievements by important figures, such as Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, and the would-be empress Amalasuintha, whom we could only spend a limited amount of space discussing in the context of each chapter. You can choose one or two of the readings to assign as home-

work, read them together with your students as part of your weekly class time, or save the pieces for supplemental readings during unit review weeks.

- **Biblical Connections in *TCH3A* PDF:** For teachers and parents who would like to integrate religious history/biblical studies with their study of medieval history, we have created a supplemental PDF that draws connections to biblical history and locations, scripture verses, and so forth. Icons in the teacher's edition indicate when to reference this optional PDF resource.
- **The Curious Historian's Reading Guide for *Level 3A* PDF:** For those who would like to continue their exploration of medieval history beyond the pages of this text, we have supplied an annotated recommended reading list, featuring titles for both students and teachers. This PDF includes clickable links for easy browsing and purchasing.
- The "**Top 12 Facts from *TCH3A,***" beautifully designed as a convenient reference sheet
- Printable PDF of the chapter maps
- Printable PDF of the unit time lines (appendix E) and the timetable (appendix F)

Pedagogical Principles

The classical tradition has passed down a rich collection of successful methods for teaching children well. We encourage teachers of The Curious Historian series to become familiar with and to employ these methods while teaching history. Below is a list of key pedagogical principles that come to us from the classical tradition of education. You can read an annotated version of these principles of classical pedagogy under the Recommended Resources section at https://classicalacademicpress.com/pages/what-is-classical-education, and a video overview is available at https://www.classicalu.com/course/principles-of-classical-pedagogy. A subscription to classicalu.com will grant you access not only to additional videos that cover the nine essential principles in more detail, but also to scores of other online training videos for classical educators.

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1. ***Festina Lente*: Make Haste Slowly**

Master each step rather than rushing through content.

2. ***Multum Non Multa:* Do Fewer Things, But Do Them Well**

It's better to master a few things than to cursorily cover content that will be forgotten.

3. ***Repetitio Mater Memoriae:* Repetition Is the Mother of Memory and Makes Learning Permanent**

Lively, regular review and repetition make learning permanent.

4. **Embodied Learning: Rhythms and Routines That Profoundly Teach**

The rhythms, practices, traditions, and routines we create in our classroom are just as important for learning as our front-of-the-class instruction is.

5. **Songs, Chants, and Jingles: How Singing Delights Students and Makes Learning Permanent**

Mainly in the lower school, the most important content/skills we wish to emphasize should be taught or reinforced with a song, chant, or jingle.

6. **Wonder and Curiosity: Modeling Wonder to Cultivate Lifelong Affections for Truth, Goodness, and Beauty**

We should regularly seek to impart a love for Truth, Goodness, and Beauty by modeling our own wonder or love of that which is lovely and by asking good questions to inspire students' curiosity.

7. **Educational Virtues: Cultivating Habits of Learning Necessary for a Student to Be a Student**

We should seek to cultivate virtues of love, humility, diligence, constancy, and temperance in the lives of students. In particular, when studying history we should ask, "What key figures and values should we emulate and praise?" and "What key figures and values should we avoid and blame?"

8. **Restoring *Scholé* to School: Cultivating Restful Learning That Enables Deep Learning That Delights and Sustains Students**

We should provide adequate time for reflection, contemplation, and discussion of profound and important ideas, both inside and outside the classroom, both with and without students.

9. ***Docendo Discimus:* By Teaching We Learn—Why Students Must Teach to Master Learning**

Older students should teach younger students to master material; you don't truly know something until you can teach it.

How to Teach *The Curious Historian Level 3A*

A Suggested Schedule

The Curious Historian (TCH) curriculum has been designed to be taught at the pace of one chapter per week, with each book to be completed over the course of a semester (i.e., *Level 3A* in the fall semester and *Level 3B* in the spring semester). The following is a basic suggested weekly schedule, assuming four classes per week for approximately 30–40 minutes each day, to be modified as necessary by the teacher. You can also find a suggested yearlong schedule at classicalacademicpress.com /pages/subject-history.

If you purchased *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 3A*, you can incorporate into your class schedule "Biblical Connections," "Profiles and Legends," or any of the resources supplied in the downloadable files. If you purchased the Bonus Digital Resources (which are complimentary for those who purchase their books at classicalacademicpress.com), you'll find a number of other printable classroom aids.

There are eighteen chapters in *TCH3A*: fourteen content chapters, three unit review chapters, and an end-of-book review chapter. This text also includes a book introduction (divided into two parts) and three unit introductions. The vocabulary and concepts covered in the two-part book introduction and the unit introductions will be important for students' understanding of the rest of the text, so we highly recommend that you take time to cover the concepts presented there.

If taught four days a week, this text should take approximately nineteen weeks to complete. Some chapters and sections may move faster than others, depending on the interests and strengths of your students. There is flexibility within each chapter to include some or all of the exercises and in the pacing of the curriculum as a whole to move at the speed that works best for your student(s)/classroom.

Day One: Review/Memory Work

Each chapter begins with a time line and a vocabulary section that is divided into Important Words, Important Figures, and Important Highlights. (Pronunciation for more challenging words, as well as extended definitions for some terms, can be found in the alphabetical glossary.) Take time to review these key terms, historical figures, and geographical concepts, and to note them in the context of the chapter time line. Next, introduce the new chapter verse(s) in the unit song (see appendix A for the song lyrics). Each class period should begin and end with a brief review of this content and memory work, incorporating content from previous chapters when appropriate, and with several rounds of singing all of the song verses students have learned up to that point.

If time permits, begin reading the lesson narrative.

Day Two–Day Three: Lesson Narrative

Start class with a brief review of the memory work and unit song, and then begin (or continue) to read the lesson narrative. You might read the narrative aloud, with students following along, or have your student(s) read the text aloud. Either way, be sure to pause throughout to emphasize key points, check for comprehension, and engage in periodic discussions (the Question Boxes, while optional, will be par-

ticularly helpful here). Be sure to also stop to point out how the chapter maps and artwork fit into the narrative. While the various sidebar elements and longer "of the Age" pieces contain interesting and pertinent information, they are optional. You may wish to select just one or two to highlight for students, to assign them as homework, or to skip them altogether if you need to move more quickly through a particular chapter.

Day Three–Day Four: Comprehension Exercises

Repeat the week's memory work and unit song, and then finish or review the lesson narrative and have students work on completing the chapter exercises. Allow time to review and discuss the assignment(s) before moving on. Each chapter includes a variety of exercises, both written and oral, to help students review and retain the key concepts from the lesson narrative and expand upon the knowledge they have gained. There are a wealth of exercises, and you should feel free to choose only those assignments that best meet your students' needs and abilities. Consider choosing a few exercises to complete during class time, such as the Talk It Over or the optional Spotlight on Virtue questions, which are discussion based, and one or two other exercises to assign as homework.

Optional Exercises and Chapter Quiz

While optional, the Creative Projects in appendix B allow students to interact with the chapter content in different and creative ways. You may wish to save these for day four (or, if your schedule allows, for a fifth day of history study), or integrate them earlier in the week during days two and three as a way to break up the lesson narrative and begin introducing firsthand application of the content. (Be sure to read through the instructions in advance, as many of these projects require various supplies.)

Consider assigning the optional chapter quiz either as an in-class exercise or as homework. (Note: There are no quizzes for the book introduction, unit introductions, or review chapters. Along with the answer keys, blank quizzes are included in the teacher's edition in appendix H. You may photocopy them to distribute to your class. They are also available for download in the Bonus Digital Resources, which are complimentary for those who purchase their books through Classical Academic Press or which may be purchased at classicalacademicpress.com/pages/the-curious-historian.)

Don't forget to learn this week's song verse(s)! The lyrics can be found in appendix A.

A

Introduction Part I:
Whose History Is It, Anyway?

Important Words

Word	Definition
Middle Ages	The period, ca. AD 500–1500, between the decline of the Roman Empire in the west and the major changes that came with European expeditions to the Americas, among other key events
Chronicle	An account of history organized year by year or in the order that events happened
Medieval	An adjective indicating something that happened or existed during the Middle Ages
Culture[1]	All the ways that a society acts, makes things, and thinks about life
The Renaissance	When spelled with a capital *R*, the Renaissance refers to cultural movements in Europe, ca. AD 1400–1600, which bridged the late Middle Ages and the modern era and were inspired by renewed interest in and access to ancient Greek and Roman culture.
Early modern period[2]	The period, ca. AD 1500–1800, that followed the Middle Ages

Important Highlights

Word	Definition
Christianity[3]	The largest and one of the oldest religions in the world. Its believers follow Jesus Christ as God the Son and their savior. During the Middle Ages, Christianity spread widely and had a huge impact on how people lived, how cities were governed, and how people understood the world around them.
Islam[4]	A religion based on the belief that there is only one God, called Allah in Arabic, and that Muhammad is his prophet. A person who practices Islam is called a Muslim.

See the *TCH3A* Go Deeper PDF, http://capress.link/tch3agd, to learn about . . .
- A medieval writer's version of how Stonehenge was made with Merlin's help
- How people of the European Middles Ages would have answered "What year is it?"

Who's Telling This Story?

In *The Curious Historian Level 3A*, we've come at last to the **Middle Ages**. But what were they in the middle of, and what do we know about them? Those questions aren't as easy to answer as you might think! First of all, historians don't universally agree on a set of dates for when the Middle Ages began and when they ended—but they do agree that there is rarely a definitive moment when one era ends and another begins. It's like the changing of the tides: We can see when the tide has stopped coming in and is now going out, but there are still large waves that wash up, making it hard to pinpoint exactly when the tide turned.[5] The dates we use here are merely guides, like tide gauges that mark the changes in the water's depth. We'll explore what's "middle" about the Middle Ages later in this introduction. Second, as you've seen in earlier levels, separating fact from fiction can be complicated when we don't have a lot of surviving written records, and that's especially true when we look at the early Middle Ages. What's more, the written records we have don't always tell the whole story or give us a complete picture.

B

1. Vocabulary words in color are terms students have encountered previously. You can find all of the vocabulary words from previous levels in the alphabetical glossary at the back of this book.
2. For an extended definition of early modern period, see the alphabetical glossary.
3. This is an extended definition of Christianity from what you learned in *The Curious Historian Level 2B*.
4. For an extended definition of Islam, see the alphabetical glossary.
5. Analogy from Owen Barfield, "Philology and the Incarnation," Rudolph Setiner e.Lib, updated October 15, 2022, http://capress.link/tch3abi106.

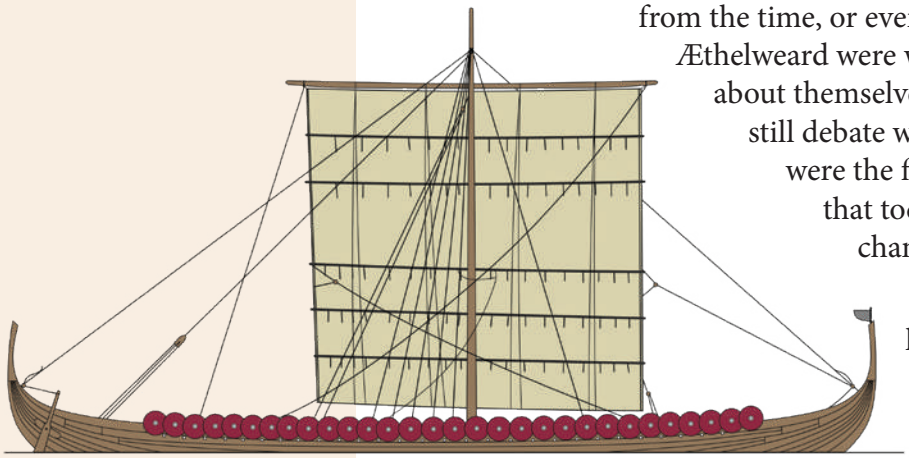
To the Source:
chronicle from the Latin word *chronica*, meaning "book of annals," borrowed from the Greek *chroniká*, meaning "of time" or "in order by time"

For example, in the early 900s, a scribe in Winchester (in what is now England) arranged her inkpot, sharpened her quill, and sat down to work on a chronicle.[6] A **chronicle*** is a history arranged in the order that events occur. In this case, the scribe wrote an entry for each year. For AD 789, she recorded the arrival of three ships in a port nearby. They were strange ships, long and shallow with the prows carved to look like dragons, and the sailors—men we would call Vikings—came from the far north, from Scandinavia. A local official rode up to the dock to see what they were doing, and they killed him. "And those," wrote the scribe, "were the first ships of Danish men that came to the land of the English."[7]

Or were they?

Historians now know that these were not the first Scandinavians—or even the first Scandinavian raiders—to visit the island of Britain. Earlier Scandinavian invaders had attacked the island of Britain and as far south as Gaul (modern-day France) in the 500s.[8] In the following centuries, there was a lot of trade between Scandinavians and other peoples who lived around the North Sea. Objects made in the British Isles have been found in Norwegian graves from the earlier 700s, while English-speaking nobles dazzled in glittering jewelry made from gems traded with Scandinavians.[9] Indeed, a later chronicler—a nobleman called Æthelweard—suggested that the attack in 789 was not a planned raid, but a trade mission gone sour. He said the official in question was a man called Beaduheard who rode down to the port for a shopping trip, expecting the Scandinavians to be traders.[10]

What about the Scandinavians' side of this story? Apart from archaeological evidence, we do not know. We do not have any written Scandinavian records from the time, or even from the time that the chronicler and Æthelweard were writing. Stories that Scandinavians told about themselves were recorded much later. Historians still debate whether the men who came ashore in 789 were the first of a wave of Scandinavian raiders that today we call Vikings or just lost merchants—or both![11]



▲A modern artist's drawing of a Scandinavian longship

Here are just a few examples of the kinds of questions historians wrestle with when considering **medieval** history, or the history of the Middle Ages:

6. M. B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), 143–169, 171–185; *The Parker Chronicle* or *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* MS A (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 173, http://capress.link/tch3abi104). Quotation translated by Dr. Elisabeth G. Wolfe.
7. D. Whitelock et al., trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), 35.
8. Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin, 1974), iii.3.
9. J. D. Richards, *The Vikings: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5; H. Hamerow, "The Circulation of Garnets in the North Sea Zone, ca. 400–700," in *Gemstones in the First Millennium AD: Mines, Trade, Workshops, and Symbolism*, ed. A. Hilgner, S. Greiff, and D. Quast (Mainz, Germany: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, 2017), 71–86.
10. Henry Savile, *Rerum Anglicarum scriptores post Bedam praecipui* (London, 1596; repr., Frankfurt, 1601), ff. 472–483 at f. 477v, http://capress.link/tch3abi101.
11. P. H. Sawyer, "The Causes of the Viking Age," in *The Vikings*, ed. R. T. Farrell (London: Phillimore, 1982), 1–7.

- When (and why) did Vikings go out in ships?
- Were legends about King Arthur based on a real person?
- Who were the Merovingians, the Moravians, and the Magyars?
- Why did so many people love stories about Robin Hood?
- Why did an Irish prince give up his riches to found monasteries across Scotland?
- Why do so many Spanish words sound like Arabic words, and why are the oldest European mosques (places of worship for Muslims) to be found in Spain?
- How did stonemasons build such gigantic stone cathedrals . . . and why the pointy windows?
- Who was the first person to come up with the idea for the number 0?
- Why did some people in the Byzantine Empire (which is what scholars call the eastern half of the Roman Empire) destroy religious art, while other people loved it?
- Why did some peasants and merchants revolt in the years after the plague known as the Black Death?
- Why were so many rulers called Charles, Chandragupta, Louis, or Otto?
- What should the chaotic years in China between the Han and Sui dynasties even be called: the Six Dynasties Period, the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, or the Northern and Southern Dynasties Period?
- How much of the life story of the classical poet Kalidasa, often called the greatest playwright of India, is true and how much is legend? Did he even exist or are his works the creations of several poets?

Even when it comes to famous events, like the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, scholars can disagree strongly about exactly what happened, when, and why.

Definitely Not the Gloomy Ages

One of the main reasons this period is so hard to understand is that only a fraction of the writings and objects that were created in the distant past survives. Even in cultures that had written alphabets, most medieval people couldn't read or write, nor were writing materials very common, so many stories weren't written down until centuries after the events occurred. What did get recorded did not reflect the life of everyone in a society. Plus, a lot of the records that were written down were destroyed

I, Archibald Diggs, archaeologist extraordinaire, welcome you to the history of the Middle Ages! Together we will travel through the early Middle Ages, exploring fascinating cultures from the Huns to the Vikings and everything in between, as the Western Roman Empire and other powers faded and new kingdoms rose in their place, with new religions and new cultures. Written records haven't always survived centuries of war, fires, floods, and spring cleanings, and many of the people we'll study didn't write anything down in the first place! Meanwhile, some groups of people didn't live in one place for very long before moving on or being absorbed into other cultures. So archaeology plays a vital role in helping us understand who did what, how they did it, and what happened where and when, even if it can't always explain why. It's an era that requires a lot of detective work to understand. But it's also a chance for you to use what you've learned so far about how to "dig" for clues and to be a curious historian! –A.D.

In Old English, *Æthel* means "noble" and *weard* means "guardian." Æthelweard means "noble guardian." The letter at the start of his name, which looks like a smashed together A and E, is called an *ash*. It used to appear in a number of modern English words, such as archæology and encyclopædia, but it's dropped out of use nowadays. Watch this archaeologist's notebook pages throughout this book for more tidbits about language as well as artifacts! –A.D.

▲Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, one of the most famous cathedrals built during the Middle Ages

▲Kalidasa, one of the most renowned Indian playwrights

▶This painting (by Maxfield Parrish, 1870–1966) depicts a scene from *The Thousand and One Nights*, one of the greatest works of literature to come from Baghdad during the Islamic golden age.

Dark or Golden?
Can you recall which culture we studied in *The Curious Historian Level 2* that featured a "dark age" and a "golden age"? In what ways can the descriptions we used then help us understand more about how and why people use those terms for the Middle Ages? TE>

by fire, war, or time. Some have been lost to thieves or forgotten in the back of cupboards, like the earliest English autobiography, which was discovered behind some ping-pong balls in an English country house in the 1930s.[12]

Archaeological evidence can be hard to come by: You literally have to really dig for it! Then we must make sense of these mute objects and put them in their historical context. Because records from the Middle Ages are so scanty, some people have called this period the "Dark Ages"—as if the lights had gone out during that entire period. We've talked about other so-called "dark ages" in past volumes, but the early Middle Ages are often what are meant when the phrase *the* Dark Ages is capitalized. Who originally called them that? It was scholars during the period at the end of the Middle Ages who saw themselves as restoring the cultural "light" of classical antiquity. In the early 1340s, an Italian poet called Petrarch lamented:

> My fate is to live amid varied and confusing storms. But for you perhaps, there will follow a better age, as I hope and wish you will live long after me. . . . When the darkness has been dispersed, our descendants can come again into pure radiance like in former times.[13]

During the next several centuries, writers such as Petrarch and many other late medieval writers, artists, and thinkers belonged to a cultural movement we now call **the Renaissance**. They tended to love the Latin literature of the Roman Empire, and they didn't think anything much worth studying had happened between the end of the Western Roman Empire and their own day.[14] (You'll read more about the Renaissance in *The Curious Historian 3B*.)

For us, the Middle Ages is a period that is "darker" to our eyes in the sense that it is much harder for us to see it clearly from the surviving sources. But it is a big mistake to think of the people and culture of the Middle Ages as dark and gloomy!

Myths and Legends

To complicate matters, centuries for which few written sources survive tend to be fertile ground for myths and legends. You may have heard a few medieval tales already: Have you ever heard of King Arthur, Mulan, Robin Hood, Saint George and the Dragon, or 1001 Nights? But the legends that have come down to us may not be all fiction, either: They tell us what people found moving,

12. The manuscript, made between 1445 and 1450, contained the autobiography of Margery Kempe, a devout Christian, businesswoman, traveler, and mother of fourteen. That manuscript is now London, British Library, Add MS 61823, http://capress.link/tch3abi107.
13. Adapted from the translation in Theodore E. Mommsen, "Petrarch's Conception of the 'Dark Ages,'" *Speculum* 17, no. 2 (1942): 240.
14. See, e.g., Mommsen, "Petrarch's Conception of the 'Dark Ages,'" 226–242.

funny, and inspiring through the ages. The stories that common people pass down from generation to generation can even contain a grain of truth, but that truth often gets distorted over time. It is the task of curious historians and archaeologists to try to sift through the evidence we have in order to determine what is legend and what really happened. Even when stories become legends that are far removed from real historical events, they can still tell us about the interests and ideals of the medieval people who told them.

Take, for example, the stories about the Battle of Badon Hill, one of the major victories attributed to King Arthur in later stories. The battle was first described by a Romano-British monk called Gildas in the sixth century. He claimed the Romano-Britons were led to victories against the Saxons by an upstanding Roman leader with a Latin name: Ambrosius Aurelianus.[15] A few hundred years later, people at the court of a Welsh ruler were still telling stories about the Battle of Badon Hill—but the way they spoke of the leader made him look like the sort of ruler they respected. They had not known Roman rulers. To them, the ideal hero was a fearless warrior, so they told stories about a battle at Badon Hill being won by a skilled military commander with a Welsh name—Arthur.[16]

▲King Arthur and Queen Guinevere watch Sir Galahad prove his worthiness at Camelot (illustration by Arthur Rackham, 1917).

Stories about King Arthur spread throughout the medieval world, and each retelling reveals something about the storytellers themselves. French poets later retold these tales and added details about a sword stuck in a stone. By the fifteenth century, Muslim soldiers of the Ottoman Empire had their own stories about a sword in the stone; but in their version, a member of Muhammad's family, not a Christian warlord, claimed the sword.[17] And that is the power of myth—it can transcend both religion and culture by speaking to the core of what makes us human, while the shifts different storytellers made reveal a lot about what made their worlds different too!

What Were the Middle Ages, and When Did They Begin?

Perhaps the biggest myth of all is the idea of the "Middle" Ages. The term "Middle Ages" and its adjective form, "medieval," both come from the Latin phrase *medium aevum*, which literally means "middle age." The name "Middle Ages" is less negative than "Dark Ages," but it still only suggests that these centuries were an in-between time, without explaining what was important about this period.

Who first used the term "Middle Ages"? Again, people living at the very end of the Middle Ages during the Renaissance invented this term for their own time period because they (mistakenly) thought that they were living in boring times! The term *media tempestas*—"the middle time" in Latin—was first used in 1469

If you purchased *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 3A*, you can read in the Biblical Connections PDF about how Luke acts like a historian in his account of Jesus's life and its implications for us today.

15. Gildas, *De excidio Britanniae*, in *The Works of Gildas and Nennius*, trans. J. A. Giles (London: James Bohn, 1841), 20.
16. Pseudo-Nennius, *Historia Brittonum*, in Giles, *Works of Gildas and Nennius*, 29.
17. Jane Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions: Myth, Memory, and Identity in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen* (Albany: University of New York Press, 2012), 175.

by an Italian bishop called Giovanni Andrea Bussi.[18] Giovanni and his friends studied Latin closely and were Christians. Therefore, they thought that the early centuries of the first millennium were the most exciting time to be alive, when lots of people spoke Latin and when Christianity was first practiced. However, Giovanni was doing his own century—and those before it—a disservice.

The period between AD 300 and 1500 saw huge changes taking place in Europe and the Mediterranean region. Two major world religions grew and spread dramatically: Christianity and Islam. We have studied **Christianity** in *The Curious Historian Level 2B*—those who profess it believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, both fully human and fully divine, and follow him as their savior. In *Level 3A* we will learn much more about the origins of Islam, but for now we can say briefly that those who profess **Islam**, called Muslims, follow the Prophet Muhammad and his revelations as recorded in the Muslim holy book, the Quran. Today, Christianity and Islam are still the two most practiced religions in the world.

▲"Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah" inscribed on the gates of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina.

Other changes came too. In Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, instead of using only papyrus or parchment scrolls, people began to make books with pages and covers. People in the Middle Ages also developed new educational institutions: There were important schools in India, China, Cairo, and Baghdad that attracted students from far and wide, while in Europe scholars started to gather in *universitates*, which give us the modern term "universities." Printing was invented, first in Asia and later in Europe. Amazing abstract art was made, as well as realistic art that followed Roman models. Many modern languages originated in the Middle Ages too, including the language in which you are reading this book: English. (The ancestor of the English language developed in the southern part of the island of Britain during the Middle Ages.)

As you can see, studying medieval history will continue to require some detective work, just like our study of ancient and classical history did. The surviving sources do not tell us everything we need to know, and what they tell us is not always said in clear, straightforward ways. Studying medieval history helps you practice skills that you will use every day, like figuring out which sources you can trust and why, and what art and stories tell us about the people who made them.

This is the first medieval mystery you must solve as a historical detective: When did the Middle Ages begin? As we mentioned earlier, it's not easy to determine! Some historians argue that the biggest changes to European societies came during the reign of Constantine, which you read about at the end of *The Curious Historian Level 2B*. In particular, the emperor's legalization and promotion of Christianity after AD 313 would have significant consequences for life and religion in North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.[19] Others argue that the biggest changes were those that occurred a century later—when there ceased

18. Giovanni Andrea Bussi, *Prefazioni alle edizioni di Sweynheym et Pannartz*, ed. M. Miglio (Milan, Italy: Il Polifilo, 1978), 17.
19. N. H. Baynes, "Constantine," in *The Cambridge Ancient History, vol. 12: The Imperial Crisis and Recovery A.D. 193–324*, ed. S. A. Cook et al., 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), 678–699, esp. 699; B. H. Rosenwein, *A Short History of the Middle Ages*, 2 vols, 5th ed. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2018), 1:5.

to be an emperor in Italy after AD 476—so those historians say that the Middle Ages started then. Still others argue that there was not one big change, but a gradual transformation of the Roman world into the medieval world between the fourth and seventh centuries.[20] In the next chapters, you will study all these reasons in more detail. Then you can decide what you think!

Were the Middle Ages the Same Everywhere, All the Time?

What do you think of when you hear the words "Middle Ages"? Perhaps the picture in your mind is full of knights and squires, lords and ladies, kings and queens. Do you also see servants toiling in the background and serfs laboring in the fields? Are there grand castles and Gothic cathedrals rising from the mists? If this is what you imagine, be patient. You will encounter such things in the *late* Middle Ages, which is covered in the next book, *The Curious Historian Level 3B* (*TCH3B*). If you've heard that medieval society was organized according to a system that has been known to modern people as feudalism, be prepared. Today's historians hotly debate whether the term "feudalism" captures the wide variety of people's experience during the Middle Ages.

You may also come across books about life in the Middle Ages that talk as if everyone in the world lived the same way and nothing ever changed for a thousand years. Nothing could be further from the truth! You may remember from *Level 1* and *Level 2* that it takes time for changes to happen, and not every civilization experiences changes at the same time. As you'll see both in this volume and in *TCH3B*, the centuries known as the Middle Ages saw great political changes. Empires rose, fell, and transformed. Kingdoms such as France, England, Scotland, Poland, and Norway were established and developed and changed. Dynasty after dynasty emerged in China and India, but after each period of disunity, stability was regained. There was growth in technology and the arts too. People invented new types of math and they studied the stars and the sea. They built canals and beacons to communicate quickly. And people in different countries often led very different lives even if their status (social class) was roughly the same. For example, the codes of chivalry, which governed the way knights were supposed to behave, were different in England, in France, and in the patchwork of tiny kingdoms, dukedoms, and towns that later became Germany. There are things about the Middle Ages that were broadly true across many countries and cultures, but history, like most things in life, is usually more complicated than it looks at first.

▼Gothic stained glass windows at the Sainte-Chapelle, a royal chapel consecrated in Paris in 1248

One common misconception about the Middle Ages is summarized in the title of a 1970s sitcom about Robin Hood: *When Things Were Rotten*. People today tend to think of medieval life as dirty, dark, smelly, and filled with poverty

20. Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150–750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971).

◀These pages from René of Anjou's *Tournament Book*, made in the 1460s, show the Dukes of Brittany and Bourbon on horseback.

and disease. There was plenty of hardship to go around, of course, just as there is today, but people still found ways to live as comfortably as they could. They had adventures, told stories and jokes, played table games and sports, sang songs, took baths, and surrounded themselves with bright colors in their clothes and houses. The Alhambra, a medieval Islamic fortress in Granada, Spain, is covered in delicate carvings of flowers, lions, stars, and calligraphy. Its halls and courts are still considered some of the most beautiful buildings in the world to this day.[21] The Buddhist university at Nalanda in northeastern India, founded in the fifth century, nurtured scholars who would make enlightened discoveries, including the concept of zero and the theory that the earth rotated on an axis. The city of Salerno in southern Italy was known for starting an important medical school as early as the ninth century, where Arab, Jewish, Greek, and Latin knowledge of medicine was studied and shared. Churches were full of light, color, and art, too. In fact, the Gothic style of architecture was developed to allow as much light as possible into the church, since medieval theologians believed light represented the presence of God. You'll learn more about the good points of the medieval era as we go along.

▲The Dome of the Rock, an Islamic shrine built in the seventh century

▲A page from the Book of Kells, made by Irish monks ca. 800

Another common misconception is that the story of the Middle Ages is only about western European events and peoples. As you read *The Curious Historian 3A*, you'll see that medieval history includes much more, such as the Byzantine Empire centered in Constantinople; the rise of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and its spread both east and west; North African thinkers like Bishop Augustine of Hippo and Maimonides the Physician; the emergence of a number of dynasties in China; the golden age of the Guptas in India when Hinduism, international trade, science, art, and literature thrived. And in *The Curious Historian 3B*, you'll see how people from across Europe renewed contact with areas far beyond the old borders of the Roman Empire—including regions that few Europeans had even heard about before.

When Did the Middle Ages End?

Just as the question of when the Middle Ages began takes some detective work, so does the question of when they ended. As with the end of the Western Roman Empire, the answer may not be quite as simple as one event defining "the end of an era." It can be difficult to pinpoint changes between the Middle Ages and the **early modern period**, which came after it, particularly since major developments in art, literature, architecture, and philosophy—collectively called the Renaissance—spanned both the late Middle Ages and the early part of the early modern period! Lots of important events and ideas from the 1500s,

▲The Hagia Sophia, one of the most well-known Byzantine buildings

21. Robert Irwin, *The Alhambra* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 49.

1600s, and 1700s grew out of conflicts, ideas, and practices that had started during the Middle Ages. And sometimes new technology and old ideas existed side by side. People still made manuscripts after the printing press reached Europe, for example, and some printed books still contained spaces for hand-drawn decorations! It was at about this time (around AD 1500) that explorers such as Columbus voyaged to North and South America from Europe, leading, of course, to big changes on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. These explorers reached the Americas using tools that were made in the Middle Ages, like maps of the stars that helped them figure out which directions their ships were moving when they were out of sight of land. (And, as you will see in later chapters, earlier medieval explorers had traveled long distances too!)

▲*A Court in The Alhambra in the Time of the Moors* by Edwin Lord Weeks (1849–1903)

Still, there are events that historians consider markers of a shift of sorts. The lasting impact of the Black Death pandemic of the fourteenth century, as well as the way the invention of the Gutenberg printing press in the 1450s revolutionized how information was shared in Europe, are major events often named as indications of "the end of an era." So are conflicts like the Wars of the Roses in fifteenth-century England, which ushered in the English Tudor dynasty, and the end of the Spanish Reconquista in 1492. Other scholars argue that the key event marking the end of the Middle Ages was the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Empire in 1453. We will explore all of these turning points of the late Middle Ages in *The Curious Historian 3B*.

In this series, we will use 1500 as a rough marker for the end of the Middle Ages, but that does not mean that everyone woke up on New Year's Day of 1500 thinking and acting differently. And that does not mean that all the languages, institutions, tools, and ideas from the Middle Ages were abandoned in the modern world. The fact that you speak English and the fact that people are still writing stories about brave knights who fight dragons and about princesses who outwit evil wizards are just two of the ways the medieval world is with us, even now.

▼A Jew and a Muslim playing chess in al-Andalus, thirteenth century (depicted in the Book of Games of Alfonso X)

Practice the Facts

For each statement below, fill in the blank with the correct answer. If you don't immediately remember an answer, be a curious historian and dig for it in the paragraphs of this introduction.

1. Since there are scarce written records for some parts of the Middle Ages, some people refer to this time as the _____Dark Ages_____.
2. The city of Salerno in Italy was known for developing one of the first medical _____schools_____ in the world, where Arab, Jewish, Greek, and Latin knowledge was studied and shared.
3. The adjective "_____medieval_____" comes from the Latin phrase *medium aevum*, meaning "middle ages," and indicates something that happened or existed during the Middle Ages.
4. Historians often need to sift through information from the Middle Ages to separate history from _____myth (or legend)_____.
5. Medieval French poets told stories about a leader called _____Arthur_____ who pulled a sword out of a stone.
6. During the Middle Ages, people started to write in _____books_____ with pages instead of in long scrolls.
7. Some historians believe that the end of the Middle Ages occurred after the fall of _____Constantinople_____, the capital of the Byzantine Empire.
8. The ancestor of the modern language of _____English_____ was developed in the southern part of the island of Britain during the Middle Ages.
9. The _____Byzantine_____ Empire is the name given to the eastern half of the Roman Empire that continued to exist throughout the Middle Ages.
10. The code of chivalry told _____knights_____ how they were supposed to behave.
11. To allow a lot of light in, builders of cathedrals used the _____Gothic_____ style of architecture.

A Don't forget to introduce this week's song verses to your students. We recommend having them sing the unit song (up through the verses they have learned) once or twice at the start of each class.

B Most of the written sources for Europe and the Middle East survive in handwritten copies known as manuscripts: from the Latin *manus*, meaning "hand," and *scriptum*, meaning "written thing." Some of these manuscripts are ornately decorated by hand, too, with intricate patterns, bright colors, even gold and silver. If you see the name of a library or archive plus the letters "MS" in footnotes, that is a link to a medieval manuscript made on parchment, papyrus, or other material. All these medieval manuscripts are remarkable just for lasting this long. For the texts contained in those manuscripts, in this book, we will be citing editions and translations of many written sources. (In this case, "editions" refers to printed copies of those sources in their original languages.) Many of these sources are very famous and have been printed and translated multiple times over the centuries. In our footnotes, we will try to choose editions that are reliable and scholarly while also being readily accessible. That being said, don't worry if you want to read more and cannot find the exact same editions in your local library: Other editions and translations may be available!

C Malcolm Parkes, a paleographer, suggested that the scribe of early entries to this manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 173, http://capress.link/tch3abi104) was a nun of the Nunnaminster in Winchester because the same hand recorded the Nunnaminster's lands in the Book of Nunnaminster (London, British Library, Harley MS 2965, fol. 40v, http://capress.link/tch3abi105). We suspect this scribe was a woman, and not just a priest who worked for the nunnery, because she described herself as a *peccatrix*: female sinner.

D Does the word "Viking" refer to "raider," to "warrior," or more innocuously to "seafarer" or "trader"? That's a vexed question debated by scholars. For more information, see not only the article by P. H. Sawyer referenced in the footnote but also this blog entry by Judith Jesch, Professor of Viking Studies, University of Nottingham: http://capress.link/tch3abi103. Neil Price also takes up the question in *Children of Ash and Elm: A History of the Vikings* (New York: Basic Books, 2020). For a short, entertaining video on the subject, see Jackson Crawford, "The Word 'Viking' (Quick Takes)," November 2018, YouTube video, 4:00:00, http://capress.link/tch3abi102. As Dr. Crawford smokes a cigar throughout the video, please consider its appropriateness for students before showing them.

From **Dark or Golden** on page 4.

See the unit I introduction in *TCH2A* for a discussion of the Greek Dark Age, which is defined as a time in Greek history, ca. 1200–800 BC, during which the skill of writing was lost, no monuments were built, and society was unstable. In general, a dark age is sometimes used to describe a period in a civilization's history for which historians have little information. As Archibald Diggs points out to students in that introduction, "The opposite of a dark age is a golden age: a period when a kingdom or civilization is prosperous and at peace, and the people are able to focus on impressive achievements, such as building, monuments, writing, literature, and making new discoveries." *TCH2A* describes the Greek Classical Period as a golden age when the formation of city-states (*poleis*) led to the development of an advanced and unique culture. We have discussed the Middle Ages as being "dark" only to the extent that reliable historical sources are not always available. Throughout *TCH Level 3* we will also highlight many "golden" elements of medieval culture. This introduction mentions a few examples, but encourage students throughout their reading of the book to notice when the subject matter of a particular chapter aligns with Archibald Diggs's definition of a golden age.

E We'll talk about Gildas again in chapter 4 and give a fuller profile of the Arthurian legends in *The Curious Historian 3B*. It's worth noting here that while Gildas only names Ambrosius Aurelianus as the commander of Romano-British forces, that does not mean that there was not a leader called Arthur at some point in the past. A warlord called Arthur was mentioned in the early Welsh poem *Y Gododdin*. Still, given the lack of sources for this early period, historians have to be careful not to "argue from silence": Just because something was not recorded in the surviving sources does not mean that it did not happen! Whether Arthur even existed at all and how we can tell are questions scholars have hotly debated for centuries.

F Especially now that "gritty" and "grimdark" are the norm in Hollywood, fantasy series like *Game of Thrones* are billed as being more accurate portrayals of the period than movies like the 1938 Technicolor classic *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, but they're just as inaccurate in their own ways. Students may have questions about what they've seen in movies, so this would be a good time to remind them that Hollywood's version of history is seldom the whole truth and may contain no truth at all!

Don't forget to learn this week's song verse(s)! The lyrics can be found in appendix A. A

Introduction Part II:
The Backstory—Barbarians!

Important Words

Word	Definition
Gaul[1]	A Roman territory that covered the area of modern-day France and the Low Countries. When applied to a person, "Gaul" might mean Celt, referring to some of the people who had already inhabited that region.
Britannia	A Roman territory that covered modern-day England and Wales
Germania	The name the Romans gave to the area bordered by the Rhine, Danube, and Vistula Rivers and the North Sea
Scandinavia	The region in northern Europe consisting of the modern-day countries of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden

Important Figures

Word	Definition
Barbarian	The name the Greeks and Romans used for non-Greco-Romans; in modern usage, someone who is seen as uncultured, rude, and uneducated
Celts	People who spoke Celtic languages and shared some art styles, beliefs, and customs that seem to have spread from central Europe. In some cases, they were also known as Gauls.
Britons	A term the Romans used to refer to the inhabitants of the island of Britain who spoke Celtic languages
Germani	The people of Germania and Scandinavia who spoke Germanic languages, may have had a common origin, and shared many beliefs and customs. The Germanic tribes included the Suevi, the Cherusci, the Goths, and the Franks, among many others.
Goths	A group of Germanic-speaking people who moved into the area around the Roman Empire's northeastern frontiers. Eventually, they were divided into the *Ostrogoths*, or East Goths, and the Visigoths, or West Goths.

Who Were the "Barbarians"?

In *The Curious Historian Level 2B*, you met the Romans and saw how their empire expanded. Now, to understand the events of the early Middle Ages that we're about to study in this volume, we need to rewind a few centuries and look at what was happening beyond the borders of the Roman Empire, particularly to the empire's north and west. The Celts were one of two important groups of non-Roman peoples whose relationship with Rome had a dramatic effect on the course of European history. The other group was known collectively as the *Germani*—the Germans (which included the Goths). These relationships make more sense when we know where these people came from and how they first met the Romans.

One quick note before we start: We'll be talking about many tribes that you've probably never heard of before—and there are even more we won't be mentioning by name. We certainly don't expect you to remember all of them! The only names you need to memorize are the ones listed in the vocabulary chart above—Celts and Goths. B

So who were these Goths and Celts? If you got in a time machine and went back to the Roman period, how would you be able to spot them? According to the ancient Greek historian Diodorus, Celts were easy to iden-

1. See the alphabetical glossary at the end of the book for the *TCH Level 2* definition of "Gauls" as the people who inhabited Gaul.

▲A Gaul (first- or second-century Roman copy of Greek original)

tify. You would just have to look for people who wore big gold arm rings and necklaces and had very long mustaches. They were so brave that they charged into battle naked. When not in battle, they sported brightly colored, striped clothing, boasted about their military exploits, spoke in riddles, and listened to poets. Diodorus said they were cruel, designing spiral-shaped spears to horribly wound their opponents. He also portrayed them as slightly silly people who thought they could send letters to the dead by burning the letters in a funeral pyre.[2]

But is that what the Celts were really like? As you can imagine, Diodorus—who may not have met many Celts—was not motivated to create a full or positive picture of these people. We don't have any surviving writings in which the Celts describe themselves. In fact, for many of the people described in this chapter, we have only the Romans' side of the story in writing. So what *can* we say about them that is true?

To the Source:
barbarian from the Greek *bárbaros*, meaning "foreigner," which in turn may even have been based on a Babylonian word. The word may have originated from the sound "bar bar"—how other languages might have sounded to the Greeks and Babylonians.[4]

As you may recall from *The Curious Historian Level 2A*, the Greeks used the term **"barbarian"*** to refer to anyone who wasn't Greek. Romans used the word in a similar way, but their meaning wasn't quite as simple as just "non-Roman." The Romans thought barbarian peoples—most non-Romans—were uncultured, uncivilized, dirty, savage, and generally awful and inferior. But there were some non-Roman peoples, most notably the Greeks and Egyptians, whose cultures were much older and more advanced than the Romans' in ways the Romans admired. The Romans still thought they were superior to those cultures, but they usually didn't refer to them as barbarians. They even adopted parts of such cultures that they liked, such as Greek art styles. (Roman collectors bought works of art from Greece by the boatload![3]) The same respect was extended to individuals who did things the Romans admired—especially if the person did something particularly heroic in the service of Rome, the Senate, or the emperor.

Still, the Romans viewed practically everyone who wasn't like them as a barbarian, and they could be incredibly rude about it. For example, the emperor Maximinus Thrax was an average legionary from Thrace (parts of which are now Bulgaria and Romania), and the Roman elites never got over the fact that they were being governed by someone who wasn't *really* a Roman. The historian Herodian, who'd lived through Maximinus's reign, even said Maximinus was "naturally barbaric" and added rumors about his cruelty.[5] As we'll see, this attitude of superiority caused some dreadful problems for Rome over the centuries.

2. Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, ed. and trans. C. H. Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library 340 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), book 5.28–31.
3. Dominik Maschek, "Iconography and Style in Republican and Early Imperial Art (200 BCE to 14 CE)," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Imagery and Iconography*, ed. Lea K. Cline and Nathan Elkins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 169–199.
4. Maria Boletsi, *Barbarism and Its Discontents* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 69.
5. Herodian, *Historia Romana*, in *History of the Roman Empire from the Death of Marcus Aurelius to the Accession of Gordian III*, trans. Edward C. Echols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961; repr.,

As you explore more about "barbarians," keep in mind two key points. First, modern scholars typically group most of the so-called barbarian tribes and peoples we will be discussing into two big categories based mainly on language: the Celtic tribes and the Germanic tribes. Both the Celtic and the Germanic language families are branches of the even larger category of Indo-European languages. In addition to having similar languages, the various tribes and peoples within these two categories also had similarities in their culture, such as their religion or technology. For example, Germanic speakers often worshiped many of the same gods and goddesses. (Some of those myths and legends were preserved by and passed down by the Vikings.) And the Celtic peoples were famous for their skill in metalwork, as you will soon see.

Second, for some of the tribes we'll be talking about, identity did not depend *only* on where you were born, who your family was, or what language you used. In theory, for example, a member of one group might be accepted into another group, even if he was from a different tribe, if he showed that he was a good fighter or possessed valuable skills, such as knowledge of a particular trade. It was also not uncommon for people to marry someone who belonged to another tribe. So, it can be tricky to say for certain, "This is what made someone Celtic" or "This person was Germanic." However, grouping the tribes into these two broader categories can help us more easily keep the big picture straight.

The Celts (Also Known as the Gauls)

One of the most important groups of tribes are known today as the **Celts**, loosely defined as people who spoke similar languages and shared art styles, beliefs, and customs. Strictly speaking, the name applies to a group of tribes known to the Greeks as *Keltoi*,[6] who lived in central Europe when the Greeks first encountered them. Archaeologists have found settlements in Austria, Germany, and France that were already growing rich from trade with Greece in the eighth century BC. From the sixth century BC, a new Celtic art style emerged, as can be seen in artworks discovered in Switzerland.[7] This art style, possibly along with an ancient Celtic language, spread along ancient trade routes that may have started back in the Stone Age. By 200 BC, tribes that used Celtic art styles or had adopted some parts of Celtic culture could be found as far west as the Atlantic Ocean and as far east as the modern city of Ankara, Turkey. In recent decades, however, scholars have debated whether all these different tribes should really be called Celts. They probably were not actually all related to each other.[8] They probably had different customs, they did not worship exactly the same gods, and they probably differed in other ways that we can't always tell from archaeological evidence.

Gaul-atia

"Celts" is a collective name for groups that lived all across the continent of Europe, from the Atlantic to Asia Minor. When the Romans conquered Asia Minor (modern Turkey), they called the area where the Celts—a.k.a. Gauls—lived Galatia. Christian missionaries established churches in Galatia by the middle of the first century AD, and Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, a part of the Christian Bible, was written to address a major controversy in those churches: whether or not Gentile (or non-Jewish) Christians had to follow the law of Moses.

2021), 7.1.2.

6. Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. A. D. Godley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920), 2.33, http://capress.link/tch3abi201.
7. Natalie Venclová et al., *The Early Iron Age: The Hallstatt Period*, vol. 5 of *The Prehistory of Bohemia* (Prague: Archeologický ústav AV ČR, 2013), 11–16.
8. Bryan Sykes, *Saxons, Vikings, and Celts: The Genetic Roots of Britain and Ireland* (New York: Norton, 2006); Stephan Schiffels et al., "Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon Genomes from East England Reveal British Migration History," *Nature Communications* 7 (2016), doi:10.1038/ncomms10408; Rui Martiniano et al., "Genomic Signals of Migration and Continuity in Britain before the Anglo-Saxons," *Nature Communications* 7 (2016), doi:10.1038/ncomms10326.

▲Detail of a figure with antlers, possibly the Celtic/Gallic god Cernunnos, holding a torc

The tribes from central Europe did begin to move out of the Alps in the fifth century BC, however, and that brought about the first clash between the Celts and the Romans. According to the Roman historian Livy (writing many centuries later), around the year 390 BC, Etruscan settlements were attacked by a group of Celtic tribes led by a man named Brennus. After three years of constant raids, the Etruscans asked the Romans for help, but the Senate didn't agree that they should get involved. Instead, they sent three envoys to meet with Brennus to try to negotiate peace. But the talks turned sour, and one of the envoys killed a Celtic warrior.

According to Livy, the enraged Celts vowed vengeance on Rome, and when the legions tried to stop them at the Allia River north of the city, the Celts routed them. The Celts reached Rome itself at sunset the same day and sacked the city for days on end, then besieged the survivors who were taking refuge on the Capitoline Hill. You might remember from *The Curious Historian 2B* what happened next, at least in Livy's version of the story. Brennus agreed to leave if the Romans paid a thousand pounds of gold—but the Celts rigged the scales so the Romans would have to pay extra. When the Romans complained, Brennus threw his sword onto the scales and declared, "Woe to the vanquished!" Although the Celts were then driven off by a relief force arriving from Veii, the Romans never forgot the humiliation of the attack.[9] When Julius Caesar conquered **Gaul** (modern-day France) three centuries later, Rome's revenge was served very cold indeed. Or at least, that is how the Romans told the story, perhaps to remind themselves not to underestimate the "barbarians"!

The tribes whose territory eventually became part of the Roman Empire had mixed reactions to their new Roman overlords. Many were understandably hostile toward the Romans, like the Gauls whose last stand against Caesar at Alesia, under the war leader Vercingetorix, became the stuff of legend. But others, like the leaders of the Dubonni in Britain, welcomed the Romans and accepted Roman ways. The Romans referred to the tribes of Britain collectively as **Britons** or British. Archaeologists believe that Fishbourne Palace, an enormous villa built in the first century AD near the modern-day English city of Chichester, was both a reward for a local British chief's cooperation and a showcase of the luxuries Rome had to offer, such as gardens, mosaic floors, and underfloor heating systems.[10] Towns such as Camulodunum (Colchester) and Londinium

9. Livy, *The History of Rome*, trans. D. Spillan (London: Henry G. Bohn. John Child and son, printers. 1857), 5.33–49, http://capress.link/tch3abi202.
10. See, e.g., Barry Cunliffe, *Fishbourne Roman Palace* (Stroud, UK: Tempus, 1998), 105–110.

(London) were also founded, complete with temples, theaters, arenas for gladiator matches, public baths, markets, and the like. Camulodunum even had a circus for chariot racing, and first-century Londinium had wells equipped with sophisticated machines for lifting the water to the surface.[11]

Unfortunately, Roman officials didn't always keep their promises to the Celts and the other people they conquered, which led to revolts. One infamous case

11. L. Pooley et al., *CAT Report 412: Archaeological Investigations on the "Alienated Land," Colchester Garrison, Colchester, Essex, May 2004–October 2007, on Behalf of Taylor Wimpey* (Colchester, UK: Colchester Archaeological Trust, 2011); Ian Blair, "The Water Supply and the Mechanical Water Lifting Devices of Roman Londinium—New Evidence from Three Archaeological Sites in the City of London," in *Problemi di Macchinismo in Ambito Romano*, ed. Franco Minonzio (Como, Italy: Musei Civici, 2005), 113–124.

▲These Roman baths in Somerset, England, are a reminder of the Romans' far-reaching influence in Britain.

happened in **Britannia** (modern England and Wales) around the year AD 60, when the chief of the Iceni, who had served as a client king within the Roman system, died. (Rome's client kings, as you may remember from *The Curious Historian 2B*, ruled their home territories on behalf of the Roman government.) At the time, client kings who died without male heirs were expected to leave their whole estates to Rome, but that was contrary to Iceni law, and the chief left part of his estate to his wife and daughters instead. So the local authorities sent soldiers to seize the chief's estate and punish his widow, Queen Boudicca, and her daughters. Outraged, Boudicca rallied the Iceni and other neighboring tribes to revolt against the Romans. They defeated the Ninth Legion and devastated both Camulodunum and Londinium, as well as Verulamium (now St. Albans), but the movement was already beginning to fall apart when the Roman governor arrived with more legions to crush the rebellion near Verulamium.[12]

Rome couldn't conquer everyone, though. In the AD 80s, the Roman governor Gnaeus Julius Agricola tried to invade the area of Britain now known as Scotland, but within twenty years, the Romans had been chased out by people they

▲Ruins of Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland

►An imaginative bronze sculpture of Queen Boudica and her daughters (by Thomas Thornycroft, 1815–1885)

12. Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals*, ed. Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb (New York: Random House, 1942), 14.31–37, http://capress.link/tch3abi203.

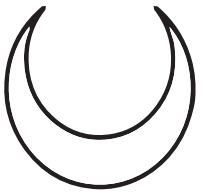
▲Take a close look at this Celtic sword. Do you see the small figure on its hilt?

called the Picts, who lived in the area that is now known as the Scottish Highlands. (We will study the Picts in more depth in chapter 4.) Do you remember reading about Hadrian's Wall in *The Curious Historian 2B*? When Hadrian secured the borders of the empire in the 120s, he ordered the construction of that wall along the northern borders of the empire to keep the Picts out of Roman Britannia. Antoninus Pius pushed the frontier north again in the 140s and had a new wall built between the towns that are now Glasgow and Edinburgh, but continued sneak attacks by the Picts forced the Romans to retreat to Hadrian's Wall again by the 160s. The Romans never invaded Ireland—the land was too rugged and wild for the Romans' usual tactics to be useful, and the Romans knew of no resources over there that would tempt them to venture further off the edge of their world to even make such an attempt.

Celtic Culture

For many of the events described above, we have only the Romans' side of the story. The Celts left no written records about themselves. So what were Celts really like? Luckily, we do have things that Celts made, and these artifacts can tell us something about them. Roman writers like Diodorus were right, at least, that the Celts were expert metalworkers. Many intricately crafted pieces of jewelry and armor made by Celts have survived. You had to be a brilliant metalworker to make objects in the art style associated with Celts, which involved lots of spirals and curvy shapes like those in this chart.

One of the things that Celtic metalworkers made were torcs: pieces of metal that had been bent into a circular shape to make a neck ring. Celts were not



Pelta

Spiral

Triskele

Running Scroll

◄Take a close look at these Celtic designs, and keep an eye out for swirls and spirals such as these throughout the coming chapters.

▲Take a look at this detail from the Battersea Shield (ca. 350). How long do you think it would have taken to make this by hand?

▲A golden torc (ca. 600–400 BC)

▲What two things in this Roman sculpture (ca. 230–220 BC) identify the man as a Celt?

the first or the last people to wear this kind of necklace, but Romans tended to assume that anyone wearing a torc was a Celt.[13] Of course, not all Celts would have worn torcs: They were expensive pieces of jewelry! Archaeologists now think that the designs on torcs might have been meant to represent local identities, rather than just a non-Roman identity. Torcs could be worn by men or women; the neck rings have been found in the graves of both male and female Celts.[14]

Roman and Greek writers may have said nasty things about the Celts' mustaches and poets, but the Romans still adopted aspects of Celtic culture. Metal items such as fish platters, made using Celtic techniques, were popular exports from Roman Gaul.[15] Roman soldiers may even have borrowed some ideas about armor and weapons from Celts![16]

Some torcs look very heavy. How do we know that they were worn? We archaeologists look for signs of wear and tear. First, we look for wear at the opening or at the back, where the torc would have rested on the wearer's neck. Second, we look for evidence of stretching. If a person had to stretch a torc a little to get it on and off, the stretching could leave stress patterns in the metal or cause wires to rub against each other and wear down a little. –A.D.

▲Fish platter

The Germans

When Caesar was beginning his expedition into Gaul, ca. 58 BC, he ran into a tribe near the Rhine who weren't Celts. Their Celtic neighbors identified them as the Suevi, and their leader, Ariovistus, told Caesar that they'd settled there at the Gauls' invitation and weren't going back across the Rhine just because Caesar told them to. When he reported his meeting with Ariovistus in *The Gallic Wars*, Caesar strongly implied that this group of Suevi had been just the advance

13. Catherine Johns, *The Jewellry of Roman Britain: Celtic and Classical Traditions* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 27.
14. Johns, *Jewellry of Roman Britain*, 27.
15. See, for example, Met Museum 47.100.30 (Fletcher Fund, 1947), http://capress.link/tch3abi211.
16. M. C. Bishop, "Cavalry Equipment of the Roman Army in the First Century A.D.," in *Military Equipment and the Identity of Roman Soldiers: Proceedings of the Fourth Roman Military Equipment Conference*, ed. J. C. Coulston, BAR International Series 394 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1988), 67–195.

guard of a vast horde of barbarians who lived beyond the Rhine and were sure to invade Roman territory. That was the reason he gave for why his legions went on to wipe out the Suevian village right away. He even had a new name for this horde: ***Germani***, or the Germans.[17]

In fact, although the Germanic tribes seem to have had a common cultural background, they weren't nearly as unified as Caesar claimed. They mainly settled in an area bounded by the Rhine, Danube, and Vistula Rivers and the North Sea. Caesar called this realm **Germania**.[18] Some went even further north into a region we now call **Scandinavia**, which consists of the modern countries of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Both legends and archaeology suggest that these tribes began migrating our of their homelands, especially heading southward, between 1000 BC and 100 BC. In many cases, the reason seems to have been lack of food due to a series of hard winters. The **Goths**, for example, may have originally been a Scandinavian tribe—possibly from Sweden—who moved to the northern coast of what's now Poland in the late first century BC or early first century AD. From that settlement, they slowly moved south and split into two groups sometime in the third or fourth century: the Visigoths, or West Goths, and the Ostrogoths, or East Goths. You will learn more about their movements—and their impact—in chapter 1.[19]

▲In an attempt to disturb their enemies with their outlandish appearance, the Suevi combed their long hair to the side and tied it in a knot over one ear. This Suevian knot remained perfectly preserved on a skull found in Osterby, Germany.

Another large migration, beginning around 120 BC, had brought certain Germanic peoples into contact with Rome. The Cimbri and Teutons, two tribes from modern Denmark, moved south to the Danube and then westward toward Gaul. The Romans tried to lead them into an ambush at some point (around 113 BC), but the Germans defeated their attackers soundly.[20] Upon arriving in Gaul, the two Germanic tribes traveled around the region and eventually parted company. The Roman general Gaius Marius then defeated the Teutons near modern Aix-en-Provence in 102 BC and slaughtered the Cimbri in the Po Valley the next year. Caesar referred to these victories when trying to stir up his legions against the Suevi tribe he encountered near the Rhine in 58 BC.[21]

Although Caesar's legions massacred the Suevi, they didn't pursue those who escaped across the Rhine.[22] It wasn't until after the Roman Civil War (49–45 BC), when Caesar's nephew Octavian had become the emperor Caesar Augustus, that Rome invaded Germania and forced the Germanic tribes to submit.

17. Julius Caesar, *Caesar's Gallic War*, trans. W. A McDevitte and W. S. Bohn, 1st ed., Harper's New Classical Library (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869), 1.1, 1.37–54, 4.1, http://capress.link/tch3abi212. Whether Caesar invented the term *Germani* or not isn't clear, but *The Gallic Wars* is the first surviving work in which it appears.
18. Julius Caesar, *Caesar's Gallic War*, 4.4.
19. Jordanes, Romana *and* Getica, trans. Peter Van Nuffelen and Lieve Van Hoof (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2023), IV–V; Jacek Andrzejowski, "The Gothic Migration through Eastern Poland—The Archaeological Evidence," in *Interacting Barbarians: Contacts, Exchange and Migrations in the First Millennium AD*, ed. Adam Cieśliński und Bartosz Kontny, Neue Studien zur Sachsenforschung 9 (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019), 225–237.
20. Appian, *Gallic History*, in *The Foreign Wars*, ed. Horace White (New York: Macmillan, 1899), http://capress.link/tch3abi206; Livy, *Periochae* 63.5–6, 67–68, http://capress.link/tch3abi204; Strabo, *Geography*, 5.1.8, trans. H. C. Hamilton (London: George Bell & Sons, 1903), http://capress.link/tch3abi205.
21. Caesar, *Caesar's Gallic War*, 1.40.
22. Caesar, *Caesar's Gallic War*, 1.51–54.

One way the Romans ensured the Germans' cooperation was by taking the young sons of chieftains as hostages, to be raised as Romans and eventually to serve in the Roman army. This policy was a standard practice in antiquity for securing peace treaties with conquered peoples, and some hostage children grew up to become Roman citizens and have distinguished military and political careers. Thanks to one of those hostage children, however, Germania wouldn't stay conquered for long.

When the chief of the Cherusci tribe surrendered his son to the Romans, the boy was given the Latin name Arminius. (Today he's sometimes called "Herman the German.") Arminius received a good education in Rome and served with distinction in the legions. Around AD 7, he was allowed to return to Germania in the service of its first governor, Publius Quinctilius Varus, who was considered harsh, unjust, disloyal, and dishonorable by the Germanic people. In AD 9, Arminius hatched a plan to lead Varus into a trap, and most of the Cherusci and many other tribes agreed to it. Arminius tricked Varus and three Roman legions into following him into a heavily forested area—and straight into a Germanic ambush. All three legions were wiped out in the Battle of Teutoburg Forest, at the end of which Varus killed himself, and the remains of the fallen weren't recovered until the general Germanicus returned to the area six years later.[23]

▲This gem-covered brooch was owned by a wealthy woman who lived along the Danube River in the early 400s AD.

"Quinctilius Varus, give me back my legions!" —Caesar Augustus, after hearing about the Battle of Teutoburg Forest

The names of some minor Germanic tribes have stuck around in surprising ways. The Suevi, for example, gave their name to the region of Swabia in Germany, the Burgundians to Burgundy in France, and the Langobards (or Lombards) to Lombardy in Italy. The whole country of France, meanwhile, is named after a Germanic group called the Franks. And the words for Germany in modern French (*Allemagne*), Spanish (*Alemania*), Portuguese (*Alemanha*), and Turkish (*Almanya*) are all derived from the name of the Alemanni. —A.D.

By the time of Hadrian, little of Germania east of the Rhine remained in Roman hands. The Roman Empire's northern boundary ran all the way from the mouth of the Rhine River in the Atlantic to the mouth of the Danube River in the Black Sea, and most of its length was guarded by the natural barrier formed by these rivers. The territory between these two rivers, though, needed to be fortified, so the Romans constructed a ditch, earthen bank, and wooden wall. Roman soldiers stationed in watchtowers along the walls or overlooking key points of the rivers controlled trade and warned nearby forts of impending raids. The two rivers were not just barriers, but flotillas of riverboats also made them highways for the Romans. In the second half of the third century AD, though, raids were increasing at the same time the Roman troops in Germania were needed elsewhere, so the empire withdrew southward behind a line that stretched from the Danube to the Iller River to the Rhine. Germanic warriors fought over and then moved into the farms and villas that were abandoned or left unprotected in this retreat.

23. Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 56.18–24, 57.18, vol. 7, trans. Earnest Cary (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1924), http://capress.link/tch3abi207; http://capress.link/tch3abi208.

Romans and Germanic speakers did not just fight each other. From time to time, they allied with each other, or at least left each other alone. Roman leaders often sent costly diplomatic gifts to Germanic-speaking kings. These gifts made some Germanic leaders very wealthy, and they were able to pay artists to create glittering brooches, headbands, and other jewelry adorned with gems, interwoven patterns, and figures that looked like animals.[24] Judging from items found buried in graves, we think a wealthy Gothic woman would probably have worn brooches covered in gems, lots of bracelets, necklaces, earrings, and a giant belt buckle. These works of art demonstrate that the Germanic people included fine artists: They weren't just the uncultured brutes that Roman writers said they were. In many of these pieces, no surface has been left blank, with some sort of design or decoration everywhere you look!

The sending of diplomatic gifts could benefit the Romans too. Making a king or chieftain both more friendly and more wealthy by such gifts might in fact strengthen Rome's position—and at the same time weaken by comparison the position of neighbors who were especially unfriendly. Eventually, Roman leaders started to make treaties with Germanic-speaking peoples. The "barbarian" leaders would send warriors to fight in the Roman armies. In return, Romans provided Germanic groups such as the Goths and Franks with food, goods, or, eventually, even land. That way, Romans persuaded Germanic speakers to defend the Roman frontiers against other Germanic speakers.

Non-Roman art had distinct styles, but it could also be *influenced* by Roman styles. For example, lots of warlords began to wear jewelry made from gold and bright red garnets. This combination was possibly based on the garnet jewelry that Roman leaders gave or traded to them. —A.D.

Eventually, Germanic warriors became a major presence within the empire too. By the mid-fourth century, most of the soldiers working for the Roman army in Gaul may have been Germanic warriors.[25] These arrangements did not always last, as we will see. But Germanic leaders provided the Roman government with useful allies and fighters at a time when the internal structure of the empire—and the power of the emperors—was changing dramatically. It would not be long before the Roman Empire was facing down the drastic loss of much of its territory and power to "barbarians," especially Germanic-speaking leaders. These barbarians would in turn become somewhat Romanized, as well as changed, by that rising new religion, Christianity. What is more, when we once again pick up the story of the Roman Empire, that new religion's status as the favored faith of the Romans had just been solidified by the death of Julian the Apostate, the last emperor to try to re-establish paganism. And so this is where we begin our tale: with a Roman Empire that had been Christianized and that was trying to control a vast territory, with an overstretched Roman army that many different groups still aspired to join, and with a ring of Germanic tribes along its European frontiers . . . who were about to have to move.

▲This garnet-studded golden buckle was possibly made in Constantinople, but it was found far away in a grave in modern-day Hungary.

24. Wilfried Menghin, "The Domagnano Treasure," in *From Attila to Charlemange*, ed. K. Reynolds Brown, D. Kidd, and C. T. Little (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 133.
25. Horst Böhme, "The Vermand Treasure," in Brown, Kidd, and Little, *From Attila to Charlemange*, 83.

Practice the Facts

For each statement below, fill in the blanks with the correct answers.

1. The Celts and Germani (or Goths) that we studied in this chapter were two of the non-Roman groups of people that had a major impact on European history.
2. Hadrian's Wall was constructed to keep the Picts out of Roman territory.
3. After sacking their city, Brennus demanded that the Romans pay him a thousand pounds of gold to leave.
4. The term "barbarian" was used by the Greeks and Romans to describe people who were not Greek or Roman.
5. Arminius (today known as "Herman the German") was handed over to the Romans as a hostage and was taken to Rome and given a good education before being allowed to return to his homeland.
6. The inhabitants of the island of Britain who spoke Celtic languages were referred to as Britons by the Romans.
7. The Roman territory that covered the area of modern-day France and the Low Countries was called Gaul.
8. Celtic neck rings that were metal bent into circular shapes were known as torcs.
9. When the Romans invaded the part of Britain which is now known as Scotland, they were eventually run out by the group of people known as the Picts.
10. Caesar referred to the land bordered by the Rhine, Danube, and Vistula Rivers and the North Sea as Germania.

A Don't forget to introduce this week's song verses to your students. We recommend having them sing the unit song (up through the verses they have learned) once or twice at the start of each class.

B The term "tribe" originally came from the Latin word *tribus*, referring to administrative divisions used to organize voting in ancient Rome. Why, then, is it being used here to refer to groups of people who were not Romans? The short answer is that when later writers translated the Bible into Latin, they applied the term *tribus* to divisions among Israelites. Since then, writers have used *tribus* and its derivatives in European languages—including the English word "tribe"—in lots of different ways to describe lots of different types of people. Some anthropologists and sociologists have used it to refer to groups of people who are related to each other. Some nineteenth-century scholars used "tribe" to describe communities which did not have centralized governments. Some just applied it to any unindustrialized community. Here, we are using the term "tribe" out of convenience, to describe members of a distinct community who shared a culture and who had their own leaders. It does not assume that all these people were ultimately related to each other, nor does it imply that they all had any particular type of governmental structure. As we will see, it is difficult to figure out exactly how some of these groups were governed, due to limitations of the sources. We can safely assume that these people were not industrialized—but then again, neither was anyone else before the eighteenth century! For some of the pitfalls and possibilities associated with this terminology see, for example, Robert J. Gregory, "Tribes and Tribal: Origin, Use, and Future of the Concept," *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* 1 (2003): 1–5.

C As noted in previous volumes of The Curious Historian series, Ancient Greek, Latin, Persian, and Sanskrit, and many modern European languages developed from Indo-European languages.

D The Romans seem to have used "Gauls" as a synonym for "Celts," at least for the tribes in mainland Europe. In the first sentence of *The Gallic Wars*, for example, Caesar calls them "those who in their own language are called Celts, and in ours Gauls" (1.1).

E The term "Celtic" has acquired later meanings referring to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, so teachers searching for examples of ancient Celtic art may have to look for scholarly references to "Hallstatt" and "La Tène" to refer to ancient Celtic art styles. These Celtic art styles also gave their names to the periods in which they flourished. The term "Hallstatt period" is used to refer to the early Iron Age, especially in central Europe, because of its association with the early Celtic settlement found near Hallstatt, Austria, that flourished between the eighth and fourth centuries BC. Similarly, the term "La Tène" refers to art and culture from the late Iron Age, based on finds from La Tène, Switzerland, that archeologists have dated to the sixth century BC. Celtic art continued to develop after the La Tène period, and elements of the La Tène style remained in use well into the Middle Ages, as we will see later with works like the Book of Kells.

Today, the term "Celtic languages" refers primarily to languages spoken in and near the British Isles: Irish, Scottish Gaelic, and Manx (on the Isle of Man) make up the Goidelic branch, while Welsh, Cornish, and Breton (in Brittany, France) form the Brythonic branch. That's why "Celtic" is sometimes used—in museum gift shops, for example—as shorthand for objects and artwork from the non-English parts of the British Isles. However, it's important to remember that the original Celts were associated with large swaths of central Europe, not primarily the British Isles. (Additionally, "Celtic" art is now often associated with knotwork—which was more associated with Germanic-speaking groups in the British Isles—and uncial script, which developed around North Africa and the Mediterranean!)

Also, while there's evidence that some beliefs were shared among all the different tribes that used La Tène art styles or other Celtic forms, there's also strong evidence for beliefs that weren't the same. Irish mythologies, for instance, seem to be unique to Ireland, and there are gods like Sulis, Viridios, and Coventina that are known only from specific sites in Britain (Bath, Ancaster, and Carrawburgh, respectively). However, an antler-headed god, identified by a Gallic inscription as Cernunnos, has been found depicted in art and on artifacts from Britain to Galatia. Druids, too, are attested both in the British Isles and on the Continent—but because their beliefs were passed down orally, we have no way of knowing how similar the teachings of different tribes' druids were across the Celtic world.

F The figure with antlers, who may be the Celtic/Gallic god Cernunnos, is a detail on a silver bowl now called the Gundestrup Cauldron, which was made ca. 150 BC–1 BC in the region of modern-day Bulgaria or Romania. It was

found buried in a peat bog near Gundestrup, Denmark, in the late 1800s. One of the greatest archaeological discoveries of ancient European art, the Gundestrup Cauldron is shrouded in mystery. What is this very Celtic object doing in a very Germanic location, and why was it placed in the bog? You and your students can find more information about this fascinating artifact in this article in the *World History Encyclopedia*: http://capress.link/tch3abi209.

G Need some *scholé* in your classroom? Virtually explore the British Museum's exhibit of Celtic art and culture: http://capress.link/tch3abi210.

H When your students encounter this incident, it might be a good time to point out to them that we only know about this event because of the Romans, and we have only Caesar's perspective. Were the Suevi simply minding their own business and were slaughtered because of a misunderstanding or a play for power by a Roman with an ego? We just don't know. Part of the problem with studying the history of the barbarian groups is that we often don't *have* their thoughts in a written text, so any attempt to portray it is speculative.

I These distinctions were first recorded by the historian Jordanes, who was a Goth himself.

J Teutoburg Forest is located near present-day Osnabrück.

An Introduction to the Divided World

Unit 1 INTRODUCTION

Don't forget to learn this week's song verse(s)! The lyrics can be found in appendix A.

A

See the *TCH3A* Go Deeper PDF, http://capress.link/tch3agd, to learn about archaeological digs in Britain that have uncovered Roman sites, including even a Roman vineyard!

Important Figures

Word	Definition
Julian the Apostate	The nephew of Constantine who became an Augustus, tried to bring back the old pagan beliefs, and died fighting the Sassanians
Bishop	A leader in the Christian community. Over time, there was one bishop for a particular town or region.
Athanasius	The bishop of Alexandria who disagreed with Arius's ideas about Jesus's divinity. Athanasius defended the Council of Nicaea's position that Jesus Christ is fully God and uncreated.
Arius	A priest who argued that God the Father had created the Son, and so Jesus was not fully God
Abbot/Abbess	The leader of a Christian monastery
Augustine of Hippo	An African scholar and bishop of Hippo Regius who wrote *The City of God* and *Confessions*, among many other important works about Christianity

Important Words

Word	Definition
Cathedral	A church that serves as the headquarters of a bishop
Monastery	A religious community that focuses on worshipping, praying, reading, and work. Sometimes, "monastery" refers to the buildings that housed the community as well as to the people themselves.

Christ the Conqueror?

"*Nenikekas Galilaie* (O Galilean, Thou hast conquered)!" —Julian the Apostate

Do you remember the Roman emperor we last studied in *The Curious Historian 2B*? Flavius Claudius Julius is known to history as Julian the Apostate because, although he was brought up as a Christian, he converted to paganism around age twenty. He was wounded in battle against the Sassanians, and legend has it that his last words were the ones quoted above, addressed not to Jupiter or to any Roman god . . . but to Jesus.[1] B

Why might later writers have portrayed an emperor who had converted to paganism saying such an odd thing about Jesus Christ? Jesus, a Galilean, had not been a warrior. He was a religious figure who was crucified by the Romans as a criminal and whose followers were persecuted by several previous Roman emperors. However, by Julian's lifetime, the number of Christians was increasing, and not even the emperor himself could halt the conversions or the way Christians were changing the world. Was it possible that the most significant battle in Roman history was not a clash of swords and shields on a battlefield, but actually a struggle inside the hearts and minds of people living throughout the empire?

To address this question, we must first look more closely at how Christians had gone from a small, persecuted group to a body that even an emperor

1. See, for example, *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1st ed. (1910), s.v. "Julian the Apostate," http://capress.link/tch3auii01.

TIME LINE B

▲Artist's depiction of Attila the Hun (ca. 1360)

AD 323–337: Constantine rules as sole emperor

AD 361–363: Julian the Apostate rules Rome

AD 440–453: Attila builds a Hunnic Empire

AD 455: Vandals sack Rome

AD 481–511: King Clovis rules the Franks

Classical Age ca. 500 BC–ca. AD 500

500 BC

AD 293: Diocletian creates the Tetrarchy

AD 330: Constantine makes Constantinople his new capital

AD 325: Council of Nicaea

AD 410: Visigoths sack Rome

AD 429–439: Vandals fight across North Africa and capture Carthage

ca. AD 454–526: Theodoric the Great, king of the Ostrogoths, lives

◄A sculpture of Diocletian and his fellow tetrarchs (ca. AD 300)

►Vandal pottery

Sassanian Empire AD 224 –651

Gupta Dynasty ca. AD 319–467

(China) Jin dynasty AD 265–420

could not stamp out, before looking at the person who supposedly made such a bold claim about Jesus.

At the start of the fourth century, things had not been looking good for Christians in the Roman Empire. As part of his reforms in the early 300s, Emperor Diocletian had tried to clamp down on religions that did not include worshipping the emperor as a god or that suggested all believers were equal—particularly that new Middle Eastern religion whose followers believed Jesus Christ was the Son of God. But, as you already know, Diocletian did not succeed in stamping out Christians, so one of his successors, Emperor Galerius, tried a different strategy: He grudgingly legalized Christianity in the empire in 311 with the Edict of Toleration. A few years later, Emperor Constantine went even further with the Edict of Milan, encouraging Christians and restoring the property and riches that Diocletian had seized from them with his edict against Christians. By the end of his life, he had even converted to Christianity himself—and he wasn't the only one![2]

Julian (who ruled from AD 361 to 363) was the nephew of Constantine. Julian's cousin Constantius, who became emperor after Constantine's death, sent Julian to some of the empire's best schools in Constantinople, Nicomedia, and Athens, where he studied both Christian theology and Neoplatonist philosophy (a new, modified version of Plato's ideas) in the late 340s and early 350s. (It was during these years that Julian became interested in paganism.) But when Constantius died in 361, Julian became emperor—and immediately started trying to revive Roman polytheism and discourage Christianity. He is known as Julian *the Apostate* because he turned against his faith, for apostates are people who reject their earlier beliefs or ideas.

2. Edict of Toleration (AD 311) in Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, in *Lactantius: De mortibus persecutorum*, ed. J. L. Creed (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), ch. 34, 35; Constantine, Edict of Milan (AD 313), in Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, ch. 48.

▲The island of Iona, where Columba founded his monastery

►Golden dinar from al-Andalus (AD 716)

Unfortunately for Julian, Christianity had spread rapidly throughout the empire under Constantine and Constantius. Some scholars estimate that the number of Christians in the Roman Empire ballooned from about 10 percent of the population in AD 300 to over 50 percent of the empire's population by 350.[3] Not everyone had converted, and not everyone who "officially" became a Christian completely gave up believing in the gods of Rome. Some villas that have been excavated include spaces used for both pagan and Christian worship, suggesting either that people followed several religious practices at the same time, or that there were people of different faiths living in the same household.[4] Still, many people did become Christians and gave up other religions. Christianity was very different from Roman religions and challenged the injustices of Roman society. Instead of believing that their lives were controlled by the whims of moody (and badly behaved) Roman gods, Christians believed in just one, loving God. Instead of buying the gods' favor with expensive sacrifices, Christians gave up their wealth and time to help others, including the poorest and most powerless people in Roman society. Even Julian himself noted that many flocked to Christianity when they saw how Christian leaders cared for the poor and the lowly.[5] So when Julian tried to suppress Christianity, he became very unpopular very quickly.

◄A gold coin depicting Julian the Apostate (AD 361–363)

The way Julian treated church leaders didn't win him any friends, either. Do you remember Athanasius, the future bishop of Alexandria who led the debate against the theologian Arius

3. Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), Table 1.1.
4. Elizabeth Marlowe, "Iconography and Archaeology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Imagery and Iconography*, ed. Lea K. Cline and Nathan Elkins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 101–110.
5. H. C. Teitler, *The Last Pagan Emperor: Julian the Apostate and the War Against Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 29.

and his followers in the Council of Nicaea in 325? The Arians had gotten Athanasius exiled multiple times in the decades since the council, and when Julian took power, the man who had replaced Athanasius was an Arian. Julian had that bishop arrested and allowed Athanasius to return to Alexandria in 362, but when he realized how popular Athanasius was, he exiled the bishop again! Yet as Athanasius left the city this time, he assured his supporters that he wouldn't be gone long. Nobody could have guessed how his prediction would come true less than a year later.[6]

▲This terra-cotta coin mold (ca. 308–320) was used to make forgeries of real coins.

As you may recall from *The Curious Historian 2B*, two of the emperor's most essential duties were to be a good lawgiver and to be a good military commander. Julian's laws with regard to Christianity were causing unrest, so he decided he needed a big military victory to improve his standing in public opinion. Mustering a large army, he invaded the Sassanian Empire in 363 and got as far as the capital, Ctesiphon, before the Sassanian emperor sprung a trap. The Romans had to retreat hundreds of miles toward Roman territory, fighting the Sassanians all the way and sustaining heavy losses, and they'd gotten only halfway back when Julian himself was killed.[7] Yet even then, if the story of his last words is true, Julian viewed Christ, not the Sassanians, as his real enemy.

Julian was the last Roman emperor to consider himself a pagan, and his successor, Jovian, recalled exiled bishops such as Athanasius and reversed Julian's anti-Christian policies. Christianity continued to spread, and Christians and their ways started to change the empire—to the extent that writers started to talk about Christianity conquering the Roman Empire. But was Christianity a threat to Rome, as Julian and some pagan authors thought, or was it a stabilizing force in a time when the empire was already in dire straits? Or did it transform the Roman world in new ways? To answer that, let's look back at where we left the relationship between the church and the empire in the previous volume.

The State of the Church: From Grim to Glam

To the Source:
bishop from the Latin word *episcopi* and the Greek words *epí*, meaning "over," and *skopos*, meaning "watchers"

As the number of Christians grew, so did the role and authority of Christian leaders called **bishops**.* Bishops served as teachers and organizers within Christian communities, and they became important figures in Roman towns, especially after Christianity was legalized in the empire. Instead of going to Roman magistrates in town halls, Christians started going to the **cathedrals**, or the churches that served as bishops' headquarters, to ask the bishops to help sort out their problems. Bishops eventually became key administrators of many cities, especially as other elites became less involved in town life; around AD 400, many nobles preferred to live in their luxurious country houses rather than stay in the towns. Grand churches full of glittering mosaics took the place of temples, town halls, and other public buildings.

But while bishops helped their flocks resolve some of their arguments, some Christians—including bishops—argued among themselves about all sorts of things. Did people who had renounced Christianity under persecution deserve a

6. Glen Warren Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 91.
7. Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 70, 72–76.

◀A cathedral, such as this one in Rome, is a bishop's headquarters, or "seat."

second chance to join the church? Did Christian leaders have to be faultless in order for their prayers and ceremonies to be worthwhile? In particular, there was one major dispute within the Church, which you might recall from *The Curious Historian 2B*, that had long-lasting political effects. Arius had taught that Jesus was not God, only *like* God and even created by God. Athanasius, on the other hand, taught that Jesus *was* God—a person of the Holy Trinity. He taught that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct persons but one God. (This is a really complicated concept; we don't expect you to understand it fully!) The Council of Nicaea was called by Constantine to settle this debate, and the bishops at the council sided with Athanasius. From this point on, Jesus's divinity and the Holy Trinity were established as central Christian (or orthodox) doctrines. But Arius and his teachings didn't go away. Some of the emperors after Constantine favored Arianism over the Nicene formula and pushed orthodox bishops such as Athanasius out of their offices. Later in the century, the emperors Gratian and Theodosius reversed course and embraced the formula, but elsewhere, Arian missionaries had gone into Germanic territories, converting a number of tribes to the Arian doctrine. Some of these tribes, such as the Goths and the Vandals, would continue to adhere to Arianism for generations. The conflict between Arians and orthodox Christians would thus continue for centuries and affect many people in the empire and beyond.

Did you ever notice that discovering the etymology of a word—tracing it to its source in Latin, Greek, or another language—is a bit like archaeology? I dig in search of pottery, coins, precious objects, and walls, looking for the remains of past human life and culture. An etymologist digs in language itself, looking for clues of meaning and for connections between words. Take the word "cathedral." Cathedrals take their name from special chairs. Like Roman leaders, bishops sat down while making important statements, so one symbol of the bishop's authority was the throne-like chair on which he sat during church services. An etymologist would point out that this chair was called a *cathedra* in Latin, so the church where the bishop had his headquarters came to be known as a cathedral. You might hear a cathedral described as a bishop's "seat" as well as his headquarters. When the pope, who is the bishop of Rome, makes a declaration with his full authority, he is said to speak *ex cathedra*, or "from the chair" (though that has happened only twice in modern history). —A.D.

▲One of the earliest surviving depictions of the Holy Trinity is found on a fourth-century sarcophagus.

Little *o* or Big *O* Orthodox?

In many religions, to be "orthodox" (lowercase *o*) is to hold what are considered the correct beliefs for that particular faith. For example, in Christianity, that means agreeing with the Nicene Creed as formulated by the Council of Nicaea in 325 and revised by the Council of Chalcedon in 451. (Even though some Protestant groups reject the creeds as man-made, many of those groups still teach the same beliefs as the correct, or orthodox, ones.) To be "Orthodox" with a capital *O*, however, is to belong to the Eastern Orthodox Church—which you will read about in chapter 10—or to Orthodox Judaism, which is separate from other branches of Judaism.

To the Source:
monastery from the Latin *monasterium*, from a Greek root *monazein*, meaning "to live alone"

▲This wooden sculpture (attributed to Nikolaus von Hagenau, ca. 1500) shows Saint Anthony of Egypt triumphantly trampling the devil.

Bishops, big churches, and big debates about the nature of God were not the only things that became more important as Christianity spread. Another group of influential institutions was created when some Christians started to live together in communities where they spent their time worshipping God through prayers, reading, services, and serving others. These communities are called monasteries (singular, **monastery**),• and the people who live, worship, and work in them are called monks and nuns.

While monks and nuns lived in monasteries, they had a big impact on people who lived outside their monasteries too. People came to the monastery for advice, for prayers or other help if they were sick, or for help burying the dead. Some monks and nuns made books, and in the West, monks and nuns eventually took over teaching people how to read or write. Monasteries became very important to the people who lived nearby, since they were churches, hospitals, libraries, schools, and meeting places all rolled into one place!

The earliest monks and nuns did not set out to invent such an important institution. At first, some people who wanted to devote their lives to prayer lived in towns, where their families or friends could provide for them, even if they lived alone. Then, some devout Christians in Egypt and the Middle East began to move away from towns, to avoid interruptions. One of these people was a man named Anthony. Anthony (died 356) was born to a wealthy family in Egypt, but he gave away all his money and went to live alone in an abandoned fort in the desert. (People who live alone like this are known as hermits.) However, his plan backfired when many other people liked his idea and followed him into the desert too. Some wanted to hear his sermons about God's love. Others were impressed by stories about his fights with demons and his ability to cross a canal full of crocodiles unharmed. And some wanted to spend all day worshipping God and needed Anthony's help deciding how to organize their time. His followers called him "Father," or "Abba" in their language. That's how the leader of a monastery came to be known as an *abbas* in Latin, or **abbot** in English. (A female abbot is called an **abbess**.) So many people settled around the abandoned fort where Anthony had lived that he eventually moved deeper into the desert to get away from them![8]

Two rich sisters living in Rome around 400, called Asella and Marcella, followed a monastic routine in their home and did not go out much. Jerome the hermit wrote to them and praised Asella for having knees that looked like camels' wrinkly knees, because she spent so much time kneeling in prayer![9] —A.D.

From the 300s onward, monasteries were established across the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe and even north of the Alps, thanks to the efforts of people like a former Roman soldier called Martin of Tours (died 397). These monasteries varied in size and the way they were organized, and they often had different rules for how members of those monasteries should live their lives. However, they all impacted the people living around them and became places where people gathered and sought help. Some abbots and abbesses became very powerful.

One person who established his own monastery—and who showed how important a bishop and a Christian thinker could

8. Athanasius, "Life of St Antony of Egypt," trans. David Brakke, in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (New York: Garland, 2000), 1–30.
9. "*De genibus camelorum*," *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, ed. Isidorus Hilberg, 3 vols. (New York: Johnson, 1970), ep. 24.

be in these times—was **Augustine of Hippo** (354–430). Augustine was from a part of North Africa that's now Algeria. His mother, Monica, was a Christian and desperately wanted Augustine to become a Christian too. However, he rebelled as a young man and found excuses for living however he wanted to as a teacher in Rome and Milan. Monica prayed for Augustine constantly and lived just long enough to see him return to Christianity when he was in his early thirties. Augustine's life totally changed when he became a Christian. He gave away most of his money and decided to turn his family's home into a monastery and developed a rule (a set of regulations for daily work and prayer) for his fellow monks to live by. *The Rule of Saint Augustine*, which he wrote around the year 400, is still used by several monastic orders in the Roman Catholic Church to this day. As for Augustine himself, in 396 he was made bishop of Hippo Regius, a position he held for the rest of his life. He wrote many, many books and became one of the greatest theologians of this day. His ideas about how humans should interact still influence modern ideas about human rights and other issues.

▲Saint Martin of Tours cutting his cloak and giving half of it to a beggar in this painting (ca. 1621) by Anthony van Dyck.

Some historians date the start of the Middle Ages to the fourth century, because one of the biggest transformations in history—and in the history of the Roman Empire—happened then. In AD 300, Christians were a small part of the population, living in fear of being discovered and hurt by the emperor's forces. By AD 400, emperors themselves were Christians. Christians had gone from living in secret to worshipping in big, beautiful churches, singing in processions through the streets, and helping to organize whole cities and regions. There is some truth to the notion that, as Julian the Apostate feared, Jesus Christ had conquered Rome. Christianity, bishops, and institutions like monasteries certainly helped to change the way people lived throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, and Christian leaders even started to take over functions that the Roman government could no longer perform if Roman civil administration broke down. And there were even more changes on the horizon, changes that would bring an end to Roman rule in western Europe.

▲What could Saint Augustine be writing in this depiction by Sandro Botticelli (ca. 1490–1494)?

A Divided World

Even apart from the spread of Christianity, the Roman Empire in about AD 400—when we start our story in the first chapter of this unit—was very different from the Roman Empire in AD 200, and certainly very different from the Rome of Augustus (which is often what people think of when they hear the term "Roman Empire"). In addition to Christianity's growth in the Roman Empire, the reach of the Roman Empire was expanding to include more and more non-Roman people. There were now dual emperors (west and east) and even a new capital, Constantinople, in addition to Rome itself. Emperors needed more money and bigger armies to try to control their vast territories. Disgruntled Roman nobles in the provinces were spending more time in their country villas and were not particularly keen to cooperate with the emperors or to use their wealth to commission the sorts of grand public buildings that their ancestors had funded.

The Mediterranean world, a region that had been united politically by the Roman Empire, was on the brink of division. Even though the Roman world had

A Divided World

By the end of the period covered in this unit, where once there was a unified Roman Empire, there would be three major cultural regions:

1. Western Europe was no longer part of the Roman Empire, but was divided into many kingdoms in the wake of invasions of Germanic groups, steppe peoples, and Arab empires, where people increasingly spoke different languages and drew on various pieces of Christianity and Roman, Germanic, Celtic, and other cultures.
2. The Iberian Peninsula and the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea were controlled by Arab empires, proclaiming the new religion of Islam; spreading the Arabic language and culture across the southern and eastern portions of the former Roman Empire; and expanding politically, militarily, and religiously as far east as the subcontinent of India.
3. A Greek-speaking Roman Empire remained in between, struggling to hold things together amidst invasions of steppe peoples and Arab empires (some of the same as those faced by the western European kingdoms), drawing on Christian, Roman, and Greek traditions as the remaining empire—and the world around it—transformed.

long been diverse in language and culture, Latin administration, roads, common coins, and some common ideas helped join different peoples together before ca. AD 400. And, of course, as we have noted, the Roman world was becoming increasingly religiously unified by Christianity, even as the Christian community coped first with persecution from without and later with heresy from within.

Those unifying forces couldn't last forever, though, especially as outside pressures grew. The political unity broke down: Many invasions over many years eventually caused the Western Roman Empire to shatter into numerous kingdoms. The Eastern Roman Empire remained united much longer, which is ironic because the eastern regions were not the empire's original heartland.

What we will discover in this unit is a western Europe made up of rival kingdoms run by long-haired warrior aristocrats and bishops in flowing robes. People in these regions spoke many different languages and developed different cultures and traditions. Meanwhile, in the east there remained a mostly unified, mostly Greek-speaking Eastern Empire ruled by bureaucrats from a "New Rome" that had been founded by an emperor who became Christian.

But that's not all! We'll fast-forward another couple of centuries to see a new religion and new empires enter the scene: Islam under the Umayyad and Abbasid Empires. For reasons that we will explore later, these new forces undertook one of the most remarkable conquests the world had ever known. Before it eventually stalled in the early 700s, it swallowed up about half of the former Roman world, including North Africa and Hispania from the Latin West, and Syria and Egypt from the Greek East. Rome's deadliest rival for much of its imperial existence would fare even worse: The Sassanian Empire would disappear from history entirely, and its Zoroastrian religion would nearly disappear with it (though as we shall see, Persian language and literature would hang around and even make a comeback).

However, just because the Roman Empire was divided and its political power decreased does not mean that Roman culture went away. You might have noticed that you are reading in the Latin alphabet, rather than Germanic runes. You have probably seen buildings with classical-style columns, such as the building that houses the modern United States Senate. Just because we are studying the Middle Ages doesn't mean that you can forget the Romans! The people in the early Middle Ages certainly did not forget their Roman past. In the following chapters, you will notice lots of rulers who called themselves "caesar." The Latin language survived as the language of church services and book-learning in western Europe, and morphed into Romance languages such as French and Spanish. In the southern Mediterranean, the Umayyad Empire drew on Roman models too: Some caliphs built their administrations on top of Roman tax areas and literally built buildings on top of old Roman columns! Roman art and literature still inspired later generations, who copied down Virgil's stories and Cicero's speeches and translated Latin works into Greek, Arabic, Old English, and more. Times when people became particularly interested in Roman art and culture were called renaissances. You'll see so many renaissances in the following chapters, you may wonder if we can say that Rome ever went away!

A Don't forget to introduce this week's song verse(s) to your students. We recommend having them sing the unit song (up through the verses they have learned) once or twice at the start of each class.

B These famous last words of Julian the Apostate may have been invented by the church historian Theodoret, who was writing with the benefit of hindsight several decades later and who was summing up Julian's inability to counter the rise of Christianity. Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.25.3, discussed in R. Joseph Hoffman, ed., *Julian's Against the Galileans* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2004), 11.

C The unit I time line doesn't list all the important events, periods, thinkers and leaders, and so forth. There were far too many to list them all here!

D To refresh your students' memories about Athanasius, Arius, and the Council of Nicaea, refer to the sections entitled "Arius and Athanasius Disagree" and "The Council of Nicaea Settles the Argument" in *TCH2B* chapter 12.

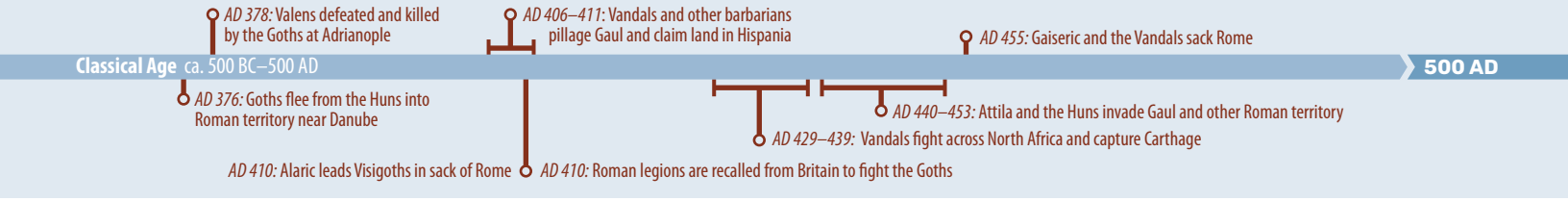
E Old English speakers sometimes replaced "p" in Latin words with "b," and they pronounced the letters "sc" with the sound "sh," thus *episcopi* evolved into *bishop*. You'll see this shift in names of Anglo-Saxon church leaders such as Benedict Biscop, founder of the famous abbey at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow and mentor of the Venerable Bede.

F In many cases those temples and other public buildings became the Christian churches. That is why the term "basilica," which originally indicated a type of Roman public building, is used today by the Roman Catholic Church as a special designation for important churches. Note also that the Pantheon in Rome (whose very name means "all the gods") was one of the temples that was made into a church.

G Historians still debate who can be considered the first Christian monks and nuns. We have focused on Anthony here because he and his contemporary Paul of Egypt are among the most famous early examples. For a summary of the debates on the origins of Christian monasticism, see Albrecht Diem and Claudia Rapp, "The Monastic Laboratory: Perspectives of Research in Late Antique and Early Medieval Monasticism," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monasticism in the Latin West*, ed. Alison I. Beach and Isabelle Cochelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 19–39.

H It could be worth noting for students who are unfamiliar with Augustine but familiar with Martin Luther that the latter was an Augustinian canon, or clergyman, before the Reformation. (We'll discuss Luther's story in more detail in *TCH3B* chapter 15.)

TIME LINE



MEMORY

Don't forget to learn this week's song verse(s)! The lyrics can be found in appendix A.

Chapter 1: The Twilight of the Western Roman Empire

Important Words

Word	Definition
Huns	Nomadic warriors from central Asia who moved west in the fourth and fifth centuries AD under leaders such as Attila
Nomads	People who move around, often each season, usually to find new places with fresh food for themselves or their herds
Vandals	A group of Germanic-speaking people who moved into Roman territory in the fourth century AD and established a kingdom in North Africa in the fifth century
Pope	The Christian bishop of Rome who eventually came to lead the whole Western Church

Important Figures

Word	Definition
Valens	Brother of Valentinian I and ruler of the Eastern Roman Empire who let Gothic refugees into Roman territory when the Huns first invaded. He was later killed when the Goths revolted.
Theodosius I	Last Roman emperor to rule the entire empire by himself. His sons permanently divided the empire in half with an emperor in the east and another in the west.
Alaric	Leader of the Visigoths who sacked Rome in 410
Gaiseric	King of the Vandals who successfully invaded North Africa and later sacked Rome
Attila	Most famous leader of the Huns, known for invading Roman territory

See the *TCH3A* Go Deeper PDF, http://capress.link/tch3agd, to explore . . .
- The life and teachings of Saint Augustine
- Visigothic artifacts
- The meeting between Attila the Hun and Pope Leo

The End of the World?

The year was AD 410, and many people throughout the Roman Empire were convinced that the world was ending. After all, the unthinkable had just happened! A warlord and a group of Goths had sacked Rome, looting and destroying, and, in the words of the hermit and famous Bible translator Jerome, "The city that had conquered the whole world has been conquered itself."[1] Throughout the empire, things seemed to be falling apart. Emperor Honorius reportedly told the cities in Britannia to take care of their own defenses because the legions that had guarded Hadrian's Wall and the Saxon Shore (along what is now called the English Channel) were needed elsewhere. In North Africa, the people in the city of Hippo Regius were so panicked that the bishop there, Augustine, wrote a book called *City of God* to reassure them that their citizenship in the kingdom of heaven (both in the present and in the afterlife) didn't depend on what happened to the kingdom

1. Jerome, "Letter to Principia, A.D. 412," in *Select Letters of St. Jerome* ed. F. A. Wright (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1933), 420–421.

If you purchased *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 3A*, you can explore through the Biblical Connections PDF several parallels between events featured in this chapter and the experiences of biblical figures: Nehemiah's distress after he learned of the destruction of Jerusalem; the displacement of refugees such as Moses, David, and Joseph and Mary; and the Israelites' relationships with foreign groups after they entered the Promised Land.

of Rome on earth. Finding out that the city that poets called the "Eternal City" had been sacked, and that the Romans' "empire without end" might indeed have an expiration date, was a huge shock for many! How did the world's mightiest empire come to this point?[2]

►**Modern illustration of Alaric entering Athens**

The story leading to the sack of Rome includes countless fascinating characters and events spread across many different regions. And after Alaric, things got even more complicated, as Roman families vied for short-lived power and as more groups of warriors showed up in Roman territory: not just Picts, Goths, and some others we've met already, but new groups of horse riders from central Asia called Huns. So many different people influenced events that historians cannot agree on one easy explanation for why these events happened. In fact, there are at least 210 possible explanations that different scholars have given for why Roman power declined in western Europe in the fifth century.[3] We will simply summarize three of the major factors that may have shaped the decline of Rome: social and religious changes; invaders from outside the empire; and political and economic changes inside the empire.

Social and Religious Changes

As we discussed in the unit I introduction, many historians argue the most important change that occurred in the late Roman period had already happened a century before Alaric: the legalization and spread of Christianity. We have seen how Christian institutions had a huge impact on how many people lived, how cities were governed, and how people understood the world around them. New institutions (such as monasteries), ideas, and even technologies were invented, as we'll see at the end of the chapter. As old titles and forms of government disappeared, new authority figures—such as bishops, abbots, and abbesses—emerged. These new trends, and most especially the rise of Christianity, ensured that in the midst of all these wars and turmoil, something new and interesting was emerging.

Kings and Contemporaries

While Emperor Honorius ruled the Western Roman Empire from 408 to 423, Alaric was leading the Visigoths (395–411), and Saint Augustine was bishop of Hippo Regius in North Africa (396–430).

2. The phrase "eternal city" appears in Tibullus's *Elegies*; see Michael C. J. Putnam, *Tibullus: A Commentary* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 44. "For Romans I [Jupiter] set down no boundaries of space or time: power without limit I have given them," Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Vintage Classics, 1990), 1.278–9; Duncan F. Kennedy, "Modern Receptions and Their Interpretative Implications," in *Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 45.
3. Alexander Demandt, *Der Fall Roms: Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt* (Munich: Beck, 1984), 695.

Invasions and Changes in Warfare

Another traditional explanation for the transformations of the fifth century has been attacks by "barbarians"—such as the one leading to the sack of Rome. Writers living in the Roman Empire during that time certainly worried a lot about these attacks. However, there had been many earlier invasion attempts that were beaten back. Was there something different about the attacks of the fifth century? It's possible. There is some evidence that the barbarian coalitions were getting bigger and better organized. Some historians have also argued that the later Roman armies had declined and were no longer up to the job, but many of those armies still fought well—right up to the point when the empire stopped being able to afford to pay them regularly. Were changes to the politics and economics of the empire therefore a bigger factor than warfare?

▲This Visigothic eagle-shaped brooch was found in Spain.

Internal Political Changes

Still other historians argue that political problems within the empire, more than enemies without, were the root of many changes. For instance, it was difficult for emperors to control the huge Roman Empire long before the outbreak of warfare with Goths, Vandals, Huns, and other groups in the 400s. The sheer size of the empire meant that it was nearly impossible for one man to handle the job of emperor, but appointing someone to a job with enough power (and soldiers) to help fix things meant creating the risk of a rival—and civil war. And below the level of emperor, the empire was running out of resources, in terms of both workers and money, to govern such a large area. Meanwhile, some local officials were becoming less dependent on jobs in the Roman government for wealth and status, and less attached to Roman towns—and to Rome. Thus, some historians argue that there was not one big change, but a gradual alteration of how Rome functioned between the fourth and seventh centuries that transformed western Europe from an area largely governed by one empire to a series of smaller kingdoms. In the next part of this chapter, we'll discuss some of those internal changes to understand what state the empire was in when Alaric, Attila, and other warriors arrived at the gates of Rome. Then we'll consider what impacts their actions had.

▲ *The Emblem of Christ Appearing to Constantine* by Peter Paul Rubens (oil on panel, 1622). This painting symbolizes the moment when Roman emperor Constantine converts from paganism to Christianity.

The State of the Roman Empire: Too Big to Function?

In *The Curious Historian 2B*, we discussed how the Roman emperors came to govern such a massive part of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. In the towns and around forts across the empire, many people seem to have adopted Roman ways by the third century AD, no matter where they were from originally. They produced more goods than they needed, sold things in local markets or to foreign traders for Roman coins, and used those same coins to buy goods imported from other parts of the empire. Gauls, Britons, and even Germanic people joined the Roman army and served throughout the empire. In fact, some

▲A Dacian gold mine

Germanic warriors were so famous for their loyalty that emperors and other Roman elites would hire them as bodyguards! At its largest, it is estimated that the Roman Empire covered five million square kilometers and sixty million people.[4]

However, as you may recall, all was not well in the Roman world in the third and fourth centuries. Remember how there were dozens of men who claimed to be emperor in the fifty years between 235 and 284 during the Crisis of the Third Century? That's just one example of the sort of political problems the empire was facing. The empire was so big that the central government in Rome simply couldn't keep an eye on everything that was happening in the provinces. It was easy for corrupt officials and rebel emperors to get away with crimes for years on end before anyone in Rome could do anything to stop them.

There were economic problems, too, not least of which was that there weren't enough sources of money for the Roman government. In the early years of the empire, new conquests had provided the empire with new resources for wealth, such as the gold mines of Dacia and Gaul. But once the empire stopped expanding, the government started running out of money. Raising taxes was both
F highly unpopular and not enough to make up the difference.

Food supply was another problem that Roman emperors had to worry about. In places like Italy, many people had stopped growing all the food they needed on their own land. Instead, they relied on grain imported from Egypt or other parts of North Africa. And most people who lived in the crowded towns couldn't grow their own food even if they wanted to, because they didn't have the land or even enough light to grow potted plants! Instead, various regions throughout the empire tended to specialize in one or two crops. For example, farmers in Spain grew olives, farmers in North Africa harvested olives and wheat, and farmers
G along the Rhine and even in Britannia planted grapes for wine.[5]

▲Tetrarchy statue

The city of Rome itself had far too many people for the surrounding farms to support, so most of its food had to be imported. Plus, poor adult men in Rome were eligible for a monthly grain allowance, which later emperors expanded to include bread, olive oil, wine, and pork.[6] If anything happened to the trade bringing food into Rome, the people of the city would quickly starve!

In response to the political and economic problems, some emperors made radical changes that would have a long-term impact throughout the empire. One of these was Emperor Diocletian, who decided to make the empire easier to manage by splitting it first in half, then into four parts, each with a regional capital and a regional emperor—otherwise known as the Tetrarchy. In the early 300s Constantine overthrew the others and became sole ruler of the empire. After Constantine, though, the empire was often split between multiple emperors. After Constantine's death in 337, his three surviving sons divided control of the empire among themselves. Rome remained the symbolic capital, but in the western half of the empire,the government was now based at Trier and Milan.

4. Christopher Kelly, *The Roman Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1.
5. On vineyards in Roman Britannia, see, e.g., A. G. Brown and I. Meadows, "Roman Vineyards in Britain: Finds from the Nene Valley and New Research," *Antiquity* 74 (2000): 491–492.
6. Stephen Mitchell, "'Food, Culture, and Environment in Ancient Asia Minor,'" in *A Companion to Food in the Ancient World*, ed. John Wilkins and Robin Nadeau (Oxford: Wiley, 2015), 292.

In the east, the government was located at Antioch and Constantinople, the new capital that Constantine had established in the eastern Mediterranean. There was even a second Senate in Constantinople. Most of the administrative changes made by Diocletian remained, including a major increase in the number of government officials in the empire.

Another change, perhaps inspired by the threat of trouble on the Germanic and Sassanian borders, was that the emperors reorganized the army, probably also increasing its size at the same time. On the one hand, these changes made the empire better defended. On the other hand, these changes were expensive. To pay the extra officials and soldiers, the emperors made changes to the money system, including raising taxes and taking control of the money city governments earned. If you recall from *The Curious Historian 2B*, Diocletian even issued an edict in 301 telling merchants what prices they could charge for food! These changes weren't popular, especially among the old elites who'd gotten rich from taking some of the money from local funds for themselves. These officials started to hoard their wealth and build big houses for themselves, away from Roman towns. They depended less and less on the empire and its towns for their jobs, wealth, and importance, and this changed towns and town life. The baths and theaters in Roman towns, which these nobles and officials used to fund, fell into disrepair. Taken together, these economic and political changes surely put immense pressure on an empire that had grown too large to be managed effectively, let alone defended.

The Emperors after Constantine

And the empire's defenses were about to be put to the test, as groups of warriors gathered on the empire's northern border. The first major test came during the reigns of two brothers called Valentinian and Valens. (Julian the Apostate's successor, Jovian, had died after less than a year in power; the only successor left was a baby, so the army had chosen these two brothers to take over.)

Valentinian I (reigned 364–375) ruled the western half of the Roman Empire from Trier, and his brother **Valens** (reigned 364–378) ruled the eastern half from Constantinople. Each had his own problems with the Germanic peoples to the north. But one of the most important conflicts came between Constantinople and the Goths, those Germanic-speaking peoples who had moved near the Empire's northeastern borders, which at that time ran along the Danube River. Valens spent three years fighting the Goths to a standstill, until he had to go east to fight the Sassanians, Rome's old rivals. Finally, in 369, Valens met the Goths' leader, Athanaric, in the middle of the Danube to negotiate a peace treaty.[7] But while the treaty stabilized relations between the Romans and the Goths for the moment, the situation was about to take a completely unexpected turn as a whole new group rode out of the plains of central Asia and into our story.

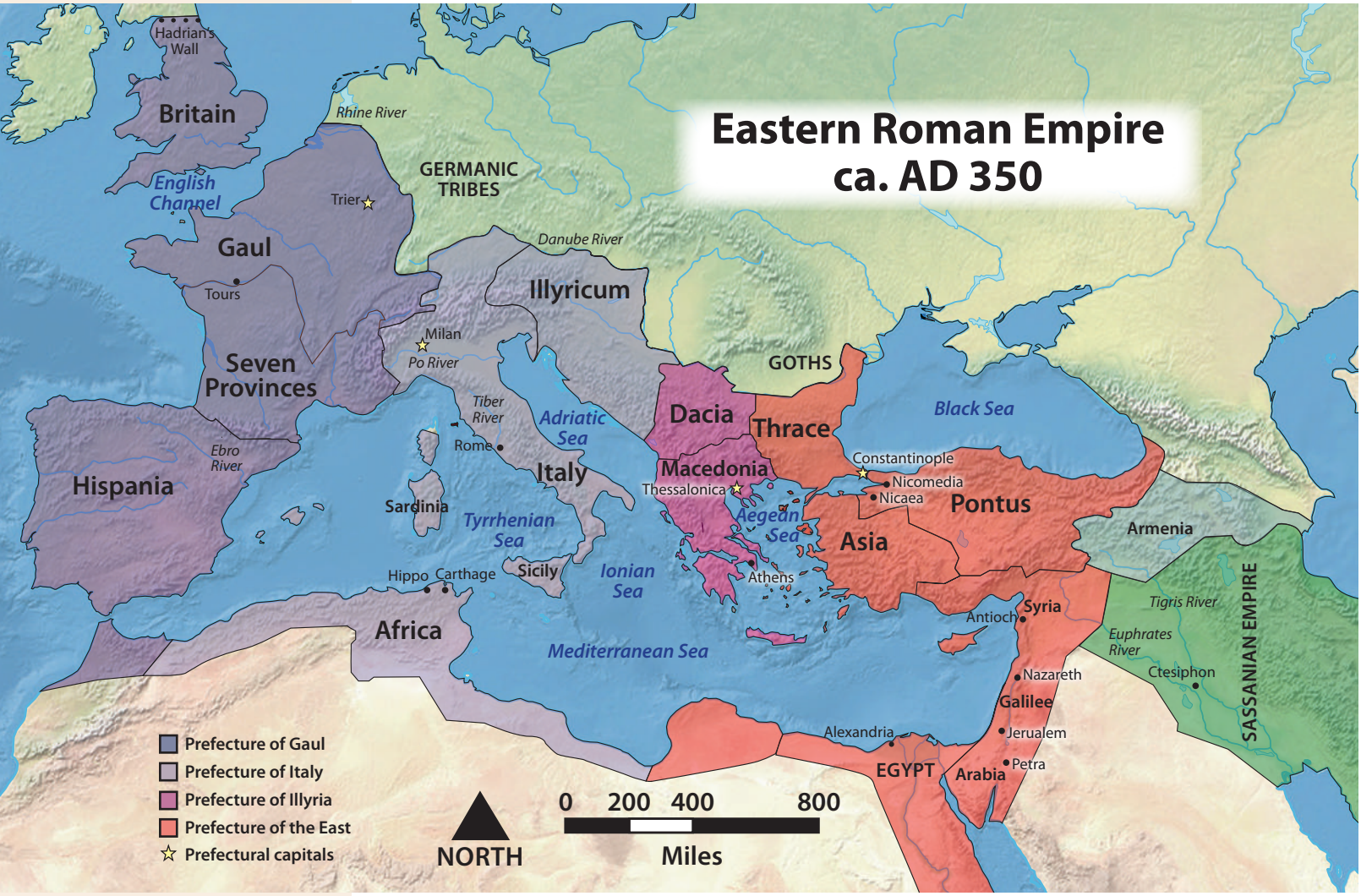
7. Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire,* 72–76, 161.

Decline of Empires

If you studied ancient history with us in *Level 1*, can you remember any of the changes that added up to bring about the "collapse" of the Late Bronze Age world? TE

▲A coin portraying Valentinian I and Valens as co-rulers

▲A nineteenth-century woodcut depicting Valens and Athanaric meeting at the Danube River

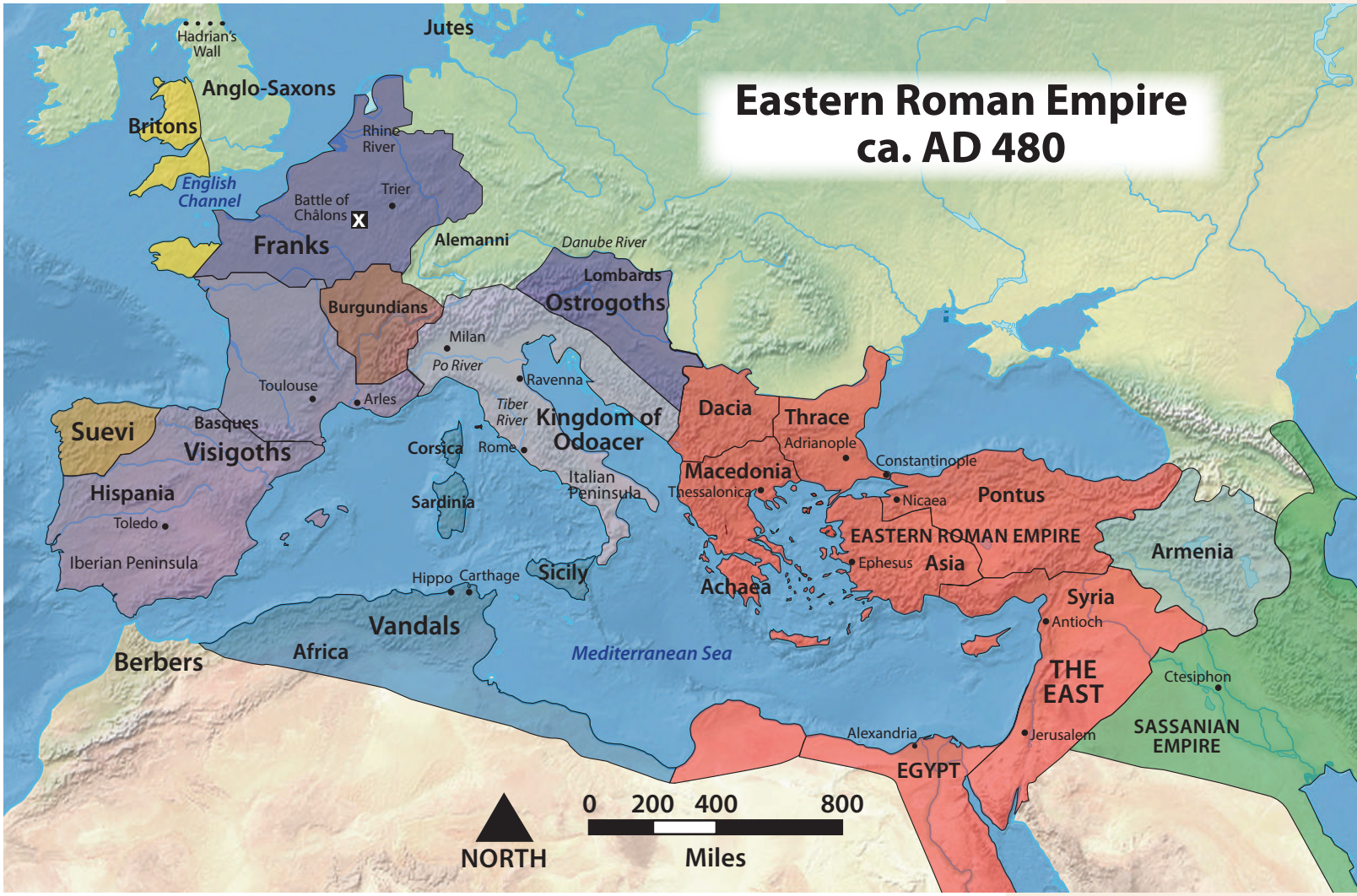


The Coming of the Huns

Have you ever watched a game of pool? At the beginning, all but one of the balls are lined up on the table in a triangular frame that holds them in position, and the remaining ball—the white cue ball—sits on a mark outside the frame. Then the first player removes the frame and strikes the cue ball toward the other balls, causing them to scatter all over the table and bump into each other and the table walls. In a way, the peoples in and around the Roman Empire were like pool balls in the frame. Even though the relationships among them were tense at this point in history, they stayed more or less balanced in the fourth century. But like a cue ball, a group of outsiders the Romans had never met before was about to shatter the peace of Europe and send the different tribes crashing into each other . . . and into the very heart of the empire!

▲This brooch depicting a horse's head may have been made or worn by a Hun in imitation of some Roman fashions.

Far away from Rome and Constantinople, on the plains of central Asia, there lived a powerful group of nomadic warriors called the **Huns**. As nomads, the Huns moved around, although they raised livestock rather than living mainly by hunting. They were skilled horse riders and outstanding archers, able to fire their short but powerful composite bows quickly and accurately even while riding at a full gallop.



Scholars aren't sure exactly where the warriors came from or why they started moving westward. No writings by Huns themselves survive.[8] In fact, we only know of three words that probably belonged to the Hunnic language![9] Archaeologists have not been able to discover much more about them. Since the Huns were nomads, they kept moving around, which makes it difficult for archaeologists to even know where to dig!

But while we might not know much about the Huns' language or culture, we do know what impact they had on history. The Huns began to expand their power over new territory. Some were recorded near the Chinese kingdoms.[10] Other Huns moved into Europe. These Huns probably pushed out some Germanic groups as they moved westward, causing them to move closer and closer to Roman territory.[11] Other Germanic peoples joined the Huns' westward march, either as allies or as adopted members of the Hunnic Empire. The first

▲These matching jeweled accessories were made for a horse and its rider, possibly a wealthy Hun.

8. Hyun Jin Kim, *The Huns, Rome and the Birth of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 5.
9. Saskia Ponk-Tiethoff, *The Germanic Loanwords in Proto-Slavic* (Brill: Leiden, 2013), 58.
10. Kim, *Huns, Rome and the Birth of Europe*, 28.
11. Peter Heather, "The Huns and the End of the Roman Empire in Western Europe," *English Historical Review* 110, no. 435 (1995): 5.

news of the Huns didn't reach the Romans until 375, when push was about to come very strongly to shove.

> "The Huns fell upon the Alans, the Alans upon the Goths and Taifali, the Goths and Taifali upon the Romans, and this is not yet the end."[12]
>
> —Ambrose of Milan

Double-Crossing on the Danube[13]

As the Huns moved into Gothic territory in 376, the Goths fled toward the Danube. From there, they sent ambassadors to Emperor Valens to get permission to settle in Thrace (made up of parts of modern-day Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey). Valens agreed, but once the Goths had crossed the river, local officials treated them very badly indeed. There are even reports of Gothic parents being forced to sell their children to slave traders just to get food—and the food they got was what the Romans had refused to eat![14]

▲A solidus featuring Theodosius I

Finally, after the local Roman commander tried to double-cross the Gothic leaders sometime early in 377, the Goths had had enough. They fought the local Roman troops and won. Acting on bad information, Valens attacked the Goths near Adrianople (in the northwest of modern Turkey) in 378—and lost both the battle and his life.

Valentinian, Valens's brother and the emperor in the west, had died in 375, leaving two sons. The older, Gratian, was now the western emperor, but the younger was still too young to rule the eastern provinces. So, Gratian chose one of his father's best generals, **Theodosius I** (lived 347–395; reigned 379–395), to succeed Valens as the eastern emperor. After another four years of fighting, though, Theodosius still couldn't make the Goths leave, so he made peace with them and allowed them to settle in Roman territory permanently. He may have hoped that the Goths would help defend their new home against the Huns.

▲Ivory carving (ca. 395) believed to portray General Stilicho and his family

These peace treaties may not have been outright victories, but they strengthened Theodosius's political position as the eastern emperor enough that he could eventually take over the whole empire in 392. Once he was the sole emperor, Theodosius tried—as earlier emperors had—to reorganize the empire to make it easier to govern. He also promoted and appointed talented generals and officials, regardless of their origins. One such talented commander was a man called Flavius Stilicho, who had risen through the ranks of Theodosius's army. Does his last name, Stilicho, sound like a Roman man's last name? (Does it end in *-us*?) Stilicho was in fact a Vandal. The **Vandals** were another of the Germanic groups that moved into the Roman Empire to escape the Huns.[15] Theodosius made him the second most powerful man in the empire. He even arranged for Stilicho to marry his niece. Stilicho's career

12. Ambrose of Milan, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* 10:10, translated in Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 190.
13. Unless otherwise noted, information in this section comes from Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 145–154, 158–189.
14. Michael Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars: From the Third Century to Alaric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 131.
15. Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 25–27.

shows how the westward movement of the Huns into the territories of the Germanic tribes changed the top of Roman government as well as the situation along the borders. Stilicho also shows that not all "barbarians" fought the Romans: Some worked for them and even became part of the Roman elite!

The Conquerors Conquered[16]

Theodosius, like Constantine before him, divided the empire between his sons. They were just children at the time, so their advisors had all the power. They also had some bigger problems than Theodosius had faced. Another wave of Germanic invasions arrived in the 400s: Most notably, a large group of Vandals, Alans, and Suevi warriors who crossed the Rhine in December of 406 and pillaged their way through Gaul for several years before claiming land for themselves in Hispania (modern Spain) in 411.

> One of the most important sources for the history of this period was an Egyptian historian and diplomat named Olympiodorus of Thebes. He's famous not only for undertaking a mission to the Huns in 411–412 but also for having a very clever parrot that traveled with him for more than twenty years![17] –A.D.

At the same time, military leaders in the empire started to get more ambitious and ask for more money and land. Among these was **Alaric**, a Romano-Gothic commander in the Roman army who became famous in the 390s and early 400s. He fought for Theodosius and Stilicho in 394 before launching a series of rebellions. (He led the Visigoths from 395 to 411.) Was Alaric trying to destroy the Roman Empire with these rebellions? No—he just wanted the Romans to give him a job![18] The Visigoths hoped the Romans would see Alaric's military talents, promote him as a general, and give his followers the recognition and riches that they felt they deserved. But the empire was not exactly overflowing with such resources after so many defeats and reverses.

The government of the eastern half of the empire seems briefly to have given Alaric some post in Greece in 397. But by 401 that arrangement had fallen apart. Alaric decided to try his luck with the western half of the empire, leading a huge group of Visigoths into Italy. He besieged many cities to force the western emperor, Honorius, to meet the Visigoths' demands. Stilicho succeeded in defeating Alaric at first, but Stilicho's forces were stretched thin, since he was also trying to direct military campaigns to put down revolts in Gaul and Africa and to fight off the Picts in Britannia. Given how difficult a set of crises he had to deal with, Stilicho did pretty well. Nevertheless, after a series of defeats, Honorius lost confidence in Stilicho and had him executed in 408.

▲A Vandal cavalryman gallops across this mosaic found near Carthage.

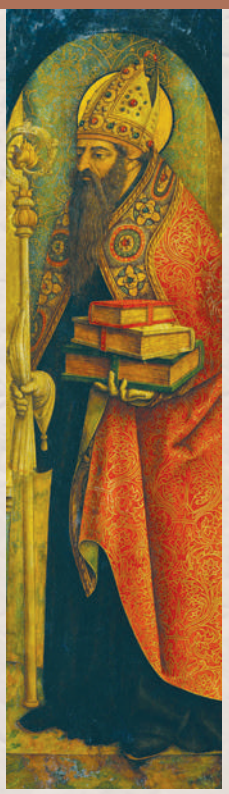
Stilicho had actually been trying to negotiate with Alaric before his death, but afterward, Honorius's new advisors refused to listen to Alaric's demands. To make his point, Alaric besieged Rome itself in November of 408. The imperial court had moved to Ravenna six years earlier and thus wasn't affected

16. Unless otherwise noted, information in this section is from Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 206–334.
17. Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 192.
18. Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 165, 191.

by the siege,[19] but the Roman Senate was impacted. They not only paid Alaric a huge ransom but also asked Honorius to give the Goths what they wanted. Honorius agreed at first, so Alaric withdrew to Tuscany, but the emperor's advisors again refused to do business with the Goths. Another siege of Rome in 409 had similar results, as did Alaric's short-lived support of a senator who tried to depose Honorius.

Q Literature of the Age: *Confessions* and *City of God*

Augustine wrote a lot of works, especially if you count his sermons and letters. Astonishingly, most of what he wrote was popular enough that multiple manuscripts of his works still survive! And so much of what he wrote is so good that he's considered one of the foremost teachers, or Doctors, of the Church. But two of his books stand out and have inspired many readers through the centuries: *Confessions* and *City of God*.



▲*Saint Augustine* by Carlo Crivelli (tempera on panel, ca. 1487)

Confessions, which Augustine wrote during his first years as bishop of Hippo Regius, was one of the first spiritual autobiographies ever written! What does this mean? It means *Confessions* is the earliest surviving text that provides a deeply personal account of an individual's religious conversion. In it, Augustine confesses how he ran from God as a young man, especially when he went to Carthage to study rhetoric. He talks about the bad things he did and the false teachings he used to justify his bad behavior. But he also talks about his relationship with his mother and his favorite preacher, Ambrose of Milan, and how they helped to bring him to faith in Christ. Besides being an interesting story, *Confessions* is full of lines that have become famous, such as this one from the first chapter: Addressing God, Augustine says, "You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." M

City of God, by contrast, was written in the aftermath of Alaric's sack of Rome. In the hundred years since the Edict of Milan, and especially in the decades since Christianity had become the official religion of the empire, Christians had become so used to thinking of Rome as an eternal Christian city that they didn't know how to respond to the news that Rome had fallen to the Goths. Plus, the Christians' pagan neighbors were blaming them for the attack. The pagans thought that abandoning Roman gods had weakened Rome's power and that Christianity had contributed to the sack of the city. Augustine wrote *City of God* as a defense of Christianity in light of these criticisms. In it, Augustine contrasts earthly kingdoms (which he refers to as "the City of Man") with the kingdom of heaven (which he calls "the City of God"). While it's important for Christians to be good citizens in this life, he says, not even the greatest kingdom in the world lasts forever. Only the City of God is eternal, and Augustine argues that it's better and more important to gain citizenship in heaven through faith in Christ than to put one's trust in the City of Man.

▲Pages from *City of God*, as printed in 1475

Finally, in August of 410, Alaric did not just lay siege to Rome: His forces sacked the city for three days. The Visigoths left the churches alone and didn't destroy many buildings, but they did kill a lot of people and stole whatever they could carry off. In addition to the loss of life and property, though, there

19. Judith Herrin, *Ravenna: Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 307.

was the shock value of the attack (and, as we discussed above, it is that sense of shock and dismay that Augustine was responding to in *City of God*). Remember, the last time Rome had been sacked was by Brennus and his Gauls in 390 BC (eight hundred years earlier), when the Roman Republic was just starting to expand. Now, even though political power was no longer concentrated in Rome, the city was still one of the largest in the world and the symbolic capital of a mighty empire. Plus, it was the biggest center of finance, culture, and learning for most of Europe and parts of Asia and Africa. With Rome under attack, it was no wonder people thought the world was ending!

▲Pepper pots from the Hoxne Hoard, the largest collection of Roman gold ever found

One of the effects of all this turmoil was that the Roman Empire effectively abandoned its outlying territory in places it couldn't easily defend. The administrative center of Gaul was moved south to the city of Arles, and imperial officials largely abandoned the provinces near the Rhine, leaving this frontier vulnerable to attacks from Germanic warbands.[20] In Britannia, the process had already begun before Alaric's attacks: No bulk shipments of coins seem to have arrived in Britannia after 402.[21] Many men of fighting age left the island in 407 to follow a rebel emperor into Gaul and fight the Vandals, Alans, and Suevi. Honorius recalled the legions by 410 to fight the Goths, and some Roman officials probably left Britannia shortly thereafter. At least one rich Roman family hid their coins, jewelry, and a particularly precious pepper pot and fled, never to return.[22]

As for the Visigoths, there was no way Honorius would give Alaric the military titles he wanted after he'd sacked Rome. Alaric gave up and tried to lead his people to North Africa. The weather was against them, sinking most of the fleet he'd been preparing to transport them, and while they were waiting, Alaric suddenly died. His brother-in-law led the Visigoths into Gaul instead, and they were later given land to settle in Aquitaine (the southwestern part of modern-day France).[23]

▲An ivory carving of Emperor Honorius

So, Alaric's sack of Rome wasn't the end of the world after all. It wasn't even the end of the Roman Empire! Honorius's new senior general restored order in Gaul and attacked the Vandals in Hispania. Life slowly went back to normal for a time, and the emperors kept looking for new ways to make administration run smoothly. But government control of the western part of the empire was declining, and "politics as usual" was not possible, even for the best Roman leaders. Honorius and his senior general both died in the early 420s, and the other leading generals in the west began squabbling over who was in charge.[24]

The Goths, Vandals, and others who'd moved into Roman territory weren't going away, either. When the surviving Vandals finally left Hispania for good in

20. Notitia Dignitatum Occ. Xii.27, in *Notitia Dignitatum Accedunt Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae et Latercula Provinciarum*, ed. O. Seeck (Berlin: Weidmann, 1876; repr., Frankfurt: Minerva, 1962); Guy Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376–568* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 209.
21. Peter Salway, *A History of Roman Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 316; Michael Cuddeford, *Coin Finds in Britain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 21.
22. The Hoxne Hoard was only rediscovered in 1992. British Museum, BEP 1994,0408.1 and following.
23. Guy Halsall, "Barbarian Invasions," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History Vol. 1: c. 500–c. 700*, ed. P. Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 49.
24. Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 209.

429, for instance, they didn't go back where they'd come from. The Huns were now in control of their old lands, and many of the Germanic peoples who hadn't crossed into Roman territory were now part of the Hunnic Empire. Instead, led by a king named **Gaiseric** (ruled 428–479), the Vandals sailed to North Africa and began fighting their way eastward. One of their targets was the city of Hippo Regius, which they besieged in 430–431; Augustine was one of the many people who starved to death as a result. Gaiseric's goal, however, was Carthage, which the Vandals captured in 439. Suddenly, not only North Africa's fields but also the key port of Carthage were no longer under Roman control, threatening the availability of food. The Vandals also gained control of a sizable fleet stationed at Carthage, and with it Gaiseric made the Vandals into a formidable naval power.

Kings and Contemporaries
Gaiseric ruled the Vandals from 428 to 477, about the same time as Attila was ruling the Huns (440–453).

In the same period, the Visigoths broke out of Aquitaine twice and tried to claim all of Gaul for themselves. The leading Roman commander in the west, Aetius, had to hire the Huns to help him put down the revolts. Aetius also had to fight (and negotiate and sometimes ally with) other Germanic tribes such as the Franks and Burgundians that were crossing into Roman territory. When word reached Rome that the Vandals had taken Carthage, Aetius assembled an invasion fleet from both halves of the empire to take it back. But the Huns suddenly attacked across the Danube, and Constantinople's troops had to leave to fight them. Losing half of Aetius's fleet forced Emperor Valentinian III to make a peace treaty with Gaiseric, leaving most of North Africa in Vandal hands. That left Aetius free to fight one of the most feared men of the fifth century: **Attila** the Hun (ruled ca. 440–453).

►**In an early German epic, Attila appears under the name Etzel, as depicted in this modern sculpture in the medieval town of Tulln, Austria (by Michail Nogin, 2005)**

Attila the Hun[25]

Attila and his brother Bleda began ruling the Huns sometime around the year 440. Before they took power, the Huns had allied with both Rome and Constantinople and had absorbed some Roman culture, especially as former residents of the Roman Empire joined the Hunnic Empire. Attila, in particular, was renowned for being able to speak (though not read) Latin and Gothic, and Roman visitors to his court were impressed by its multicultural sophistication and Attila's civility toward guests important enough to receive a personal audience. Once Attila and Bleda were in charge of the Hunnic Empire, however, they renegotiated their treaty with Constantinople, and when they didn't get everything they wanted, they invaded Roman territory.

By the time the eastern Roman troops returned from the Danube, the Huns had captured three major cities in the Balkans and forced the eastern emperor to come

25. Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section comes from Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 300–342.

up with a more acceptable peace treaty. The negotiations were aided by Romans who were working for Attila, including his secretary, Orestes.[26] But about the time Attila murdered Bleda (according to the Romans) and became sole ruler of the Huns, Constantinople broke the treaty. Attila attacked again in 447, captured most of Thrace, and nearly took Constantinople itself before peace was restored on the Huns' terms. By 450, the Eastern Empire was paying thousands of pounds of gold to the Huns as tribute, and Attila turned his attention to the west.

In 451, the Huns and their Germanic allies invaded Gaul. Aetius gathered the western Roman army and his Germanic allies to fight Attila, and a Roman victory near Châlons (in the northeast of modern-day France) forced the Huns out.[27] The next year, Attila invaded Italy, but while he had enough success to set his sights on the city of Rome, the Huns' supplies started running short, and their troops also started getting sick. Shortly after the Huns captured Milan, Pope Leo the Great, also known as Saint Leo I, went with other Roman officials to talk Attila out of continuing his invasion. (Leo was the **pope**, or bishop of Rome, from 440 to 461.) We do not know exactly what Leo said to Attila. However, according to some, Pope Leo convinced Attila that the Christian God had caused Alaric's sudden death as punishment for his having sacked Rome and that the same thing would happen to Attila if he proceeded with his plan to attack Rome. Attila was decidedly pagan, but it seems he wasn't willing to risk further offending a god who might already be causing his problems. Whatever the conversation was about, afterward Attila left Italy.[28]

▼ ***El papa San León I Magno*** **(Pope Saint Leo the Great) by Francisco Herrera the Younger (oil on canvas, 1600s)**

To the Source:
pope from the Latin *papa*, meaning "father"

The Last Days of Roman Rule in the West[29]

Attila hadn't completely given up the idea of conquering the Roman Empire, but his plans ended abruptly with his sudden death early in 453. After his funeral, the Hunnic Empire fell apart. But the damage it had done to the Roman Empire, especially in the west, was too great to be undone. By the late 450s, only parts of the Iberian and Italian Peninsulas were still under the control of the western Roman emperor. Still, with Attila dead, Roman leaders went back to fighting among themselves, and a new round of assassinations and power grabs began. In the chaos that followed, the Romans broke their treaty with the Vandals. It was not so smart to pick a fight with the people who controlled the food supply, and more disaster would soon follow. A furious Gaiseric sacked Rome in 455 in revenge.[30]

The western part of the empire then fell under the control of various puppet emperors, some of them old men and children, who were controlled by powerful advisors and armies. Two attempts to retake North Africa failed. The last western ruler who claimed the title Roman emperor (for a while, at least) was

26. Jonathan P. Conant, "Romanness in the Age of Attila," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Attila*, ed. Michael Maas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 156–172.
27. Raymond Van Damme, "Merovingian Gaul and the Frankish Conquests," in Fouracre, *New Cambridge Medieval History Vol. 1*, 196.
28. Maya Maskarinec, "Selected Ancient Sources," in Mass, *Cambridge Companion to the Age of Attila*, 417.
29. Unless otherwise noted, information in this section comes from Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 342–369, 373–407.
30. Richard Gerberding, "The Later Roman Empire," in Fouracre, *New Cambridge Medieval History Vol. 1*, 25.

▲Gold coin depicting Romulus Augustulus

Romulus Augustulus, who had been declared emperor by his father, Orestes. Does that name sound familiar? Orestes was a Roman who was fluent in the Hunnic language, and he had, years earlier, helped Attila negotiate with Roman emperors' forces.[31] Romulus was never acknowledged as a true emperor by the Roman government in Constantinople.[32] He was forced out of power by Odoacer, a soldier with a Germanic or Hunnic background, in 476. After that, Romulus went to live on an island villa in the Bay of Naples, and Odoacer declared himself *rex*—king—and not emperor.[33] The eastern part of the empire, centered on Constantinople, was still intact, and it would remain so for another thousand years, as we'll see. But at least as a political entity, the Western Roman Empire was no more.

Looking Back . . . Looking Ahead

As we now know, the world did not end in the fifth century AD, but after learning about all the hardships the Roman Empire faced, you probably aren't surprised that people thought it would! Many changes, such as economic upheavals to shrinking towns to the rise of Christianity, drastically reshaped the empire. Some of these tensions came from the empire's large size; ruling lands spanning from Britannia to northern Africa and western Africa was no small feat! Not only did the Romans have to face these *internal* issues, but they also had to face *external* pressures from peoples such as the Goths and Huns. Invasions led by leaders such as Attila put a great deal of stress on the empire.

Around 340, where we began this chapter, Roman emperors still ruled territory stretching from modern Scotland to Syria. They maintained power through a permanent, standing army. Trade and government was based in cities, where residents enjoyed feats of Roman engineering, from aqueducts to villas with central heating. One and a half centuries—and countless battles, plots, famines, betrayals, sacks, assassinations, and negotiations—later, when this chapter ends, there was no longer an emperor ruling from Rome. In the east, of course, an emperor remained. In western Europe, warrior kings with Germanic names now ruled smaller areas. As we have seen, the Vandals controlled North Africa. The Visigoths ended up in Hispania, while some eastern Goths—Ostrogoths—started to make their way west too. And in the next few chapters we'll meet warrior-kings who called themselves Franks, Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, and who took over other parts of what had been the Western Roman Empire.

But beyond all these warriors and battles, how much did life change for the average Roman once the government of the Western Empire collapsed? As we'll see in the next few chapters, that depended heavily on where you lived, but it wasn't as if everyone woke up one morning and stopped being Roman. On the contrary, most people who'd adopted Roman ways still used Roman coins, recycled Roman glass, and made do with what they had for as long as they could.[34]

31. Conant, "Romanness in the Age of Attila," 156–172.
32. Gerberding, "Later Roman Empire," 25.
33. Thomas Noble Howe, "The Social Status of the Villas of Stabiae," in *The Roman Villa in the Mediterranean Basin: Late Republic to Late Antiquity*, ed. Annalisa Marzano and Guy P. R. Métraux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 98.
34. Miles Russell et al., "The Durotriges Project, Phase Two: An Interim Report," *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History & Archeological Society* 136 (2015): 158, 160–161.

And, as we discussed in the introduction to this unit, not everyone in the Roman Empire had embraced Roman culture or lifestyles to begin with! As a rough rule, more Roman features of life remained into the fifth and sixth centuries in southern regions and in areas closer to the city of Rome than in the more distant provinces. For example, cities on the island of Britain were abandoned, but many cities around the Mediterranean continued to exist. People in some regions kept paying taxes, although the money went to local kings rather than emperors in Rome, and they probably paid taxes less frequently. Many of the same Roman families remained in charge in those surviving towns, working for the new kings and their warriors. If you traveled to Rome a few decades after Romulus Augustulus, you'd find a leader who had been educated in Constantinople, who liked mosaics, and who looked like a Roman leader . . . apart from his mustache and his Germanic name. How did these new warlords interact with their Roman subjects? Why didn't they call themselves emperors, and why wouldn't they give up their mustaches? Many changes took place across Europe throughout the end of the fifth century and after. Curious about what life was like in this new world? Read on to find out!

▲Jug from Tunisia (ca. 200s)

◀Red slip pottery dish made in Tunisia (ca. 350–400)

Technologies of the Age: The Codex

The fourth and fifth centuries were not just times of war and destruction. They also saw the spread of an important writing technology. So far in The Curious Historian series, you have learned about lots of different writing technologies. Can you describe some of the ways people wrote and read in the past? R

During the third and especially by the fourth century, yet another new writing technology spread throughout the Middle East, Europe, and North Africa: books with covers and pages.[35] This type of book is known as a *codex* (plural *codices*). Today, we are used to codex books, but in the late Roman Empire, they led to big changes in the way information could be stored and retrieved. When you want to find a specific part of a long history or an epic poem written down on a scroll, you unroll the papyrus or parchment until you spot the part you are seeking. With books, you can easily flip between pages to find what you are looking for, without getting tangled up in a long scroll. You can also bookmark pages you need. This makes it easier to find your place in very long texts. As you do your studies today, note how many times you turn to a specific page in a book. How much

▲Luke's genealogy of Jesus from the Book of Kells (ca. 800)

35. Roger S. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021), 71.

longer would your studies take you if instead you had to guess how far you had to unroll a long scroll to find a certain spot?

There had been codex-like objects before. For example, in India and southeast Asia texts were written on palm leaves that were joined together. In China, strips of bamboo served as a base for writing and were tied together to create a sort of book that could be rolled up. Roman students went to school with a set of wax tablets attached to each other like pages in a codex-book.[36] In fact, the term "codex" might come from tablets: Codex is related to the Latin word for a block of wood (*caudex*), which might have referred to the tablets' wooden frames.[37] However, most texts in the Roman world were written on scrolls until the third and the fourth century. Scholars still debate what caused this change, but it might have been related to some major cultural changes. In particular, Christians began to use the codex format for their Bibles. Other groups began to use codices more too.

▲The hollow pages of wooden writing tablets such as this were filled with wax, which allowed users to write and keep records.

Books might seem like a very simple technology, especially compared to the roads, aqueducts, hypocausts, and other amazing engineering works constructed by Romans. However, the codex proved to be the most enduring Roman technology. In fact, you are reading a codex now! But people didn't stop using scrolls and rolls. Documents continued to be made in those forms throughout the medieval period, such as genealogies presented in roll form. And scrolls might be having the last laugh: While we visit web *pages*, we still *scroll* through their contents.

To read about Saint Ambrose's showdown at a basilica with Valentinian II, and also about how Justa Grata Honoria, the rebellious sister of Valentinian III, sent a ring to Attila the Hun, see the Profiles and Legends PDF in *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 3A*.

36. See, for example, the second-century set of tablets now London, British Library, Add MS 33270.
37. Francis Watson, "The Canon and the Codex: On the Material Form of the Christian Bible," in *The Life of Texts: Evidence in Textual Production, Transmission and Reception*, ed. Carlo Caruso (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 53.

Write About It

On the lines below each of the following questions, write a one-paragraph response. Be sure to use information from the text to support your answers.

1. Historians do not agree on what ultimately caused the fall of the Roman Empire. Explain some possible reasons for its decline, including at least two different factors in your paragraph.

Answers will vary but should include at least two of the following:

- Invasions and changes in warfare: Barbarian groups were getting larger so it was easier for them to invade the Roman Empire.
- Internal political changes: It was difficult for one person to rule such a large area, and opening it up to more than one ruler could lead to civil war. The government was also running out of resources and money.
- Social and religious changes: The spread of Christianity and Christian institutions led to changes in the way people lived and how the empire was governed.

2. Why are information and artifacts relating to the Huns so difficult for historians to find?

Answers will vary. As nomads, Huns traveled around a lot and were not often settled in one place for long. Historians have a difficult time knowing where to look for artifacts and information related to the Huns. Historians are not sure where the Huns initially came from or why they started moving westward, as there are no written records left behind from the Huns. Also, historians and archaeologists have difficulty in definitively distinguishing Hunnic items from those of their neighbors and allies.

3. When Rome was sacked and the empire began to fall apart, why were so many people convinced that the world was ending?

Answers will vary but should include some of the following information:

- Rome was still the center for finance, culture, and learning across most of Europe, Asia, and Africa, so destroying it threatened a vast number of people.
- Even though political control was no longer based in Rome itself, the city was still considered a symbol of one of the greatest empires of all time.
- Pagans felt that so many people turning to Christianity had angered the Roman gods, and the gods were having their revenge.

Talk About It

Read the following and write discussion points for each question to use as your group talks about this information.

1. Valens had worked out a peace treaty with the Goths but that agreement did not last. What led to the undoing of this peace treaty?

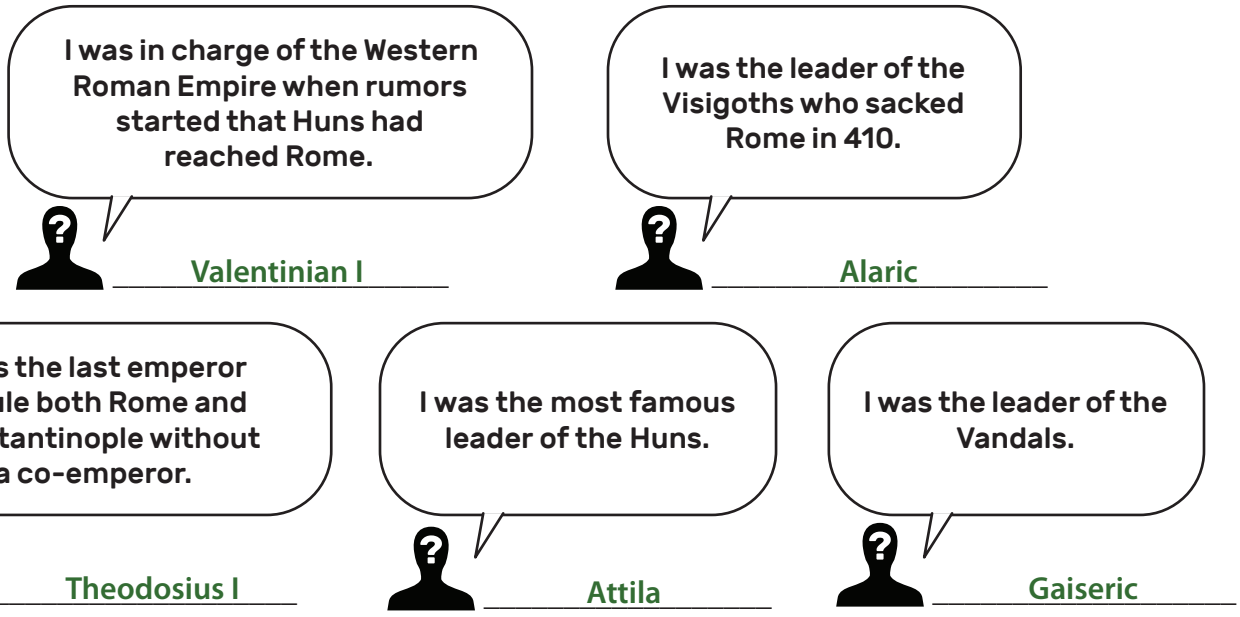
Discussion points that students create should be based on the following information: As the Huns moved into Roman territory, the Goths were forced to move toward the Danube and asked for permission to settle in Thrace. Once there, the Goths were treated horribly—e.g., parents were forced to sell their children to pay for food and were betrayed by a Roman commander. These events eventually led to the Goths fighting the Romans.

2. How was Pope Leo able to convince Attila that the Huns should stop their attack on the Roman Empire?

Discussion points that students create should be based on the following information: No one is certain, but perhaps the pope convinced Attila that Alaric's sudden death was due to his angering the Christian God when he sacked Rome, and the same would happen to Attila if he did not stop what he was doing. Whatever it was that Pope Leo said, Attila did not continue.

Who Am I?

Can you identify who would have said each of the following statements? Write your answer on the line below each speech bubble.



Which Came First?

Circle the correct answer for each of the following questions.

1. Which leader threatened the city of Rome first? (Alaric) or Attila
2. Which area did Attila attack first? Italy or (Gaul)
3. Which emperor came first? (Theodosius) or Romulus Augustulus
4. Which group came into Roman territory first? Huns or (Goths)
5. Which of these book forms came first? (Scrolls) or Codex

Make the Connection

Complete each of the following sentences by *crossing out* the incorrect word in the parentheses.

1. After the reign of Constantine, the number of (Christians / ~~Celts~~) in the Roman Empire increased.
2. Christian believers were led by the leaders of their particular town or region, called (bishops / ~~barbarians~~).
3. A few Christians just wanted to worship without distractions, so they lived alone as (~~popes~~ / hermits).
4. Other Christian believers lived in communities called (monasteries / ~~basilicas~~) where they prayed and worshiped throughout the day.
5. Not all people who claimed to be Christians followed all the tenets that we associate with this religion today. For example, (Arians / ~~Ambrose~~) did not believe that Jesus was fully God.

True or False?

If the sentence is true, circle the T. If the sentence is false, circle the F.

1. The Roman Empire had been in turmoil during the third century, before emperors such as Diocletian and Constantine made big changes. (T) F
2. Alaric the Visigoth's sack of Rome in AD 410 was the first time the city of Rome had been overrun in 800 years. (T) F
3. Roman leaders never allied with Germanic groups such as the Goths. T (F)
4. Only the western half of the Roman Empire collapsed in the fifth century. There continued to be an emperor in Constantinople (the capital of the eastern half). (T) F
5. The bishop of Hippo Regius, Augustine, also believed that the sack of Rome signaled that the world was ending. T (F)

S

A Don't forget to introduce this week's song verse(s) to your students. We recommend having them sing the unit song (up through the verses they have learned) once or twice at the start of each class.

B *Spotlight on Virtue:* Loyalty is the recommended virtue to highlight this week. For the optional virtue-related discussion question and answer prompts, see the last page of the Teacher's Notes for this chapter.

C Augustine suggests that the City of God is both the Church that exists on earth and the New Jerusalem that is to come with the new heavens and the new earth. This might help students understand that some Christians saw the kingdom of heaven as part of the afterlife but also a present reality.

D You may need to remind the students that when we say a city has been "sacked," we mean the enemy has entered it and caused great destruction. There's no easy modern parallel to help students get their heads around the scale of the shock the Romans felt at this sack of Rome in 410, largely because there's no one city that represents to us what Rome represented to the empire. Most likely, the closest equivalent we can imagine would be if a terrorist attack were to hit New York (finance/commerce, universities, media, and the UN), Los Angeles (Hollywood and media), Washington (government), and the Vatican and Jerusalem (religion), all at the same time. The loss of life and property damage would be horrendous enough, regardless of the method used; but the psychological trauma would be several orders of magnitude worse than Pearl Harbor and 9/11 combined.

E There have been numerous books about the "grand strategy" of the Roman empire (or about the lack thereof, according to some writers), such as James Lacey's *Rome: Strategy of Empire* (Oxford: OUP, 2022). Lacey argues a Roman military strategy was carried out with reasonable effectiveness until the permanent loss of certain key provinces, most especially those in Africa, crippled the empire's economic foundation—see especially pages 334 to 359. For his assessment of the barbarian threat, see pages 30 to 40.

F Policies introduced by Septimius Severus and Aurelian also meant that coins were worth less and some types of coins were no longer minted at all, but even that didn't solve the problem. Meanwhile, the Edict of Caracalla in 212, which granted citizenship to all free residents of the empire, was probably intended to increase taxes. However, it backfired, because citizens were exempt from certain kinds of taxes and the new citizens did not want to pay more. See Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Taxing Freedom in Thessalian Manumission Inscriptions* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 75.

G The wine industry in Britain continued until the Little Ice Age but has returned over the last fifty years. If you'd like to see a snapshot of this history, *Antiques Road Trip* season 18, episode 18, features a four-minute history segment (starting at 26:50) in which Margie Cooper visits a modern English vineyard to learn about British viticulture past and present.

From **Decline of Empires** on page 35.

Just as with the decline of the Roman Empire, there are no simple reasons for the collapse of the Late Bronze Age world! Rather, historians identify several possible contributing factors. These include natural disasters such as earthquakes and droughts as well as famine, disease, and conflicts that led to interruptions in trade and the destruction of crops. A clue to another big change that led to the decline of the Late Bronze Age is in its name! The strength of bronze was replaced by iron, giving way to the Iron Age. Iron changed warfare, allowing for a shift in some of the power dynamics between peoples. The migration of peoples such as the Sea Peoples, the Philistines, and the Israelites also contributed to the end of the Late Bronze Age. This movement created big changes that paved the way for the emergence of the Iron Age. Throughout *TCH3A*, we will continue to see just how new technologies and the migration of peoples have shaped history.

H The old elites saw their position changed even further later in the fourth century when various emperors changed the system of honors, allowing imperial bureaucrats to achieve the same rank as senators and creating even higher ranks that couldn't be achieved without working as a bureaucrat. See Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 30–31, 115–117.

I The grassland plains of central Asia where the Huns originally lived are generally known as the steppe regions. The Eurasian steppe is an important geopolitical location throughout history since it is located—as its name suggests—between two continents. We will meet many other steppe peoples in this book, and the steppe would become extremely important again during the Mongol conquests and the numerous Turkic invasions later in the Middle Ages. Not coincidentally, the Mongols and many other steppe warriors we'll encounter in *Level 3* were also nomadic peoples. Similarly, these groups would gain great fame for their skill at wielding powerful composite bows from horseback.

J These Hunnic words are *medos* (a drink), *kamon* (a drink made with barley that servants drank), and *strava* (something to do with funerals).

K It is hard to spot a distinctively "Hunnic" piece of jewelry or pot because the Huns probably allied and traded with Germanic-speaking people in the west. A Hun probably had some goods made by a Goth and vice versa. (See Hyun Jin Kim, *The Huns, Rome and the Birth of Europe* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013], 8.) Even graves don't always tell us much. Archeologists have found few graves that they can be sure belonged to Huns. They have found graves in places such as Austria that contained skeletons of Germanic people who'd adopted the practice, associated with the Huns, of flattening the tops of babies' heads. Did these people consider themselves Huns, or were they only following a fad for Hunnic fashion? There's no way to tell. See Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 331–332.

L The Goths became known as *foederati*: people who ruled themselves *inside* the Roman Empire. See Gerard Friell and Stephen Williams, *Theodosius: The Empire at Bay* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2005), 89. In some ways, this was an extension of earlier Roman alliances with "barbarians." However, letting such a group settle en masse within the empire was a notable change.

M Need some *scholé* in your classroom? Listen with your students to the beginning of Augustine's *Confessions*: http://capress.link/tch3a0104.

N The eastern emperor mentioned here is Theodosius II. We haven't named him simply because we don't want students to confuse him with Theodosius I, discussed earlier in the chapter.

O Exactly when the word "pope" was first used to refer to the bishop of Rome isn't clear; one of the earliest references we have is Tertullian's *On Modesty*, in which he uses the sarcastic phrase *bonus pastor et benedictus papa* ("good shepherd and blessed father") to address the bishop he's berating for being soft on sinners. (See Tertullian, *De Pudicitia*, 13.7.) By the end of the fourth century, though, people in the Western Church used it to refer only to the bishop of Rome, and Pope Gregory VII made it one of the official titles of the bishop of Rome in the eleventh century. (See *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1st ed. [1912], s.v. "The Pope.")

P Different historians give different accounts of Attila's death, which took place shortly after he married a Germanic woman, Ildico. Some say he was assassinated, possibly even by his new wife; others claimed he died from a nosebleed. See Christopher Kelly, "Neither Conquest Nor Settlement: Attila's Empire and Its Impact," in Mass, *Cambridge Companion to the Age of Attila*, 202.

Q The Roman Empire was established as one united empire, and a "Western Roman Empire" or an "Eastern Roman Empire" as such did not really exist; however, in this volume, for simplicity's sake, we will sometimes use these terms to describe the division that existed in what remained of the Roman Empire in the late Classical Age and early Middle Ages.

R Answers might include references to cuneiform clay tablets, bamboo strips in China, and papyrus scrolls in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, etc.

S See appendix B for hands-on projects and other activities to complement the chapters. See appendix G for a chart detailing the names, dates, and dynasties of all the Roman rulers from Diocletian on. See appendix H (reach-

er's edition only) for chapter quizzes and quiz answer keys. You can also download blank versions of the quizzes as a printable PDF found in the Bonus Digital Resources at classicalacademicpress.com/pages/subject-history.

Spotlight on Virtue: Loyalty

Discussion Question: Have you ever stood up for a friend or family member? Perhaps you saw one of your friends being mistreated by someone and told that person to stop. Maybe your sister was crying because she had a bad day, and you cheered her up. When we stand up for someone we care about, we are showing the virtue of loyalty. People who are loyal remain firm in their friendship or support of each other no matter what. The virtue of loyalty is closely related to the virtue of courage, which means not backing down from difficult or fearful tasks.

Loyalty is all about relationships. Think about the most important people in your life—parents, siblings, friends, or teachers. One of the ways that we show our love for these people is by sticking with them when they go through hard times. There may be lots of people who act friendly toward you when things are going well, but a true and loyal friend will be there for you even when you are at your lowest moment. We can also show our loyalty to that friend by listening to him when he asks us to do something.

Loyalty not only applies to the individuals in our lives, but even to communities that we belong to, such as our school or our country. A good soldier is a perfect example of loyalty because he risks his life fighting for his family, his friends, and his country. And sometimes loyalty can prompt us to make tough choices. During the American Civil War, for example, a group of young German Texans disagreed with the Confederacy's values so strongly that they tried to escape to Mexico so that they could join the Union Army. Confederate soldiers caught them and executed them as traitors, but after the war, their families erected a monument to them with the inscription *Die Treue der Union* ("Those who were loyal to the Union").

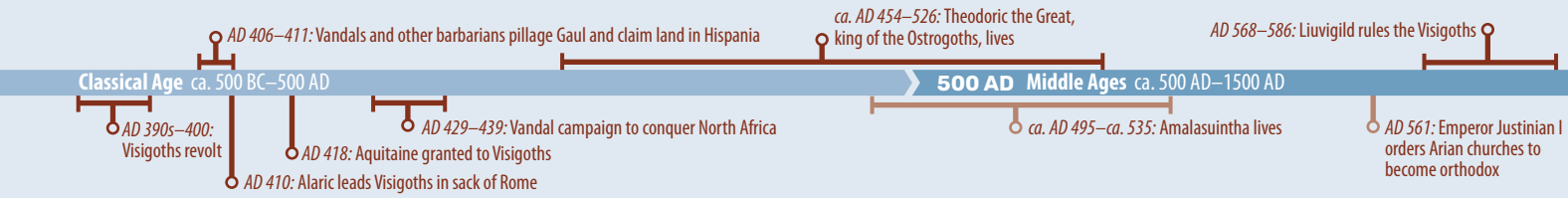
In this chapter, you read about a low moment in Roman history, when enemies surrounded the empire on all sides. One of the figures that stands out in this time of crisis is Flavius Stilicho. How did Stilicho show loyalty to Rome? How can you too show loyalty to your friends, family, and school?

Answers will vary. Stilicho showed loyalty to his country by fighting Rome's enemies, even though he was half Vandal. He could have turned his back on Rome and fought for the Vandals or another group that was trying to use threats to gain riches from Rome. Instead, he made a choice to stand by the empire and his emperor (Theodosius). We see how Stilicho's loyalty was at first rewarded by the emperor, who promoted him to second-in-command of the empire and gave him his niece to be his wife. But later, although Stilicho proved himself to be loyal to Rome, Honorius and his advisors had him executed because they were not satisfied with the way things were going. This could indicate the emperor's lack of loyalty toward Stilicho and could prompt a discussion on treachery or faithlessness, the vice associated with loyalty.

Student answers will vary for the second question. You can have students discuss the three groups separately (friends, family, and school). Loyalty to friends can look like encouraging them when they do something good, cheering them up when they are having a bad day, and defending them when someone hurts them or makes fun of them. Loyalty to family can include obeying parents, helping siblings, doing chores around the house, and speaking well of your family when you are with others. Loyalty to the school can look like obeying school rules, respecting teachers and administrators, participating in school events, speaking well of the school to their friends, and behaving well when they represent their school.

To deepen their understanding and appreciation for the virtue of loyalty, have students discuss the vices that are associated with loyalty: misplaced loyalty, treachery, or faithlessness. Can students think of an occasion when loyalty would not be a virtue? Guide them in a discussion of misplaced loyalty to an evil person or cause, such as carrying out the orders of an evil dictator, when loyalty ceases to be a virtue and becomes a vice. Remind your students that it is never virtuous to act in a way that is morally wrong. Then have students think of a time when they observed someone "switching sides" on someone else. What would it look like to betray their friends, family, or school?

TIME LINE



MEMORY

Chapter 2:
The Gothic and Vandal Kingdoms

Don't forget to learn this week's song verse(s)! The lyrics can be found in appendix A. A

Important Words

Word	Definition
Goths	A group of Germanic-speaking people who moved into the area around the Roman Empire's northeastern frontiers. Eventually, they were divided into the *Ostrogoths*, or East Goths, and the *Visigoths*, or West Goths.
Vandals	A group of Germanic-speaking people who moved into Roman territory in the fourth century AD and established a kingdom in North Africa in the fifth century
Regent	Someone who temporarily rules for a king or queen when the ruler is too young or sick to actively rule

Important Figures B

Word	Definition
Theodoric the Great	A powerful king of the Ostrogoths who ruled Italy at the turn of the sixth century. Having received a Roman education, he dressed and lived like a Roman emperor and relied on Roman officials to help run his government.
Cassiodorus	An administrator and scholar from a Roman family who advised Ostrogothic kings, wrote government documents for them, and eventually retired to a monastery
Amalasuintha	The daughter of Theodoric who helped rule the Ostrogoths after his death and embraced many aspects of Roman culture
Procopius	A scholar and administrator from the Eastern Empire who wrote many different histories about events in the sixth century
Liuvigild	A powerful Visigothic king who conquered many territories, founded new cities, and reformed laws to give orthodox Christians similar rights as Arians
Benedict	An abbot who developed a new form of monasticism according to specific rules, including a daily schedule of prayer and work, which he wrote down in an influential book known as *The Rule of Saint Benedict*
Isidore	A bishop of Seville who wrote many books, such as *On the Nature of Things*, which explained natural phenomena rationally rather than relying on superstition

Important Highlights

Word	Definition
Aquitaine	A region of southwestern Gaul initially granted to the Visigoths
Late Antique Little Ice Age	A natural disaster that started around 536 and disrupted life and economies around the world

See the *TCH3A* Go Deeper PDF, http://capress.link/tch3agd, to learn about Belisarius, one of the most celebrated and victorious generals of all time, and Reccopolis, a Visigothic urban settlement in modern-day Spain. C

Under New Management

Do you like to go sightseeing when you visit a new place? The early Christian monuments in the city of Ravenna, Italy, are a popular tourist site because of their history and their breathtaking mosaics from the fifth and sixth centuries. But if you go to Ravenna today and visit the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, you'll find one mosaic that looks a little odd. It's a picture of a building with the inscription "Palatium" ("palace"), and below the roof is a series of columns with spaces between them. Normally, you'd expect to see people in those spaces, but in this case, there's only a series of curtains. Even stranger are hands that appear to be floating in midair in front of some of the columns, and in one spot a whole arm! So clearly there *used* to be people pictured in between the columns, but at some point the mosaic was changed. Who used to be in those pictures, and why did someone change the mosaics to get rid of the images of those people? D

▲Can you spot the "floating" hands and arms in this mosaic from the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo?

When expensive art made for former leaders is covered up or edited, that often suggests that there has been a big change either in leadership or in people's opinions! There were plenty of big changes that happened around the Italian Peninsula—and across the sea the Iberian Peninsula, and in North Africa—as we'll see in this chapter. However, the fact that craftsmen were still making fancy Roman-style mosaics in the sixth century, when there was no longer a Roman emperor in the west, brings up another important point. Even though the government of the Western Roman Empire had collapsed, Roman culture was still alive and well! And as we'll see in this chapter, many of the Germanic warrior-kings who took power in this period still wanted to live like Romans. That was especially true of the three groups we're looking at in this chapter: the Visigoths in the Iberian Peninsula, the Ostrogoths in the Italian Peninsula, and the Vandals in North Africa.

The Visigoths

1. They were a Germanic group who came to control parts of the Iberian Peninsula.
2. Their leaders eventually converted from Arianism to orthodox Christianity.
3. Their leaders kept some Roman customs and reissued Roman laws in their own name. They also built their own cities. E

The Visigoths[1]

Remember the story of the Visigoths from chapter 1? In 376, Emperor Valens gave them permission to settle in Roman territory, and Gothic warriors started serving in the Roman army after Emperor Theodosius made a better peace treaty with them in 382. But then, under the leadership of Alaric, the Visigoths revolted in the late 390s and 400s and sacked Rome in 410. Alaric suddenly died early in 411, however, and his brother-in-law took the Visigoths into Gaul.

At first, the Visigoths settled around the city that's now Narbonne, France. They might have been happy to stay there if the Roman army hadn't chased them into Hispania (the Roman provinces on the Iberian Peninsula) in 415. The

1. Unless otherwise noted, information in this section comes from Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 238–425.

Visigoths then agreed to help the Romans fight the Suevi and other "barbarians" who had been living in Hispania since 411. The Romans and Visigoths didn't get rid of the other tribes, but they were successful enough in subduing them that in 418, Emperor Honorius granted the Visigoths land to farm in the region of **Aquitaine**, in southwestern Gaul. They received more land in both Gaul and Hispania in the 450s for helping the Romans against the Huns and the Suevi. The Romans who were already living in those areas were not all happy about this. With the Western Empire falling apart, however, the Visigoths met less resistance as they added most of southern Gaul and large parts of Hispania to the lands the emperors had granted them. Roman officials and landowners who were still in Gaul and Hispania switched sides to work for the Visigoths. Then, in the 500s, the Visigoths clashed with a new group of Germanic invaders: the Franks. (We will learn more about them in chapter 3.) The Franks forced the Visigoths out of Gaul and into Hispania, where the Visigoths established a new capital at Barcelona.

F

▲Coin from Visigothic Aquitaine

◀Detail of a mosaic from the Roman villa La Olmeda. La Olmeda stopped being repaired by the sixth century during the Visigothic takeover and eventually fell into ruin.

Culture on the Iberian Peninsula

What would your life be like on the Iberian Peninsula at this time if you were not a Visigothic warrior, but instead one of the people who already lived there? That would depend on where you lived and what you did for a living. During all the fighting between the Suevi, Visigoths, Romans, and other groups in the 400s, some people living on the breezy Atlantic coast or in the mountains headed for the hills—literally!

G

By contrast, if you lived in cities such as Seville and Barcelona—particularly on the sunny Mediterranean coast and in the south—people still spoke Latin, still crossed Roman bridges, and still used Roman buildings. However, the way the cities were run had changed. Their rulers no longer reported back to a huge government that was based in Rome. Rather, they were often governed by powerful bishops. The majority of the population of the Iberian Peninsula were orthodox Christians who listened to their bishops. These bishops also frequently

had meetings, or councils, and were able to influence Visigothic kings, even if the bishops were orthodox* and the early Visigothic kings were Arians.[2]

And it wasn't just the people who were already living in towns who kept to their Roman ways: The new Visigothic leaders copied Roman ideas, too! Roman law continued to apply to many people in Visigothic territories, since the Visigothic kings created laws that closely copied Roman legislation. For example, the "Roman Law of the Visigoths," issued in 506 by King Alaric II, was for the most part a collection of earlier Roman laws. The Roman Law of the Visigoths differed because it left out laws about the senate, which no longer controlled the Iberian Peninsula.[3]

The Roman Law of the Visigoths reveals a society where many people had a lord. Your lord was a person who was more powerful than you were. He could tell you what to do and ask you for help: He could ask you to deliver a message, come to his parties, and even fight a war for him. In turn, though, your lord could get in trouble with the king for anything you did wrong, such as starting fights that the king did not want.[4] Visigothic kings were at the top of this society and did not have lords over them. However, if the king was a child, he still had to listen to his parents and grandparents, like any little boy! This is what happened when Alaric II died. His young son Amalaric had to listen to his mother's father, who was one of the most remarkable rulers in the 500s: Theodoric the Ostrogoth, king of Italy.

The Ostrogoths[5]

Not all the Goths had moved into Roman territory in the 370s. The Ostrogoths, or East Goths, were overrun by the Huns and ended up moving west with other tribes that made up the Hunnic Empire. After Attila's death, the Ostrogoths were among the groups who revolted against the Huns. They made a treaty with Constantinople and were allowed to settle in the Roman province of Pannonia, where the Visigoths had lived when they first arrived in Roman territory. (Pannonia is now divided among the modern nations of Hungary, Serbia, and Romania.) And like the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths' leaders converted to Arianism.

In the 480s, the Ostrogoths' leader was **Theodoric the Great** (lived ca. 454–526, ruled 471–526). Theodoric had been taken to Constantinople as a hostage in the 460s and received a good Roman education, and he'd served in the eastern Roman army. He even became a Roman citizen and a general. Of all the Germanic rulers in the fifth and sixth centuries, Theodoric was the most Romanized. Theodoric even dressed like a Roman emperor (apart from his mustache)! But while Theodoric wanted to live like a Roman, he didn't want to be a Roman subject. He wanted to be a *king*.

To the Source:

"orthodox" comes from the Greek *orth-*, meaning "straight" or "correct," and *doxa*, "opinion" or "belief." Together the compound word means "correct beliefs."

▲The beautiful Chapel of São Frutuoso in Braga is a visual reminder of medieval bishops' wealth and power.

The Ostrogoths

1. They were a group of Goths who ruled Italy in the late fifth century and early sixth century.
2. Their leader, Theodoric, and his family had Roman educations and hired old Roman officials to work for them.
3. Although many Roman customs remained, Ostrogothic warrior-kings also simplified the government, demanding fewer taxes and keeping far fewer officials to run things.
4. Ostrogothic kings depended much more on warrior-nobles and Christian leaders, such as bishops and abbots, and less on the old class of Roman civil officials.

Must-(Have) 'Stache

Why do you think Theodoric kept his mustache despite dressing like a Roman emperor? What did this mixture of styles convey to the Romans, and what did it say to the Ostrogoths? TE>

2. Michael Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain and Its Cities* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 254–255.
3. Michael Edward Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300–850* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 132.
4. Santiago Castellanos, *The Visigothic Kingdom in Iberia: Construction and Invention* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 31.
5. Unless otherwise noted, information in this section comes from Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 329–454.

◀This gold coin depicts "King Theodoric, pious prince" wearing Roman attire.

Theodoric got his chance in 488, when Zeno, the eastern Roman emperor, asked Theodoric and the Ostrogoths to invade Italy in 488 to attack Odoacer, the king who had overthrown Romulus Augustulus. Theodoric's army managed to destroy Odoacer's supply lines. The Italian king agreed to a peace treaty, stating that Theodoric would share the rule of Italy with him. Theodoric then entered Ravenna and arranged a lavish banquet, supposedly to celebrate the treaty. During the meal, however, Theodoric killed Odoacer, and from then on he claimed to be the sole ruler of Italy. Zeno recognized Theodoric as king of Italy in 497. While Theodoric acknowledged that Zeno was the emperor, Theodoric, not Zeno, was in charge in Italy.[6]

Theodoric relied on Roman officials, including the scholar **Cassiodorus** (ca. 485–ca. 585) and the philosopher Boethius (died 524), to help his government run smoothly. These men came from families that had been running the empire for generations as consuls, senators, and military leaders. Remember, as you saw with conquering rulers such as the Sassanians, it is much easier to work with the existing nobles and systems of government than to try to destroy everything and create a whole new government. And when the people are allowed to continue practicing their cultures and traditions, they are happier and less likely to rebel against their new rulers. Theodoric governed his Germanic subjects according to Ostrogothic law but kept Roman laws for his Roman subjects, and as much as he could, he rebuilt Roman towns and aqueducts that had been damaged or destroyed by the wars of the fifth century. He was also the only Arian ruler of the time to protect both orthodox Christians and Jews and built many magnificent churches, especially in Ravenna. The church that's now Sant'Apollinare Nuovo—then the Basilica of Christ the Redeemer—was one of the churches he built for Arian worship, and the "Palatium" mosaic we mentioned at the start of the chapter probably featured pictures of Theodoric and his court.

▲Page 292 of the Silver Bible, featuring Mark 3:26-32

The Silver Bible

The oldest surviving written document in the Gothic language is the Silver Bible, or *Codex Argenteus*, which was completed in the city of Ravenna ca. 510. It contains the four Gospels translated from Greek into Gothic. The Silver Bible may have been owned by Theodoric and is written in gold and silver ink on purple parchment. Purple dye was incredibly expensive in ancient times, so you can imagine how much this Bible cost to make! The pages are now terribly fragile, so scholars who want to read it often work from images that were made under special lighting and by taking X-rays of each page.[7]

◀Illustrations from a 1385 manuscript showing Boethius teaching (top) and Boethius in prison after he clashed with Theodoric (bottom)

Theodoric became so powerful that he also began to interfere in the politics of neighboring Germanic kingdoms. He married the sister of the Frankish king,

6. John Moorhead, "Ostrogothic Italy and the Lombard Invasions," in Fouracre, *New Cambridge Medieval History Vol. 1*, 143.
7. Lars Munkhammar, "Codex Argenteus, From Ravenna to Uppsala: The Wanderings of a Gothic Manuscript from the Early Sixth Century," Proceedings of the 64th IFLA General Conference (August 16–21, 1998), *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions*, accessed August 26, 2021, http://capress.link/tch3a0202.

▲The Arian baptistry in Ravenna, Italy

▲Look closely at this diptych. Do you see the two figures flanking the cross at the top? They're Amalasuintha and her son Athalaric!

arranged for his own sister to marry the Vandal king, and had one of his daughters marry the Visigothic king, Alaric II. When Alaric II died in battle in 507, Theodoric's baby grandson, Amalaric, inherited the Visigothic throne, but Theodoric ruled the Visigoths as regent from 511. He also negotiated a treaty between the Visigoths and the Franks that set the boundary between their two kingdoms.

However, before Theodoric could expand his power any further, he died in 526. After Theodoric's death, the Visigoths and Vandals became independent of Ostrogothic influence once more. The Ostrogothic throne passed to one of Theodoric's other grandsons, Athalaric, who was still a child. His well-educated mother, Theodoric's daughter **Amalasuintha** (ca. 495–534 or 535), served as his regent. This arrangement largely worked until Athalaric died eight years later. The Ostrogothic nobles did not want to be ruled by a woman, and Amalasuintha did not want to give up power. To keep her Ostrogothic nobles happy, she invited her male cousin, Theodahad, to be her co-ruler, even though she made it very clear to Theodahad that she expected to be the boss. By appointing a co-ruler, Amalasuintha was following older Roman models of government. However, neither Theodahad, nor the eastern emperor Justinian, nor the Ostrogothic nobles were entirely happy with this development. Theodahad imprisoned Amalasuintha on an island, where she died in 534 or 535. Then Justinian invaded the Italian Peninsula, using Amalasuintha's death as an excuse (although he was probably intending to attack all along).

While Amalasuintha did not reign for long, she nevertheless had a big impact on the history of Italy, due to Justinian's ensuing invasion. You will have to read on to learn more about Justinian in chapter 5. She also influenced later queens. Ironically, queens of her old opponents, the Franks, would later cite her as an example of a queen mother legitimately holding power![8]

When in Rome (or Ravenna), Do as the Romans?

As we have seen, Theodoric's and Amalasuintha's Italy preserved many Roman customs. Even so, there were a few key changes that came with these new Ostrogothic leaders. The most important leaders in Italy increasingly wore military clothes, rather than dressing in the togas of senators and officials. If you wanted power, being able to quote famous Roman writers such as Virgil and Cicero in official documents—as Theodoric's chief advisor Cassiodorus did—soon became less important than being able to fight (if you were a noble) or knowing the Bible (if you were a bishop or administrator).[9]

At least, *claiming* that you knew how to fight was important for Ostrogothic leaders, as can be seen in a letter that Cassiodorus wrote in 536 on behalf of Witigis. (Witigis was married to Amalsuintha's daughter, and he became king

8. Massimiliano Vitiello, *Amalasuintha: The Transformation of Queenship in the Post-Roman World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 215–218.
9. Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome* (London: Penguin, 2009), 106.

after Theodahad was himself murdered.) Cassiodorus portrays Witigis saying, "I was not chosen behind closed doors in government buildings, but in the wide and open battlefields . . . as the trumpets blared, so that the Gothic people . . . might find themselves a warrior king."[10] N

Ostrogothic leaders also had far less control than most emperors did. They collected fewer taxes and were thus not able to keep such an extensive array of professional officials at their beck and call. While a Roman emperor could fire a misbehaving Roman official right away—at least in theory—the Ostrogothic kings needed their wealthy nobles to fight for them and to keep the peace: They could not as easily fire them or get rid of them.[11]

▼ Illustration of Cassiodorus found in a manuscript (ca. 1176)

It was not just Goths who did things differently from the Romans. Even Italians like Cassiodorus had to change with the times. Cassiodorus's family intended him to work in powerful government jobs, so they had him educated in Greek and Latin classics at Rome's classical schools. Over time, these sorts of schools began to disappear, as people stopped valuing the skills they taught. Instead, parents who wanted to educate their children in reading and writing started to send them to monastic schools. Toward the end of his life, Cassiodorus founded his own monastery with a school. He still encouraged his students to study the subjects that were taught at classical schools, in addition to biblical studies. In particular, he advocated for the study of seven key subjects that became the basis for the seven liberal arts. He never stopped teaching. He even wrote a book on spelling at the age of ninety-three![12]

The Vandals[13]

Remember the Vandals from chapter 1? They were another of the Germanic peoples who got pushed westward by the Huns. And like the Goths, the Vandals converted to Arianism when they left their polytheistic beliefs behind. A large group of Vandals (along with Alans and Suevi) invaded Gaul in 406 and settled in Hispania in 411. Then in 429, the Vandal king Gaiseric led his people across the Straits of Gibraltar into North Africa, which they slowly conquered over the next ten years. A treaty with Rome in 435 gave them control of several of the richest provinces on the southwestern shores of the Mediterranean.

But Gaiseric wanted all of North Africa west of Egypt, and he won an important victory in 439 when he captured Carthage. Do you remember the kinds of goods Carthage exported from North Africa? Capturing Carthage put Gaiseric in control of most of Rome's grain supply! From there, the Vandals also started capturing strategic islands in the Mediterranean, including Sardinia and Sicily, which brought even more of Rome's supply lines into Vandal territory.

The Vandals

1. They were a Germanic group who conquered some parts of North Africa in the fifth century.
2. Some Vandal leaders disrupted the supply of grain to Rome.
3. Many Vandal leaders adopted Roman clothing and customs (such as going to the theater, bathing, and living in big houses with mosaics).

10. Cassiodorus, *Variae*, book X, letter 31, http://capress.link/tch3a0204. Excerpt translated by Alison Hardy and Elisabeth G. Wolfe.
11. Wickham, *Inheritance of Rome*, 103.
12. Cassiodorus, *De orthographia: tradizione manoscritta, fortuna, edizione critica*, ed. Patrizia Stoppacci (Florence: SISMEL, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2010), 4.
13. Unless otherwise noted, information in this section comes from Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 263–426.

Tunisian archaeologist Dr. Aïcha Ben Abed has made a career of recovering mosaics from the Roman and Vandal periods. But she doesn't just study the mosaics. She hires local people, especially women, and trains them in how to conserve the mosaics, either where they're found or in a museum. Not only does that allow archaeologists and museum visitors to see the mosaics in better condition, but the trainees can then go on to have a career in mosaic conservation or even make new mosaics for modern customers. So Dr. Abed isn't just recovering ancient artworks—she's recovering the art skills as well![14] —A.D.

Gaiseric didn't cut off trade with Rome at once, though. He let traders continue to operate, but he kept the tax money that had been going to Rome and used it to pay his own army. He also seized farms and villas—many of which belonged to wealthy families who lived in Rome most of the time—and gave them to his followers, who were perfectly happy to live in swanky Roman houses and let the Roman peasants keep working the land for them. The Vandals even commissioned new mosaics showing off their newfound wealth!

When Attila's invasions forced Emperor Valentinian III to make peace with Gaiseric in 442, one of the terms of the treaty was that Valentinian's daughter Eudocia would marry Gaiseric's son Huneric. They were both young children at the time, so the wedding was supposed to be delayed until they were old enough to marry. It was still on hold when Valentinian was killed in 455, and the man who claimed the throne after him broke the treaty by marrying Eudocia to his own son. Furious, Gaiseric cut off the grain supply to Rome. Then he besieged the city of Rome, and when the people surrendered, the Vandals came in and stole everything they could carry. That's how *vandal* came to mean "a person who delights in destruction"!

►**A nineteenth-century engraving portraying the Vandal king Gaiseric**

By the time of his death, Gaiseric had built a strong kingdom out of formerly Roman North Africa. Although Huneric wasn't nearly as popular, he managed

14. *Sturm über Europa: Die Völkerwanderung*, episode 3, "Der Kampf um Rom," originally aired February 24, 2002, on Arte, http://capress.link/tch3a0205; see also Aïcha Ben Abed, Martha Demas, and Thomas Roby, eds., *Lessons Learned: Reflecting on the Theory and Practice of Mosaic Conservation*, Proceedings of the 9th ICCM Conference, Hammatt, Tunisia, November 29–December 3, 2005 (Los Angeles: Getty, 2008).

to hold on to most of his father's gains. After Huneric's death, the throne passed to his nephew Gunthamund and then to Gunthamund's brother Thrasamund, who married Theodoric's sister. Thrasamund was more like Theodoric than like Gaiseric in his style of governing. Although he was an Arian, he built new churches for orthodox Christians and first eased, then ended, the restrictions against them. He also sponsored other building projects across North Africa, repairing and replacing public buildings in the Roman style.

Pretty Pots, Mountain Monarchs, and Fig Farmers

In North Africa, the Vandals encountered people from many different cultures who spoke different languages. There were traders in the bustling port cities who spoke the Greek and Punic languages as well as Latin and who sent their goods all over the Mediterranean and beyond. Some of the pretty red dishes and pots made in Carthage and other North African towns have even been found as far north as the British Isles.[15]

Meanwhile, living in the mountains beyond the coast were other groups of people who spoke a language that is called Tamazight or Berber today. The Romans called some of these people Numidians and *Mauri*. Some of these people kept their own languages and kings, but they were incorporated into the Roman Empire and were heavily influenced by Roman culture. For example, we have records from one king, Nubel, who also had a Latin name—Flavius Nuvel—and was a commander of some Roman army divisions. Other Berbers built towns like the Romans. Many converted to Christianity by the sixth and seventh centuries.[16]

At first, some Berber leaders may have supported the Vandals, but many Berbers later resisted the Vandals and formed their own kingdoms, in part because the Vandals were Arian Christians and the Berbers were orthodox Christians. Berber leaders founded kingdoms in the west in the area between the coast and the Sahara Desert, where they took over Roman towns and forts.[17]

In between the Berber kingdoms in the mountains and the trading ports on the coast, there were farms. Records survive for a group of farms on the southern border of the Vandals' realms which give us some idea of what life was like there. On those farms, people grew olive trees, fig trees, almond trees, pistachio trees, and vines, and they made olive oil. The biggest farms were owned by Flavius Geminius Catullinus, a man with a Latin name. The village had a priest, Saturninus, and at least two schoolteachers who helped write documents recording land sales that still survive to this day. Toward the bottom of this society, there was a woman recorded only as "Sebrun's widow," who owned a "morsel" of land and who sold some fig trees and vines. On the lowest rung of

15. A. H. Merrills, "Introduction," in *Vandals, Romans and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa* (London: Routledge, 2016), 10–11; Maria Duggan, *Links to Late Antiquity: Ceramic Exchange and Contacts on the Atlantic Seaboard in the 5th to 7th Centuries AD* (Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2018).
16. Andy Blackhurst, "The House of Nubel: Rebels or Players?" in Merrills, *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, 66, 74; Alan Rushworth, "From Arzuges to Rustamids: State Formation and Regional Identity in the Pre-Saharan Zone," in Merrills, *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, 94.
17. Blackhurst, "House of Nubel," in Merrills, *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, 74.

Rulers and Rivals

Gaiseric was the ruler of the Vandals from 428 to 477. He was their leader the entire time Attila was king of the Huns (ca. 440–453).

▲ A red African cup with molded interior decoration

If you purchased *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 3A*, you can read in the Biblical Connections PDF about how both Joshua and Paul navigated being surrounded by people with different or unorthodox religious beliefs.

this society was an enslaved boy called Fortinus. His owners sold him for about one and a half gold coins. The people who lived on these farms were not totally unaffected by the politics of kings and warlords—they may have been caught up in fighting between Vandals and Berbers—but life on these farms continued regardless of them.[18]

▲Vandalic jewelry

The Vandals seem to have fit right into this world as landlords and political leaders. It became increasingly hard to tell who was a Vandal and who was a Roman just by looking at the clothes and jewelry they were wearing. Vandal leaders collected taxes and enjoyed poems written in their honor by authors trained in the Latin and Greek classics, just like their Roman predecessors had. **Procopius** (ca. 500–565)—an administrator and historian from the eastern part of the empire—said the Vandals took baths every day and went to the theater, like the Romans, and that they had lost their warrior culture. Procopius may have been exaggerating, but what he wrote shows that people had noticed that Vandal elites were changing.[19]

How did an eastern administrator such as Procopius know so much about the Vandals? He was the secretary of a general who was on a mission from the emperor to retake North Africa and Italy. The empire was striking back!

Invasions and Ice

The situation in the Gothic and Vandal kingdoms was uncertain enough in the early 530s as it was, but a series of outside forces started shaking things up even more. The first was that a new emperor, Justinian I, came to power in Constantinople and began a major campaign in 533 to take back all the Roman territory that had been lost in the previous century. His senior general, a man named Belisarius, swiftly defeated the Vandals and then turned his attention toward Italy. His fight against the Ostrogoths took much longer and was much more destructive, but he did capture Ravenna in 540. Although the Ostrogoths made a comeback in the 540s while Justinian's generals were forced to give their attention to a Sassanian invasion, Justinian was determined: He at last sent his other famous general, Narses, to Italy with a huge army, which finally ended the Ostrogothic kingdom in 552. Then Justinian turned toward the Iberian Peninsula. The army he sent there was small, though, so it only managed to take a strip of the Mediterranean coast from the Visigoths before the campaign had to end.

A second disruptive force, which affected Justinian and Belisarius as much as it did the Goths and Vandals, was a natural disaster that scholars call the **Late Antique Little Ice Age**, which seems to have started in 536. It appears to have disrupted life and economies around the world: A chronicle from Ireland mentioned a lack of bread, while government records mentioned that it snowed in August in China! Some cities in the Maya lowlands in Central America were

18. Jonathan P. Conant, "Literacy and Private Documentation in Vandal North Africa: The Case of the Albertini Tablets," in Merrills, *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, 199–224; Douglas Boin, *A Social and Cultural History of Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Wiley, 2018), 183.
19. Merrills, "Introduction," in *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, 12; Procopius, *History of the Wars, Volume II: Books 3–4 (Vandalic War)*, trans. H. B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library 81 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), IV.vi.6–14.

deserted around this time too. Scientists still debate the exact cause of this catastrophe, but some suggest that a series of major volcanic eruptions contributed. In 536, there may have been so much ash in the atmosphere that Cassiodorus, writing in Ravenna, and Procopius, writing in Constantinople, both say the sun was dimmed for a whole year! Crops all over the world failed, and a lot of people starved. As a result of all these problems—wars and famines and disease—the population of Rome shrank from 500,000 in AD 400 to less than 50,000 by AD 550.[20]

> "For the sun gave forth its light without brightness, like the moon, during this whole year, and it seemed exceedingly like the sun in eclipse, for the beams it shed were not clear nor such as it is accustomed to shed. And from the time when this thing happened men were free neither from war nor pestilence nor any other thing leading to death."
>
> —Procopius, *History of the Wars* IV.xiv

After Belisarius's victories and the Late Antique Little Ice Age, the Ostrogoths and Vandals disappeared from history. Justinian's forces also tried to erase them from memory. In 561, Justinian ordered that all Arian churches be rededicated for orthodox Christian worship.

When the Romans wanted people to forget that an emperor existed, the Senate would formally condemn him after his death. His name would be erased from official documents, inscriptions, and coins, and statues and monuments might be destroyed or changed to look like someone else. His home might also be remodeled or demolished, and artworks with his image usually had his face scratched off. In some cases, people could be executed just for mentioning a condemned emperor's name! Modern scholars call this process *damnatio memoriae*, "condemnation of memory." Justinian's treatment of Theodoric's memory wasn't a formal *damnatio memoriae*, but the result was similar. –A.D.

◂A mosaic of Emperor Justinian surrounded by members of the military and clergy at the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy

20. Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill, ed. and trans., *The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)*, year 536 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983), 71; Richardson B. Gill, *The Great Maya Droughts: Water, Life, and Death* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 229; Procopius, *De Bellae,* IV.xiv; Cassiodorus, *Variae*, XII.XXV; Uwe Büntgen et al., "Cooling and Societal Change during the Late Antique Little Ice Age from 536 to around 660 AD," *Nature Geoscience* 9 (2016): 231–236, doi:10.1038/ngeo2652; Matthew Toohey et al., "Climatic and Societal Impacts of a Volcanic Double Event at the Dawn of the Middle Ages," *Climatic Change* 136 (2016): 401–412; Brandon Spektor, "536 Was a Garbage Year for Mankind (So Give 2018 a Break)," *LiveScience*, last updated November 20, 2018, http://capress.link/tch3a0206; Jonathan Arnold, Kristina Sessa, and Shane Bjornlie, eds., "Introduction," in *A Companion to Ostrogothic Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 9.

▲A painting of Saint Benedict by Hans Memling (oil on panel, 1487)

Remember at the beginning of the chapter when we talked about the mystery of the disembodied hands in the Ravenna mosaic and asked why someone would cover up the people in it? Here's the answer! The bishop of Ravenna had the art in the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo reworked to remove any Arian symbolism—including the pictures of Theodoric and his court in the "Palatium" mosaic, which were replaced with curtains. Another, grander new church, the Basilica of San Vitale, was built around the same time; it's famous for a pair of mosaics depicting Justinian and his wife, Theodora.

Busy Bishops and Memorable Monks

Part of the reason Justinian and others wanted to forget about Theodoric and the Ostrogothic leaders was that they were Arians. Most of the population of Italy, however, had remained committed to orthodox Christianity. As a result, orthodox leaders and institutions became increasingly important for the whole population. By AD 500 there were dozens of bishops on the Italian Peninsula: Almost every city had one. These bishops played an important role in maintaining towns. Even medium-sized towns had wealthy bishops who paid for big new buildings. As town leaders, bishops also had to deal with many crises in this period, as shipments of food from North Africa did not arrive, as refugees from wars *did* arrive, and as volcanic clouds wreaked havoc. Bishops welcomed refugees and helped distribute food.[21]

Monasteries were also important as places of worship, schools, libraries, hospitals, and refuges for travelers, all rolled into one, as we discussed in the introduction to this unit. In fact, while all the wars between Ostrogoths, imperial forces, and others were taking place, a new form of monasticism was being developed by an abbot called **Benedict**. Benedict believed the secret to living a good, godly life was to pray and to work (*ora et labora*), so he created a schedule for his monks to make sure they had enough time to pray, study the Bible, and work. His monks were supposed to pray eight times during the day and night. His monks were not allowed to own private property; rather, they were supposed to share everything with each other. They were also required to stay in the monastery unless the abbot sent them on an errand.

Benedict wrote down many other rules for how to run a monastery. For example, he said that the person in charge of the cellar, where all the food was kept, should be someone who could be trusted not to sneak snacks; monks should not hit each other; and work tasks should be assigned to each monk according to age, abilities, and strength.

Eventually, other abbots and abbesses all around Europe learned about Benedict's ideas and started to use his rules too. As a result, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, as it was known, would spread throughout Europe over the next few centuries.[22]

The Relics of Saint Apollinaris

Saint Apollinaris was the first bishop of Ravenna, and legend states that he was personally appointed by the Apostle Peter. Saint Apollinaris was one of the first Christian martyrs in Italy, so his relics have long been honored. Relics are the belongings or bodily remains of a deceased person who is thought to have lived an exceptionally holy life. The faithful of some non-Christian traditions, such as Buddhism, also revere some objects as sacred relics. Sometimes kept or displayed in a special container called a "reliquary," relics have often been the object of pilgrimages. In the Middle Ages, pilgrims sometimes traveled great distances in order to pray to God in the presence of a saint's holy relics. Saint Apollinaris's relics had been kept in the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in the nearby port town of Classe until the ninth century, when pirate raids on Classe made that basilica unsafe. The relics were then moved to Ravenna, and the church was rededicated as Sant'Apollinare Nuovo (New Saint Apollinaris).[23]

21. Federico Marazzi, "Ostrogothic Cities," in Arnold, Sessa, and Bjornlie, *Companion to Ostrogothic Italy*, 115–116; Arnold, Sessa, and Bjornlie, "Introduction," *Companion to Ostrogothic Italy*, 9.
22. Benedict, *The Rule of Benedict*, trans. Carolinne White (London: Penguin, 2008).
23. "St. Apollinaris"; "Basilica of Saint'Apollinare Nuovo," *Opera di Religione della Diocesi di Ravenna*, accessed September 4, 2021, http://capress.link/tch3a0207.

The Visigoths' Golden Age

While the kingdoms of the Ostrogoths and Vandals were disappearing, however, the Visigoths were about to enter a new period of prosperity. By 550, they'd established their new capital at Toledo. Most of what they built there was later torn down so the stone could be used for new buildings, but a few scattered bits of the decoration still survive. There was also a burst of building activity in other strategic cities such as Barcelona around this time.[24] In the 570s, the Visigoths' new king was the ambitious **Liuvigild** (ruled 568–586). Although he was a Visigothic king, he copied Roman styles. He wore purple, sat on a throne, and minted gold coins with his own image and name on them, although the picture was much less realistic than Roman coins' portraits had been.

> Liuvigild "was the first [Visigoth] to greet his people while on a throne, dressed like a king. Before him, the people and the kings dressed alike and sat together."
> —Isidore of Seville[25]

▲Notice the difference between Liuvigild's likeness and those of Roman rulers featured on similar coins (see page 25 for an example).

And on the whole, Liuvigild lived up to the Roman hype he fostered. Not only did he regain territories his predecessors had lost, but he founded whole new Roman-style cities—the only completely new cities being built in western Europe at the time! The most important of these cities was Reccopolis, which Liuvigild founded in the late 570s and named after his son and heir Reccared I (ruled 586–601). Its ruins stand about fifty miles east of modern Madrid. Excavations since the 1990s have shown that Reccopolis was a major regional capital and a center of both local and foreign trade.[26]

▼Made to hang over an altar, this golden Visigothic crown was hidden with other church treasures and found again in the nineteenth century.

Liuvigild also reformed the laws of his kingdom to give his Roman subjects the same rights as Visigoths and to allow marriages between the two groups. Liuvigild knew that he would have a better chance of keeping his kingdom together if there was religious unity, so he sought to make Arian doctrines more like orthodox doctrines. He may have offered perks to people who converted to Arianism, which made him unpopular with later (orthodox) bishops who wrote histories of his reign. However, there were too few Arians left in his realm to make Arianism a popular choice: Many Visigoths had already converted to orthodox Christianity. Liuvigild himself reportedly joined them and converted to orthodox Christianity on his deathbed.[27]

The religious changes continued under Liuvigild's heirs. Reccared not only converted to orthodox Christianity himself in 587, but he convinced most of the other Arians in the kingdom to do likewise. Within a few generations, his successors were creating and giving beautiful golden crosses and even crowns to

24. Cristina Godoy Fernández, "Archaeology in the Eastern Part of the Tarraconensis Province in the Times of the Visigothic Kings," *Catalan Historical Review* 13 (2020): 15–19.
25. Isidore, *Historia Gothorum*, in *Las Historias de los godos, vándalos y suevos de Isidoro de Sevilla : estudio, edición crítica y traducción*, ed. Rodríguez Alonso, Cristóbal (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidro, 1975), 51. Excerpt translated by Alison Hardy.
26. Lauro Olmo-Enciso, Manuel Castro-Priego, and Pilar Diarte-Blasco, "Beside and within the Walls of Reccopolis: Social Dynamics and Landscape Transformations of a New Visigothic Urban Foundation," *Groma* 3 (2018): 1–14, doi:10.12977/groma14; Jason Urbanus, "The Visigoths' Imperial Ambitions," *Archaeology*, March/April 2021, 50–55.
27. Ángel Barbero and M. I. Loring, "The Formation of the Sueve and Visigothic Kingdoms in Spain," in Fouracre, *New Cambridge Medieval History Vol. 1*, 192.

Only a small part of the Reccopolis site is available for excavation. The rest is on private property, and the archaeologists haven't been able to get permission to dig there. But they have gotten permission to scan the land with sensors that can detect buried items with strong magnetic fields or patches of soil where there were fires or where blacksmiths worked iron. These scans have shown that Reccopolis was a huge, busy place, even after Visigothic times![28] V —A.D.

▶Ruins of a basilica at Reccopolis

(orthodox) churches in cities such as Toledo, where the items were meant to be displayed on altars as royal gifts to God.

Meanwhile, during the ensuing period of peace, writers in the Visigothic kingdom created other forms of art and learning too. Among these writers was **Isidore**, bishop of Seville. Isidore's writings show how some aspects of Roman culture survived under the later Visigoths. For example, Isidore revised and expanded on a book first written by the Roman writer Lucretius (died ca. 55 BC), called *On the Nature of Things* (*De Natura Rerum*). He also wrote a sort of encyclopedia that covered topics from hedgehogs to eclipses, as well as books about theology and on history. W

28. Joachim Henning et al., "Reccopolis Revealed: The First Geomagnetic Mapping of the Early Medieval Visigothic Royal Town," *Antiquity* 93 (2019): 735–751, doi:10.15184/aqy.2019.66.

Literature of the Age: *On the Nature of Things*

Isidore's *On the Nature of Things* was a guide to natural phenomena such as clouds, stars, seasons, and rainbows. Isidore wanted to combat superstition by explaining how natural phenomena worked. He explained that the moon does not give off its own light, but rather reflects light from the sun. That's why the moon appears to change shape from week to week: The whole moon is still there, but only part of it is illuminated. He also explained how rainbows, clouds, snow, and hail are formed, how the planets move in the night sky, and how earthquakes happen.[29] Scientists no longer agree with all of Isidore's explanations, but he got a surprising amount right, given the limited technology that was available to him. Generations of astronomers have respected Isidore, and there is even a crater on the moon named in his honor (the Isidorus crater).

▼One of Isidore's many round diagrams from *On the Nature of Things*

Isidore's work was very popular and widely copied throughout the Middle Ages. It was sometimes called the "Book of Wheels" because it contained so many round diagrams. What do you think Isidore was illustrating with the diagram replicated here?

29. Isidore of Seville, *On the Nature of Things*, ed. and trans. Calvin Kendall and Faith Wallis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016).

Looking Back . . . Looking Ahead

Roman names, Roman laws, rewrites of Roman books—but, you might say, I thought we were supposed to be in the Middle Ages now! Although there may no longer have been an emperor ruling from Rome, many aspects of Roman daily life continued. While there were Germanic-speaking warrior-kings in charge of the places around the Mediterranean, they ruled Roman people, and they often embraced the Roman traditions, art, and writings of those people.

Roman estates and farms in North Africa, where everyday people continued to farm pistachios, olives, and goods just as they had before, were now taken over by the Vandals, who controlled Carthage and shipments of food around the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, the Italian Peninsula was ruled by Theodoric the Ostrogoth, who also adopted some parts of Roman culture. He hired members of old Roman families like Cassiodorus to help him write his letters and do day-to-day business, so he could expand his power over neighboring Germanic kingdoms and their kings. One of those groups were the West Goths, or Visigoths, who had been pushed out of Gaul by another Germanic group (the Franks, whom we'll meet in the next chapter) and into the Iberian Peninsula. Their kings revitalized Roman laws, dressed like Roman rulers, issued Roman-style coins, converted to the orthodox Christianity of their subjects, and even built new towns as Roman leaders once did.

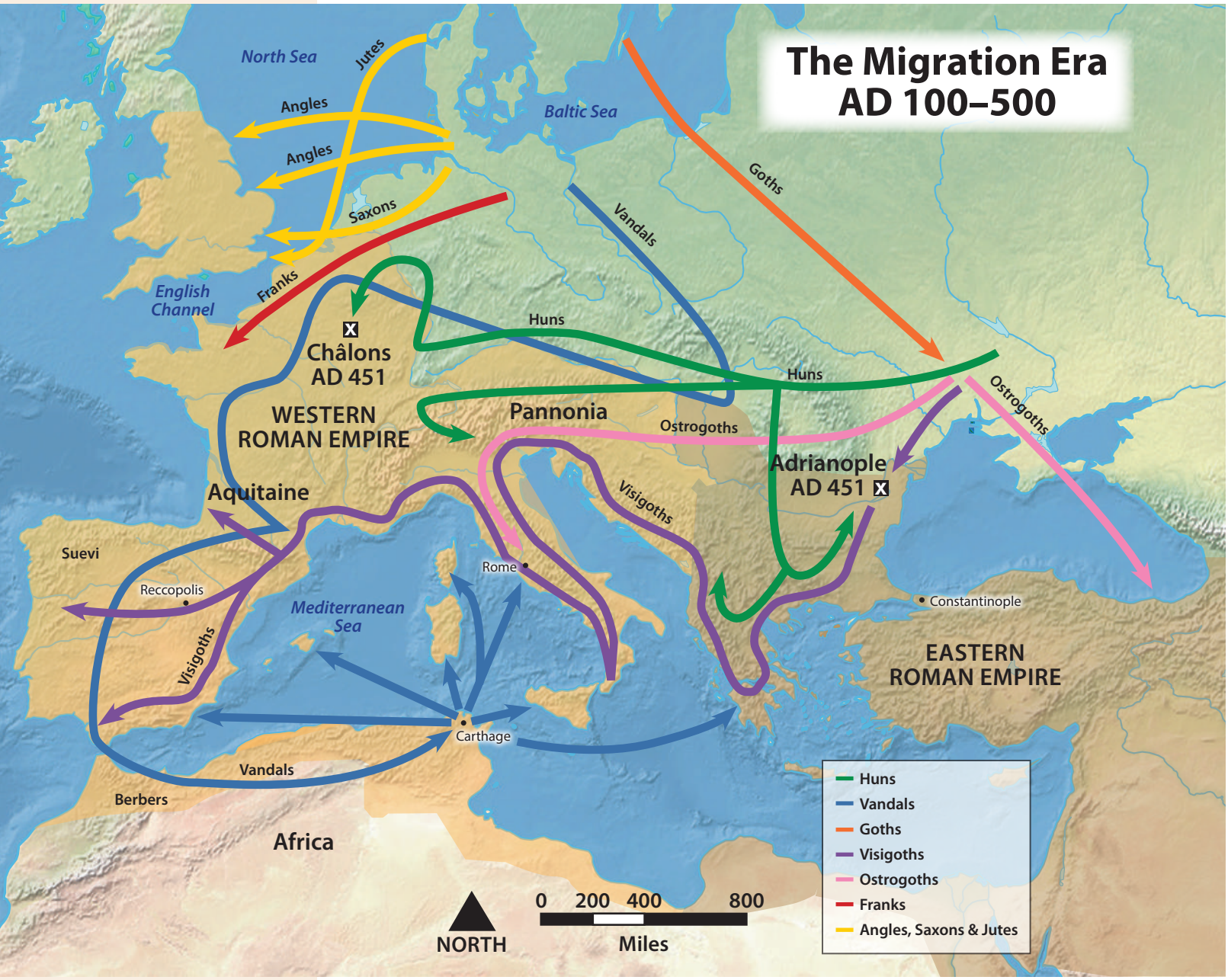
However, by the end of this chapter, large parts of these regions had gone from having Romanized kings to being ruled by imperial forces again! Not only did Theodoric die before he could expand his power over the Visigoths, but also the generals of the eastern emperor, Justinian, swept the Vandals out of North Africa and then the Ostrogoths out of Italy. Justinian's forces did not manage to take out the Visigoths, though. Visigothic leaders such as Liuvigild, who had also adopted more Roman practices and fashion styles over time, enabled the peace and prosperity of the Visigothic kingdom to last until 710, when Hispania was invaded by an army from North Africa. (These invaders followed a new religion—Islam—but that's a story for chapter 6.)

In the fifth and sixth centuries, even while some things stayed the same, the world was changing. To be a leader, you now had to be a warrior. There was still a place for people with organizational skills and a talent for book-learning: Those people often became bishops, monks, or nuns who worked, prayed, studied, and helped the refugees and the people around them. There was something else that changed dramatically in the early sixth century: the weather! During the Late Antique Little Ice Age, a series of bad harvests and lack of light caused famine and disease, affecting everyone around the Mediterranean, from the mighty emperor Justinian to the farmers eking out a living in the hills.

In parts of western Europe that were farther away from the Mediterranean, life had changed even more dramatically. This would have been noticeable to a young Visigothic princess called Brunhilda, as she and her entourage traveled north so she could marry one of the kings of the Franks, the group who had pushed the Visigoths out of Gaul. Smaller cities, bossier bishops, fewer Roman customs: As Brunhilda and her entourage creaked over the road toward Metz

(in modern-day France), what was she thinking about the Frankish world in which she found herself? Would she ever fit in? To find out how Brunhilda fared—and who these Franks were—read on!

To read more about the Basques, inhabitants of the Pyrenees who resisted Roman culture; Amalasuintha, a would-be empress who ruled the Ostrogoths; and the Christian community that thrived in North Africa, see the Profiles and Legends PDF in *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 3A*.



Practice the Facts

Match each of these names and terms, some of which are vocabulary words, to its proper definition.

1. Aquitaine	2	A. A person appointed to help rule because the current ruler is too young or too sick
2. Regent	4	B. An administrator and scholar from a Roman family who advised many Ostrogothic kings and wrote government documents for them. He eventually retired to a monastery.
3. Reccopolis	1	C. A region of southwestern Gaul granted to the Visigoths
4. Cassiodorus	6	D. A powerful king of the Ostrogoths who ruled Italy
5. Procopius	3	E. Regional capital and center for local and foreign trade
6. Theodoric the Great	5	F. A scholar and administrator from the Eastern Empire who wrote many different histories about events in the sixth century

Know the Reason Why

Cross out the incorrect answer in each sentence.

1. After the Ostrogoths won their independence from the Huns, they were allowed to settle in (~~Constantinople~~ / Pannonia).
2. Amalasuintha became regent after the death of (Theodoric / ~~Gaiseric~~).
3. The Berber kingdom resisted the rule of the (~~Goths~~ / Vandals) due to differences in religion.
4. The general (Belisarius / ~~Theodoric~~) was responsible for the invasion that ended the Ostrogothic kingdom.
5. (Liuvigild / ~~Belisarius~~) was the first Visigothic king to sit on a throne and dress differently from his people.

Write It Down

Use two to three sentences to answer each of the following questions.

1. What conclusion have historians reached as to why the mosaics of the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo were changed and covered?

Answers may vary. After Justinian ordered all Arian churches to be rededicated as orthodox Christian churches, signs and symbols of Arianism were removed from public places. This included changing mosaics that contained Arian symbols like those at the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo.

2. What were the series of events that led up to Theodoric killing Odoacer?

Answers may vary. When Theodoric and the Ostrogoths invaded Italy, they were able to destroy the supply lines for Odoacer and his people. As a solution, Odoacer agreed to a treaty that gave Theodoric the right to co-rule Italy with him. Theodoric planned a banquet to celebrate this treaty, and at the banquet he killed Odoacer to gain complete rule of Italy.

3. Why did the Ostrogoth leaders generally have less power than Roman emperors?

The Ostrogoth leaders did not collect as many taxes from their citizens so they were not as wealthy as other emperors. They heavily relied on the help of their nobles to fight in battle and keep peace.

4. What was the Late Antique Little Ice Age and how did it affect daily life?

This was a time when it was recorded in a number of different locations and kingdoms that the sun was "dimmed" for about a year. Historians believe that this may have been caused by several volcanic eruptions that emitted ash and clouded the atmosphere. This dimmed sunlight led to crops dying and many people starving from famine, as well as wars and disease, which had long-lasting effects.

Make the Connection

Circle the correct answer for each question.

1. Emperor Honorius gifted which group of people farmland in Aquitaine after they provided help in defeating some invading barbarians? (Ostrogoths / Visigoths)
2. What city was Gaiseric able to capture and gain control over Rome's grain supply? (Carthage / Constantinople)
3. Whose invasion forced Valentinian to make peace with Gaiseric? (Attila's / Justinian's)
4. What two things did Benedict claim led to a good and godly life? (Prayer and generosity / Prayer and work)
5. Liuvigild reformed laws so that (Ostrogothic / Roman) subjects had the same rights as the Visigoths.

Do It Yourself

Follow the directions below and complete the project with a partner or small group. After completion, write a one-paragraph summary of your experiment and how it worked. Then discuss with the rest of the class how a much larger cloud might have brought about the Late Antique Little Ice Age.

Make a Cloud

Equipment:

- Mason jar with lid
- ⅓ cup hot water
- Ice cubes
- Hairspray ("volcanic ash")

Put the hot water in the jar. Then, put the lid upside down on top of the jar and put the ice in the lid. Leave it a few minutes. Quickly remove the jar and add the hairspray and then quickly put the lid back on top of the jar. See how cloudy the interior of the jar becomes, like volcanic ash.

A Don't forget to introduce this week's song verse(s) to your students. We recommend having them sing the unit song (up through the verses they have learned) once or twice at the start of each class.

B In online resources and scholarly works, you may run across wildly differing spellings for the Gothic and Vandalic names covered in this chapter. "Liuvigild," for example, is sometimes spelled "Leovigild" (among other variants), and "Gaiseric" is also spelled "Geiseric" and even "Genseric." "Witigis" can be spelled "Witiges" or even "Vitiges"! One reason for these differences is that while some sources don't follow Latin authors' approximation of Germanic names, some do—with the associated question of whether a *V* should be read as a *V*, as a *U*, or as a *W*, along with the long-standing debate over whether *V* should be pronounced "W" or whether *W* should be pronounced "V"! Another reason for the variations, especially for Gothic names, is the problem of transliterating from the Gothic alphabet to the Latin alphabet. Spanish sources can also differ from French sources, which differ again from English or German sources, largely because each language has its own way of spelling different sounds. It's a real headache! But knowing that the variant spellings exist, you'll be less likely to be confused when you find one.

C *Spotlight on Virtue:* Respect with humility is the recommended virtue to highlight this week. For the optional virtue-related discussion question and answer prompts, see the last page of the Teacher's Notes for this chapter.

D Need some *scholé* in your classroom? Explore with your students the mosaics of Ravenna on the website for the Opera di Religioni della Diocesi di Ravenna (Works of Religion of the Diocese of Ravenna): http://capress.link/tch3a0201. The website includes write-ups about five of the eight UNESCO-protected monuments—Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, the Basilica of San Vitale, the Neonian Baptistery, the Chapel of St. Andrew, and the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia—and a blog exploring the symbolism and history of the mosaics in more detail, a YouTube channel with videos for kids, and an Instagram page with loads of pictures.

E Another distinguishing fact about the Visigoths is they spoke Gothic, the oldest Germanic language in which we have an extensive body of writings, and the only language from the eastern branch of the Germanic language family tree for which this is true. For nearly all of the Germanic languages, what little writing exists from this early in history consists entirely of scattered runic inscriptions. Not so for Gothic! We have enough preserved texts in Gothic (mostly parts of Bible translations) that we can nearly reconstruct the Gothic language! This sets it apart from other eastern-Germanic languages, like Vandalic and Burgundian, for which we really only have proper names and a few scattered borrowed vocabulary words to go on.

F The Suevi kingdom survived in some form until 585, although not much is known about it between 469 (when the chronicle of Bishop Hydatius, one of historians' primary sources for knowledge about the Suevi, ends) and 561, the date when Bishop Isidore of Seville chose to begin his *Historia Suevorum*. See Ángel Barbero and M. I. Loring, "The Formation of the Sueve and Visigothic Kingdoms in Spain," in Fouracre, *New Cambridge Medieval History Vol. 1*, 188.

G If you purchased *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 3A*, see the Profiles and Legends PDF for more about the group of people, the Basques, who lived in the Pyrenees Mountains between modern-day France and Spain.

H This King Alaric was not the Alaric who sacked Rome, but rather a later figure. To this day, Roman law forms the basis for the Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Italian legal systems, among many, many others.

I It's important not to assume that society was as neat and tidy as the Roman Law of the Visigoths suggests, or that everyone always obeyed these laws. We know, for example, that rules for royal succession specified in Visigothic laws were almost *never* followed! Still, they give us an insight into the way that some important people in the Visigothic kingdom thought about their world. See Wickham, *Inheritance of Rome*, 130.

J If you want to search for resources relating to *this* Theodoric, be aware that there were also two Visigothic kings by that name: Theodoric I died fighting the Huns in 451, and Theodoric II was assassinated in 465. Searching for "Theodoric the Ostrogoth," "Theodoric the Amal," or "Theodoric the Great" should get you to the right material.

From ? **Must-(Have) 'Stache** on page 54.

Possible answers might include:

- When people imagined a powerful ruler in this society, they still pictured a Roman emperor, so Theodoric had to adopt Roman trimmings.
- Theodoric's education also made him familiar with Roman styles.
- Romans and people living in Italy would have been aware that Theodoric wanted to take over existing power structures (and their imagery), but he could still do things his way and introduce some Ostrogothic customs.
- Theodoric wanted to impress his Ostrogothic warriors (whom he needed in order to maintain power) with his Roman symbols of power, yet he also wanted to retain the distinctions that made him an Ostrogoth, so he combined the two styles.
- More advanced students might also consider how definitions of "Roman" (and who got to consider themselves Roman) changed in this period.

K The philosopher Boethius is perhaps best known for his work *The Consolation of Philosophy*. He was from an old, prominent Roman family, and held a high position in Theodoric's court. In the early 520s, though, Theodoric suspected that the Byzantine emperor Justinian was conspiring against him with several court officials and had those officials, including Boethius, arrested for treason. While in prison awaiting execution, Boethius wrote *The Consolation of Philosophy*, a series of conversations in which Philosophy, personified as a woman, attempts to cheer Boethius up by talking about the truths he knows about life. One of the main themes is the older Roman concept of the fickle goddess Fortune, whose wheel governs the fates of humans—raised to the heights one minute, dashed to the depths the next. Many copies of *The Consolation of Philosophy* were made and it remained both popular and influential throughout the Middle Ages. Parts of it were even set to music in an eleventh-century manuscript, and scholars from the University of Cambridge have reconstructed these tunes and arranged for their first public performance in over a thousand years! You can read more about the project at http://capress.link/tch3a0203.

L This manuscript is also called the "Ulfilas Bible" because it was copied from a translation project overseen by the Arian missionary Ulfilas. Ulfilas even invented a new alphabet for Gothic, based on the Greek alphabet, just for his translation of the Bible.

M The changes instituted by Theodoric filtered down to people at lower levels of society, too. They might have noted changes in the taxes they paid—they probably paid less, although some landlords might have increased their rent. The governmental documents that Cassiodorus wrote show that the tax system had changed from that used by the emperors. Because Cassiodorus was writing to other people who knew what he was talking about, he did not explain this new system in detail or define all the terms he was using. As a result, scholars still debate whether Ostrogothic leaders were given lands or were given a part of the tax revenue from lands. What Cassiodorus meant by the term *hospitalitas* is particularly debated. (See Walter Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans, A.D. 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980]; S. J. B. Barnish, "Taxation, Land and Barbarian Settlement in the Western Empire," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 54 [1986]: 170–195.) However the Ostrogoths handled their finances, though, it is clear that something had changed. *Land* was now the basis for wealth and government finance. Why did this system change under the Ostrogoths? It's probably because the new system was easier to run than the former method of taxation: Taxes are often unpopular; taxes require much effort to collect; and taxes demand exact and copious records so that tax collectors know how much each person is supposed to pay and whether that amount has been paid. While less taxation may have been easier for Ostrogothic leaders, they ended up being less wealthy than earlier Roman emperors. Therefore, they were less able to implement all their plans or even keep their realms together.

N Of course, in practice, there was much more to becoming an Ostrogothic king than winning battles and being popular with other Ostrogothic warriors. The fact that Witigis married Amalasuintha's daughter—who was also Theodoric's only surviving grandchild—was probably important too.

O While the term *Berbers* is commonly used today, the Roman term *Mauri* is linked to the name of the modern country of Mauritania and to the term *Moor* that was variously used throughout the early modern period. Augus-

tine's mother, Monica, had a non-Roman name and may have been an influential example of a Christian from a Berber family or culture. See Andy Blackhurst, "The House of Nubel: Rebels or Players?", in Merrills, *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, 66. You can refer interested students to this encyclopedia entry for more information about the Berbers, who call themselves the Imazighen: Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Berber," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed June 12, 2023, http://capress.link/tch3a0212.

P We know about this area from a group of wooden tablets discovered in 1928. Dating from the 480s and 490s, the tablets record the sale of plots of land, olive oil presses, olive trees, fig trees, almond trees, pistachio trees, and vines, among other things. These tablets are particularly precious because they describe the sorts of people who tend to be left out of most of the other types of sources that historians use to study North Africa: the histories written by Byzantine diplomats, the inscriptions on fancy stone buildings, or the elaborate poems written by skilled authors. See Jonathan P. Conant, "Literacy and Private Documentation in Vandal North Africa: The Case of the Albertini Tablets," in Merrills, *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, 199–224.

Q The Vandals' distinctive—or not distinctive—clothing and jewelry have been assessed by studying excavations of fifth- and sixth-century cemeteries. Scholars have only identified eight graves with clearly Vandal dress and jewelry from this period in North Africa. Those graves also included a lot of gold jewelry, suggesting that "Vandal" attire became a mark of high social status, rather than of origin, language, or culture. See J. Kleemann, "*Quelques réflexions sur l'interprétation ethnique des sépultures habillées considérées comme vandales*," *Antiquité Tardive* 10 (2003): 123–129.

R If time allows, you might consider prompting students to remember other major disasters caused by volcanic eruptions that we have studied in The Curious Historian. We studied Pompeii (and also Herculaneum), destroyed because of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, and also the eruption on Thera, which damaged nearby Crete, where the Minoans lived.

S For a long time historians were puzzled by these famines. Bad weather might cause famines in one region, but not the whole world. To solve this mystery, some historians began to look at a type of evidence that they hadn't considered before: ice. In very cold places, such as at the tops of mountains or in the far north and south, ice never thaws. A new layer of ice is just added every year. In addition to ice, each layer traps some particles that were in the air in a given year. By taking samples of ice sheets, historians and scientists can analyze what was (literally) "in the air" thousands of years ago. In ice layers from 536, scientists have found particles from a volcanic explosion. (See L. B. Larsen et al., "New Ice Core Evidence for a Volcanic Cause of the A.D. 536 Dust Veil," *Geophysical Research Letters* 35 (2008), https://doi.org/10.1029/2007GL032450.)

T If time allows, you might prompt students to remember other monarchs whose images and monuments were changed in attempt to erase their memory, such as Akhenaten, Hatshepsut, and Geta.

U Need some *scholé* in your classroom? Explore with your students on Google Earth an especially famous monastery founded by Benedict called Monte Cassino: http://capress.link/tch3a0208. Benedict founded twelve monasteries in central Italy, including Monte Cassino. His rule that monks had to remain in their monasteries (known as "the rule of the cloister," named for the courtyard in the center of the monastery) was particularly important because at the time, many monks had a bad reputation for wandering the countryside begging, stealing, and generally making a nuisance of themselves. Cloistered monks couldn't get themselves into that kind of trouble . . . at least in theory. We'll see how things had developed by the fourteenth century in *TCH3B*!

V If students want to know more about geomagnetic surveys, there are several *Time Team* videos about geophysics available on their official YouTube channel (http://capress.link/tch3a0209), as well as an interview with Jimmy Adcock (http://capress.link/tch3a0210) that discusses the technology.

W Isidore was interested in so many different topics that some Christians today consider him (unofficially) to be the patron saint of the internet. His writings show he was in some ways a one-man Wikipedia or *Encyclopedia Britannica*. See Jacques Elfassi, "Isidore of Seville and the Etymologies," in *A Companion to Isidore of Seville*, ed. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 245.

X Help students arrive at the following conclusions: When volcanoes erupt, they create dark clouds of debris, like the "hairspray cloud," as well as lava flows. Those clouds can spread across vast distances, blocking out sunlight. Since plants need sunlight to grow, a volcanic eruption could lead to crop failure and therefore food shortages and famines, which in turn could cause wars and disease.

Y See appendix B for hands-on projects and other activities to complement the chapters. See appendix H (teacher's edition only) for chapter quizzes and quiz answer keys. You can also download blank versions of the quizzes as a printable PDF found in the Bonus Digital Resources at classicalacademicpress.com/pages/subject-history.

Spotlight on Virtue: Respect with Humility

Discussion Question: What do you do when you meet people who don't look like you or like the same things as you? Perhaps they speak a different language or come from a different cultural background. It can be easy to think that differences like these give us permission to ignore others or treat them differently—but that's not true! When you meet someone who's different, there is an opportunity for you to practice the virtue of respect. Respect means honoring and valuing others for who they are: human beings just like we are who have their own strengths and weaknesses. One small way to show respect is to acknowledge a person's unique talents and abilities.

Before we can do that, however, we must have the virtue of humility, which is recognizing our own shortcomings and being open to learning from others. A student who knows he struggles with math can honor one of his classmates who is good at math by asking her to help him and listening to her advice. The same even applies to kings. When faced with the difficult task of ruling an empire, a good king will listen to the advice of his counselors and the pleas of his subjects. A humble king also follows the example of previous leaders who governed their people well, even if it means borrowing an idea from the people who used to be his enemies.

In chapter 2, you read about how the Goths and Vandals adjusted to their new roles as the rulers of parts of the former Roman Empire. While some of the kings rejected the cultural and religious practices of the Romans, some of the kings honored and respected the old Roman ways by recognizing the good things that the Romans did and imitating them. One king who respected the culture of the Romans was King Liuvigild. In what ways did Liuvigild respect both the old Roman way of life and the Roman subjects in his kingdom and how did his actions strengthen the Visigothic kingdom? Who are the people in your community that you should respect and how might you grow from showing them respect?

Answers will vary. King Liuvigild was the first Visigothic king to rule like a Roman emperor: He wore purple, sat on a throne, and minted gold coins with his face on it. More significantly, even though he was a "barbarian," he founded Roman-style cities, which suggests that they were well designed and allowed for more economic growth. This allowed the whole kingdom to flourish in a time when many other cities in Europe were in disrepair. Also, he reformed the laws to guarantee equal protection for his Roman subjects, which meant that the other Visigoths were forced to respect their Roman neighbors.

You could lead your students in a discussion on justice: If everyone in a society respects each other, then they will be more likely to give others what they are due. Make sure students notice the connection between Liuvigild's reign and the ensuing Visigoth golden age. His efforts to respect the people under his rule by protecting them under the law and even converting to their faith (orthodox Christianity) helped set the stage for over a hundred years of peace and prosperity (if we start with the founding of Reccopolis in the late 570s to the invasion of 710). The takeaway here is that being humble enough to acknowledge that other cultures may have better ways of doing things than you and honoring them by following those good examples will lead to greater flourishing for your own people.

Student answers will vary based on their own experiences. You may want to focus their attention on their school community. People they should respect include their teachers and the students in their own grade as well as students in other grades and even visitors from other schools. Respecting these individuals could be as simple as smiling at them and talking to them instead of gossiping about or making fun of them. As mentioned earlier, it could also look like acknowledging the talents and strengths of others. The benefits of showing such respect are numerous: Taking time to listen to and interact with other people will help students develop virtues such as kindness, patience, empathy, humility, and gratitude. They might also learn things or see new perspectives they would otherwise have never known or considered.