

## Lecture 12: *The Fall of Rome and the New Kingdoms of the West*

### 1. From Unity to Fragmentation: The Fall of Rome

- A. The Sack of Rome 410 AD
- B. Gibbon's Ghost – the model of decline and fall

### 2. Re-interpreting the model: Barbarian Migrations, Population Movements, and the Transformation of the Roman World

- A. Refugees the Roman Army and Permeable Borders
- B. Barbarian Migrations: The Example of the Goths
  - Baltic phase, 376-378
  - Rhineland phase, 406-408
- C. The Huns and the Loss of the West

### 3. Fragmentation and the New Kingdoms of the 5th Century

- A. Society of Survivors – New Kingdoms of the West

Continuity lies to the East: Byzantium

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### Barbarian Populations

**Huns** – nomadic, horsemen from the East, united and led forward under Attila (r. 440-453).

**Visigoths** – *Western* Goths (Alaric, sack of Rome 410); came to hold part of northern Italy, southern Gaul, and Spain

**Ostrogoths** – *Eastern* Goths (Theodoric r. 493-526), ruled in Italy until the Lombards

**Vandals** – North Africa and Spain

**Franks** – numerous tribes, came to be dominated by the **Merovingian Dynasty** under leadership of Clovis (r. 481-511).

**Burgundians** – Southern France

**Lombards** – Established kingdom in Italy, from 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century

**Angles, Saxons, Jutes** – moved into Celtic lands and Roman Britain

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### The Goths in the Fourth Century

Emperor Valens (r. 364-378)

200,000 Gothic refugees cross the Danube into the Roman Empire in the wake of the Huns (376)

Battle of Adrianople (378) = the Goths kill Emperor Valens

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By 400 Goths push West – looking for land, food, official status in the Empire

Emperor Honorius (d. 423)

Alaric, War-Chief of the Visigoths (d. 410)

410: The Sack of Rome (24 August)

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### **The Rhine Invasions of 406-08**

Alliance of **Vandals, Alans, and Suevi** cross the frozen Rhine on 31 December 406

They ransack Roman Gaul (406-409)

They invade and occupy Roman Spain (409-411)  
= effect of diverting tax revenues that normally went to the Roman State

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Attila the Hun (ruled the Hunnic Empire 440-453)

#### Effects of the Hunnic Empire on the Roman World

1. Forced barbarian peoples into the Roman Empire twice (Visigoths in 376; and Vandals/Alans/Suevi in 406)
2. Attila's military campaigns in the 440s (east) and early 450s (west) posed an **indirect** threat to the integrity of the Roman Empire, which began to dissolve.