

THE END OF THE ANCIENT WORLD



THE ROMAN WORLD



The traditional view of “The Fall of Rome” is that nomadic tribes from the north and east of the Empire gradually broke through into Roman territory. Rome was weakened from within, her armies were too thinly spread and she was unable to defend herself. The city of Rome itself was sacked in 410AD and again in 455AD and in 476AD the Empire in the West completely collapsed, “The Fall of Rome”.

The traditional story goes on to say that this was the beginning of “The Dark Ages”, when Western Europe became a place of ignorance and violence; a gap in civilisation. HOWEVER, recent archaeological discoveries show a very different picture!

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- The barbarian invaders didn't just ride in and destroy everything. They came with their families as settlers.
- From the beginning they adopted Roman customs, laws, ways of governing and doing business. Perhaps most importantly, many of them became Christians.
- Modern archaeology is showing that, while there certainly was disruption and violence involved in the end of the Western Roman Empire, it may be more correct to say it was taken over rather than destroyed.

Tasks

1. In your own words, explain the traditional view of the Fall of Rome.
2. Who were the barbarian invaders and where did they come from?
3. What is the “different picture” that modern archaeology is showing us?
4. How did the barbarians behave once they had taken over the Roman Empire in the West?

Answer in full sentences and paragraphs.