

# THE LASTING LEGACY OF ROME

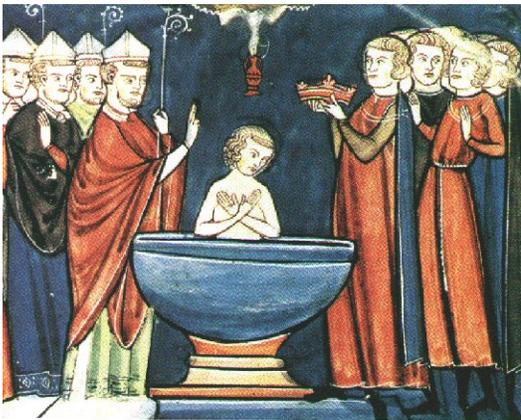
**Directions:** Despite the fall of the West, Roman influence persisted, indirectly in the West, where it made up part of the cultural fabric of Medieval Europe, and directly in the East, where the Roman Empire continued for another millennium in its Byzantine form. **Examine each of the documents provided below and answer the questions in order to identify the impact that persisted after the fall of Rome.**

## OI: The Blended Culture of Medieval Europe

After the collapse of Rome, Western Europe entered a period of political, social, and economic decline. From about **500 to 1000**, it was politically divided, rural, and largely cut off from advanced civilizations in the Middle East, China, and India. Waves of invaders swept across the region, trade slowed to a trickle, towns emptied, and classical learning virtually ceased. For those reasons, this period in Europe has sometimes been called the Dark Ages. Today, historians recognize this period was not “dark.” During this period, Greco-Roman, Germanic, and Christian traditions blended, creating a new civilization.

**Source:** Elizabeth Gaynor Ellis and Anthony Esler, “The Early Middle Ages,” *World History* (adapted)

1. *What three cultures combined to create the culture of Medieval Europe?*



## OI: Christianity Spreads Through Europe

When Rome fell in the late **400s CE**, Christianity was mostly confined to southern Europe. By about **600 CE**, however, the religion had spread northward into other parts of the continent. The conversion of peoples like the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks helped make Western Europe into a largely Christian society. Following Rome’s fall, Christianity appealed to many Europeans. Early in this period, known as the **Middle Ages** or **Medieval** times, many people’s lives were filled with doubt, suffering, and hardship. Christianity offered them comfort, the promise of a happy afterlife, and a sense of community.

**Source:** Susan Ramirez, et al., “Christianity in Western Europe,” *World History: Human Legacy*

2. *What conditions contributed to the spread of Christianity during the Middle Ages?*

## OFFICIAL DOCUMENT 3: The East Lives On

... As western Europe fell to the Germanic invasions, imperial power shifted to the **Byzantine Empire**, that is, the eastern part of the Roman Empire, with its capital at **Constantinople**. The eastern provinces of the former Roman Empire had always outnumbered those in the west. Its civilization was far older and it had larger cities, which were also more numerous than in the west....

**Source:** Steven Kreis, *The History Guide: Lectures on Ancient and Medieval European History*, Lecture 17, History Guide online

3. *According to Steven Kreis, what was one change that resulted from the fall of the western half of the Roman Empire?*



## EUROPE AND THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE, 525 - 565 CE



### OI: Byzantine Efforts to Reclaim Roman Glory

After the fall of Rome, the eastern emperors did not give up their claim to the western part of the empire. The Byzantine emperor **Justinian I**, who reigned from **527 to 565**, dreamed of restoring the original Roman Empire. In order to accomplish this feat, military action was necessary. The first task was to reconquer territories in northern Africa [which] had been taken by a Germanic tribe called the Vandals... By **534**, the Byzantine fleet had recaptured the region, and it was absorbed back into the Roman Empire. The next year, Byzantine troops retook Italy. However, Justinian's achievements did not last. When he died in **565**, he left the government nearly bankrupt from the expense of taking back the empire's territory. Furthermore, Justinian had expanded the empire beyond what the government could effectively administer. After his death, the western provinces once again fell to migrating tribes.

**Source:** Susan Ramirez, et al., "The Byzantine Empire," *World History: Human Legacy*

4. *What was Emperor Justinian's goal? To what extent was he successful?*

5. *Examine the map above. The main map represents 525 CE, before Justinian's attempts at reconquest. What were some of the major kingdoms in control of Western Europe?*