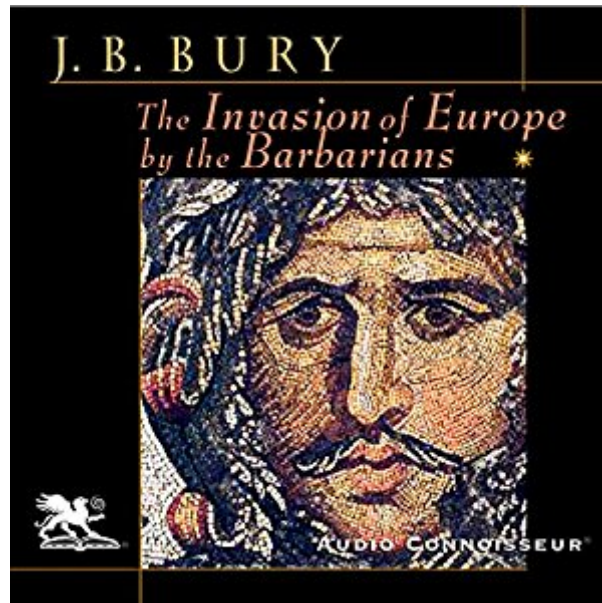


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# The Invasion Of Europe By The Barbarians



## Synopsis

In the last half of the fourth century, the Roman Empire began to feel the stress of renewed pressure on its borders as Germanic and Asian tribes moved westward. As these tribes settled, they began to form alliances and to convert to Christianity. But when these very capable tribesmen began to enlist in the Roman military, the empire began to fall under the control of mercenary soldiers. Men like the gifted Vandal Stilicho became supreme commanders and wielded enormous influence at a very crucial period in Roman history. But though the various German tribes were dangerous, they did not menace the Roman civilization in the same way as the feared Huns, who destroyed everything in their path. In this brilliant history, you will learn why Attila turned his devouring hordes into Gaul, and how he came within a heartbeat of controlling all of Europe. Discover the truth behind the heroic legends of powerful men like Alaric, Theodoric, and Clovis, and the amazing journeys of tribes like the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, the Franks, the Vandals, and the Lombards. And as you listen, you will also come to understand the underpinnings of the modern European nation state.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bury tells of the dismantling of the Roman Empire in the West by the Germanic tribes. This book is based on a series of lectures delivered by Bury at Cambridge University. He begins with a description of German life in the forests outside the Empire and then tells how population pressures and migrations eventually ruptured the border of the Roman Empire, letting in tribe after tribe of German warriors. They came as federates, seldom thinking of themselves as conquerors, seeking to partake of the goodness of Roman civilization, not destroy it. Seen in this light, the Western Empire didn't so much fall as fade away under the successive waves of migrating tribes. Most history books

date the fall of the Western Empire from the date on which Odovacer deposed the last Western Emperor, Romulus Augustulus. Bury makes the point that Odovacer and his successors, the Ostrogoths, recognized the authority of the Eastern Emperor. It wasn't until the Lombard invasion that a completely independent German state was set up in Italy. My misconception always was that the Germans were pagan invaders. The major tribes of the invasion were all Christians. They weren't Catholic, they subscribed to the heretical doctrine of Arianism. Bury makes a compelling case that the Ostrogothic kingdom's short existence was caused by the fact that Italy was largely Catholic and hostile to their heretical overlords. It is interesting that the first lasting Germanic kingdom was established by the Frankish king, Clovis, who converted to Catholicism. Bury makes the case that Clovis converted to Catholicism, not because of a battlefield prayer for victory and a sign from heaven, but because of a calculated decision of statecraft by a shrewd politician.

A clear introduction to the period of the barbarian invasions that led to important transformations of the Roman Empire, paved the way to its dismemberment, and started the transition from Roman to medieval Europe, from A. D. 247 until the fifth century. From the historical perspective, of importance is the insistence of the author on the gradual encroachment of Barbarism upon Romanism during this period. The author, Professor Bury, was appointed (in 1902) successor to Lord Acton as holder of the Chair of Modern History at the University of Cambridge. A reputed scholar, he is well known for his illustrated edition of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1909) as well as his own seminal works *Constitution of the Later Roman Empire* (1910) and *History of the Roman Empire* (1923). Not envisioned by Bury originally as a book, this is an ensemble of lectures given by him at the University (and edited by Professor Hearnshaw, from King's College at the University of London). This vivid excursion through the "barbarization" of the Empire, starts with a reference to the early German history and Gothic migrations. Then an account of the first invasions of the Goths in the third century follows, with a description of the Visigothic invasion of Dacia and the Ostrogothic settlements. According to Bury it is during the third century that the extension and heterogeneity of the Roman Empire led to a natural tendency of the parts of this huge empire to fall asunder. Two great subdivisions appeared- a western or Latin section and an eastern or Greek section. The emperor Diocletian was convinced that the empire was too extended to be ruled by one emperor and so he concocted a scheme to put it under two coequal emperors.

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