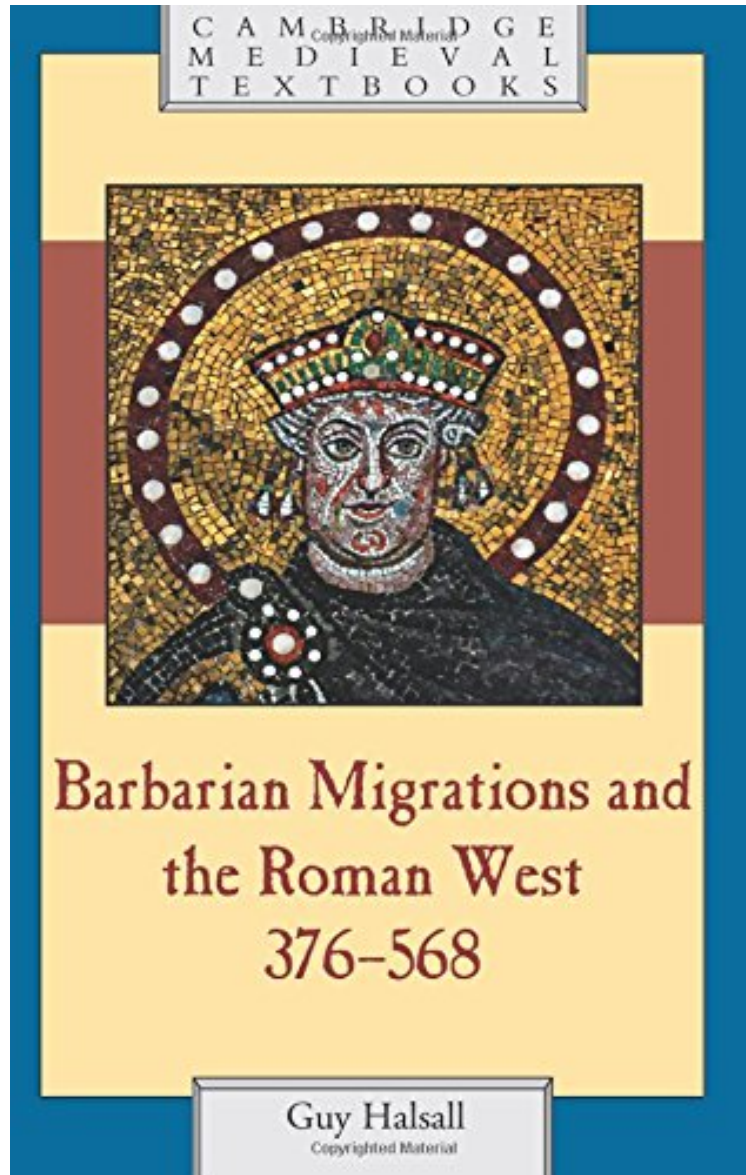


[Mobile book] Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376 - 568 (Cambridge Medieval Textbooks)

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Guy Halsall

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Guy Halsall : Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376 - 568 (Cambridge Medieval Textbooks) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376 - 568 (Cambridge Medieval Textbooks):

19 of 20 people found the following review helpful. An Original and Though Provoking Synthesis...By tml_mplsThis

is one of my favorite historical periods, and I've read a number of histories of this period, including most of the recent ones and had actually held off on purchasing this because I wondered if it would simply re-tread old ground. I'm pleased to say that this book was an excellent read and contained several highly original ideas that were well thought out and truly provided me with new ways of looking at the period. These include: the true nature of early barbarian settlement, the origin and role of Alaric; the formation of the Frankish kingdom; a quite well thought out analysis of developments in Britain after the fall that engaged the existing evidence to a greater degree than the many books that simply skip over this province, while stopping well short of some of the excesses in other books that analyze this same puzzle; the extent of Visigothic control over Spain, and the role of the moors in Africa and the Vandal kingdom; among other things. In general, Halsall really excels at calling out the educated guesses made by historians about the period which have morphed over time into accepted facts. He reintroduces a healthy sense of uncertainty and offers up alternative ideas and explanations that encourage you to think more deeply about the period. The primary sources for the 5th century are thin and the desire to explain the fall of the Western Roman Empire in a simple narrative is strong. There is more than one way of interpreting the available evidence and opening the doors to other possibilities helps breathe new life into the story of the fall of Rome. That said, there were some parts of the book that made for slow reading. The obligatory historiography chapter and ethnicity chapter at times felt a bit like eating peas so I could get to dessert. Sure both concepts play an important role in understanding the period and are used to great effect in the subsequent history, they're just less interesting than the actual narrative and analysis that follows. Overall, I rate it 5 stars and would encourage anyone interested in the period to purchase this book, particularly if you've read and enjoyed other recent histories of the period (Wickham, Heather, etc.). 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Ignore the one hostile and misguided review of this book.

By buddhawannabe
I would like to respond to the review below that says there is "nothing new" in this book, and I want to do it in a conspicuous place (not in an appended comment which people are less likely to click on), because that is an unjust and untrue remark. Also, the reviewer says that he would have appreciated the book if he had been reading it for a university course but that in his retirement he just wants the story. In the front matter of my copy of this book it says that this is part of a series "aimed primarily at advanced students and faculty." If he had bought a book on gourmet French cuisine, would he complain because the book didn't give instructions on how to fry up hot dogs and make scrambled eggs? I admit that I am a history professor (though not with a specialty in this period), and I found the book quite useful and readable. OF COURSE it reviews previous literature and gives a (somewhat dry) summary of the events of the period. That is what books like this are supposed to do, and Halsall does it quite well. 15 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

New Synthesis
By Lori Reeser
A major addition to this growing field. Knowledge of the transition from the Roman world to the European world (from about 400AD to about 800AD, aka Late Antiquity, Early Medieval) has been growing rapidly. This knowledge is just now being synthesized and published. This book is from the perspective of the movements of the non-Roman barbarians into what is now western Europe. The author emphasizes the fluidity of ethnic identification as well as the relatively low numbers of the invaders, while acknowledging the major impact they had on culture, society and politics. I would recommend this book plus *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* by Chris Wickham. In combination they give an excellent view of the changes that occurred, and the current ideas as to why. These are both upper undergraduate, early graduate level reading. I haven't read it yet, but *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* by Peter Heather is frequently cited by both authors (although mostly to respectfully disagree). It helps if you have a basic understanding of the history of this time. *The Civilization of the Middle Ages: A Completely Revised and Expanded Edition of Medieval History* by Norman Cantor is a good start, although he (necessarily) does not go in depth. If you want to read a classic *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Gibbon is also a start. (It's where I started.)

This is a major survey of the barbarian migrations and their role in the fall of the Roman Empire and the creation of early medieval Europe, one of the key events in European history. Unlike previous studies it integrates historical and archaeological evidence and discusses Britain, Ireland, mainland Europe and North Africa, demonstrating that the Roman Empire and its neighbours were inextricably linked. A narrative account of the turbulent fifth and early sixth centuries is followed by a description of society and politics during the migration period and an analysis of the mechanisms of settlement and the changes of identity. Guy Halsall reveals that the creation and maintenance of kingdoms and empires was impossible without the active involvement of people in the communities of Europe and North Africa. He concludes that, contrary to most opinions, the fall of the Roman Empire produced the barbarian migrations, not vice versa.

"This book is important not only as a systematic statement of important current views on how the last Mediterranean empire of antiquity devolved into a series of recognisably European polities, but also for its impressive fusion of seemingly disparate archaeological and literary/historical materials. A genuinely important contribution to its field, by striving to be accessible to those outside its discipline, this book should contribute beneficially to wider discussions of historical change." -The English Historical "...should be read by anyone interested in the early Middle Ages, the

historical use of archaeological evidence, theories and practices of ethnicity, and, finally the Roman Empire and its ultimate collapse." -M.A. Claussen, *Speculum* About the Author Guy Halsall is Professor of History at the University of York.