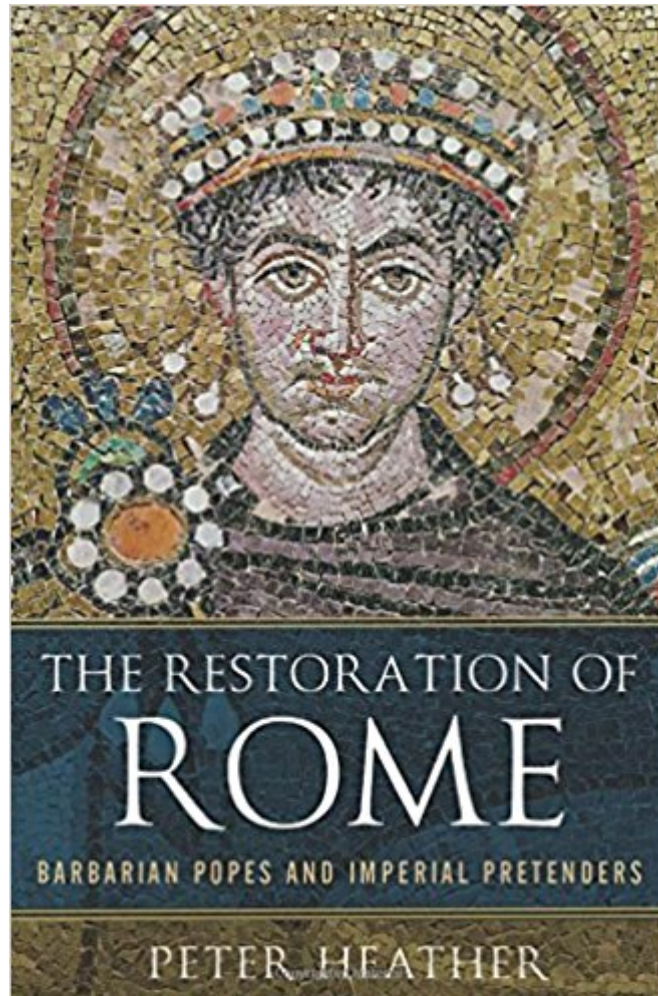




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# The Restoration Of Rome: Barbarian Popes And Imperial Pretenders



## Synopsis

In 476 AD, the last of Rome's emperors, known as "Augustulus," was deposed by a barbarian general, the son of one of Attila the Hun's henchmen. With the imperial vestments dispatched to Constantinople, the curtain fell on the Roman empire in Western Europe, its territories divided among successor kingdoms constructed around barbarian military manpower. But, if the Roman Empire was dead, Romans across much of the old empire still lived, holding on to their lands, their values, and their institutions. The conquering barbarians, responding to Rome's continuing psychological dominance and the practical value of many of its institutions, were ready to reignite the imperial flame and enjoy the benefits. As Peter Heather shows in dazzling biographical portraits, each of the three greatest immediate contenders for imperial power--Theoderic, Justinian, and Charlemagne--operated with a different power base but was astonishingly successful in his own way. Though each in turn managed to put back together enough of the old Roman West to stake a plausible claim to the Western imperial title, none of their empires long outlived their founders' deaths. Not until the reinvention of the papacy in the eleventh century would Europe's barbarians find the means to establish a new kind of Roman Empire, one that has lasted a thousand years. A sequel to the bestselling *Fall of the Roman Empire*, *The Restoration of Rome* offers a captivating narrative of the death of an era and the birth of the Catholic Church.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"While a serious work, Heather's writing style and informality makes this book a good read not only for scholars, but also for the reasonably educated layman."--A. A. Nofi, *The NYMAS Review*"The

transition from the first empire to the present is wonderfully retold... Heather's style is seductive and his British wit enlivens this engrossing history of the piecemeal 'restoration' of a Rome that lingers still." --Publishers Weekly "Underlying this rollicking narrative of sieges, sea battles and palace coups is a clever argument about the enduring dream of a universal European realm."--Sunday Times Books of the Year "In this brilliant account... Peter Heather explains how and why efforts to reconstruct the Roman empire ultimately failed, and how they unwittingly laid the foundation for a new sort of Roman empire... This is a beautifully written book that combines sprightly narrative with detailed analysis, but never loses the big picture." --Peter Jones, BBC History Magazine "The Restoration of Rome presents an exciting and learned argument in a convincing, passionate way designed to be intelligible to a popular audience. Heather is a masterly interrogator of evidence, questioning the texts he quotes in such a way to make his book feel at times like a historical detective puzzle... This is a keenly conceived, deeply intelligent and very timely history." --Dan Jones, Sunday Times "This is the story of the birth of Europe, with its profusion of competitive states. It is told with energy and zest, full of lurid detail and enthralling biographical portraits." --Ben Wilson, Telegraph "A tightly argued and highly stimulating book that will be of obvious interest to readers curious about the aftermath of Rome's fall and the cultural and ideological legacy of Rome. The style is chatty and accessible, and the scholarship up to date and reliable." --Peter Sarris, Literary Review "An immensely enjoyable and informative book . Heather's style is never disagreeable, often witty, and always engaging."- -H-Empire

Peter Heather is Professor of Medieval History at King's College London. He is the bestselling author of *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, *Empires and Barbarians*, and numerous other works on late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

This book is along the lines of Peter's other works like *Empires and Barbarians* and *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, a voluminous work of information around 400 pages. I have to admit it's less insipid than the other Peter Heather work I read *The Fall of the Roman Empire* in the sense he adds some colorful language and modern day references to modern day movies like *The Godfather*. I agree with Peter's premise that there were successor states to the Roman Empire after its fall that continued the Roman Empire albeit in a debilitated and smaller form. Peter mentions these successor states as Theodoric's Gothic kingdom, Justinian's Byzantine empire, Charlemagne's Carolingian empire and the Papal empire. I have to agree Theodoric, Justinian and Charlemagne had empires in the traditional sense of owning large swaths of land and having the feudal privilege of conscripting

troops from the areas of land they control. However, I have to disagree with Peter's assertion that the Papal state was a continuation of the Roman empire. Peter skirts around the idea of Empire being a combination of tangible military and political force by saying an empire could also be an empire of ideology. The Papal state was an all pervading empire of ideology in a non-secular sense all throughout Western Europe but was this an empire in the sense of a successor state of the Roman empire in the traditional sense of empire being a combination of military and political force? I have to disagree with this assertion of the Papal State being a successor and continuation of the Roman empire. I also have to demure to Peter's assertion that empire can solely be an ideology. I wouldn't really call that empire but more a predominant philosophy (though the papal state did wield influence in royal and political matters in W.Europe). We can see that this ideology was easily reversed with the Protestant reformation in the 16th century and the so-called Papal empire of pope decretals was easily overthrown by Martin Luther and King Henry the VIII. I think Peter wanted to add some pages to this book by adding the last section of the book asserting that the Papal State was an empire to make the book larger. Who knows maybe his publisher wants a certain amount of pages or that there is an expectation by himself for his books to be at least 400-500 pages so he added the spurious notion of Papal empire. Another thing I also found annoying was that all the pictures and graphs in the book were not labeled with numbers. When Peter was referencing a specific picture, he would reference the picture by a number in the text. But since the pictures were not labeled with a number I would have to start from the beginning picture in the book and start counting to the number of the picture Peter was referencing. This is such an expected practice to label a picture inside a book to help the reader (especially a historical academic work) as I am not sure why Peter or his publisher's editor missed this. Overall, a nice book by Peter. If your a history lover like me, I am sure you'll enjoy this work!

This book traces the Roman empire after the fall of the west through the paths of its most famous leaders. Theodoric, Justinian and Charlemagne each receive their own parts, as well as several popes around 1000 AD, focusing on Leo IX and Innocent III. Heather is an excellent story teller with an informal style, often making modern day references. Some may be turned off by this approach, but he does not overdo it and it makes the stories more relatable. Each of the main characters led fascinating lives and ultimately shaped the world we live in today. One of the overarching themes was the prevalence of violence and the overriding ambition of the characters involved, where not even loved ones stood in the way for their quest for power. Throughout the entirety of the story, might makes right, and power is derived from the force of conquest. Although, the power of

persuasion is also displayed when the various disagreements are described that often split the church. The background of the church and the chaotic rise of the popes is also very entertaining. It is too bad more history books are not written in this manner because it truly demonstrates how fascinating the stories that formed our world today are. It also shows how little human nature has changed.

This book gives very detailed insight of things happened and more importantly how and why it happened, the drivers behind the outcome. This book displays well how politics, religion, war, selfish greed, law, economics, academia all interact and mingle with each other dynamically to produce historical outcome. It sometimes gets bogged down in too much detail and hence slow to read here and there but thoroughly enjoyable read. It is actually an extremely good attempt at explaining Europe's complicated and diverse medieval history and if anyone wants to understand why the current Europe is shaped as it is now you must read this.

Overall the book has many interesting parts but I felt it was a bit too long on the descriptions of how the church transformed its power structure. The first part dealing with the barbarians in the former Roman Empire through the Carolingian period was very interesting and well worth reading.

This book covers the period of time from 476 C.E. (the common era) until the death of Charlemagne in January of 814 C.E. As such this book deals with the three "successor states" to the Roman Empire. Following the fall of the Roman Empire (especially the western part of that empire which was based in city of Rome) three serious attempts were made to form a unified replacement empire for the Roman Empire of antiquity. First, was the attempt by Theodoric I, king of the Ostrogoths to capture and subjugate the governments which were in the territory of old western Roman Empire. Theodoric used his base in the barbarian Ostrogoths (or as the author of the book, Peter Heather calls them "Pannonian Goths") to militarily expand his new unified Roman empire. In 493 C.E. Theodoric was crowned Emperor of this new Roman Empire. However, upon Theodoric's death in August of 526 C.E. the Ostrogoths had made no provision for a successor. Accordingly, the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire (the name of the eastern part of the old Roman Empire)--Justinian I--was crowned as the emperor of the western part of the Empire. This had the effect of once again unifying both halves of the old Roman Empire under Justinian and is the second of the three successor states whose histories are included in this volume.

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