

A History of Knowledge

Oldest Knowledge

What the Sumerians knew

What the Babylonians knew

What the Hittites knew

What the Persians knew

What the Egyptians knew

What the Indians knew

What the Chinese knew

What the Greeks knew

What the Phoenicians knew

What the Romans knew

What the Barbarians knew

What the Jews knew

What the Christians knew

Tang & Sung China (618-1368)

What the Japanese knew

What the Muslims knew

The Middle Ages

Ming & Manchu China

The Renaissance

The Industrial Age

The Victorian Age

The Modern World

What the Barbarians knew

Piero Scaruffi 2004

What the Barbarians knew

- **Bibliography**
 - **Richard Fletcher: The Barbarian Conversion (1997)**
 - **Thomas Burns: Rome and the Barbarians (2003)**
 - **Thompson: The Huns (1996)**
 - **Peter Heather: The Goths (1996)**

The Barbarians

- Huns

48 AD: the Hsiung-nu empire is defeated by the Han and dissolves

376AD: Huns, led by Uldin, reach the Black Sea and the Danube, conquering the eastern Goths

408AD: the Roman patrician Aetius is taken prisoner by the Huns

412AD: Karaton unifies all Western Huns

425AD: Huns are hired by a western Roman general Aetius to fight in Italy

430AD: the new Hun leader Rugida (Rua) signs a peace treaty with the eastern Roman empire

433AD: Aetius becomes the de-facto ruler of the western Roman empire

434AD: Rugida (Rua) dies and is succeeded by Attila (a friend of Aetius)

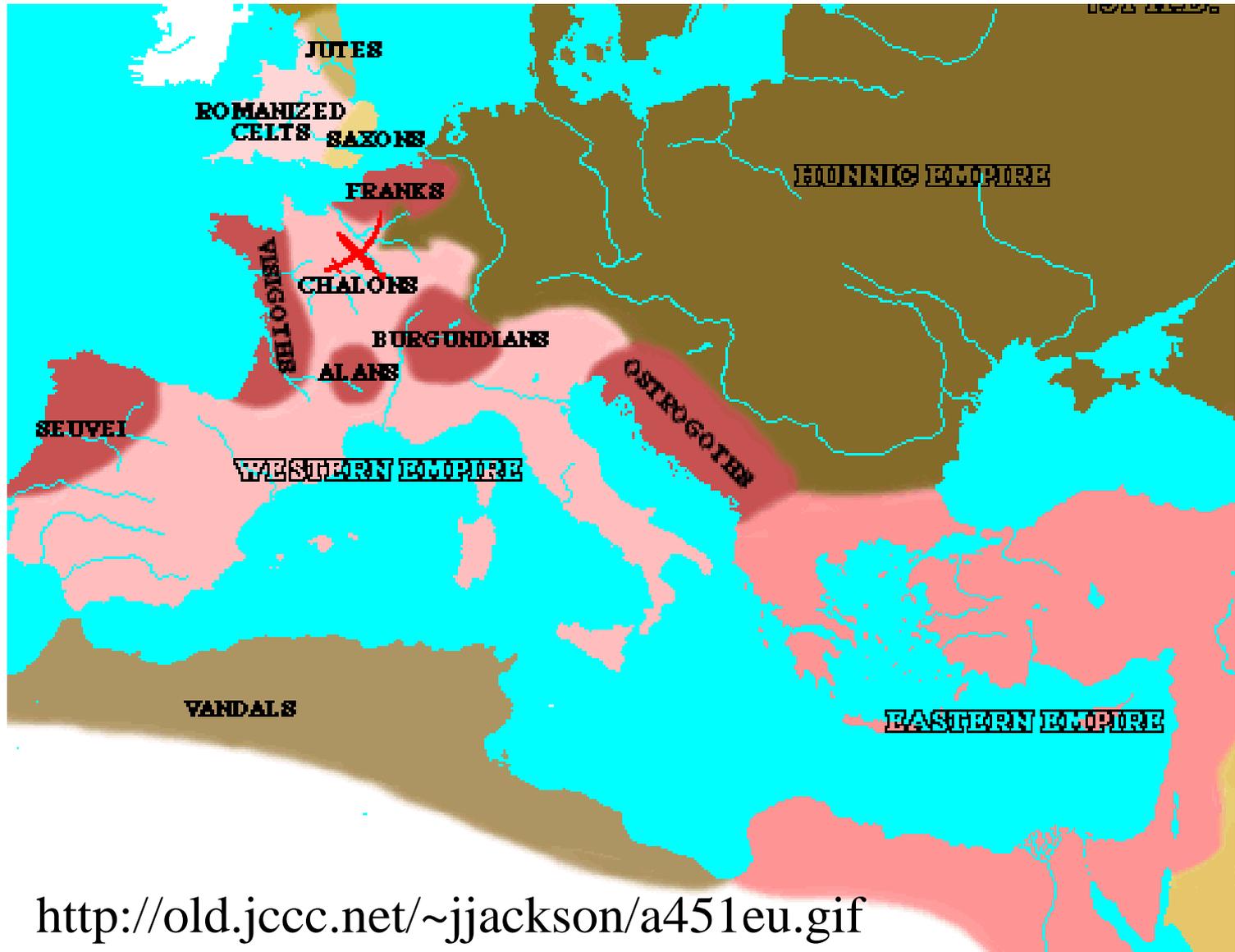
435AD: Aetius employs Huns to fight Vandals and Franks

441AD: the Huns raid eastern Roman outposts along the Danube

452AD: Huns cross the Alps but renounce attacking Italy

469AD: the Huns disappear

The Barbarians



<http://old.jccc.net/~jjackson/a451eu.gif>

The Barbarians

- **Agricultural revolution in Germanic Europe causes population boom**
- **Trade with Roman Empire causes economic development across the frontier (amber from the Baltic, iron from Poland, glass from Carpathians)**
- **Half of the Roman army (since Augustus) was made of non-Romans, mostly Germanic recruits**
- **Political reorganization leads to confederation of tribes**
- **Somehow economic development and political reorganization leads to mass migrations**

The Barbarians

- **1st c AD: Turkic-speaking Huns begin migrating into Eastern Europe**
- **2nd c AD (Marcomanni wars): insurrections and raids all along the European frontier (Rhine, Danube)**
- **3rd c AD: Persian wars (the Sassanids defeat three Roman emperors) and emergence of the "Goths"**
- **383-94 Civil wars of Theodosius with Western Roman usurpers that leave the northern frontiers unguarded**

The Barbarians

- **382-435 Peace treaties (382, Hungary: Germanic-speaking Visigoths - 406, France: Germanic-speaking Vandals and Iranian-speaking Alans, 435, Balkans: Huns)**
- **5th c AD: Collapse of the Western Roman Empire**
- **434-53: Attila unifies the Huns of southeastern Europe**
- **470: The Hun empire disintegrates**
- **507: Franks invade Spain and expel the Visigoths**

The Barbarians

- **Migrations**

- **Tervingi (Visigoths) travel from the Black Sea to Aquitaine: 2500 kms**
- **Vandals from Slovakia to Tunisia: 4000 kms**
- **Alans from the river Don to Tunisia: 5000 kms**
- **Ostrogoths from Hungary to Constantinople to Hungary to Asia Minor to Constantinople to Italy: 5200 kms**
- **Lombards from Lower Elbe region to Hungary to Italy**

The Barbarians

- Vandals

270AD: Vandals cross the Rhein

360AD: the Vandals convert to christianity

406AD: Vandals occupy Spain

407AD: Roman general Stilicho (of Vandal descent) stops the Vandals on their way to Italy

429AD: Vandals, led by Gaiseric, invade northern Africa and are recognized as an independent kingdom

534AD: the Roman general Belisarius recaptures Africa from the vandals

The Barbarians

- **Goths**

0BC: Poland

150AD: Roman expansion in Europe halted

238AD: First Gothic incursion into the Roman empire

340AD: Christianization and literalization of the Goths (Ulfila and the "Gothic bible")

375AD: Ostrogoths become subjects of the Huns

378AD: the Romans are defeated at Hadrianapolis by Goths

395AD: Stilicho becomes supreme commander of the western Roman army

390AD: the Gothic general Alaric is hired as a Roman commander

The Barbarians

- **Goths**

395AD: Alaric unifies the Goths of the Balkans (Visigoths)

397AD: Stilicho attacks his old friend Alaric, but lets him repeatedly escape

401AD: Alaric invades Italy but is defeated by Stilicho (escapes again)

408AD: Stilicho is assassinated in a coup

410AD: Alaric sacks Rome

The Barbarians

- **Goths**

476AD: Odoacer, a mercenary in the service of Rome, leader of the Germanic soldiers in the Roman army, deposes the western Roman emperor and thereby terminates the western Roman empire

507AD: Visigoths are defeated by the Franks and move to Spain

536AD: the Roman general Belisarius launches a campaign to recover Italy

539AD: the Ostrogoths conquer Milan

561AD: the Ostrogoths are destroyed by the eastern Roman empire

The Barbarians

- **Goths**

580AD: Arian synod in Toledo

587AD: the new Visigothic king Recared converts to catholicism and the Gothic language is abandoned

711AD: the Moors invade Spain and destroy the Visigothic kingdom

718AD: Pelayo unites with the Visigothic leaders who have been defeated by Tariq, and creates the kingdom of Asturias in northwestern Spain, thus creating the kingdom of Leon

The Barbarians

- **Scythians (Sakas)**
 - **750 BC: the Scythians (or Sakas), a pastoral nomadic Indo-European group, settle between the Don and the Carpathians**
 - **653 BC: the Scythians invade the Median empire**
 - **626 BC: the Medes defeat the Scythians**
 - **514 BC: the Persian king Darius invades Scythia**
 - **360 BC: king Atheas unites all Scythian tribes and expands their territory to the border with Macedonia**
 - **339 BC: Atheas of Scythia is killed in the war against Philip of Macedonia**
 - **225 BC: the Celts in the west and the Sarmatians in the east destroy the Scythian kingdom**

The Barbarians

- **Scythians (Sakas)**
 - **First major group to adapt to the steppe environment**
 - **Metal workers**
 - **Cult of ancestor gods**
 - **Three-dimensional animal figures (in felt)**
 - **Compound bow (ideal for mounted archers)**
 - **Central Asia predominantly occupied by Indo-Europeans until the first century AD**

The Barbarians

- **Eastern Scythians of Asia (Sakas)**
 - **Horse society**
 - **Shared women**
 - **Ritual cannibalism**
 - **Euthanasia of the old**
 - **Cult of the sun**
 - **Gold**
 - **Opulent tombs**
 - **Necropolises in eastern Kazakhstan**
 - **Oral literature**
 - **Trade with Greeks on the Black Sea**



Golden warrior from Issyk kurgan (Kazakhstan, 5th c BC)
(Ermitage museum)

The Barbarians



Europe 500



The Barbarians

- Slavs

Culture collapse of 5th and 6th centuries

Thinking about this phenomenon, it is important to be absolutely clear about its nature. As the Polish archaeologist Kazimierz Godlowski above all demonstrated, culture collapse involved the disappearance, in the fifth and sixth centuries, of long-standing patterns of material-cultural development over vast tracts of central Europe. These patterns often ran back at least to the start of the millennium and sometimes beyond. But when discontinuity hit, it manifested itself in virtually every area of life reflected in the material-cultural remains: everything from the enduring economic links with the Mediterranean world that generated regular flows of Roman imports, to established craft traditions in pottery and metalwork. Technologically, pottery production simplified dramatically, the use of the wheel was abandoned. This was matched by a marked diminution in the range of pot forms and even in the overall quantities being produced. Metallurgical production similarly declined in scale – the range of ornaments being produced (or at least deposited) shrank almost to zero. Settlements also became much smaller.⁵⁰ Essentially, the archaeological record shows striking simplification in every category by which the activities of the populations of the region are customarily analysed, compared and dated in the Roman period, and it all adds up to a massive change in lifestyles.

Peter Heather: “Empires and Barbarians”, page 373

The Barbarians

- Franks

350: the Roman empire allows the Franks to settle in Belgium

447: Merovech (Meerwig) establishes the Merovingian dynasty among the Franks

486: Frank king Clovis I (Chlodovech) conquers northern Gaul from the Romans

507: Clovis defeats the Visigoths

510: Clovis moves the Frankish capital to Paris

628: count Pepin I becomes the "major domi" (mayor of the palace)

732: the Muslim invasion of Europe is stopped by Charles Martel at the battle of Tours

751: the Carolingian mayor Pepin III deposes the Merovingian king and appoints himself king of the Franks

754: pope Stephen II anoints Pepin III king of the Franks

768: Pepin III dies and Charlemagne becomes king of the Franks

800: the Pope crowns Charles emperor of the Holy Roman Empire

Europe 700



What the Barbarians Knew

- **Horses**
- **Mobility**
- **The Roman Empire**

What the Barbarians Knew

- **Partition of the Western Roman Empire**
 - **Italy: Ostrogoths**
 - **Spain: Visigoths and Suevi**
 - **France: Franks, Visigoths and Burgundi**
 - **England: Anglo-Saxons**
 - **Africa: Vandals**

The Barbarians



What the Barbarians Knew

- **Population**
 - **Visigoths: 100,000**
 - **Vandals: 80,000**
 - **Burgundi: 25,000**
 - **Ostrogoths: 100,000**
- **The Roman population was 100 times than the invading hordes**

What the Barbarians Knew

- **Economic unity of the Mediterranean Sea (Western Europe, Middle East and Africa)**
 - **Roman money (solidus, gold)**
 - **Free trade**

What the Barbarians Knew

- **Political unity of the Mediterranean Sea**
 - **All but the Anglo-Saxons acknowledged the Roman emperor of the East (foederati)**
 - **Barbarian kings were Romanized**
 - **Barbarians spoke Latin**
 - **They established themselves according to the Roman rule of hospitalitas (except the Franks)**
 - **They adopted the Roman code of law**
 - **They were all Aryans except the Franks (Catholics)**

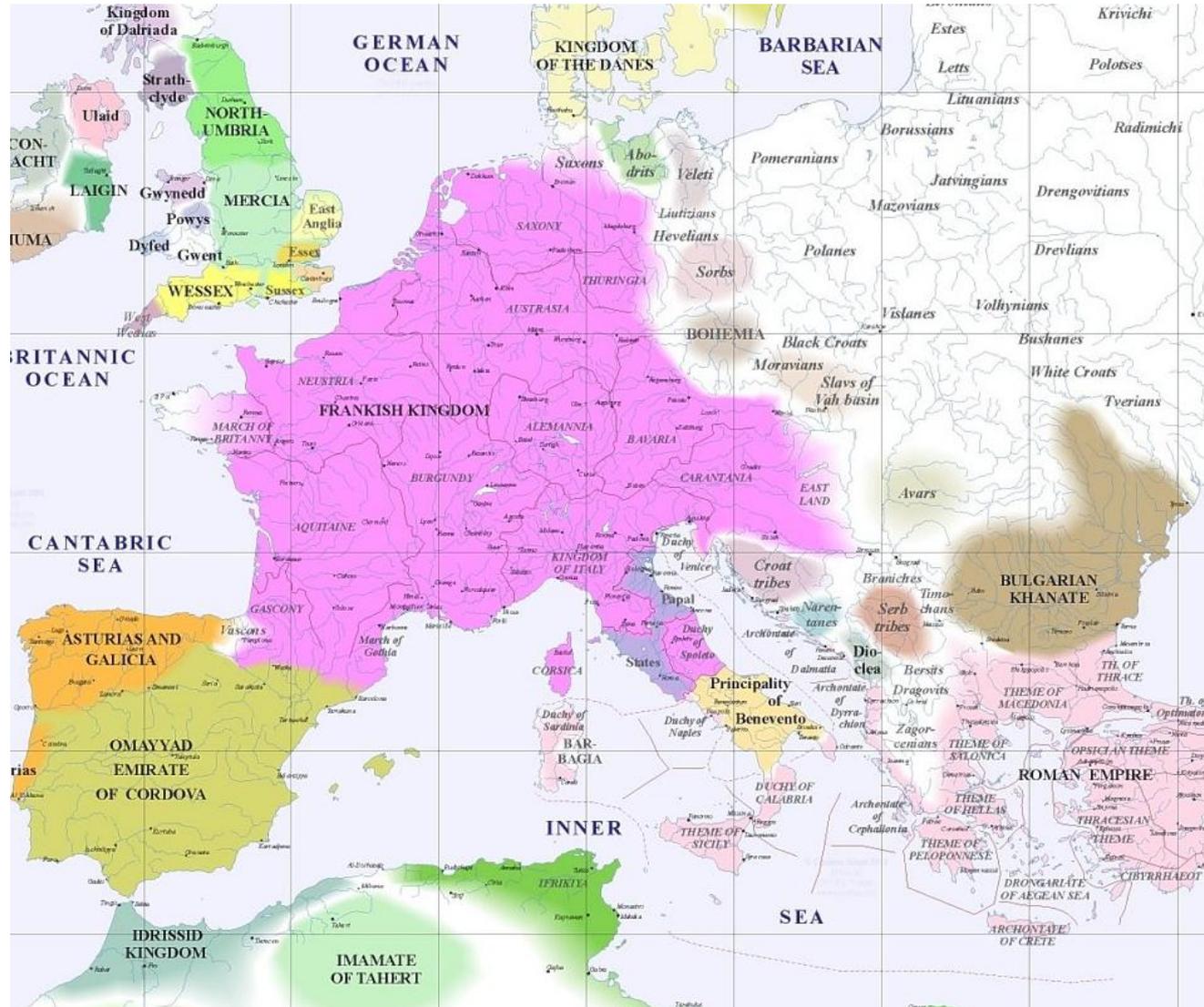
What the Barbarians Knew

- **Post-476 Western Roman Empire**
 - **Melting pot of**
 - **Goths (army)**
 - **Romans (administrators, land owners, farmers, law officers, tax officers)**
 - **Greeks**
 - **Syrians (maritime traders)**
 - **Jews (merchants, lenders)**

What the Barbarians Knew

- **Post-476 Trade**
 - **Spices from China to Western Europe**
 - **Spices from India to Western Europe**
 - **Spices from Arabia to Western Europe**
 - **Papyrus from Egypt to Western Europe**
 - **Oil from Africa to Western Europe**
 - **Slaves from Central/Northern/Eastern Europe to Middle East and Africa via Western Europe**

Europe 800



What the Barbarians knew

- **The Franks casket of carved whalebone (made by Viking craftsmen during the first half of the 8th century AD Northumbria, England), with scenes from Roman, Jewish, Christian and Germanic tradition, and accompanying texts in both runic and Roman script in both English and Latin language**

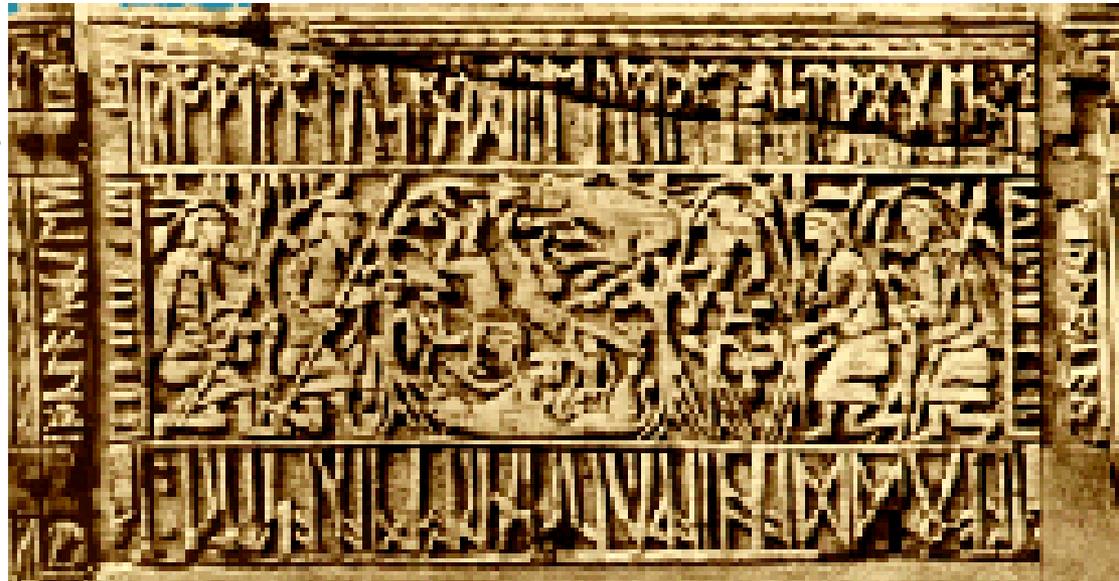


(British Museum)

The front has two scenes: the Germanic legend of Weland the Smith (left) and the Adoration of the Magi (right).



The left side shows the Rome's founders Romulus and Remus. The inscription at the bottom reads "AFCEDDAE HIAE WYLIF IN ROMAEE KAESTRI"



The back shows the capture of Jerusalem in AD 70 by the Romans.



What the Barbarians knew

- **Germanic barbarians: 3rd-4th c (Western Europe)**
 - **Attraction force: wealth of Roman empire**
 - **Repulsion force: Hun invasion**
 - **States form where the Germans terminate their mass migration**
- **Slavic barbarians: 7th c (Balkans), 10th c (Poland), 10th c (Russia) in collapsed Eastern Europe**
 - **Attraction force: wealth of Frankish Europe, Byzantium and Islam**
 - **Repulsion force: Avar invasion**
 - **State form largely where the Slavs have settled a long time before**
 - **Przemyslid dynasty in Bohemia**
 - **Piast dynasty in Poland**
 - **Rurikid dynasty in Russia**

What the Barbarians knew

- **Magyars: 10th c (Hungary)**
 - **No secondary migration caused by Magyar invasion (unlike Hun and Avar invasions)**
 - **The Moravians fight them and the Magyars settle**
 - **End of the age of great mass migrations**
- **New states formed more and more rapidly over the centuries**
 - **improved military technology (easier to defend from invaders and to control subjects)**
 - **more intense agricultural investment (higher motivation to stand one's ground against invaders)**
- **All new states convert to Christianity in order to be admitted to the club of European states**

What the Barbarians knew

- **Barbarian progress towards military triumph and statehood is largely due to economic and military development derived from living near the empire**
- **Client states turn into rising powers and eventually enemies of the empire**
- **Peter Heather's law: "The exercise of imperial power generates an opposite and equal reaction among those affected by it until they so reorganize themselves as to blunt the imperial edge"**

What the Barbarians knew

- **Kievan Russia (900-1240)**



What the Barbarians knew

- **Russia**
 - **Rus (Vikings) colonize Russia from the 9th century**
 - **Trade routes joining two agricultural areas (Baltic and Caucasus)**
 - **Inspired by the Jewish empire of the Khazars (e.g., the khan is a figurehead while military power is in the hands of the bek)**
 - **980: Vladimir of Novgorod conquers Kiev and establishes the largest European state (from Ukraine to the Baltic)**

What the Barbarians knew

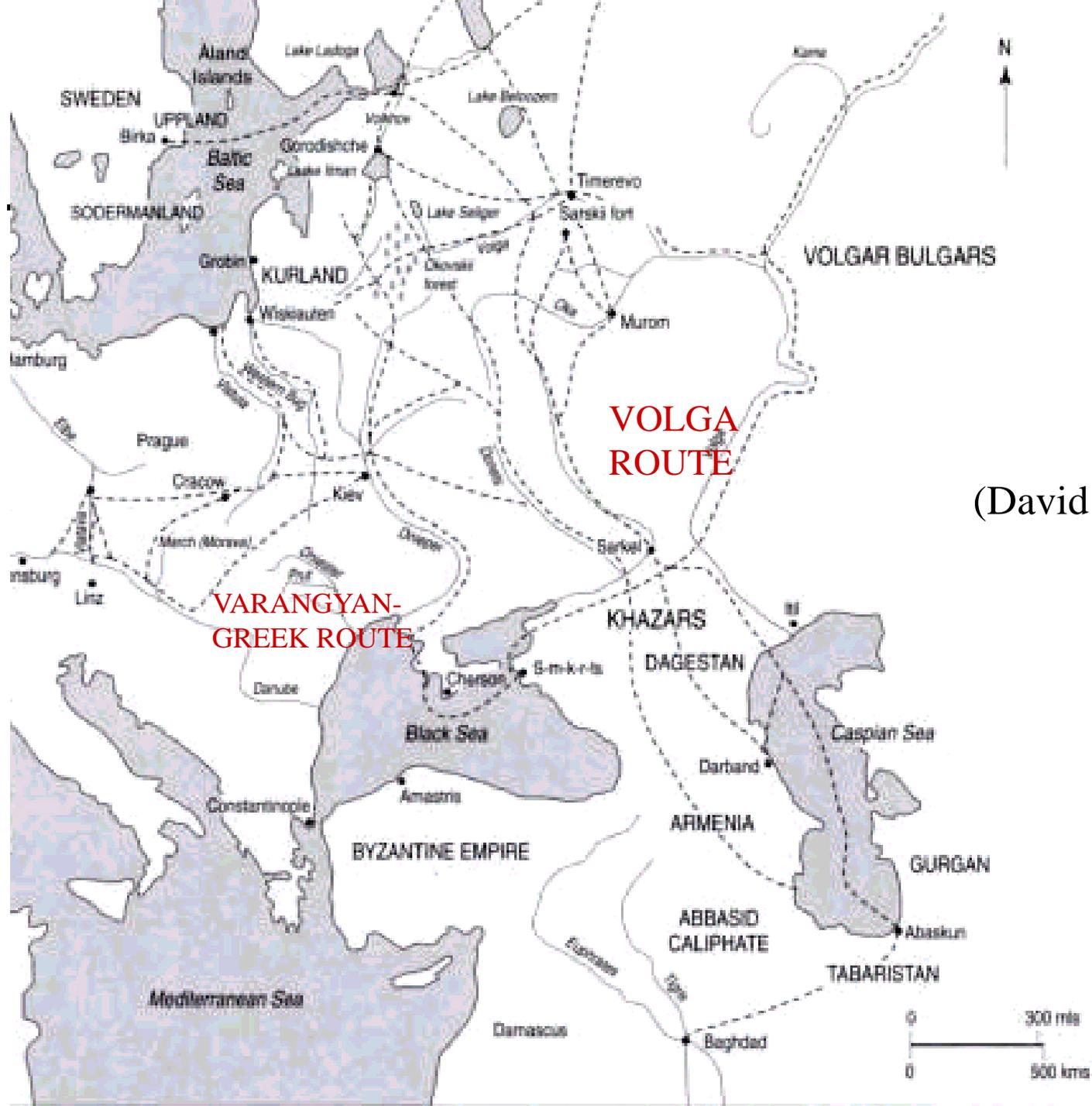
- **Russia**
 - **History marked by continuous civil wars and continuous invasions by the peoples of the steppes**
 - **Feudalism (hierarchy of vassals) with the grand prince playing the role of the king**
 - **No chivalry**
 - **Politics: prince + Duma (council of the nobles) + Veche (town assemblies)**

What the Barbarians knew

- **Russia**
 - **Agriculture: rye, wheat, barley, millet, oats**
 - **Exports: furs and slaves (mainly to Byzantium)**
 - **Imports: wine, textiles, spices (Byzantium) and horses and metals (East)**
 - **Foreign traders settle in Russia: Germans, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Volga Bulgars**
 - **Widespread use of slaves in the economy**

What the Barbarians knew

- **Russia**
 - **Derivation of culture from Byzantium (no native theologians or philosophers)**
 - **Most metropolitans of Kiev were not Russian**
 - **The conversion to Christianity marks the beginning of written literature (including the first script)**
 - **The conversion to Christianity marks the beginning of stone architecture**
 - **Pre-Christian art: epic poems (“byliny”) and wood architecture**



(David Christian)

What the Barbarians knew

- **From the fall of Rome to the modern world**

