

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO  
THE AGE OF ATTILA



This book examines the Age of Attila, roughly the fifth century CE, an era in which western Eurasia experienced significant geopolitical and cultural changes. The Roman Empire collapsed in western Europe, replaced by new “barbarian” kingdoms, but it continued in Christian Byzantine guise in the eastern Mediterranean. New states and peoples changed the face of northern Europe where Rome had never ruled, while in Iran, the Sasanian Empire developed new theories of power and government. At the same time, the great Eurasian steppe became increasingly important in European affairs. This book treats Attila, the notorious king of the Huns, as both an agent of change and a symbol of the wreck of the old world order.

Michael Maas is Professor of History and Classical Studies at Rice University. The focus of his research is late antiquity. His publications include *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (2005); *Exegesis and Empire in the Early Byzantine Mediterranean* (2003); and *Readings in Late Antiquity: A Sourcebook*, second edition (2010).

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THE AGE OF  
  
ATTILA



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*IN MEMORIAM*

*THOMAS SIZGORICH*

*1970–2011*

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



**T**he Age of Attila, which lasted from the late fourth through the early sixth century CE, witnessed manifold changes in western Eurasia. During this transformative era, the peoples and polities of the greater Roman Mediterranean world, northern Europe, the Iranian realm, and the Eurasian steppe itself took new forms and found new voices. Alterations in the geopolitical map across this broad horizon were more than matched by profound internal changes in cultural, religious, economic, and political life. Attila, the king of the Huns who terrified Europe in the middle of the fifth century, stands as an emblem of this turbulent period and gives this volume its title. Although Attila was indisputably a significant figure, this book is not about him or even about the kingdom of the Huns, though their presence is felt throughout the pages that follow. Instead, this volume provides a provocative new overview of the long fifth century, largely from a Roman perspective, by introducing many different vectors of change.

*The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Attila* is intended for an Anglophone university audience, students and specialists alike. The contributors strove to make their discussions accessible to a more general readership as well. Consequently, English translations of most ancient sources will be found in the bibliography, and secondary sources in other languages have been kept to an essential minimum. At all times, interested readers will be guided to further reading. A chronology of important events mentioned in the volume is found at the beginning of the volume in the Chronology, and thumbnail sketches of the main ancient authors, and modern translations of their works into English, are provided in Selected Ancient Sources.

It is a most pleasant duty to thank colleagues and friends whose encouragement and assistance contributed greatly to the making of this book. Beatrice Rehl, now Director of Publishing, Humanities, at Cambridge University Press deserves pride of place for commissioning

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHRONOLOGY



312	Battle of the Milvian Bridge; conversion of Constantine
325	Council of Nicaea
363	Death of Julian, the last pagan emperor
ca. 370	Huns appear in western steppe
376	Goths cross the Danube into Roman Empire
378	Battle of Adrianople; death of Emperor Valens
382	Settlement of Goths south of the Danube
388	Peace treaty between Persian and Roman Empires
402	Ravenna becomes an imperial residence
405	Radagaisus invades Italy
406	Vandals, Alans, and Sueves cross the Rhine into Roman Empire
410	Sack of Rome by Alaric's Visigoths; end of Roman rule in Britain
412	Theodosian Walls built in Constantinople
418	Settlement of Visigoths in southwestern Gaul
429	End of Jewish Patriarchate; Vandals enter North Africa
431	Council of Ephesus
434	Attila becomes ruler of Huns
438	<i>Theodosian Code</i> issued
439	Vandals conquer Carthage
441	Persians invade Roman Empire
441–447	Attila's Huns raid Balkans
451	Council of Chalcedon; Attila invades Gaul and is defeated at the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains
452	Attila invades Italy
453	Death of Attila
455	Vandals sack Rome
468	Expedition from Constantinople against Vandals fails
474	Persian king Peroz captured by Hephthalite Huns
476	Deposition of last western emperor, Romulus Augustulus

CHRONOLOGY

476–493	Odovacar rules Italy
481	Clovis becomes king of Franks
484	Hephthalite Huns seize Bactria from Persians
493	Theodoric becomes ruler of Italy
507	Battle of Vouillé; Franks defeat the Visigoths
ca. 507–511	Clovis promulgates Salic Law for the Franks
517	Promulgation of the Burgundian Law Code
527	Justinian becomes Roman emperor

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS



<i>AB</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>ABull</i>	<i>Art Bulletin</i>
<i>AHB</i>	<i>Ancient History Bulletin</i>
<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJAH</i>	<i>American Journal of Ancient History</i>
<i>AJN</i>	<i>American Journal of Numismatics</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>AM</i>	<i>Archéologie Médiévale</i>
<i>Amm. Res gest.</i>	<i>Ammianus Marcellinus, Res gestae</i>
<i>AN</i>	<i>The American Neptune</i>
<i>AnTard</i>	<i>Antiquité Tardive</i>
<i>Anth. Lat.</i>	<i>Anthologia Latina</i>
<i>Anth. Pal.</i>	<i>Anthologia Palatina</i>
<i>Aug. Ep.</i>	<i>Augustine, Epistulae</i>
<i>AugStud</i>	<i>Augustinian Studies</i>
<i>AWE</i>	<i>Ancient West and East</i>
<i>BAI</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Asia Institute</i>
<i>BEFEO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient</i>
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
<i>Blockley</i>	Roger C. Blockley (see <i>FCH</i> )
<i>BMGS</i>	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>ByzSlav</i>	<i>Byzantinoslavica</i>
<i>ByzZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>C&amp;M</i>	<i>Classica et Mediaevalia</i>
<i>CAH</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
<i>CAJ</i>	<i>Central Asiatic Journal</i>
<i>Cass. Inst.</i>	<i>Cassiodorus, Institutiones/Institutes</i>
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i>
<i>CFHB</i>	<i>Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae</i>



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CH	<i>Church History</i>
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>Cod. Just.</i>	Codex Justinianus
CPh	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CRAI	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
CSCO SS	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium Scriptores Syri
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CSHB	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae
CTh	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
DA	<i>Les Dossiers d'archéologie</i>
Damasc. <i>Vit. Isid.</i>	Damascius, <i>Vita Isidorii</i>
Dio Cass.	Dio Cassius
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
EMedE	<i>Early Medieval Europe</i>
ETL	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
Eunap. <i>Hist.</i>	Eunapius, <i>Fragmenta</i> (FCH)
Eunap. <i>Vit. Soph.</i>	Eunapius, <i>Vitae Sophistarum</i>
Evagr. <i>HE</i>	Evagrius, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
FCH	<i>The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus</i> , by Roger C. Blockley, 2 vols. (Liverpool, 1981–1983)
Ferrandus, <i>Vit. Fulg.</i>	Ferrandus, <i>Vita S. Fulgentii episcopi Ruspensi</i>
GCS	Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
Greg. Mag.	Gregorius Magnus, Gregory the Great
HR	<i>History of Religions</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
Hyd.	Hydatius Lemicensis, <i>Chronicon</i>
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
IJNA	<i>International Journal of Nautical Archaeology</i>
IM	<i>Imago Mundi</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JAC	<i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i>
JAJ	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
Jer. Adv. Jud.	Jerome, <i>Adversus Judaeos</i>
Jer. Ep.	Jerome, <i>Epistulae</i>
JIAA	<i>Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology</i>
JLA	<i>Journal of Late Antiquity</i>
Joh. Ant., fr.	John of Antioch, <i>Fragmenta</i>
Jord. Get.	Jordanes, <i>Getica/History of the Goths</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
Just. Const. omnem	Justinian, <i>Constitutio omnem</i>
Just. Inst.	Justinian, <i>Institutiones</i>
Just. Nov.	Justinian, <i>Novellae</i>
Leo Ep.	Leo, <i>Epistles</i>
Leo Serm.	Leo, <i>Sermons</i>
Liban. Ep.	Libanius, <i>Epistolae</i>
Liban. Or.	Libanius, <i>Orationes</i>
LRE	<i>The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey</i> , by A. H. M. Jones (Oxford, 1964) 3 vols.
Malch. fr.	Malchus, <i>Fragmenta (FCH)</i>
Marc. Com.	Marcellinus Comes
Marin. Vit. Proc.	Marinus, <i>Vita Procli</i>
MedArch	<i>Mediterranean Archaeology</i>
MGH AA	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctores Antiquissimi
MGH LNG	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Leges Nationum Germanicarum
MGH SRM	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum
MHR	<i>Mediterranean Historical Review</i>
MRDTB	<i>Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko</i>
Nov. Theod.	Theodosius II, <i>Novellae</i>
Nov. Val.	Valentinian III, <i>Novellae</i>
NPNF	Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church
Olymp. fr.	Olympiodorus of Thebes, <i>Fragmenta (FCH)</i>

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Olymp. <i>In Alc.</i>	Olympiodorus of Alexandria, <i>In Platonis Alcibiadem</i>
Oros.	Orosius
<i>P&amp;P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
Par. Gr.	Codex Parisinus Graecus
<i>PBSR</i>	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
<i>PFlor</i>	Papyrus, Florence
PG	Patrologia Graeca
<i>PGiess</i>	Papyrus, Giessen
Philostorg. <i>Hist. eccl.</i>	Philostorgius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
Philostrat. <i>VS</i>	Philostratus, <i>Vitae Sophistarum</i>
PL	Patrologia Latina
<i>PLips.</i>	Papyrus, Leipzig
<i>PLRE</i>	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, 260–395</i> , ed. A. H. M. Jones, John R. Martindale, and John Morris, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1971–1992)
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
<i>POxy</i>	Papyrus Oxyrhynchus
Prisc. fr. (Blockley)	Priscus of Panium, <i>Fragmenta (FCH)</i>
Proc. <i>BV</i>	Procopius, <i>De bello vandalico</i>
Prosp.	Prosper of Aquitaine
<i>REArm</i>	<i>Revue des Études Arméniennes</i>
<i>RSO</i>	<i>Rivista degli Studi Orientali</i>
Sal. <i>Ad eccl.</i>	Salvian of Marseille, <i>Ad ecclesiam</i>
Sal. <i>De gub. Dei</i>	Salvian of Marseille, <i>De gubernatione Dei</i>
SC	Sources Chrésiennes
<i>SemClas</i>	<i>Semitica et Classica</i>
Sid. Ap. <i>Ep.</i>	Sidonius Apollinaris, <i>Epistulae</i>
Soc. <i>Hist. eccl.</i>	Socrates Scholasticus, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
Soz. <i>Hist. eccl.</i>	Sozomen, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
SP	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
<i>StIr</i>	<i>Studia Iranica</i>
Syn. <i>Ep.</i>	Synesius of Cyrene, <i>Epistulae</i>
<i>T&amp;MBYZ</i>	<i>Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de recherches d'hist. et civil. byzantines</i>
<i>TAPhA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
Theod. <i>Ep.</i>	Theodoret, <i>Epistulae</i>
Theophan.	Theophanes
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
<i>VChr</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
Vict. Vit.	Victor of Vita

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

YCIS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum</i>
Zach. Ammon.	Zacharias Scholasticus, <i>Ammonius</i>
Zach. Vit. Sev.	Zacharias Scholasticus, <i>Vita Severi Antiocheni</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
Zos.	Zosimus
ZRGG	<i>Zeitschrift für Religions und Geistesgeschichte</i>