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978-1-107-09146-7 - Barbarism and Religion Barbarism: Triumph in the West: Volume Six

J. G. A. Pocock

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## Barbarism and Religion

### Volume Six

This sixth and final volume in John Pocock's acclaimed sequence of works on *Barbarism and Religion* examines Volumes II and III of Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, carrying Gibbon's narrative to the end of empire in the west. "It makes two general assertions: first, that this is in reality a mosaic of narratives, written on diverse premises and never fully synthesised with one another; and second, that these chapters assert a progress of both barbarism and religion from east to west, leaving much history behind as they do so." The magnitude of *Barbarism and Religion* is already apparent. *Barbarism: Triumph in the West* represents the culmination of a remarkable attempt to discover and present what Gibbon was saying, what he meant by it, and why he said it in the ways that he did, as well as an unparalleled contribution to the historiography of Enlightened Europe.

J. G. A. POCKOCK was born in London and brought up in Christchurch, New Zealand, and educated at the Universities of Canterbury and Cambridge. He is now Harry C. Black Professor of History Emeritus at the Johns Hopkins University and an Honorary Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge. His many seminal works on intellectual history include *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* (1957, second edition 1987), *Politics, Language and Time* (1971), *The Machiavellian Moment* (1975, second edition 2003), *Virtue, Commerce and History* (1985), *The Discovery of Islands* (2005), *Political Thought and History* (2009) and five volumes in an ongoing sequence, initiated in 1999, on *Barbarism and Religion*. He has also edited *The Political Works of James Harrington* (1977) and *Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1987), as well as the collaborative study *The Varieties of British Political Thought* (1995). A Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy and of the Royal Historical Society, Professor Pocock is also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the American Philosophical Society. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of New Zealand Merit in 2002.

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# Barbarism and Religion

*Barbarism: Triumph in the West*

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Volume Six

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To the memory of Michel Baridon, 1927–2009

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## Acknowledgements

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The reading necessary to the construction of this volume has been carried out almost entirely in the Special Collections of the Eisenhower Library of the Johns Hopkins University, and has depended on its own great resources and those of the George W. Peabody and John Work Garrett Libraries associated with it. I thank the staffs of all these libraries for their unflinching helpfulness and patience; in particular Amy Kimball and Chella Vidyanathan for many services, including their guidance through the electronic forest in which we are now compelled to wander. I confess to a continuing nostalgia for the research skills I once exercised, before technological progress abolished them.

The preparation of the volume has been once more assisted by a generous grant from the History Department of the Johns Hopkins University, which has been sustained through the twenty years of my retirement from teaching. I have first to thank my graduate assistants, Kenneth Sheppard and Rebecca Stoil, for their hard work, patience and accuracy in creating a typewritten text from originals entirely handwritten. To adapt language once used by Gibbon to David Hume, I write in ink because I think in ink. I cannot do otherwise, but it has required much of others. I also thank all those engaged in the production and correction of this text by the Cambridge University Press.

The volume is dedicated to the memory of Michel Baridon, whose *Edward Gibbon et le mythe de Rome* (1978) placed him among the pioneers of modern Gibbon interpretation. To his name must instantly be added those of Patricia Craddock and David Womersley; and I add those of others whose role in the shaping of my project has far exceeded their presence in its footnotes: the late Istvan Hont, Robert Mankin, Nicholas Phillipson, Orest Ranum, John Robertson and Brian Young. And I cannot conclude the series *Barbarism and Religion* without expressing my unlimited and affectionate gratitude to Richard Fisher, whose insight and encouragement, extended to all six volumes over a period of nearly twenty years, exceed all measure of praise and thanks. My debt to my wife and family remains inexpressible, as it was in her lifetime.

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## Advice to readers

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Like the preceding volumes in this series, this is intended as a contribution to the history of historiography, and is not to be read as offering a history of the late Roman empire or the first centuries of the Christian church. Where I have made use of recent scholarship on these two great subjects, it has not been with the intention of evaluating Gibbon's history or those written by his contemporaries, or (though this is still possible) of treating him or them as engaged in problems they share with recent historians; but with that of understanding the histories they wrote and the kinds of histories they were writing. The history of historiography is a discipline (or a group of sub-disciplines) that has, for reasons themselves historical, been neglected to the point where its character and methods still need to be agreed on; and in these volumes I have found myself studying the *Decline and Fall* both as a very great text in its own right, and as the centrepiece of a portrait of early modern historiography in its last phase before the revolutionary transformation it underwent in the following century.

For this reason, historians other than Gibbon, with whose work his was engaged – Tillemont in particular among them – have been allowed to speak at length in their own voices, and I have endeavoured to present and interpret them as well as him. In both cases I have often reported them in the historic present tense, as narratives we may read and experience in themselves before going on to examine them as acts of speech performed in past history. It is necessary, of course, to preserve their historic and sometimes archaic character in order to understand them; and I have continued the practice of transcribing works printed in eighteenth-century French so as to preserve their now obsolete spelling, punctuation and (especially) accentuation. This may trouble the eye of the modern reader, but it would have distorted their historicity to modernise their visual appearance. For the same reason, I have retained Gibbon's spellings of late-antique names – e.g., 'Genseric', 'Jornandes' – where these have now been abandoned in favour of others.

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Advice to readers

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My aim has been to return the reader to the world of the eighteenth century and its historical culture.

All translations are my own except where I have used Loeb editions of Latin and Greek authors, or employed contemporary English translations from the French. It may be desirable to reiterate that *Decline and Fall* in italic refers to the book, Decline and Fall in roman to the concept.

## Abbreviations

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The following abbreviations of book titles have been regularly employed.

<i>A</i>	John Murray (ed.): <i>The Autobiography of Edward Gibbon</i> . Second edition. London: John Murray, 1897.
<i>BSE</i>	J. G. A. Pocock: <i>Barbarism and Religion</i> , volume IV: <i>Barbarians, Savages and Empires</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
<i>BUH</i>	Jean Le Clerc: <i>Bibliothèque universelle et historique. Réimpression de l'édition d'Amsterdam, 1686–1693</i> . Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1968.
<i>EE</i>	Patricia B. Craddock (ed.): <i>The English Essays of Edward Gibbon</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.
<i>EEG</i>	J. G. A. Pocock: <i>Barbarism and Religion</i> , volume I: <i>The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon 1737–1764</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
<i>EGLH</i>	Patricia B. Craddock: <i>Edward Gibbon, Luminous Historian, 1772–1794</i> . Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
<i>Empereurs</i>	Louis Sebastien Le Nain de Tillemont: <i>Histoire des Empereurs et des autres princes qui ont régné durant les six premiers siècles de l'église, de leurs guerres contre les Juifs, des écrivains profanes, et des personnes les plus illustres de leurs temps</i> . Brussels, 1732–40.
<i>FDF</i>	J. G. A. Pocock. <i>Barbarism and Religion</i> , volume III: <i>The First Decline and Fall</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
<i>Journal B</i>	Georges A. Bonnard (ed.): <i>Le Journal de Gibbon à Lausanne: 17 Août 1763–19 Avril 1764</i> . Lausanne: Librairie de l'Université, 1945.
<i>Journal C</i>	Georges A. Bonnard (ed.): <i>Gibbon's Journey from Geneva to Rome: his Journal from 20 April to 2</i>

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- October 1764*. London and New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961.
- Letters* J. E. Norton (ed.): *The Letters of Edward Gibbon*. 3 volumes. London: Cassell, 1956.
- Mémoires* Louis Sebastien Le Nain de Tillemont. *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*. 16 volumes separately subtitled. Paris, 1693–1712.
- NGG* J. G. A. Pocock: *Barbarism and Religion*, volume II: *Narratives of Civil Government*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- RFT* J. G. A. Pocock. *Barbarism and Religion*, volume v: *Religion: The First Triumph*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Womersley, 1994 David Womersley (ed.): *Edward Gibbon: The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Three volumes. Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1994.
- YEG* Patricia B. Craddock: *Young Edward Gibbon, Gentleman of Letters*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.