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The Fall of Rome, by Jean-Louis Erard, 1793.

"Fall of Rome" redirects here. For other uses, see Fall of Rome (disambiguation). "The fall of the Roman Empire" redirects here. For the film, see The Fall of the Roman Empire (film). For the Italian film, see The Fall of Rome (film). The fall of the Western Roman Empire, also called the fall of the Roman Empire or the fall of Rome, was the loss of central political control in the Western Roman Empire, a process in which the Empire failed to enforce its rule, and its vast territory was divided among several successor polities. The Roman Empire lost the strengths that had allowed it to exercise effective control over its Western provinces; modern historians posit factors including the effectiveness and numbers of the army, the health and numbers of the Roman population, the strength of the economy, the competence of the emperors, the internal struggles for power, the religious changes of the period, and the efficiency of the civil administration. Increasing pressure from invading peoples outside Roman culture also contributed greatly to the collapse. Climatic changes and both endemic and epidemic disease drove many of these immediate factors.[1] The reasons for the collapse are major subjects of the historiography of the ancient world and they inform much modern discourse on state failure.[2][3][4] Map of Roman Territory Republic Principle/Dominate Eastern/Byzantine Empire Western Empire In 376, a large migration of Goths and other non-Roman people, fleeing from the Huns, entered the Empire. Roman forces were unable to exterminate, expel or subjugate them (as was their normal practice). In 395, after winning two destructive civil wars, Theodosius I died. He left a collapsing field army, and the Empire divided between the warring ministers of his two incapable sons. Goths and other non-Romans became a force that could challenge either part of the Empire. Further barbarian groups crossed the Rhine and other frontiers. The armed forces of the Western Empire became few and ineffective, and despite brief recoveries under able leaders, central and provincial governments disintegrated. By 476, the position of Western Roman Emperor wielded no real political or public authority, and had no effective control over the empire, and the emperor's office could exist as little as the seventh century.[9][10][11][12] Observing the political and social context (and the attendant fragmentation of commerce, culture, and language), but also the cultural and archaeological continuity, the process has been described as a complex cultural transformation, rather than a fall.[13]:34 The perception of Late Antiquity as significantly changed the period is no longer seen as an era of decline and crisis but as an epoch of metamorphosis in the Mediterranean region.[14][15]:3–4 Routes taken by barbarian invaders of the Roman Empire during the Migration Period A synthesis by Harper (2017) gave four decisive turns of events in the transformation from the height of the empire to the early Middle Ages: The Antonine Plague that ended a long period of demographic and economic expansion, weakening but not toppling the empire. 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