

ROME HAS FALLEN.

The Defense of the City of God

Deconstructing the Pagan Accusation Against Christianity (410 A.D.)

"My voice falters, sobs stifle the words... She is a captive, that city which enthralled the world." — **St. Jerome**

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THE UNTHINKABLE CATASTROPHE

THE FALL OF THE ETERNAL CITY

ALARIC'S MARCH TO ROME (c. 408-410 A.D.)



HISTORICAL CONTEXT & IMPACT

Date: **August 24, 410 A.D.**

Event: **The Sack of Rome** by Alaric the Goth.

Context: For the first time in 800 years, the 'Eternal City' has been conquered. The psychological shock is global. Refugees flee to Carthage and the East. The sense of imperial security is shattered.



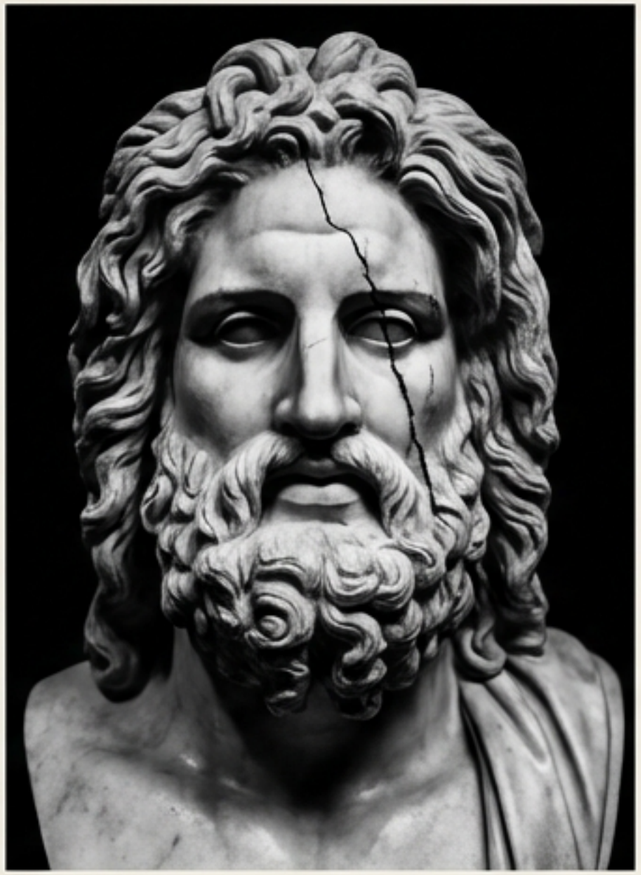
ROMAN NOBLEMAN,
5th Century A.D.,
Marble Fragment.

"A terrible rumour reaches me from the West... Rome besieged, bought for gold, besieged again, life and property perishing together."

— St. Jerome, Letter 127

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THE PAGAN ACCUSATION



The Old Gods.

The Charge: Pagan traditionalists claim the disaster occurred because Rome abandoned its ancient gods for Christianity.

The Logic: "The old gods made us great; this new God has left us defenseless."

The Defense: Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, writes "The City of God" to refute this claim, arguing that Rome's gods were never its protectors, but its destroyers.



The New Faith.

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EXHIBIT A: A NEW KIND OF WAR

The Anomaly of Mercy

Gothic Warriors & The Basilica



A Historical Precedent Broken:

1. **Pagan Precedent** (Troy): Juno's sanctuary saved no one. "Dying Priam at the shrine, staining the hearth he made divine" (Virgil)', made divine" (Virgil).

2. **Christian Reality** (Rome, 410 A.D.): The Basilicas of the Apostles served as **safe havens**. The barbarians spared the vanquished specifically for the **sake of Christ**.

Conclusion: The only reason the accusers survived to complain is because they feigned Christianity to find safety in its churches.

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Exhibit B: The Problem of Pain

The Pagan Objection:
"If your God is real, why did Christians suffer alongside Pagans?"

Augustine's Rebuttal:
Suffering is a **refining fire**, not a verdict.



The Wicked
(Chaff)

The Good
(Gold)

The Analogy: The same violence of affliction **proves, purges,** and **clarifies the good,** but **damns** and **exterminates the wicked.**

Insight: Temporal goods (wealth, safety) are not the **ultimate reward.** Losing them is not the ultimate loss.

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Exhibit C: Violation and Virtue

The Issue: The violation of Christian women and captives during the sack.

The Philosophical Stance: Purity is a virtue of the **Will**, not the **Body**.

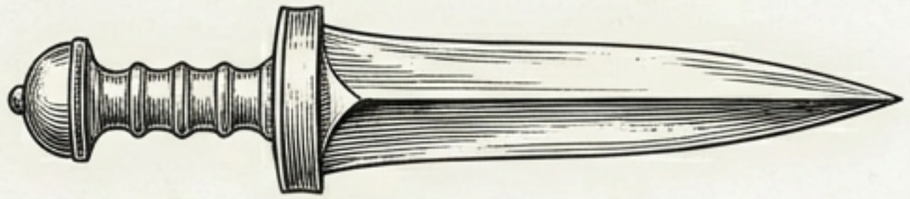
Augustine's Argument: "If the will remains firm… nothing that another person does with the body is any fault of the person who suffers it."

Conclusion: Chastity cannot be stolen by force; it can only be **surrendered** by **consent**. The Christian women who suffered maintained their **virtue** because they maintained their will.



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Exhibit D: The False Heroism of Suicide



Lucretia / Cato

The **Pagan Ideal**: Lucretia killed herself after rape. Romans call this nobility. Augustine calls it pride. If she was innocent, she **murdered an innocent woman** to **avoid shame**.



Job / Regulus

The **Christian Ideal**: **True courage is endurance**. ‘Thou shalt not kill’ includes oneself. Job endured suffering; Regulus returned to captivity. Suicide is a sign of weakness, unable to bear the judgment of others.

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The Myth of Divine Protection

The Counter-Attack Begins

The Argument: Romans entrusted their safety to the gods of Troy.

The Irony: These gods had already been conquered. They could not save their own city, Ilium.

Virgil's Admission: "The gods of her domestic shrines / Your country to your care consigns." (Aeneas saved the gods; the gods did not save Aeneas).

Verdict: **It is madness to believe that gods who failed to protect their own statues in Troy could protect the walls of Rome.**



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A HISTORY OF CALAMITY

Where Were the Gods Before Christ?



The Sack by the Gauls

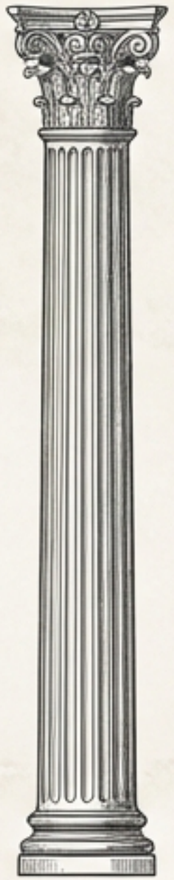
The Capitol saved by geese, not Jupiter.

Caudine Forks

Entire Roman army surrenders.

Civil Wars (Marius & Sylla)

Sylla butchered citizens while temples were full.



Fact Check:
Rome suffered **famine, pestilence,** and **massacre** long before the **name of Christ was known.**

The Omen: Sylla saw a "**golden crown**" on a liver sacrifice, promising victory. The gods prophesied success for a man who **murdered his own people.**

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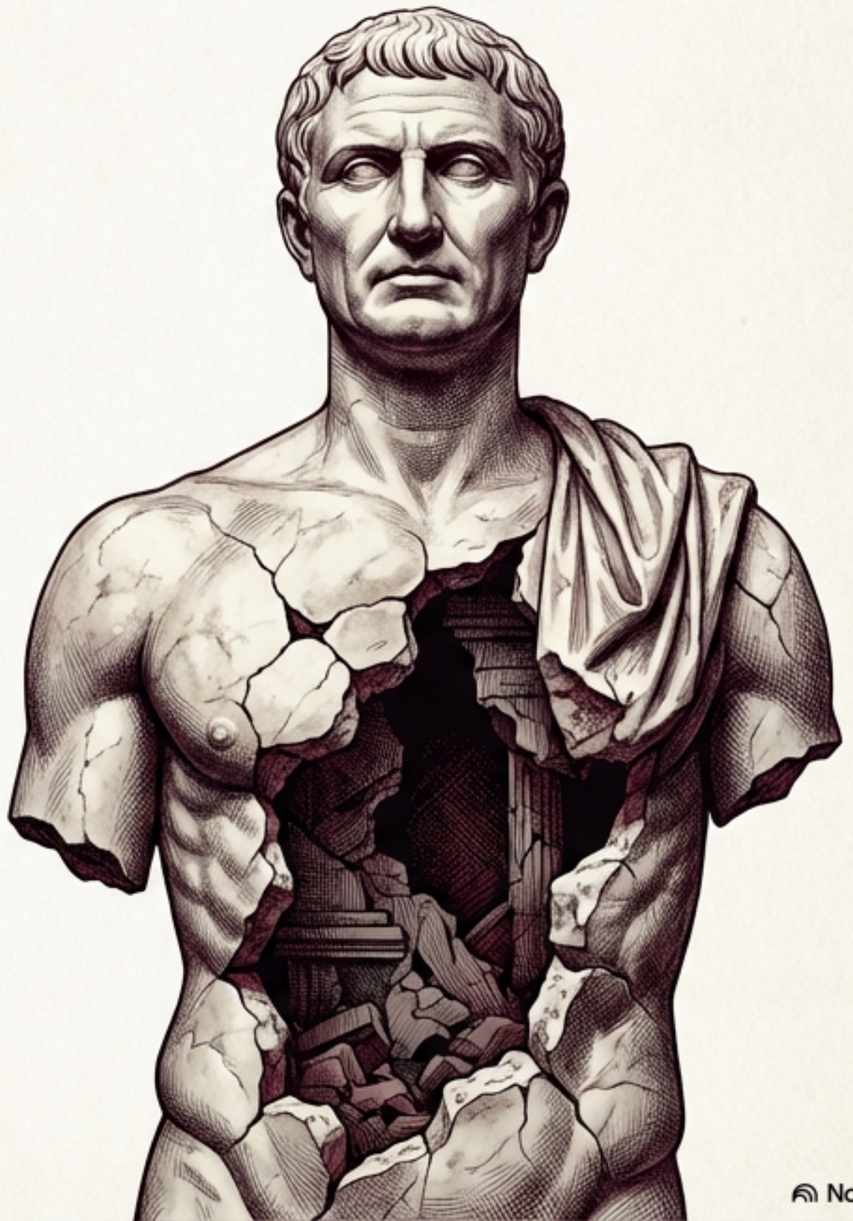
THE MORAL COLLAPSE OF THE REPUBLIC

Core Thesis: The Republic was destroyed by VICE, not by Barbarians. This internal destruction happened long before Christ.

Testimony of Sallust: Rome became "utterly wicked and dissolute" after the destruction of Carthage.

Testimony of Cicero: "We retain only the name of a republic, and have long since lost the reality."

The Cause: The gods gave no moral laws. They demanded no chastity. They allowed the Republic to sink into avarice and luxury.



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THE THEATER OF DEMONS



The Scandal: To stop a physical pestilence, the gods ordered the institution of scenic games (plays). These plays depicted the gods as adulterers and criminals.

The Paradox:

- **The Gods:** Demand to be worshipped via obscene plays.
- **The Romans:** Brand the actors of these plays as "infamous" and strip their citizenship.

Augustine's Verdict: If the actors are too shameful to be citizens, the gods who demand them are too shameful to be worshipped. These are malicious demons seeking the corruption of the human soul.

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THE MYTH OF THE JUST REPUBLIC



Cicero's Definition: A Republic is the 'weal of the people' associated by a common acknowledgment of RIGHT and JUSTICE.

The Reality: From the fratricide of Romulus to the rape of the Sabine women, Rome was built on injustice.

The Conclusion: True justice requires giving every one their due. If Rome denies the True God His due (worship), there is no justice. Without justice, there is no Republic. Rome was merely a successful brigandage.

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THE TWO CITIES

The City of God
- Love of God
- Glory of Mod
- Seeking Eterhly Peace



The Earthly City,
- Love of Self
- Glory of Men
- Seeking Earthly Peace

The Pivot: Humanity is divided into two communities, entangled in this world until the final judgment.

Current State: The sack of Rome is merely a ripple in the Earthly City; the City of God remains unshaken.

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THE VERDICT

1.

MERCY.
Christianity brought unprecedented mercy to war (Sanctuary).

2.

HISTORY.
Rome suffered disasters and moral rot long before Christ (Orosius/Sallust).

3.

THEOLOGY.
The old gods were impotent demons who demanded vice (Theater).

4.

REALITY.
Suffering is a test, not a verdict. The good lose nothing of value in losing earthly wealth.

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A PILGRIMAGE TOWARD ETERNITY



Closing Thought: “Choose now what you will pursue... The City of God invites you to become a citizen.”

Do not mourn the “Eternal City” of stone which can burn. Seek the City which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Based on the writings of St. Augustine (*City of God*), St. Jerome (*Letters*), and Orosius (*Histories*).

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