The Seven Books of History History against the Pagans

An Intellectual Prospectus & Contextual Atlas

Based on the work by Paulus Orosius (c. 417 AD)

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THE CRISIS OF 410 AD



THE ACCUSATION

Rome fell because the Empire abandoned its ancient gods for Christianity. Pagan critics claimed the “Christian Era” was a curse.

THE DEFENSE

The Church commissioned Orosius to prove the pre-Christian world was historically worse—steeped in blood, fire, and disaster.

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THE ARCHITECT & THE BUILDER



ST. AUGUSTINE
Author of *The City of God*

THE COMMISSION



PAULUS OROSIUS
The Historical Researcher

Augustine needed a catalog of all known "burdens of war, ravages of disease, sorrows of famine, and horrors of earthquakes" to prove that misery is inherent to the human condition, not Christianity.

"You bade me speak out in opposition to the empty perversity of those who... are called 'pagans'."

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PROFILE: PAULUS OROSIUS

BIOGRAPHY

ORIGIN: Bracara (modern Braga, Portugal).

BORN: c. 380-390 AD.

ROLE: Presbyter, Refugee, Historian.

JOURNEY

Fled Vandal invasion in Spain → North **Africa** (Augustine) → Palestine (Jerome).



THE WATCHDOG METAPHOR

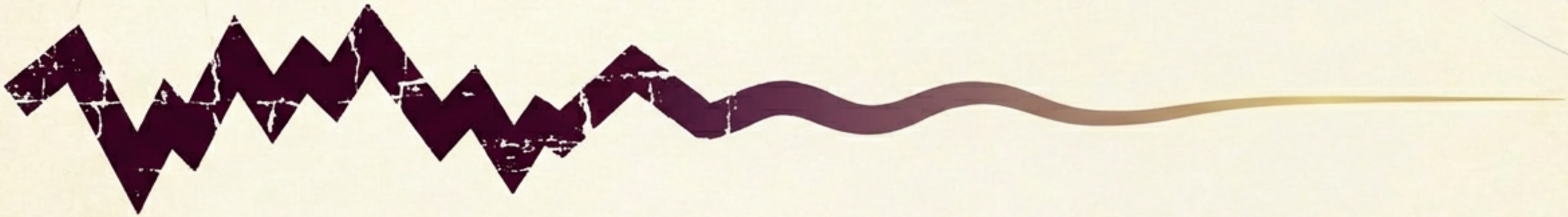
The care of the dogs is not the last consideration... they have special faculties... to distinguish, to love, and to serve.

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THE THEORY OF MISERY

THE PAST:
Avaricious Bloody Death.

THE PRESENT:
Moderated by Grace.

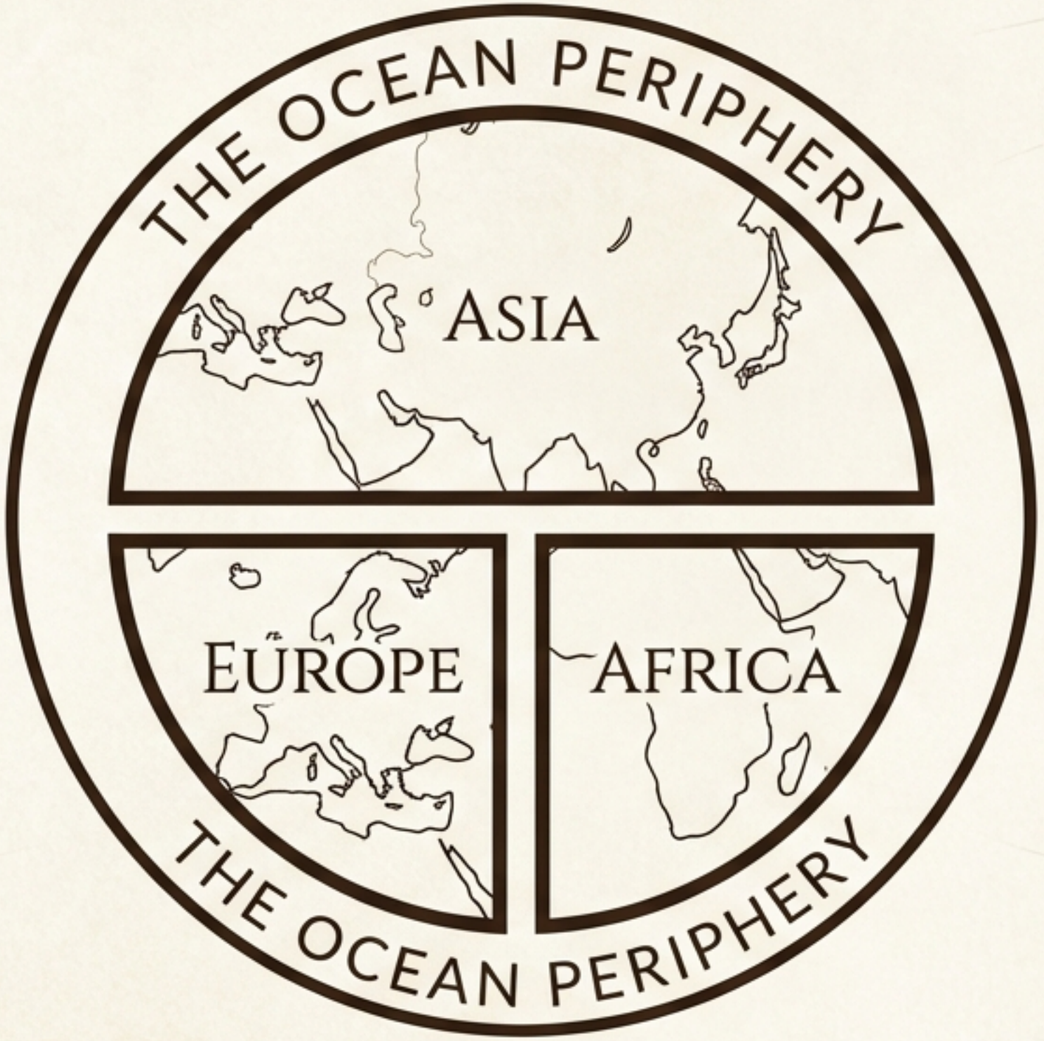


Orosius argues that the world has been “burning with evils” since the first sin. If the past was horrific without Christ, the pagan argument that Christianity caused Rome’s fall collapses.

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The Watchtower of History

Orosius views the world “as from a watchtower.” He divides the inhabited earth into three parts, not two.



1. **ASIA** (The East)
2. **EUROPE** (The North)
3. **AFRICA** (The South/Third Part)

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Survey of Asia



BOUNDARIES:
Surrounded on three sides by the Ocean. Extends from the Ganges in the East to the Mediterranean in the West.

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The European Frontier

GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

The Wild North: Begins at the Riphaean Mountains. The Suebi possess the largest part of Germania, separated from the Roman world by the Danube.



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The Mediterranean Core

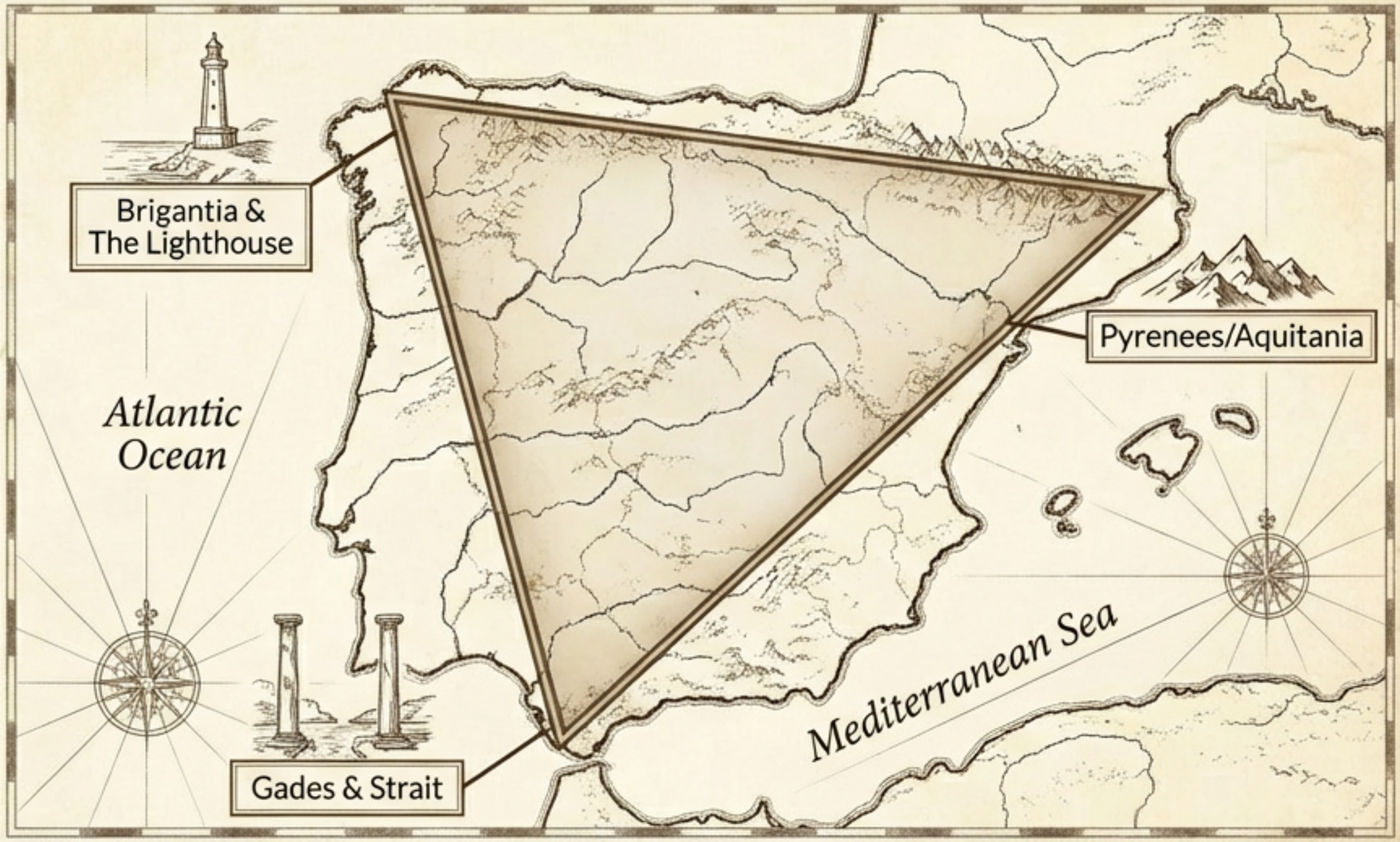


The heart of the Roman world, defined by its seas and mountain ranges.

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Hispania: The Triangle of the West

Orosius describes his homeland as a triangle, almost an island, surrounded by the Ocean and the Tyrrhenian Sea.



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The Ocean Periphery

Thule: The furthest limit, “situated in the middle of the Ocean toward the northwest,” known to barely a few.

Refer to the descriptions of the islands.



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Africa: The Third Part

The Geographical Debate: Orosius classifies Africa as a third continent, though others considered it part of Europe.

He notes it appears smaller because large portions are "uncultivated and unknown" **due to the intense heat of the sun.**



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Architecture of the Seven Books



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Cataloging the Catastrophe

Narrative Goal: To demolish the idea of the pagan "Good Old Days" by cataloging flood, fire, plague, and crime.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

ITEM 1

BIBLICAL DESTRUCTION:
Sodom and Gomorrah (Book 1, Ch 6)



ITEM 2

MYTH AS HISTORY:
The Minotaur & Lapithae (Book 1, Ch 13)



ITEM 3

THE FOUR EMPIRES:
Babylon → Macedon → Carthage → Rome
(*Translatio Imperii*)



Reference: Table of Contents (<IMAGE 2>) - Chapters 6, 13, and related empirical histories.

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The Christian Convergence (Book 7)

Roman History
(Principate of Augustus)

Divine History
(Nativity of Christ)

THE PIVOT OF HISTORY

Principate of Augustus.
Portents Announcing Christ
(Book 7, Ch 20-23)

Nativity of Christ.
Crucifixion of Christ
(Book 7, Ch 3-4)

- The Gates of Janus were closed (Peace) at the exact moment of Christ's birth.
- Rome was preserved to spread the Gospel.
- The "Modern" Age: Contemporary events and the blessings of Christian times.

Reference: Table of Contents (Book 7) - Chapters showing the connection between Augustus, Christ, and the subsequent emperors.

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The Medieval Standard

Pope Gelasius (494 AD)



Gave the work work unqualified approval.

King Alfred the Great



Translated it into Anglo-Saxon to educate England.

Dante Alighieri



Placed Orosius in the “Heaven of the Sun” as a light of the Church.

Survival: Nearly 200 manuscripts exist today. Refer to the text regarding Alfred and Gelasius.

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A Testament to Anxious Times

Orosius wrote to comfort a world terrified by change. He argued that chaos was not a sign of abandonment, but part of a divine plan.

The *Seven Books* remains a fascinating attempt to map the geography of human suffering and find hope within it.

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