



THE EXPANSION OF THE *BARBARIAN WEST*
(570-632 C.E/52 BH-12 AH)

BY

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the degree of Master of Human Sciences
(History and Civilization)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates and examines the main selected Germanic Barbarian West tribes, the Visigoths, Franks, Langobards and Anglo-Saxons who settled in Western Europe in the early Medieval Europe. This research applies the life span of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) from 52 BH-12 A.H/ 570-632 C.E as a framework although but this is not a comparative study of religions. The significance of these dates being selected as the most important period in Medieval History emphasizes the crucial period in the migration of tribes and the formation of tribal states in the West. The method of study is based on published and edited primary sources written by barbarian bishops and monks as well as reports from published secondary books and archeological sources. The research concludes to refute the hypothesis of Henri Pirenne on the backwardness of medieval Europe, subsequent to the cause of Muslim conquest of post-Roman Mediterranean. The research also validates studies of other historians who confirmed that paganism (the German and Keltic animism and the Greco-Roman idolatry) was still unyielding within the Barbarian West Catholic kingdoms. In our study, we scrutinize published primary sources, mostly annals of Catholic bishops who confabulated truthfully recorded facts with their own biases, beliefs, thoughts and opinions. This study emphasizes the rise and expansion of the *Barbarian West* in the formative Age of the Revelation of Islam and formulates question of western Christian civilization-building by population considered uncivilized and barbarian by the Romans. The waning Western Roman Empire was replaced by the Christianized “Holy Roman Empire of the German Nations”, a threat to the Eastern Roman Empire (‘Romania’) called by the modern historians as “Byzantine Empire” in the discussed “Dark Ages”.

خلاصة البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء وبحث عن قبائل الغرب الجرمانية البربرية الرئيسية المحددة، أي القوط الغربيين، والفرنجة، ولومبارديون والأنجلو سكسونيون الذين استقروا في أوروبا الغربية في مبكر عصورها الوسطى. وسيتم تطبيق هذا البحث على فترة حياة النبي محمد (ص) من BH-12 52 هـ/ 570-632 م كهيكلة ولكنها ليست دراسة من مقارنة الأديان. وأهمية هذه التواريخ التي يتم تحديدها بأنها أهم الفترات في تاريخ العصور الوسطى التي تؤكد على الفترات الحاسمة في هجرة القبائل وتشكيل الدول القبليّة في الغرب. ويستند هذا الأسلوب من الدراسة على نشر وتحرير المصادر الأولية التي كتبها الأساقفة البرابرة والرهبان إضافة إلى تقارير الكتب الثانوية المنشورة والمصادر الأثرية. ويخلص البحث إلى دحض فرضية هنري بيرين على أن تخلف أوروبا في العصور الوسطى لاحقاً لقضية الفتح المسلم من منطقة البحر الأبيض المتوسط في مرحلة ما بعد الرومان. ويؤكد البحث أيضاً دراسات المؤرخين الآخرين الذين أكدوا أن الوثنية (أرواحية الألمانية والسلتية ووثنية اليونانية الرومانية) كانت ولا تزال لم تنضب داخل الممالك البربرية الغربية الكاثوليكية. وفي دراستنا نحن نفحص المصادر الأولية المنشورة، ومعظمهما حوليات الأساقفة الكاثوليك الذين يتسامرون بالحقائق التي سجّلت بصدق مع التحيزات الخاصة بهم، ومعتقداتهم، وأفكارهم، وآرائهم. وتؤكد هذه الدراسة صعود وتوسع البربر الغرب في عصر التكويني من وحي الإسلام وتصوغ مسألة بناء الحضارة المسيحية الغربية من حيث عدد السكان الذين كانوا يعتبرون برابرة غير متحضرين من قبل الرومان. وقد استعيض عن تراجع الإمبراطورية الرومانية الغربية من قبل مسيحية "الإمبراطورية الرومانية المقدسة من الأمم الألمانية" تهديداً للإمبراطورية الرومانية الشرقية ('رومانيا') التي سمّاها المؤرخون المعاصرون باسم "الإمبراطورية البيزنطية" في مناقشة "العصور المظلمة".

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (History and Civilization).

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The Roman Empire reached its civilizational zenith during the first century C.E. Its dominium was stretched from the British Isles in the west, the Rhine valleys in the north, to the Euphrates River in the east and the Sahara Desert in the south.¹ It became too large to be ruled by a single emperor so Emperor Diocletian (r. 338-317 BH/284-305 C.E) divided the rapidly declining Roman Empire into the Oriental and the Occidental realms. Diocletian ruled the Eastern part of the empire while Maximian (co-emperor) governed the Western lands.² His Western Roman Empire (*Imperium Romanum Occidentalis*) collapsed in 146 BH/476 C.E. Several historians have presented reasons for this fall. Edward Gibbon and his disciples blame the rise of Christianity as the crucial factor for the fall of Rome.³ Gibbon claims that Greco-Roman (Hellenistic) culture was influenced by the Germanic tribes and they had adopted Arian Christianity long before the dethroning of Romulus Augustus, the last emperor of the West in 146 BH/476 C.E who was deposed by the Germanic invaders called “Barbarians” by the Romans.⁴

The Western Roman Empire - stretching from Britannia to Syria and Egypt - was overrun by the migrating Germanic hordes of Goths (Visigoths and Ostrogoths), Burgundians, Lombards (Langobards), Franks, Anglo-Saxons, Jutes, Vandals, Suebes,

¹ Kay Slocum, *Medieval Civilisation*, (London: Laurence King Published Ltd, 2005), 12.

² *Ibid*, 14.

³ Edward Gibbon, *The history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. David Womersley, (England: Penguin Book Ltd, 1995), 2: 511.

⁴ J.J. Norwich, *A short history of Byzantium*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 53.

the Iranic Alans, as well as the Celts of Caledonia, Hibernia and Wales (Scots, Picts and Irish). “Europe” as a concept of unity and civilization did not exist during the period of the Revelation of Islam. The term “Europe” as a description of the Christianized Far West was first used by the English monk Alcuin, a tutor of the Frankish King Charlemagne who built his new “Roman Empire of the German Nation” between 184-198 AH/800-814 C.E.⁵ His personality and deeds as narrated by Einhard in his *Vita Caroli* (The Life of Charlemagne) are disputed nowadays by medievalists in the context of Einhard’s plagiarism of Suetonius’ *Vita Caesar* (The twelve Caesars).

The term “*Barbarian West*” was introduced in 1369 AH/1950 by the renowned British historian, John Michael Wallace-Hadrill in his fundamental book on the era of the Merovingian and Carolingian kings of Franks entitled *The Barbarian West 400-1000 C.E.* According to Wallace-Hadrill, the word “Barbarian” comes into English from the Medieval Latin: *barbarinus*, Latin: *barbaria*, *barbarus* and from the ancient Greek: *βάρβαρος*. The term “barbarian” either describes a foreign individual or tribe whose first language was not Greek or a Greek individual or tribe speaking Greek crudely.⁶ However, it became a general term because the Greeks referred it to the different foreign cultures that existed during those periods such as the Celts, Egyptians, Etruscans, Carthaginians, Germanic Macedonians, Medes, Phoenicians, etc.

Further changes occurred in the connotations of *barbari/barbaroi* in Late Antiquity when bishops of Orthodox Catholic were appointed to see other "civilized" barbarian tribes such as in Armenia or Persia, where bishops were appointed to

⁵ Jeff Sypeck, *Becoming Charlemagne, Europe, Baghdad and the empires of A.D. 800*, (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2009), 60-61.

⁶ J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West 400-1000*, (New York: Barnes & Noble Inc, 3rd ed., 1998), 11.

supervise entire peoples among the less settled.⁷ According to the controversial definition of “Barbarians” based on Cassiodorus’ demography, the word “barbarian” was made up as:

... *barba* (beard) and *rus* (flat land); for barbarians who did not live in cities but in the open fields. The female popular name "Barbara" in the western Christian civilization means "a barbarian woman". However, “Saint” Barbara was the daughter of rich and respectable Roman parents. Evidently, by her time about 300 C.E according to Christian hagiographer, the name no longer had any specific ethnic or pejorative connotations.⁸

The “Berbers” of Maghreb who call themselves *al-Amaziq*⁹ were identified by the ancient Romans as “barbarians”. The Arabic word *barbar*, derived from the Latin word *barbaricum*, means land of *al-Amaziq* or people of Maghreb. The Muslim Arabs continued using it to refer to the non-Arabs in North Africa.

The period of European history identified as the Early Middle Ages (172 BH-390 AH/c. 450 C.E to approximately 1000 C.E) and the Late Antiquity (372 BH-132 AH/c. 250-750 C.E) known as the Age of Wandering of the Barbarian tribes (in German: *Volkerwanderung*), can be easily identified by Muslim scholars as *Jahiliyyah*, equal to the time of ignorance, illiteracy and paganism in Arabia before the Revelation of Qur’an. The Romans regarded the various Germanic, Keltic tribes and the nomadic Huns as the northern barbarians. The Romans adapted this Greek description of all non-Hellenic peoples as criterion of life outside the frontiers of Latin civilization.¹⁰ The nomadic peoples of the vast Steppe north of the Black Sea, including the Finno-Ugric and Turko-Uralic Pechenegs (Pechinaks) as well as the

⁷ *Webster’s Online Dictionary*, “Extended Definition: barbarian.”

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Encyclopedia of World History: The Ancient World Prehistoric Eras to 600 C.E.*, 1st edition, “Berber.”

¹⁰ Wim Blockmans & Peter Hoppenbrouwers, *Introduction to Medieval Europe 300-1550*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 22.

Kipchaks, were also called barbarians by the “Byzantines” (the people of the medieval Eastern Roman Empire).¹¹

The word “barbarian” is used in Medieval studies as a convenient, non-pejorative term to refer to all non-Latin and non-Greek speaking persons who inhabited around and even eventually settled within the Roman Empire during the Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages.¹² Many mainstream medieval scholars agree with this. Even *Encyclopedia Britannica* and other general audience encyclopedias and books use the term Barbarians in the context of the Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages of the West.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The aim of this research is to study the Germanic Anglo-Saxons, Langobards, Franks, and Visigoths in Western Europe who shaped its demographical growth during the 6th - 7th c. C.E. In this research, we will use names of the German and Keltic tribes (in the older English version: “Celtic”) reported by ancient Roman historians, for example, ‘Visigoths’ and ‘Langobards’ (Longobards or Lombards) but we will examine and identify the original tribal names of the investigated Barbarians.

This study uses the historical survey concerned with very early Medieval Europe by applying the life span of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) from 52 BH-12 A.H/570-632 C.E as a framework. However, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) is not the object of our research and this is not a comparative study of religions of the early Middle Ages of European-Arabian realm. Our goal is to scrutinize the history of the West in the Age of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w). The significance of these dates as the most important periods of Medieval History emphasizes also crucial periods in the

¹¹ J.J. Norwich, *A short history of Byzantium*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 36-57.

¹² See Holmes, 82-114.

migration of “European” tribes and the formation of tribal states in the geo-cultural realm known until today as the Far West from the perspective of the earliest community of Islam. Unfortunately, the historical knowledge about events which took place in Europe during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) is obscured by scarcity of primary sources and results of the collapse of *pax romana* under the pressure of the invading Germanic, Keltic, Turkic and Slavic tribes. This research is focused on the Atlantic-Mediterranean territory of the European continent between 52 BH and 12AH (570-632 C.E) in its first season of the so called “The Dark Ages” of the West. There were numerous tribes in the *Barbarian West*, but in this study our attention concentrates mainly on the larger tribes of the *Barbarian West* such as the Angles, Jutes, Saxons, Franks, Langobards and Visigoths. However, we will not ignore the existence of the smaller tribes like Burgundies, Suebes, Vandals, Gepids, Alans, Scots, etc.

1.2.1 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to re-evaluate the primary sources in the light of the recent historical criticisms and the newest discoveries of massive medieval forgeries and confabulations of the earliest Western Christian chronicles in the Cistercian scriptoria of the 10th-13th centuries C.E.

In addition, it also examines the rise of tribal kingdoms and dukedoms in the period classified by medievalists as the earliest Dark Ages of the post-Western Roman Empire. This study also attempts to investigate the transformation of European paganism¹³ into Roman Catholicism and its impact on the everyday lifestyle of the

¹³ The Oxford English Dictionary gave two definitions of pagans which are “a person who holds religious beliefs that are not part of any of the world’s main religions” and “used in the past by Christians to describe a person who did not believe in Christianity.

Barbarian West. Furthermore, this study seeks to find answers to the following questions:

1. How reliable are the primary sources of history written by the Barbarian-origin bishops and monks? Are they mirrors of the authentic history of the *Barbarian West*?
2. Which events determined the rise of Western Europe as the bulwark of the Papacy during the time of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) (570-632 C.E.)?
3. What was the cause of transformation of the *Barbarian West* into the Roman-Catholic West? Did Roman Catholicism influence lifestyle significantly in the examined age? Which religious practices and beliefs of the *Barbarian West* were dominant during those days?

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The rise and expansion of the *Barbarian West* in the formative Age of the Revelation of Islam is an interesting question of civilization-building because although its population was considered uncivilized and primitive by the Romans, it became successful and a mortal threat to the Western Roman Empire at the time when Arabs of *al-Jazeera* became Muslims who successfully overrun both the Eastern Roman Empire and its foe, the Persian Empire.

Furthermore, one of the aims of this study is to refute Henri Pirenne, who in his controversial *Mohammed and Charlemagne*¹⁴, tries to hold responsible the fast growing early Islamic Ummah as the cause for the backwardness and regression of the northwest Europe in her “Dark Ages” of the Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages.

¹⁴ Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* translated from French by Bernard Miall, (London and New York: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), vol 27.

He criticizes the Muslims for not following or sustaining the Roman religious culture and the Greco-Latin civilization as the Germanic barbarians did.

This research is not a comparative study of religions of the very Late Antiquity but we will try to examine the horizons of geo-demographical knowledge of both the early Islamic communities of Makkah and Madinah on the *Barbarian West* and vice versa, the knowledge of the tribal kingdoms of the Germano-Keltic Far West on the Arabian heartland. Several Muslim historians such as al-Baladhuri and al-Tabari surveyed the Mediterranean Barbaricum but not the Far West. Very few Christian annalists of the Early Middle Ages of Europe knew about similar events which took place in the Muslim Near East. This research is studied from the Islamic perspective of the Muslim Western Asia and the Christianized West.

We use *Hijrah* calendar reversely, but compatible with the reformed Gregorian chronology because the Muslim lunar calendar helps to narrow the margin of error of the Western Christian dates based on the solar Julian calendar (still used by the Eastern Greco-Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church, the reason why biographical data collected by the Barbarian bishops and monks are often wrongly dated). Medievalist historians dispute the accuracy of the narrated and sometimes invented events. The use of the *Hijrah* calendar in our research reflects also the philosophical foundation of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Primary sources (chronicles, records and annals) from the examined age of the Christianized West in the time of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) are very scarce and were written entirely by Roman Catholic monks.

*The History of the Franks*¹⁵ was written by the bishop, Gregory of Tours in Latin. We use his chronicle translated into English and edited by Lewis Thorpe. Gregory begins his writing with the semi-mythical formation of the Merovingian Franks. He describes the bloody terror of the Merovingian kings, warlords and their consorts. His annal is the most relevant to our research because the Christianized Franks is a major theme of his reports. Gregory evaluates the relationship between the king and the church during the studied period with his typical Tours-centric bias. He witnesses how churchmen and churchwomen established themselves in the West as the most educated class of pre-feudal society. He amuses readers of his work by clumsy remarks in his crude vulgar Latin and witnesses how the Franks and their rulers had been Catholicized and uprooted from the native pagan religion. Gregory of Tours portrays the scandalous life of monks, “holy women” and bishops inside often besieged monasteries in such humorous way that it became a medieval ‘bestseller’. Unfortunately, his chronicle covers only between 84-28 BH/538-594 C.E. Most definitely, his chronicle is a crucial primary source of that period because his work is based on the writer’s own experience. His often extremely biased view makes the chronicle not always a reliable mirror of his times but reflects the mentality of the Barbarian bishop of the Dark Ages.

Another important work entitled *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*¹⁶ was written by a monk called Bede. His work which we use was translated from Latin to English by Leo Sherley-Price. Bede’s work is the first account written about Anglo-Saxon England and the essential source of this period. The main focus in this annal is the history of the Catholicization of the Anglo-Saxon England which includes

¹⁵ Gregory Tours, *The History of the Franks* translated from Latin by Lewis Thorpe, ed. Betty Radice, (London: Penguin Group, 1974).

¹⁶ Bede, *Ecclesiastical history of the English People*, translated from Latin by L. Sherly-Price, (London: Penguin Group, 1990).

legendary tales (*fabulas*), a genre known to Muslims as *hikayat*. The fundamental theme of Bede's reporting is the preaching of the first Roman-Catholic missionaries to the English tribesmen. Despite his religious and social biases, Bede provides observations on the life and religion of the Pagan German and Keltics of ex-Roman Britannia of his era.

*History of the Lombards*¹⁷ written by Paul the Deacon which we use in our study is translated by William Dudley Foulke. Deacon describes the origin and the early wandering of the Langobards down to the 6th century C.E, when the last tribes of the *Barbarian West* migrated to the western parts of the old Roman Empire. The Langobards came to Italy when Alboin managed to conquer Italy from Rome in 568 BH/568 C.E. Deacon also discusses the period of their ducal autonomy and the Langobards' Christianization. However, there are fewer details in his narrative compared to the accounts of Bede and Gregory of Tours. Deacon provides a chronological list of dukes and kings who almost permanently disunited Langobard fiefdoms.

Secondary literature related to the topic is abundant and written either from secularist or Christian perspectives. The objectivity of this literature is disputed and re-evaluated by a new generation of "postmodernist" historians who question many previous viewpoints. John Michael Wallace-Hadrill's *Barbarian West 400-1000*¹⁸ is still the most detailed scrutiny of the "darkest age" of Western historiography. This research contributes to studies on tribes such as the Langobards, the Merovingian Franks and Goths in Spain (Visigoths) during the selected period. The author also

¹⁷ Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards*, translated from Latin by William Dudley Foulke, ed. Edward Peters, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

¹⁸ J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West 400-100*, (New York: Barnes & Noble Inc, 3rd edn., 1998).

explains briefly the Christianization of those tribes but does not discuss the development of papacy as a separate Barbarian state in Italy.

In his series of lectures entitled *The Invasion of Europe by the Barbarians*¹⁹ that cover the period 247-47 BH/375-575 C.E, John Bagnell Bury begins with the Germans and their wandering during the collapse of the Roman Empire which started from the recruitment of German soldiers into the Roman legions. Later, Barbarians held high ranking positions in the army and became superiors of the Roman Empire's military organization. The emergence of the Barbarian kingdoms and the administration system in the early phases of the kingdoms are discussed by the author. It gives some ideas and overview about the tribes of the *Barbarian West*. Just like Wallace-Hadrill, Bury does not discuss the Anglo-Saxon tribes in his book.

Third, *The Goths*²⁰ written by Peter Heather is a comprehensive work which deals with the general vision of Gothic history. This book contains the origins of the Goths from their early development, politics, social structures, economic structures and patterns of Gothic ethnicity. In this work, the writer discusses the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths who later formed the first Gothic successor state. Soon it transformed itself into kingdoms of Ostrogoth Italy and Visigoth Spain. However, there is less detailed information concerning the Visigoth in Spain and how the Visigoth society socially organized themselves. Heather focuses on the Visigoth king, Theodoric, who built the kingdom. He goes into pivotal details of the rise and end of Ostrogothic kingdom. He pays less attention to the pre-Christian Gothic religion and only discusses the Arianism²¹, the non-trinitarian Christianity embraced by the Goths long

¹⁹ J.B Bury. *The invasion of Europe by the Barbarians*, (London and New York: W. W. Norton Company, 2000).

²⁰ Peter Heather, *The Goths*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 1996).

²¹ The non-trinitarian Christianity was proposed as early as the 4th century by the Alexandrian presbyter, Arius. It affirmed that Christ was not divine but a created being. Arius' basic premise was the

before the Roman population was instructed to accept the decisions of bishops who voted for the divinity of Christ during the Nicaean Synod.

Roger Collins' *Visigothic Spain 409-711*²² is a book in which he examines the end of Roman rule from the early 5th century C.E. until the Muslim conquest of Visigoth-occupied Iberian Peninsula in 711-713 C.E. The author provides a chronological overview of the political history of Visigoth Spain which includes the alteration from the Roman Empire to the German fractured kingdom and the reign of Leovigild (53-36 BH/569-586 C.E). The book provides a comprehensive explanation of the rise and fall of the Catholic Kingdom of Visigoths (36 BH-50 AH/586-672 C.E), highlighting the aspect of conversion and reaction of the Arian Visigoths to Roman-Catholic Christianity which was forcibly imposed onto them. Collins discusses the societal and cultural organizations such as rural and urban settlements and law and ethnicity. It also contains archeological survey of cemeteries and churches which later became the signature of Visigoth architecture.

Another study used for our research is a book written by Neil Christie entitled *The Lombards: The Ancient Longobards*.²³ This book gives details of the origins of Langobards and their settlement where the author provides evidence of archeological monuments, particularly Italian cemeteries. Christie provides more insight into the economy, settlement and defense in Langobard Italy. He investigates the lifestyle of the Langobards' society and describes their conversion from Arian Christianity to Trinitarian Christianity. The book comprehensively details the Langobards' conquest and rule in Italy from 36-17 BH/569-605 C.E including a great deal of information on

uniqueness of who is alone self-existent and immutable; the Son, who is not self-existent, cannot be God. Arian Christianity declared the cult of Jesus- 'son of God' as relics of Greco-Roman polytheism. Arius opposed the trinity during the Nicaean Synod and was imprisoned for his Unitarian teachings.

²² Roger Collins, *Visigothic Spain 409-711*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

²³ Neil Christie, *The Lombards: The Ancient Longobards*, (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1995).

military activities, diplomatic contacts and treaties and various internal aspects such as the relationship between the people and nobility as well as the internal and external threats. His book emphasizes the development of city-states and principalities of Langobards in Italy.

*The Anglo-Saxons*²⁴ by James Campbell, Eric John and Patrick Wormald is a brief and incomprehensive interpretative account of the Anglo-Saxon history which contains events that occurred in the 6th century C.E until 11th century C.E. Christianity was adopted by the kings of Anglo-Saxons in c. 622 C.E (zero year of *Hijrah*). Most of the sources provided by the authors include archeological evidence that underpin a lot of our current understanding of the period. However, there is lack of information about the society of Anglo-Saxon itself because the authors focus on written primary sources from King Alfred, many bishops such as Venerable Bede, etc., who only wrote on the Anglo-Saxon history in charters, scriptures and annals.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The theoretical method used in this research is based on a historical-analytical framework. The historical approach scrutinizes the historical rise of the *Barbarian West* from 52 BH-12AH/570-632 C.E. as well as the lifestyle and religious belief of the tribes. Ample collection of relevant books in IIUM and ISTAC facilitates obtaining information on the historical background of the Barbarians.

Our study is based mainly on published and edited primary sources and we re-evaluate the Western chronicles written by bishops and monks such as Gregory of Tours (84-28 BH/c. 538-594 C.E.), John of Biclar (82-2 BH/c.540-c.620 C.E), Paul the Deacon (101-183 AH/c. 720-799 C.E.) and the Venerable Bede (53-117 AH/673-

²⁴ James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxons*. (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

735 C.E). Most of these accounts were written in crude Latin but they are excellently translated and edited in English. Those original chronicles were written during the examined time of the *Barbarian West*.

The objective of our historical deconstruction of these annals is to find evidence, proofs and suggestions or hints to determine truthfulness of recorded events and helpfulness in the investigation of the invented story. Criticism of the primary sources is based on the research questions which will help to refute the well-known hypothesis of Henri Pirenne on the role of the Muslim conquest of the post-Roman Mediterranean, causing the medieval backwardness of the Far West. Pirenne's notes are a continuation of Edward Gibbon's theory of the retardation of Germanic cultures of the Far West by both Christianization and Islamization in southern Europe.

The major secondary sources are divided into three categories. The first category consists of materials that cover the fall of the Western Roman Empire and wandering tribes of the Far West of Europe, such as Lynette Olson's *The Early Middle Ages: The Birth of Europe*, Roger Collins' *Early Medieval Spain*, Kay Slocum's *Medieval Civilisation*, Wim Blockmans and Peter Hoppenbrouwers' *Introduction to Medieval Europe 300-1550*, Roger Collins' *Early Medieval Europe 300-1000* and H.G. Koenigsberger's *Medieval Europe 400-1500*.

The second category focuses on the tribes of the *Barbarian West*, their origins and their rise until they established their kingdoms, for instance, the works of James Campbell in *The Anglo-Saxons*, Peter Heather's *The Goths*, Neil Christie's *The Lombards: The Ancient Longobards*, Roger Collins' *Visigothic Spain 409-711* and Bryan Sykes' *Saxons, Vikings and Celts*. These books also discuss the social life, culture and the impact of Christianity on each tribe.

The third category forms the *Journal of Medieval History and Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval History* as well as *Thought and Religion* concerning the topic at hand. They are available in IUM Library online databases such as Jurn.org, Papersinvited, ProQuest and ScienceDirect which include academic and scholarly journals related to this research. Furthermore, although the materials are limited in this region, the Internet may provide access to published, displayed primary sources and maps from libraries and classic archives from authentic websites.

1.6 CHAPTERIZATION

This research comprises five major chapters including the conclusion of this study. Chapter One contains the introduction. It discusses the background of the thesis and the scope of investigation. It also provides the importance of this study along with the methodology used and literature reviewed.

Chapter Two specifically explores the existing historical sources on the history of the “Dark Age” from monks and bishops. This part analyzes their credibility in writing the history of the *Barbarian West* by trying to find the facts in the context of events, especially in the light of recent criticisms of falsified documents.

Chapter Three analyzes the origins of the selected tribes of the *Barbarian West* such as Anglo-Saxons, Franks, Visigoths, Longobards and the rise of those tribes which overwhelmed the Western Roman Empire. This chapter will also investigate the position, political system and territories of the Barbarian kingdoms and principalities.

In Chapter Four, we discuss the transformation of European paganism into the Christianity of the Latin Church (Roman Catholicism) and its impact on the everyday lifestyle of the tribal kingdoms of the *Barbarian West*. The study emphasizes also on

the status of women in the Pagan and Christianized society in the context of the tribal lifestyle.

In the last chapter, we briefly evaluate the century after the investigated period, mainly the spread of Islam among the Visigoths, contacts of the Muslims with the Franks, Visigothic Spain, Anglo-Saxons and Longobards in the times of the Four Righteous Caliphs and the Umayyads.