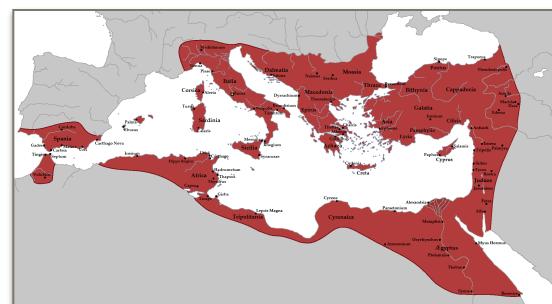


C. The Fate of Italy

1. We have not paid attention to Italy yet! It was the center of the Roman empire, *and* it is a founding member of today's European Union, but it is not as important as France or Germany.
2. Part of the reason is the Italy is a mess during the *Medieval Period (476-1789AD)*.
3. As the Roman empire collapsed, the city of Rome itself was twice sacked as we have seen, and it was replaced as the most important city by Constantinople in the East (see map on page 7, again).
4. The emperors who lived in Constantinople were able to survive the barbarian invasions of the Roman world in the “Eastern Roman Empire,” which came to be known as the *Byzantine Empire* (because the city of Constantinople used to be called “Byzantium”).
5. Hoping to regain control of Italy, the Byzantine emperors made a bargain with the Ostrogoths (Eastern Goths) that allowed them to take over Italy on behalf of the Byzantines. However, they found the Ostrogoths unwilling to keep up their end of the bargain.
6. Trying to regain Italy, the Byzantine empire sent a great general named Belisarius, who briefly reconquered it. But the emperor was afraid that Belisarius would use his power to take over the empire. He put Belisarius on trial and dismissed him. (In one version of the story, he even had Belisarius blinded.)
7. When Belisarius’s successor Narses came under similar suspicion, he refused to return to Constantinople, and instead turned over Italy to another Germanic tribe called the Lombards.
8. With Italy constantly changing hands like this, it was not able to form itself into a kingdom of its own, and the rise of the *nation* of Italy was long delayed.



the Ostrogothic kingdom over Italy at its height



The Byzantine empire was briefly able to regain Italy thanks to the general Belisarius.



Italy ended up split between the Byzantines and Lombards.