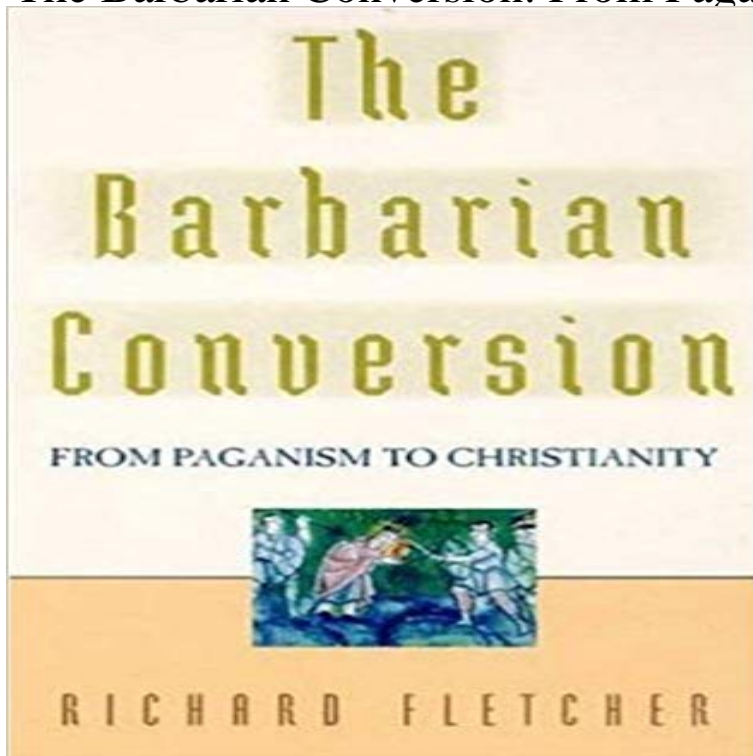


The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity



The conversion of the pagan world that began in the obscurity of the Dark Ages was in no way inevitable. England did not embrace Christianity until 627, and while confessing communities existed from Greenland to China by the millennium, the last European conversion occurred late in the Middle Ages, in 1386. How did it all happen--and why? In a work of splendid scholarship that often reads like a detective story and that owes as much to keen intuition as to the mastery of difficult sources, Richard Fletcher lays out the story of the Christianization of Europe. It is a very large story, for conversion was not merely a matter of religious belief. Christianity brought with it enormous cultural baggage. With it came Latin literacy--books; Roman notions of law, property, and government--even the concept of town life, and Mediterranean customs, including new tastes in food, drink, and dress. Whether from faith or by force, conversion had an immense impact that is with us even today, and it is Richard Fletcher's achievement to make that impact felt and understood.

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