

Barbarian Invasions Student Worksheet

Introduction:

Much of the Roman frontier followed the natural boundaries of the Rhine and Danube rivers across Europe. On the other side of these rivers were territories the Romans never brought under their control and tribal peoples such as the Goths, Franks, Vandals, and Huns. By the middle of the fourth century CE, many Roman governors had allowed these so-called “barbarians” to settle on the Roman side of the rivers, and Roman generals had even recruited many of the men as soldiers in their armies. However, the barbarians never assimilated fully into Roman culture. By the end of the century they started to wage a series of ferocious campaigns into Roman territory, eventually destroying the city of Rome itself.

All Web links for this lesson can be found at:

<http://www.socialstudies.com/ancientlinks.html>

Directions:

“History of the Wars” by Procopius of Caesarea

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/410alaric.html>

Read the selection and answer the following questions:

1. Who was Alaric and what tribe did he lead?
2. Who was Emperor when Alaric led invasions against Rome? Where did the Emperor go?
3. How thoroughly did the barbarians destroy the cities they captured? What did they do to women and children? What did they take with them when they left a city?
4. In his plot to capture Rome, Alaric chose three hundred youths “whom he knew to be of good birth” and “whose beards had not yet grown.” What does this say about the men?
5. What instructions did Alaric give the young men? How did he get them inside the city of Rome?
6. Describe in your own words what happened at the Salarian Gate on the day of the siege (attack).
7. When the Emperor heard that “Roma” had “perished” (died), what did he think? When he learned what really happened, how did he respond? What does this say about the Emperor?
8. According to Procopius, “some say that Rome was not captured in this way by

Alaric.” What do they say happened?

9. Based on your work on this lesson and your knowledge of Roman history, would you agree or disagree with the following statement: “The destruction of Rome was the final blow to the western Roman Empire”? Explain your response.