

The Visigoths: Name: _____ Prd: _____ Score: _____ / 15 pts. _

A Threat to Rome

Directions: Evidenzi la risposta nel testo a sinistra.

A tribe of **Visigoths** was eating supper. They had hunted & killed a wild boar. They were good hunters because they were strong & hardy. Although they had warm woolen clothing, they sometimes wore only a few animal skins. They believed that being cold would make them physically brutal & tough.

A group of people from another tribe also appeared. True to the Germanic ideal of hospitality, they were invited to stay for supper. After everyone had eaten, both tribes began to talk about their leaders. Each claimed that their leader was the best.

A young man from the first tribe said, "Our leader is a great warrior. He fights with all his strength & risks his life to save ours. It would be shameful to die *before* him in battle. With him as our leader, we almost always win. He has helped us take many things from Roman cities. And he protected us against the fierce Huns."

A woman from the second tribe said, "Our leader is very just. He shares the wealth from our victories fairly. People get rewards that are large or small according to how brave they were. But our leader is careful to see that nobody has too much or too little."

A third person said, "Our leader is very pious. While many are converting to Christianity, he follows the good old ways. Yesterday he sacrificed five goats to the war god Tiwaz & fertility goddess Nerthus.

Who were these people? They were **nomads** from Germany who dared to challenge the Romans! They wanted to live on Roman land, but the Romans found them rough & uncivilized. They called them ***Barbarians**; yet, they also secretly admired them for their courage & *simple ways of living*.

One of the most important Germanic tribes were called **Visigoths**. They came from southern Sweden in about 200 A.D. From there they slowly moved south through Germany. In 375 A.D., they were attacked by the warrior **Huns** of Asia.

Applying past knowledge: What **Greek city-state** also *trained* their men to *withstand* harsh conditions? _____



BONUS: Who were the **Greek & Roman war gods**? **Greek:** _____
Roman: _____

Recalling past vocabulary: **Nomads** were ___?
a. residents c. an 80s rock band
b. wanderers d. no angry men

A simple way of living can be described as
(**Athenian** / **Carthaginian** / **Spartan** ← circle 1.)



To protect themselves, the Visigoths crossed the Danube River near the Black Sea. *Now, they were inside the great Roman Empire!*

The Visigoths lived in small tribes, loosely united by their king. Each tribe was headed by a leader. Tribal order was based on loyalty to a strong leader. This was also true of many other Germanic tribes including the Saxons, Lombards, & Vandals.

These people did not live in comfortable houses. They built small homes out of wood, & they often lived in them for less than a year. Unlike the Romans, they did not want many possessions. A person's worth was based on bravery rather than wealth. They did not even have a system of money. Instead, they used Roman coins & cattle as currency.

The tribes had a few simple laws. If someone was harmed or robbed, the guilty person would have to pay a fine. *Guilt was determined by a test.* The accused person might be made to walk on fire. If the wounds healed quickly, the person was declared innocent. If they didn't, the person was considered guilty. This was called *trial by ordeal*.

Like the Romans, the Germanic tribes worshipped many gods & goddesses. The most important ones were Tiwaz & Nerthus. They worshipped them in sacred groves of oak trees *instead of temples*. Sometimes humans & animals were sacrificed there. Rituals to predict the future were also performed. Although tribes had a written language, it was mainly used to keep track of religious rituals. Occasionally, someone wrote down the recipe for a potion or a medicine.

The tribes ate mostly what they could hunt & gather in the woods. They grew a little grain & got milk from their cattle herds. Food was cooked in clay pots, but tribal **artisans** rarely decorated their work. The one exception was metalwork. Men & women wore beautiful gold jewelry, & some people even had elaborate cups & other utensils of gold & silver.

Women played an important role in domestic, political, & spiritual life within their tribe. Because men were constantly away in battle, women were often in charge of keeping the tribe fed & clothed.



Order among Visigoth tribes was *based on*

_____.
(Just one word!)

Comparing (or more appropriately, contrasting) the *Visigoths to the Greeks*, you could assume that the **Visigoths** were *more like Greek* ____.

a. Athenians c. Trojans
b. Minoans d. Spartans

Higher level thinking skills & drawing conclusions: *How or why* might this **method of guilt or innocence prove flawed?** _____

Recalling past knowledge: To worship *many gods* is called _____.

Making analogies: *Places of worship* ~
Romans : _____ :: Visigoths : groves

Recalling past knowledge: Romans used (**oracles / shamans / wizards** ← circle 1) *to predict & foretell* the future.

Recalling past vocabulary: A synonym for **artisans** is _____.

You might assume that **women in the Visigoth tribes** were *more like* (Athenian / Spartan / Trojan ← circle 1) **women**.

They planted crops, cooked, washed, brewed beer, & cared for the sick. In some tribes, women had political influence. Because they were considered physically weaker than men, they did *not* go to war. However, they could & would fight fiercely to defend their homes, family & village.

Tribal women were believed to have great spiritual strength & were powerful priestesses & prophets. They gave charms to warriors to bring victory in battle. In return, they were given protection & respect ~ all part of the tribal code of honor.

By 376 A.D., the tribes were a real threat to the Romans. In that year, the Visigoths were given permission to enter the Roman Empire. The Romans regretted their decision when the Visigoths began to sack Roman cities. And they grew more & more worried about other tribes invading the empire.

The Roman Empire & its armies had become weak. Because Romans no longer served in the army, the eastern emperor, Theodosius, was forced to hire some Visigoths as soldiers. As payment, he gave the tribes some land that nobody wanted. However, the tribes then wanted more & better land. And their people were increasing in number. Many wanted to give up wandering & settle down in permanent villages. Although they still frowned upon personal wealth, they believed in tribal wealth.

Finally, the Roman government even had to hire Germanic warriors called mercenaries to fight other Germanic warriors. The Romans could no longer defend their borders. The tribes overran Gaul & began to move towards the city of Rome itself!

The Romans simply could not stop them!!

Comparing & contrasting: Explain how Spartan women were alike & different from the women of the Visigoth tribe. _____

Drawing conclusions: Why did the Romans grow to regret their decision to allow the Visigoths to enter their empire? _____

How did Rome lose its hold on its vast empire to the Visigoths?

- a. The Visigoths wanted more Roman land.
- b. Visigoths tired of their nomadic life.
- c. Rome's army was weakened.
- d. The Visigoth numbers were increasing.
- e. all the above
- f. a, b & d only

Drawing conclusions: Why do you believe Visigoths were called "***barbarians***"? _____

(Clue: Look back at page 1.)

