

Warm-up



Source: *The Meeting between Leo the Great and Attila*, created by Raphael in 1514.

1. According to the painting *The Meeting Between Leo the Great and Attila*, what happened at the meeting between Pope Leo and Attila the Hun?

2. Is the painting *The Meeting Between Leo the Great and Attila* from 1514 a good source for understanding what happened at the meeting between Pope Leo and Attila the Hun in 452? Why or why not?

Document A: Paul the Deacon (Excerpt)

Paul the Deacon was a Christian monk and historian who lived in the Middle Ages, many years after the fall of Rome. In the following excerpt from his book Roman History, published in the late 700s, he describes the meeting between Pope Leo and Attila the Hun that took place in 452.

Attila, the leader of the Huns, who was called the **scourge** of God, came into Italy, inflamed with fury . . .

Then Leo . . . and a large part of the Roman senate went to meet Attila . . . He spoke to the monarch [Attila], saying "The senate and the people of Rome, once conquerors of the world, now conquered, come before thee as **suppliants**. We pray for mercy."

As Leo said these things Attila stood . . . silent, as if thinking deeply. And lo, suddenly there were seen the apostles Peter and Paul . . . standing by Leo, the one on the right hand, the other on the left. They held swords stretched out over his head, and threatened Attila with death if he did not obey the pope's command. Wherefore Attila was **appeased** . . . [and] promised a lasting peace and withdrew beyond the Danube.

Vocabulary:

scourge: person who gives punishments suppliant: people who pray, beg or ask appease: calm
--

Source: Excerpted from J.H. Robinson's translation of Paul the Deacon, *Roman History*, late 700s CE

Document B: Prosper of Aquitaine (Modified)

Prosper of Aquitaine was a Christian writer at the end of the Roman Empire. In the following excerpt from his book History of the World, published in 455, he describes the 452 meeting between Pope Leo and Attila the Hun. Historians don't know if Prosper was actually at the meeting.

Now Attila . . . took his way through Pannonia into Italy . . . To the emperor and the senate and Roman people, none of all the proposed plans to oppose the enemy seemed so practical as to send **legates** to the most savage king [Attila] and beg for peace. Our most blessed Pope Leo – trusting in the help of God, who never fails the righteous in their trials – undertook the task . . . When King Attila had received the **embassy**, he was so impressed by the presence of the high priest [Leo] that he ordered his army to give up warfare and, after he had promised peace, he departed beyond the Danube.

Vocabulary:

legates: government officials

embassy: group of people on a mission for a government, ambassadors

Source: Prosper of Aquitaine, “Account 1” from *History of the World*, 455 CE.

Guiding Questions

Central Historical Question:

What happened at the meeting between Pope Leo and Attila the Hun?

Document A: Paul the Deacon

1. (Sourcing) About how many years after the meeting between Leo and Attila was this document written?
2. (Sourcing) How might the date affect whether or not this document is a good source for understanding what happened at the meeting between Leo and Attila?
3. (Close Reading) How does Paul the Deacon's description of the meeting compare to Raphael's painting of the meeting?
4. (Sourcing) In your opinion, what was Paul the Deacon's goal in writing this document?

Document B: Prosper of Aquitaine

1. (Sourcing) How many years after the meeting between Leo and Attila was this document written?
2. (Sourcing) How might the date affect whether or not this document is a good source for understanding what happened at the meeting between Leo and Attila?
3. (Corroboration) How is Prosper's description of the meeting between Leo and Attila different from Paul the Deacon's? How is it similar?
4. (Corroboration) How is Prosper's description of the meeting between Leo and Attila different from Raphael's painting? How is it similar?
5. (Sourcing) In your opinion, what was Prosper's goal in writing this document?

Summary: Based on what you have read today, is Raphael's painting *The Meeting between Leo the Great and Attila*, made in 1514, a good source for deciding what happened at the meeting in 452? Why or why not?

Raphael's painting *The Meeting between Leo the Great and Attila* **is/is not (circle one)** a good source for deciding what happened at the meeting in 452 because . . .

1.

2.
