

The Goths were among the biggest and most important Germanic tribes of the Migration Period. Thanks to their number and combativeness they were able to maintain their unity in two large groups that later formed empires - Visigoth and Ostrogoth.

Ostrogoths established themselves as a new large tribe at the time of their sojourn in Pannonia, where they were dominated by the Huns, but because of their advancement and large population they managed to become the co-rulers of the Hun Empire. The second half of the 5th century was decisive for the formation of Ostrogoths' new ethnic territory because Attila's death and the ensuing disintegration of the Hun Empire allowed a single ruler, Thiudimir, succeeded by his son Theodoric the Great, to concentrate control over three Goth groups in his hands.

In the 490s Italy was conquered by Ostrogoths, who founded a barbarian kingdom there. The Ostrogothic kingdom became a major political power in the western Mediterranean. Its ruler Theodoric took over the system of government and the religious tolerance of the defeated Germanic ruler Odoacer.

At the end of Theodoric the Great's rule no power factor in Europe could jeopardize the Gothic Empire surrounded by a system of vassal states. However, Theodoric's successors permitted a disintegration of these links and allowed Emperor Justinian I to put into practice his *renovatio imperii* program.

According to the historian Jordan the history of the Goth ended by the capture of King Vitigis in 540. However, Gothic resistance lasted until 555. Totila was the only successful successor of Vitigis; he managed to renew the Ostrogothic Empire in the original extent. Following defeats by East Roman Emperor Justinian the Gothic tribe was assimilated by the local population and the newly arrived Langobards.