

## **The Power of The Byzantine Empire**

**The time period that the Byzantine Empire span:** 514 C.E-1453 C.E. 4th century. Known as the successor of Rome after Rome's decline of its western territory

**Events occurring at the beginning of the Byzantine Empire:** The western half of the empire was falling to Germanic invaders.

**Cause of the Byzantine Empire's fall:** Invasions took over important sources of tax revenue and food in addition to annihilating Byzantine armies before taking over the capital in 1453.

**Form of Christianity being practiced in the Byzantine Empire:** Eastern Orthodox Christianity

**Byzantine Capital:** Constantinople

**Area of Byzantine Influence:** Eastern and Western Europe, Russia

**The spread northward:** Religion, laws and principles spread northward

**Differences of Eastern and Western Europe's developments:** East and West had two different versions of Christianity

*\*Roman Catholic Church vs Eastern Orthodox Church. Eastern political sophistication, cultural range, and economic vitality, interregional trade*

## **The Byzantine Empire**

**Roman Emperor** that moved the eastern capital to Byzantium: Constantine

**Area of the capital:** Regional Slavic Kingdoms

*\*Balkan Peninsula, Northern Middle East, Mediterranean Coast and Northern Africa*

**Language Used:** First Latin, then Greek

**Language benefits:** Latin was universal, Greek helped their bureaucracy

*\*Greek: Athenian philosopher and literary classic could be studied; Hellenistic writing and scientific work*

**Participants in the bureaucracy** for the Byzantine Empire, but not during Roman Times: Military, province governors

## **Justinian's Achievements**

**Threats** on the Empire: Arab invaders, nomadic invaders, Germanic invaders

**Negative Attributes of Justinian:** Not truthful, too ambitious, and easily deceived. Not considered wise, easily influenced by others (Theodora)

**Positive Achievements** of Justinian: Conquered many of Western Europe and parts of North Africa with General Belisarius. Created the Legal Law Code, which set up a unified law that reduced confusion within the empire itself and unified and organized the empire. Helped spread Roman legal principles to many parts of Europe.

**Extended later Roman architecture:** Created a massive church known as the Hagia Sophia, one of the largest wonders of the Christian world. Achievement in engineering and architecture. No one had been able to build the supports needed for a dome of its size.

## **Arab Pressure and the Empire's Defenses**

**Method used to convert people** in the Middle East to Christianity in the 600s: Applied Military Pressure

**What eventually threatened** Byzantine holdings in the Middle East: Nomadic invaders and Arabs

**Military means used:** Military force

**New scientific weapon** the Byzantines used to combat the Arabs: Greek Fire

**Where the burden of maintaining the empire fall**, militarily and economically: Farmers and peasants

**Cause of this group's additional strain:** Caused a greater control of aristocrats and farmers and peasants lost their status. Big military couldn't be supported and taxes were raised to support the military, put a burden on the lower classes

**Period of Byzantines** at it's height: 10th century

### **Byzantine Society and Politics**

The Byzantines government similarity: Similar to China's government, bureaucracy.

*\*The emperor was held to be ordained by God head of a church as well as state. He appointed church bishops and passed religious and secular laws. Court rituals symbolized the ideals of a divinely inspired, all powerful ruler, they often immobilized rulers and inhibited innovative policy.*

Head of the church: Emperor

Women exerted more importance/power during the Byzantine empire:

- At some points women held the imperial throne, while maintaining the ceremonial power of the office. Empress Theodora, Justinian's powerful wife, illustrates the complex nature of Byzantine politics and the fates affected by women rulers.
- Theodora, daughter of an emperor, was strong and strict; refused to marry the imperial heir, then wed her sister Zoe, who was afraid of Theodora influence and had her confined to a monastery. A rebellion against the new emperor made Theodora and Zoe the new empresses. Theodora yielded power to Zoe's new husband, but reasserted her right when he died at age 70. After brief turmoil, she checked unruly nobles and limited bureaucratic corruption. Her severe retaliation against personal enemies brought criticism. She also had trouble building a reliable staff and was attacked for her reliance on demagogues.

**Byzantine Bureaucracy:** Aristocrats and talented people

*\*Bureaucrats were specialized into various offices and officials close to the emperor were mainly guards to the women's living areas.*

**Trained in:** Greek classics, science, and philosophy in a secular school system that paralleled church education for the priesthood, Byzantine bureaucrats could be recruited from all social classes

*\*In China, aristocrats predominated, but talent also counted among this elite highly educated scholars,*

**Positions held** close to the emperor: *Priests-* Act in the name of the emperor, *Governors and Military Leaders-* Had the power from the emperor/the strength of the government, *Aristocrats-* Bureaucracy dominated and they had the money

**Military Recruiting:** Military were recruited in exchange for land. Similar to: Romans

- *Many outsiders, particularly Slavs and Armenian Christians were recruited this way. Increasingly, hereditary military leaders assumed regional power, displacing more traditional and better-educated aristocrats Emperor Michael II was a product of this system and was notorious for his hatred of Greek education and his overall personal ignorance. His military system had advantages in protecting a state from attacks from Muslims, Persians, Arabs, and Turks, as well as nomadic invaders from central Asia. Until the 15th century, the Byzantine Empire blocked the pathway to Europe for most of these groups.*

**What did the Byzantine Empire effectively do** for Europe until the 15th century: Served as a barrier of the Muslim's expansion

**Byzantine Empire new role in the economy:** Served as a trading partner with the Arabs and developed a trading network.

*\*The empire traded with India, Arabs and east Asia while receiving simpler products from western Europe and Africa.*

*\*Silk production expanded in the empire, with silkworms and techniques initially imported from China, and various luxury products, including cloth, carpets and spices, were sent north.*

*\*The empire developed a far- flung trading network with Asia to the east and Russia and Scandinavia to the north.*

**Benefits:** Benefited them as they traded together and large urban classes

*\*Food prices were kept low, to content the numerous urban lower class.*

**Hurt:** Blocked Muslim's expansion , peasants burdened with most tax revenues and the merchants were low in status

*\*The large peasant class was vital in supporting goods and providing the bulk of tax revenues.*

**Trade item** that the Byzantine Empire became famous for: Art;Iconic Painting and their domed shaped structure. Silk from China

**Philosophy their cultural life centered around:** The traditions of Hellenism, in the education of Bureaucrats and on the evolving traditions of Orthodox Christianity.

*\*A host of literary and artistic creations resulted from the mixture of cultures, but there was little innovations.*

**Artistic/ architectural innovations** out of Byzantium:Domed churches, mosaics and iconic paintings

*\*Byzantine strenght laid in preserving and commenting on post forms rather than developing new ones. Art and architecture were exceptions.*

*\*The adaption of Roman domed buildings, the elaboration of richly colored religious mosaics and a tradition of iconic paintings(of saints and other religious figures, often richly ornamented) expressed an artistic impulse and its marriage with Christianity*

**First major religious controversy** in the 8th century: Iconoclasm

*\*A new emperor attacked the use of religious images in worship(iconoclasm- the breaking of images) created a huge protest from Byzantine monks, which briefly threatened a split between church and state. After a long battle the use of icons were restored and the tradition of state control over church affairs resumed.*

To what extent was the Byzantine empire tolerant of diversity: Allowed other orthodox faiths and even the religion Islam for Muslims

## **The Split Between East and West**

West		East
Pope	Head of Church	Emperor
Latin	Bible Language	Greek
No Marriage	Priests celibacy	Marriage permitted
Roman Catholic	Rituals	Orthodox

**In 1054, what brought the differences between the East and the West to a head:** A church patriarch in Constantinople raised a host of issues, including a quarrel over what kind of bread to use for celebration of Christ's last supper in the church liturgy. The patriarch also attacked the Roman Catholic

practice, developed centuries earlier, of insisting marriage for its priests.

### **The Empire's Decline**

**Unification of nomadic invaders:** Islam

**Biggest blow to the empire's economy:** In the late 11th century, the Seljuks seized almost all the Asiatic provinces from the empire, cutting off most prosperous sources of tax revenues and the land that had supplied most of their food.

**What resulted from the Byzantine appeal for help from the West:** Their requests were ignored and their appeal helped motivate Western Crusades.

*\*At the same time, Italian cities gained increasing advantages, such as trading privileges.*

**How much longer does the Byzantine Empire last after the crusaders attack Constantinople:** Able to survive for 4 centuries through careful diplomacy

*\*One Western Crusade in 1204, set to conquer the land from Muslims, turned against the Byzantine. Led by greedy merchants, the Crusade attacked and conquered Constantinople, briefly unseating the emperor and weakening the whole structure.*

**When did Constantinople fall to the Turks:** 1453 C.E.

*\* Turkish sultan brought a powerful army, equipped with artillery from the West, which fell after 2 months. By 1461 the Turks had conquered remaining pockets of Byzantine control.*

**Empire's Significance:** The empire preserved and spread classical and Christian learnings and acted as a buffer against Muslim expansion.

### **The Spread of Civilization in Eastern Europe**

**Who spread Christianity North:** Byzantium

*\*Empire was the source of a new surge of Christianity. Orthodox missionaries from Constantinople converted most people in the Balkans to their version of Christianity*

**Importance of Cyril and Methodius:** In 864 they spread Christianity to Czech and Slovakia and created the Cyrillic alphabet devised from Greek letters.

*\*Their ability to speak the Slavic language assisted them*

Success of the spread of Orthodox Christianity in its spread north: Possibility of literature and some literacy developed in eastern Europe along with Christianity, beyond the political borders of Byzantium.

### **The East Central Borderlands**

**Region the Jews settled in:** Eastern Europe

**Area of the economy Jews were allowed to participate:** Local commerce while maintaining their own religious and cultural traditions

**The behavior Jews emphasized** from the treatment from Christians and forced cultural isolation: Were migrating from the Middle East and also fleeing from the intolerance in Middle East

*\*Poland gained the largest concentration of Jews*

*\*Largely barred agriculture and often resented by Christian majority*

### **The Emergence of Kievan Rus'**

**Ethnic Group of people who settled this area** of Eastern Europe: Slavs

*\*Civilization emerged in 1450*

*\*Mixed with and incorporated with earlier inhabitants and some additional invaders (ex: Bulgarians), who adopted Slavic language and customs*

**Kievan Rus political and cultural tradition:** Slavs used iron, and extended agriculture in the rich soils of Ukraine and western Russia. Political organizations- family tribes and villages. Maintained a polytheistic religion. Had a tradition of folk music and oral language and loose regional kingdoms.

**Principality in Kiev:** Monarchy emerged and the first prince was Rurik, a native of Denmark of what to be called

**Origin of the word Russia:** The Rovers

**Who did they trade with:** Byzantium

- *Scandinavian traders, militarily superior to the Slavs gradually set up some governments along the trade routes, particularly in the city of Kiev.*
- *Kiev became a prosperous trading center and many Russians visited Constantinople from there. These exchanges led to growing knowledge of Christianity.*
- *During the 6th and 7th centuries, traders set up a trade route along the great rivers of western Europe, particularly the Dnieper. Norse traders were able to reach the Byzantine empire and a trade developed between Scandinavia and Constantinople. Luxury products from the Byzantium traveled north in return for fur and other crude products.*

**Actions Yaroslav did to build unity:** created ties through marriage and created law code

### **Institutions and Culture in Kievan Rus'**

**Compare/Contrast Byzantine and Russian political institutions:** Russians were not as elaborate as the Byzantine bureaucracy, aristocracy and education. Common: Strong Divine King, iconic models monasteries

*\*Kievan Rus' borrowed much from Byzantium, but it was in no position to replicate major institutions such as the bureaucracy or an elaborate education system.*

**Difference of Russian aristocrats than in Western Europe:** Russians were called boyars and were not as powerful than Western Europeans

*\*Russian aristocrats, called boyars, had less political power than their counterparts in western Europe, although the Kievan princes had to negotiate with them.*

### **Kievan Decline**

**Internal Problems:** Debate over succession of throne and competition with rival kingdoms

*\*Rival princes set up regional governments, and the royal family often squabbled over succession to the throne.*

**Externally what affected their economy:** Invasions took important sources of taxes and food.

*\*Invaders from Asia whittled at Russian territory. The rapid decline of Byzantium reduced Russian trade and wealth, for the kingdom had always depended heavily on the greater prosperity and sophisticated manufacturing of its southern neighbor.*

**Nomadic group that struck the final blow:** Mongols or Tatars

*\*The final blow in the first chapter of Russian history came in 1237-1238 and 1240-1241, when two invasions by Mongols from Central Asia moved through Russia and into other parts of Eastern Europe.*

**Length of their control of Russia:** Two centuries

*\*For over two centuries much of Russia remained under Tatar control.*

What did the Russians consider themselves: The third “Rome”

*\*Russian leaders retained an active memory of the glories of Byzantium. When Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, just as Russia was beginning to assert its independence from the Tatars, it was logical to claim that the mantle of east European leadership had fallen on Russia. “Two Romes have fallen, but the third stands, and there will be no fourth.”*

**The End of an Era in Eastern Europe:** The end of the postclassical period that confirmed a separate development for eastern and western Europe:

*\*western Europe remained free from outside control, and despite new problems, maintained a clear vigor in politics, economy, and culture. When eastern Europe did re emerge, it was at some disadvantage to the West in terms of power and economic and cultural sophistication-a very different balance from that of the glory days of Byzantium and the vigor of Kievan Rus.*

**Present continuities when eastern Europe and Russia began to recover:**

*\*Yet continuity was not entirely lost. Not only Christian but also eastern European assumptions about political rulers and church-state relations and the pride in a lively artistic culture served as organizing threads when Russia and other Slavic societies turned to rebuilding.*

### **Global Connections: Eastern Europe and The World**

#### **Geographical Significance of the Byzantine Empire:**

*\*Constantinople had become one of the world’s greatest trading cities, a connecting point between Europe and Asia. The Byzantine import of a silk industry from China was a sign of their active awareness of the world beyond their borders. The empire served as an active global link in the postclassical global system, between northern Europe and the Mediterranean.*

**Russia’s Isolation** and its result:

*\*Russia was not able to benefit from wider relationships during the Mongol centuries, though the Mongol influence itself left a mark. When by the 15th century, Russia began to regain independence, it faced decisions about what kind of broader contacts to foster, and how.*

### **Developments**

- Elegant Buildings
- Christian churches
- Greek became used language, Latin was inferior
- High levels of commerce
- Recruited armies from barbarians
- Emperors kept separate

### **Arab Pressure and the Empire’ Defenses**

- Justinian’s successors focused on defending the eastern empire.
- Persian successes in the Middle East changed in the 7th century when the population were converted to Christianity.
- Defended its empire against the new Arabic threat with a new weapon known as the Greek fire., which destroyed Arabic ships. ( A petroleum, quicklime and sulfur mixture). Took over Bulgaria by bribing many nobles and generals there to defeat the Bulgarian army, which brought the king of Bulgaria’s death.
- Muslims added new economic burdens to the empire, invasions and taxation, weakening the small farmers, resulted in greater aristocratic estates and new power for aristocratic generals.
- Greater emphasis was given to organizing the army and the navy.

- After the Arab onslaught, the empire was ruled by a series of weak and strong emperors. Arab pressure continued.
- Conquest of Crete in the 9th century allowed the Muslims to harass Byzantine shipping in the Mediterranean for centuries. Slavic kingdoms, especially, Bulgaria. At times military success and marriage alliances brought Byzantine control of the Bulgarian kingdoms.
- A Bulgarian king Caesar, Byzantine pressure through war steadily eroded the kingdom
- The Byzantine Emperor, Basil II, known as the slayer of the Bulgarians, used the empire's wealth to bribe many Bulgarian nobles and generals. He defeated the Bulgarian army in 1014, blinding as many as 15,000 soldiers, which brought the Bulgarian king's death
- Bulgaria became part of the empire, its aristocracy settling with Constantinople and merging with the leading Greek families.

### **Byzantine Society and Politics**

- Provincial governors were appointed from the center and were in charge with keeping tabs on military authorities. An elaborate system of spies helped preserve loyalties while creating intense distrust even among friends. The system successfully supported the longest lived single government structure the Mediterranean world has ever known.
- Socially and economically the empire depended on Constantinople's control over the countryside, with the bureaucracy regulating trade and controlling food prices.
- The large merchant class never gained significant political power because of the network of government controls. Byzantine resembled China as merchants were gaining greater voice, unlike other networks of the West.

### **The Split Between East and West**

- Were hostility to efforts by a Frankish ruler, Charlemagne, to proclaim himself a Roman emperor in the 9th century. Byzantine officials believed that they were the true heirs of Rome and that Western were crude and unsophisticated.
- The division reflected the different patterns of development the two civilizations followed during the post-classical millennium.

### **The Empire's Decline**

- After the split the empire went under a decline
- Turkish invaders who had converted to Islam, began to press on eastern borders, who have gained influence in the Muslim caliphate.
- The Byzantine emperor lost the battle of Manzikert in 1071 and the empire never recovered
- Creation of new Slavic kingdom in the Balkans, like Serbia, showed the empire's diminished power

### **East Central Borderlands**

- Eastern missionaries did not monopolized the borderlands of eastern Europe.
- Roman Catholicism and the Latin alphabet prevailed in Czech and in most of Hungary.
- Stretch of eastern Europe north of Balkans was organized in a series of regional monarchies, loosely governed amid a powerful aristocracy
- Kingdoms of Poland, Bohemia and Lithuania surpassed most western kingdoms in land. Was an active area for trade and industry.

*\*Ironworking was more developed in the West until the 12th century*

- Strong emphasis on extensive education and literacy primarily for males from most societies in the world

### **Emergence of Kievan Rus'**

- Russia shared many features with the rest of northeastern Europe before the 15th century (advances in economics and politics as well)
- Prince Vladimir I a Rurik descendent ruled from 980-1015, took the step of converting Christianity,

to his own name and on behalf of all his people. He was eager to avoid the pope influence that came with Roman Catholicism, which he knew from the Polish kingdom experience.

- Orthodox Christian was an alternate from the prevailing animism. Islam was rejected because Vladimir could not accept a religion that forbid alcohol.
- Vladimir organized a mass baptisms for his subjects, forcing conversions by military pressure.
- Early church leaders were imported from Byzantium, and they helped train a literate Russian priesthood. In Byzantium, the king controlled major appointments and a separate Russian Orthodox church was developed.
- Kievan Rus was the largest single state in Europe, highly decentralized. Descendents managed to avoid damage from battles for some time over the succession to the throne.
- Issued a law code like Byzantium that reduced the severity of traditional punishments and replaced community vendettas with state-run courts, in principle
- The last prince, Yaroslav, issued the legal codification while building many churches and arranging the translation of religion literature from Greek to Slavic.