

The Byzantine Empire

Guide to Reading



History Social Science Standards

WH.7.1 Students analyze the causes and effects of the vast expansion and ultimate disintegration of the Roman Empire.

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

In the last section, you learned that even though the Roman Empire in the West fell, the Eastern Roman Empire survived and prospered. It became known as the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantines developed a new civilization based on Greek, Roman, and Christian ideas.

Focusing on the **Main Ideas**

- The Eastern Roman Empire grew rich and powerful as the Western Roman Empire fell. (page 485)
- The policies and reforms of Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora helped make the Byzantine Empire strong. (page 486)
- The Byzantines developed a rich culture based on Roman, Greek, and Christian ideas. (page 489)

Locating Places

Black Sea

Aegean Sea (ih•JEE•uhn)

Meeting People

Justinian (juh•STIH•nee•uhn)

Theodora (THEE•uh•DOHR•uh)

Belisarius (BEH•luh•SAR•ee•uhs)

Tribonian (truh•BOH•nee•uhn)

Content Vocabulary

mosaic (moh•ZAY•ihk)

saint (SAYNT)

regent (REE•juhnt)

Academic Vocabulary

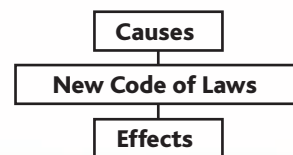
income (IHN•KUHM)

rely (rih•LY)

enormous (ih•NAWR•muhs)

Reading Strategy

Cause and Effect Complete a chart to show the causes and effects of Justinian's new law code.



Where & When?



A.D. 525

A.D. 527
Emperor Justinian begins rule

A.D. 550

A.D. 537
Hagia Sophia completed

A.D. 575

A.D. 565
Justinian dies



WH7.1.3 Describe the establishment by Constantine of the new capital in Constantinople and the development of the Byzantine Empire, with an emphasis on the consequences of the development of two distinct European civilizations, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic, and their two distinct views on church-state relations.

The Rise of the Byzantines

Main Idea The Eastern Roman Empire grew rich and powerful as the Western Roman Empire fell.

Reading Connection Think of your own community. How have groups of people from different backgrounds contributed to its character? What would your town or city be like without these contributions from all the different groups? Read to learn about the different groups that made up the Byzantine Empire.

The Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire reached a high point in the A.D. 500s. At this time, the empire stretched west to Italy, south to Egypt, and east to the border with Arabia. Greeks made up the empire's largest group, but many other peoples were found within the empire. They included Egyptians, Syrians, Arabs, Armenians, Jews, Persians, Slavs, and Turks.

Why Is Constantinople Important? In the last section, you learned that Emperor Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to a new city called Constantinople. Constantine's city became the capital of the Byzantine Empire. By the A.D. 500s, Constantinople had become one of the world's great cities.

One reason for Constantinople's success was its location. It lay on the waterways between the **Black Sea** and the **Aegean Sea** (ih•JEE•uhn). Its harbors offered a safe shelter for fishing boats, trading ships, and warships. Constantinople also sat at the crossroads of trade routes between Europe and Asia. The trade that passed through made the city extremely wealthy.

Constantinople had a secure land location. Residing on a peninsula, Constantinople was easily defended. Seas protected it on three sides, and on the fourth side, a huge wall guarded the city. Invaders could not easily take Constantinople.



▲ The ancient walled city of Constantinople

Influence of Greek Culture The Byzantines at first followed Roman ways. Constantinople was known as the "New Rome." Its public buildings and palaces were built in the Roman style. The city even had an oval arena called the Hippodrome, where chariot races and other events were held.

Byzantine political and social life also were based on that of Rome. Emperors spoke Latin and enforced Roman laws. The empire's poor people received free bread and shows. Wealthy people lived in town or on large farming estates. In fact, many of them had once lived in Rome.

History online

Web Activity Visit ca.hss.glencoe.com and click on *Chapter 10—Student Web Activity* to learn more about Roman civilization.



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As time passed, the Byzantine Empire became less Roman and more Greek. Most Byzantines spoke Greek and honored their Greek past. Byzantine emperors and officials began to speak Greek too. The ideas of non-Greek peoples, like the Egyptians and the Slavs, also shaped Byzantine life. Still other customs came from Persia to the east. All of these cultures blended together to form the Byzantine civilization. Between A.D. 500 and A.D. 1200, the Byzantines had one of the world's richest and most-advanced empires.

Reading Check Explain Why did the Byzantine Empire have such a blending of cultures?

Emperor Justinian

Main Idea The policies and reforms of Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora helped make the Byzantine Empire strong.

Reading Connection Do you sometimes rewrite reports to make them easier to understand? Read to learn how Justinian rewrote and reorganized the Byzantine law code.

Justinian (juh • STIH • nee • uhn) became emperor of the Byzantine Empire in A.D. 527 and ruled until A.D. 565. Justinian was a strong leader. He controlled the military, made laws, and was supreme judge. His order could not be challenged.



Justinian's wife, the empress **Theodora** (THEE•uh•DOHR•uh), helped him run the empire. Theodora, a former actress, was intelligent and strong-willed, and she helped Justinian choose government officials. Theodora also convinced him to give women more rights. For the first time, a Byzantine wife could own land. If she became a widow, she now had the **income** to take care of her children.

In A.D. 532 Theodora helped save Justinian's throne. Angry taxpayers threatened to overthrow Justinian and stormed the palace. Justinian's advisers urged him to leave Constantinople. Theodora, however, told him to stay and fight. Justinian took Theodora's advice. He stayed in the city and crushed the uprising. By doing this, Justinian not only restored order but also strengthened his power to rule.

Justinian's Conquests Justinian wanted to reunite the Roman Empire and bring back Rome's glory. To do this, he had to conquer Western Europe and northern Africa. He ordered a general named **Belisarius** (BEH•luh•SAR•ee•uhs) to strengthen and lead the Byzantine army.

When Belisarius took command, he reorganized the Byzantine army. Instead of foot soldiers, the Byzantine army came to **rely** on cavalry—soldiers mounted on horses. Byzantine cavalry wore armor and carried bows and lances, which were long spears.

During Justinian's reign, the Byzantine military conquered most of Italy and northern Africa and defeated the Persians in the east. However, Justinian conquered too much too quickly. After he died, the empire did not have the money to maintain an army large enough to hold all of the territory in the west. About three years after he died, much of northern Italy was lost to an invading tribe of Germans.

Primary Source

Justinian's Law Code Justinian decided that the empire's laws were disorganized and too difficult to understand. He ordered a group of legal scholars headed by **Tribonian** (truh•BOH•nee•uhn) to interpret and reform the law code.

The group's new simplified code became known as the Justinian Code. Officials, businesspeople, and individuals could now more easily understand the empire's laws. Over the years, the Justinian Code has had a great influence on the laws of almost every country in Europe.

 **Reading Check Explain** What did Justinian accomplish during his reign?



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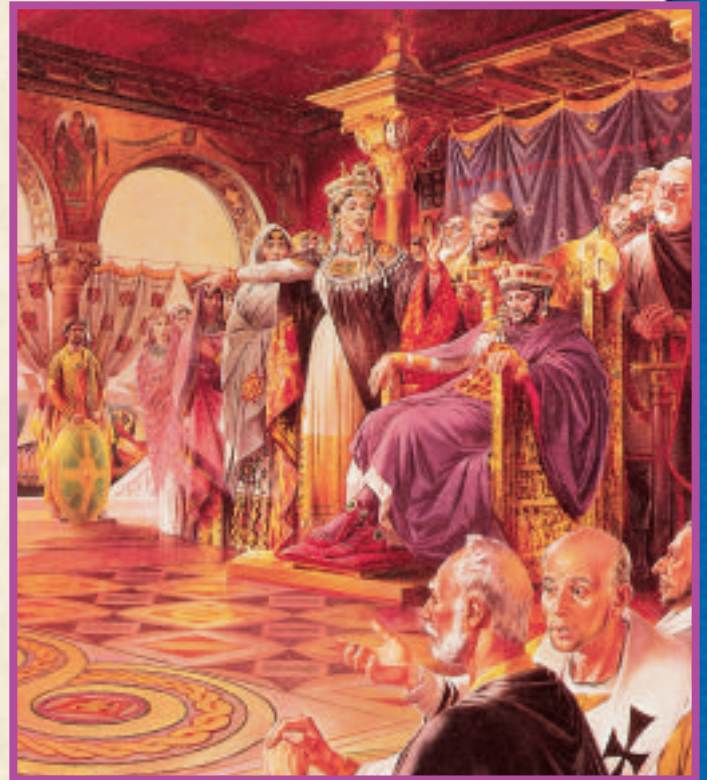
EMPRESS THEODORA

c. A.D. 500–548

Theodora began life in the lower class of Byzantine society but rose to the rank of empress. The historian Procopius recorded the events of her early life. According to Procopius, Theodora's father worked as a bear keeper at the Hippodrome. After his death, Theodora followed her mother's advice and became an actress. A career in acting was not as glamorous then as it is now. It was a job of the lower class, like wool spinning, which was Theodora's other job.

Even though Theodora was of the lower class, she began dating Justinian. Justinian was attracted to Theodora's beauty and intelligence. Because Justinian wanted to marry Theodora, his uncle, the emperor, changed the law that prevented upper-class nobles from marrying actresses. The two were married in A.D. 525.

Justinian considered Theodora his intellectual equal. In his writings, Justinian said he asked for Theodora's advice on laws and policies. At Theodora's urging, he granted more rights to women. Some historians believe Theodora had great power within the royal court, perhaps more than Justinian. For example, nearly all the laws passed during Theodora's reign as empress mention her name. Theodora and Justinian had no children together. When Theodora died from cancer in A.D. 548, Justinian was overcome with grief. He had her portrait incorporated into many works of art, including numerous Byzantine mosaics.



▲ Empress Theodora advises Emperor Justinian.

“She was extremely clever and had a biting wit.”

—Procopius, *The Secret History*

Then and Now

Name a modern-day female political leader that you think has great influence in making and changing laws. Explain your choice.



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Byzantine Civilization

Main Idea The Byzantines developed a rich culture based on Roman, Greek, and Christian ideas.

Reading Connection Do you think a multicultural population adds to a country's interest and success? Read to learn how the diverse groups of the Byzantine Empire contributed to its culture.

From the A.D. 500s to the A.D. 1100s, the Byzantine Empire was the center of trade between Europe and Asia. Trade goods from present-day Russia in the north, Mediterranean lands in the south, Latin Europe in the west, and Persia and China in the east passed through the empire. From Asia, ships and caravans brought luxury

goods—spices, gems, metals, and cloth—to Constantinople. For these items, Byzantine merchants traded farm goods as well as furs, honey, and enslaved people from northern Europe.

This **enormous** trade made the Byzantine Empire very rich. However, most Byzantines were not merchants. Instead they were farmers, herders, laborers, and artisans. One of the major Byzantine industries was weaving silk. It developed around A.D. 550. At that time, Byzantine travelers smuggled silkworm eggs out of China. Brought to Constantinople, the silkworms fed on mulberry leaves and produced silk threads. Weavers then used the threads to make the silk cloth that brought wealth to the empire.



▲ Sculpture showing chariot racing at the Hippodrome



▲ The style of the Hagia Sophia, shown here, and other Byzantine churches influenced the architecture of churches throughout Russia and Eastern Europe.

What does the name Hagia Sophia mean?



▲ Byzantine jewelry

The Way It Was

Focus on Everyday Life

Byzantine Mosaics Imagine taking bits of glass and turning them into beautiful masterpieces. Byzantine artists did just that starting around A.D. 330. Roman mosaics were made of natural-colored marble pieces and decorated villas and buildings. Byzantine mosaics were different. They were made of richly colored, irregular pieces of glass and decorated the ceilings, domes, and floors of Byzantine churches.

Byzantine mosaics were created to honor religious or political leaders. The centers of domes—because they were the highest points of the churches—were commonly reserved for images of Jesus.

Mosaics were expensive. They were ordered and paid for by emperors, state officials, or church leaders. Many mosaics are still intact and can be seen today inside churches, monasteries, and museums.

Mosaic from the Byzantine Empire ▶



The Art Archive/Hagia Sophia Istanbul/Dagli Ort

Connecting to the Past

1. Why do you think the name of the person who paid for the mosaic—rather than the name of the person who made the mosaic—was often recorded in the inscription?
2. What types of art do present-day artists make with glass?

Byzantine Art and Architecture The Byzantine Empire lasted approximately 1,000 years. For much of that chapter in history, Constantinople was the largest and richest city in Europe. The Byzantines were highly educated and creative. They preserved and passed on Greek culture and Roman law to other peoples. They gave the world new techniques in the arts.

Justinian and many of his successors supported artists and architects. They ordered the building of churches, forts, and public buildings throughout the empire. Constantinople was known for its hundreds of churches and palaces. One of Justinian's greatest achievements was building the huge church called Hagia Sophia (HAH•jee•uh soh•FEE•uh), or "Holy Wisdom." It was completed in A.D. 537 and became the religious center of the Byzantine Empire. It still stands today in Istanbul.

Inside Hagia Sophia, worshipers could see walls of beautiful marble and mosaics. **Mosaics** (moh•ZAY•ihks) are pictures made from many bits of colored glass or stone. They were an important type of art in the Byzantine Empire. Mosaics mainly showed figures of **saints** (SAYNTS), or Christian holy people.

Byzantine Women The family was the foundation of social life for most Byzantines. Religion and the government stressed the importance of marriage and family life. Divorces were rare and difficult to get.

Byzantine women were not encouraged to lead independent lives. They were expected to stay home and take care of their families. Despite this tradition, women did gain some important rights, thanks to Empress Theodora. Some

Byzantine women became well educated and involved in politics. Several royal women served as regents. A **regent** (REE•juhnt) is a person who stands in for a ruler who is too young or too ill to govern. A few ruled the empire in their own right.

Byzantine Education The Byzantines valued education. In Byzantine schools, boys studied religion, medicine, law, arithmetic, grammar, and other subjects. Wealthy Byzantines sometimes hired tutors to teach their children. Girls usually did not attend schools and were taught at home.

Most Byzantine authors wrote about religion. They stressed the need to obey God and save one's soul. To strengthen faith, they wrote about the lives of saints. Byzantine writers gave an important gift to the world. They copied and passed on the



▲ This Byzantine religious text is beautifully illustrated. **What did Byzantine boys study at school?**

writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Without Byzantine copies, many important works from the ancient world would have disappeared forever.

Reading Check Identify What church is one of Justinian's greatest achievements?

Section 3 Review

History online
Study Central Need help understanding the rise of the Byzantine Empire? Visit ca.hss.glencoe.com and click on Study Central.

Reading Summary

Review the Main Ideas

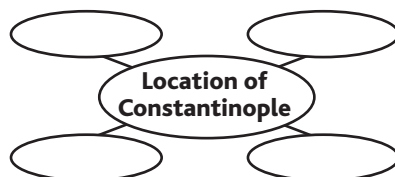
- With its capital at Constantinople and strong Greek influences, the Byzantine Empire grew powerful and wealthy.
- The Byzantine emperor, Justinian, reconquered much of the land that had been held by the old Roman Empire in the Mediterranean. It also issued a new law code known as the Justinian Code.
- As the Byzantine Empire grew wealthy from trade, art, architecture, and education flourished.

What Did You Learn?

1. What is a mosaic, and where were mosaics found in the Byzantine Empire?
2. How did silk weaving develop in the Byzantine Empire?
4. **Describe** What were the consequences of Justinian's wars in Italy, North Africa, and Persia?
CA 6RC2.4

Critical Thinking

3. **Organizing Information**
 Draw a diagram like the one below. Fill in details about Constantinople's location.
CA 6RC2.4



5. **The Big Ideas** How did geography influence Byzantine trade?
CA CS3.

6. **Analyze** What important service did Byzantine writers provide to the rest of the world? Explain its significance.
CA HI2.

7. **Analysis Geography**
 Study the map on page 486. Explain why geography made it hard for the Byzantine Empire to expand north or west.
CA CS3.

Analyzing Primary Sources



WH7.1 Students analyze the causes and effects of the vast expansion and ultimate disintegration of the Roman Empire.

Problems in Rome

You have read about many of the problems of the Roman Empire. These included poor leadership, a declining economy, and attacks by Germanic tribes. Other problems also faced Rome, including the unemployed poor in Rome who did not have enough to eat and emperors who did not have a plan for choosing the next ruler of Rome. Roman rulers tried to address these problems, but they were not always successful.

Read the passages on pages 492 and 493, and answer the questions that follow.



▲ Roman coin

Reader's Dictionary

entail: to be involved in something

detriment (DEH•truh•muhnt): damage

largess (lahr•JEHS): gift

dole: a government gift

plebs (PLEHBS): the common people

vied: competed

sesterce (SEHS•TUHRS): a Roman coin roughly equivalent to one U.S. dollar

“Bread and Circuses”

The city of Rome may have had over one million people at its height. Many people were unemployed and could not buy food. They were also bored and restless. Unhappy hungry people might rebel. The following passage by the Roman writer Fronto explains how emperors tried to solve these problems.

It was the height of political wisdom for the emperor not to neglect even actors and the other performers of the stage, the circus, and the arena, since he knew that the Roman people is held fast by two things above all, the grain supply and the shows, that the success of the government depends



▲ Gladiators in battle

on amusements as much as on serious things. Neglect of serious matters **entails** the greater **detriment**, of amusements the greater unpopularity. The money **largesses** are less eagerly desired than the shows; the largesses appease only the grain-**doled** **plebs** singly and individually, while the shows keep the whole population happy.

—Fronto, “Bread and Circuses”

“Empire for Sale”

One of the main problems that faced Rome was how to choose a new emperor. The following passage by Dio Cassius describes the imperial crisis of A.D. 193.

Didius Julianus . . . when he heard of the death of [Emperor] Pertinax, hastily made his way to the [Praetorian] camp and, standing at the gates of the enclosure, made bids to the soldiers for the rule over the Romans. . . . For, just as if it had been in some market or auction room, both the city and its entire Empire were auctioned off. The sellers were the ones who had slain their emperor, and the would-be buyers were Sulpicianus and Julianus, who vied to outbid each other. . . . They gradually raised their bids up to 20,000 sesterces per soldier. Some of the soldiers would carry word to Julianus, “Sulpicianus offers so much; how much more do you bid?” And to Sulpicianus in turn, “Julianus promises so much; how much do you raise him?” Sulpicianus would have won the day. . . . had not Julianus raised his bid no longer by a small amount but by 5,000 at one time. . . . So the soldiers, captivated by this extravagant bid . . . received Julianus inside and declared him emperor.

—Dio Cassius, “Empire for Sale”

Justinian’s Laws

Slavery was common in both the Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire. The use of enslaved workers during a time of high unemployment helped weaken the Roman Empire. When the Byzantine emperor Justinian created his law codes, he included regulations about slavery based on the old Roman slave laws. The following laws come from the Institutes, a collection of some of Justinian’s laws.

Book I, Chapter III

4. Slaves either are born or become so. They are born so when their mother is a slave; they become so either by the law of nations, that is, by captivity, or by the civil law, as when a free person, above the age of twenty, suffers himself to be sold, that he may share the price given for him.

Book I, Chapter VIII

1. Slaves are in the power of masters, a power derived from the law of nations: for among all nations it may be remarked that masters have the power of life and death over their slaves, and that everything acquired by the slave is acquired for the master.
2. But at the present day none of our subjects may use unrestrained violence towards their slaves, except for a reason recognized by law.

—The Institutes

DBQ Document-Based Questions

“Bread and Circuses”

1. How did the grain doles help keep order?
2. Why was it important for emperors not to neglect actors? Why was this more important than the grain dole?

“Empire for Sale”

3. How did Julianus become emperor?
4. What does this process of choosing an emperor say about the loyalty and power of the soldiers?

Justinian’s Laws

5. Besides being born enslaved, what other ways could a person become enslaved?
6. Based on the laws shown, how do you think enslaved people were treated? Explain.

Read to Write

7. Write a short essay using these primary sources to answer this question: What problems do these sources reveal that may have helped cause the Roman Empire to fall?

CA HR4.

Chapter 10 Assessment

Standards WH6.7 & WH7.1

Review Content Vocabulary

Match the definitions in the second column to the terms in the first column.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| ___ 1. anatomy | a. pictures made of many bits of colored glass or stone |
| ___ 2. inflation | b. rapidly increasing prices |
| ___ 3. gladiator | c. father of a family |
| ___ 4. regent | d. emotional poem about life's ups and downs |
| ___ 5. mosaic | e. study of the body's structure |
| ___ 6. paterfamilias | f. a person who stands in for a ruler who cannot govern |
| ___ 7. ode | g. a warrior who fought animals and people in public arenas |

Review the Main Ideas

Section 1 • Life in Ancient Rome

8. What did the Romans borrow from the Greeks? What did they develop on their own?
9. What were the lives of the rich and poor like in Rome?

Section 2 • The Fall of Rome

10. What weakened the Roman Empire?
11. What caused the fall of Rome?
12. In what areas of today's society can we see Roman influence?

Section 3 • The Byzantine Empire

13. Which half of the former Roman Empire was most successful?
14. What policies and reforms helped make the Byzantine Empire strong?
15. What different groups of people contributed to the Byzantine culture?

Critical Thinking

16. **Cause and Effect** Why did Alaric's capture of Rome shock the Roman people? CA HR5.
17. **Predict** How do you think history would have been different if Theodosius had not divided the Roman Empire? CA HI2.

Geography Skills

Study the map below and answer the following questions.

18. **Place** Which areas were conquered by Justinian's military? CA CS3.
19. **Human/Environment Interaction** Why do you think Justinian decided to conquer lands to the west of his empire? CA CS3.
20. **Movement** What made it difficult for the Byzantine Empire to hold on to Justinian's conquests? CA CS3.



Read to Write

21. **The Big Ideas** **Writing Reports** You have learned that Byzantine culture was greatly influenced by the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Slavs, and Persians. Think about the culture of the United States. Work with a classmate to prepare a report identifying parts of U.S. culture that were originally part of other cultures. **CA HI.2.**
22. **Using Your FOLDABLES** Use the information in your foldable to create a study guide. For each section, your study guide should include five questions that focus on the main ideas. **CA 6RC2.0**

Using Academic Vocabulary

23. Use five of the following vocabulary words to write a short essay about the fall of Rome. Make sure that the words are used correctly.

constant	income
authority	enormous
expand	rely

Building Citizenship

24. **Analyze** Traditional Roman ideas of duty, courage, and honesty lost their importance before Rome fell. Why do you think duty, courage, and honesty are important in keeping a society strong? **CA 6RC2.3**

Linking Past and Present

25. **Language Connections** Use your local library to research some of the words from the Roman language, Latin, that we still use today. Create a list of these words as well as the Latin words from which they come. Be sure to include a definition with each entry. **CA 6RC2.3**

Economics Connection

26. **Explain** What role did taxation play in the fall of Rome? What would be some possible solutions to solving the tax problems? Write an essay explaining your solution to the problem. **CA HI.6.**

Reviewing Skills

27. **Reading Skill** **Predicting** Write an essay in which you predict the fall of the Roman Empire. What are some of the things that you notice as signs of the fall? **CA 6WA2.2**
28. **Analysis Skill** **Making Choices** How did Rome's leaders try to strengthen the empire? How well did these methods work? Write a short story describing how you would make Rome strong. **CA HI.1.**
CA 6WA2.1



Standards Practice

Select the best answer for each of the following questions.

29. Which of the following contributed to the instability of the Roman Empire and its eventual fall?
- A dishonest government officials
 - B attacks by the Greeks
 - C the death of Julius Caesar
 - D the rise of the Byzantines
30. The Eastern Roman Empire was able to avoid many Germanic invasions because
- A it was protected by the Spartans.
 - B the Western Roman Empire had more wealth.
 - C the Mediterranean and Black Seas offered protection from invaders.
 - D Constantine moved the capital to Constantinople.