

## Chapter 10 Byzantine Empire Section 1

The emperor Constantine rebuilt the Greek city of Byzantium and renamed it Constantinople. It became the new capital of Roman Empire. This kingdom became known as the Byzantium Empire.

Constantinople was a vital trade city. Located on the strait of Bosphorus, the waterway that connected the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. It had an excellent harbor and was protected on three sides by water. This allowed the Constantine the power to control the flow of goods from Asia to Europe.

The Byzantine Empire existed nearly 1,000 years after the collapse of the western part of Rome. The culture was a blend of Greek, Roman and Christian, along with other local traditions of the Mediterranean world.

The Byzantine Empire reached its greatest size under the emperor Justinian who rule from 527 to 565. Led by the brilliant general Belisarius, Byzantine armies re-conquered North Africa, Spain, and Italy.

Justinian launched a program to beautify Constantinople. His greatest contribution was the Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom). This was the center of the Eastern Church. Its beauty he declared was greater than Solomon's temple.

Justinian is best remembered for his reform of the law. He set up a commission to collect, revise, and organize all the laws of ancient Rome. The result was the "Corpus Juris Civilis, or Body of Civil Law, known as Justinian's Code.

Justinian used the law to unite the empire under his authority. He ruled as an autocrat, sole ruler with absolute power. He also had power over the church. He was deemed Christ's co-ruler on earth.

Religion in the Byzantine Empire was just as influential as in the west; by this time the two churches had split in doctrine.

Although the Byzantine emperor was not a priest he still controlled the church by appointing the patriarchs. Byzantine Christians rejected the pope's claim to all authority over the church.

Byzantines placed a higher emphasis on Easter than Christmas, like the western church did. A dispute over the use of icons also contributed to the split. In the early Byzantine church when many would pray to images of Christ or Mary, and other saints, the emperor in 700's outlawed the veneration of icons. He stated this violated the commandment of God, which forbade the worshipping of "graven images". Violence did erupt for many years over this decree. Finally in 1054, the Pope in Rome and the Patriarchs in East excommunicated each other; this was the official split in the two churches.

At this point not only was the church having troubles, but also politically the government was struggling with invading groups. Islam was spreading throughout the Mediterranean world and this expansion was putting pressure on the Byzantine's.

In 1090, the emperor was asking for help from the western powers to fight the Seljuk Turks. The Seljuk's had gained control over Jerusalem and close it to Christian pilgrims. This event led to the First Crusade. Competition for markets between the Venice merchants and the Byzantines caused war between the two. During the Fourth Crusade the Venetian merchants convinced the knights to attack Constantinople in 1204. Much of the city was burned and the treasures plundered. Venetian merchants gained control over the Byzantine trade routes, and western leaders ruled the east for about 50 years.

In 1453, the Ottoman Turks who were lead by Muhammad II conquered the last Byzantine emperor. They surrounded the city, stormed the walls and captured it. The city was renamed Istanbul and became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Turks are going to rule most of the Eastern Mediterranean until 1920. The Hagia Sophia was converted to an Islamic Mosque.

Byzantine art was mostly Mosaics, and much of it portrayed religious scenes. Architecture the Byzantines used the dome as a major feature of their designs.

Byzantine scholars preserve much of the classics from the Greeks. Procopius wrote of Belisarius military campaign against Persia. Anna Comnena was a great female historian.

## Section 2 The Rise of Russia

Russia lies on the Eurasian plain that reaches from Europe to the borders of China. Three broad zones with different climates and resources helped shape early Russian life. The northern forest supplied lumber for construction and fuel; trapping for fur was also an activity of the region. To the south fertile lands of the Northern European Plain provided opportunity for farmers. The area of the Ukraine is located here, which is the site of Russia's early culture. Toward the southeast is the steppe, treeless grassland suitable for grazing large herds of the nomadic people who lived there.

Russia's river also contributed to their growth. The Volga, Dnieper, and the Don provided water for irrigation and deep enough for transportation.

During the time of the Romans, Slavic speaking people began to migrate into southern Russia. The Slavs organized themselves into clans. They lived in small villages, farmed, and traded along the rivers.

In the 700s and 800s the Vikings came in contact with the Slavs forcing them to trade and pay tribute to them. The Russians called them Varangians. The center of this trade route was the Ukrainian city of Kiev. Kiev would become the heart of the early Russian culture.

Trade with the Byzantine Empire brought their political and cultural influences to the Slavs. Christian missionaries were sent to Kiev to convert the Slavs. Two Greek monks Methodius and Cyril adapted the Greek alphabet so they could translate the Bible into Russian. This new written language became known as Cyrillic. In 957, Princess Olga of Kiev converted to Christianity. Her grandson Vladimir spread the religion among the Slavs. When he married the sister of a Byzantine emperor many Orthodox priests moved to Kiev.

The rulers of Kiev began to adopt some of the Byzantine practices related to the church. They began to see themselves as the leaders of the Russian Church. They also began to promote the idea of being ruler based on divine right. Future rulers would make the church dependent on them, thus gaining religious power over their people.

Kiev enjoyed its “golden age” under Yaroslav the Wise, who ruled from 1019 to 1054. He issued a code of law to improve justice; he translated many Greek works into Cyrillic. He strengthens ties to the west by arranging marriages for his children with royal families from the west. The strength of Kiev began to decline in the 1100s when noble families began to compete for the throne.

Between 1236 and 1241 Batu, the grandson of Genghis Khan, led Mongol armies into Russia. Known as the Golden Horde, from the cooler of their tents, they looted and burned Kiev and other Russian cities. From their capital on the Volga, they ruled Russia for the next 240 years. They demanded regular payments of heavy tribute, and Russian princes had to acknowledge the Mongols as their overlords. Even though the Mongols converted to Islam, they tolerated the Russian Orthodox Church. The Mongol conquest brought peace to the land. Russian merchants benefited from this peace because they were free to trade with foreign lands forging new markets.

New social changes occurred in Russia especially affecting women. Men became the dominant figures of society. In the upper class women would be isolated to their homes and completely under the authority of their husbands. Husbands could actually sell their wife into slavery to pay off family debts.

During the time of the Mongols, the nobility living in Muscovy (Moscow) were gaining power. The strength of their city was its location on the new trade routes. They also increased their wealth as tax collectors for the Mongols. When the Church moved from Kiev to Moscow the city now became the center of religion for the Slavic people. Princes of Moscow took this role and rallied support for revolution against the Mongols. In 1380 they defeated the Mongols at the battle of Kulikovo.

Ivan III, (Ivan the Great) ruled Moscow and also expanded its territories. He consolidated power for the monarch and limited the power of the boyars, wealthy landowners. Ivan and his successors adopted the title Czar, the Russian word for Caesar. Ivan declared that the Czar's authority was like that of God's.

### Section 3

The region known as Eastern Europe is a wide territory lying between Germany and Russia. Eastern Europe reaches the chilly waters of the Baltic Sea through the mountains of the Balkans to Greece's northern border. The main rivers of Eastern Europe are the Danube, and the Vistula.

Eastern Europe's geography has made it a cultural crossroads. The ease of migration encouraged many different peoples to seek new homes, as well as increased power, in the region. Eastern Europe now includes a wealth of languages and cultures.

In the early middle ages, the Slavs spread out from a central heartland in Russia. The West Slavs filtered into present-day Poland and the Czech and Slovak republics. The south Slavs descended into the Balkans and became the ancestors of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. People of other ethnic groups also populated the Balkans as well. Ethnic groups are large groups of people who share a common language and cultural background.

Powerful neighboring states exercised strong cultural influences on Eastern Europe. Byzantine missionaries carried the Orthodox religion to the Balkans. German knights and missionaries from the west spread Catholicism to Poland, Czech, and Hungary. In the 1300s the Ottomans invade the Balkans spreading Islam to the people. In the late Middle Ages, Eastern Europe was a refuge for many Jewish settlers. Western Europe Christians launched brutal attacks on Jewish communities. To escape persecution, many Jews fled to the east. In the 1300s Polish kings followed a policy of toleration toward the Jews. Jewish villages sprang up Poland and other sparsely populated areas of Eastern Europe.

During the Middle Ages, Eastern Europe included many kingdoms and small states. Alliances or royal marriages might bind some of these areas together for a brief time.

Missionaries brought Catholicism to Poland to the west Slavs in the 900s. Poland often battled Germans, Russians, and Mongols. Poland's greatest age came after Queen Jadwiga married Duke Wladyslav Jagiello of Lithuania in 1386. Poland-Lithuania controlled the largest state in Europe, stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Poland gradually increased the power of its nobles at the expense of the monarch. They met in a diet, or assembly, where the veto of a single noble was enough to block a law. During the 1700s Poland was divided by Russia and Prussia until it finally disappeared from the map.

The Magyars raided Europe from the Asian steppes and settled in Hungary. They adopted Catholicism. The Hungarian king was forced to sign a charter recognizing the rights of his nobles. Known as the Golden Bull of 1222, it strictly limited royal power.

The Mongols overran Hungary in 1241, killing about half its population. The expansion of the Ottoman Turks ended Hungarian independence in 1526.

During the 600s, South Slavs settled the mountainous Balkans. Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, and other Slavic peoples in the Balkans had different histories during the Middle Ages. The Serbs accepted Orthodox Christianity. The Serbs accepted Christianity. By the late 1100s, they had set up their own state, which reached its height under Stefan Dusan. Stefan encouraged Byzantine culture, even modeling his code of laws after Justinian's. Serbia could not withstand the Ottoman Turks. At the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, Serbs fought to the death, a memory still honored by their ancestor more than 600 years later.