

CHAPTER

9

SECTION 1

Section Summary

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

The Roman emperor Constantine rebuilt the city of Byzantium and renamed it **Constantinople**. Constantinople grew wealthy from trade. In 330, Constantine made Constantinople the new capital of the Roman empire. In time, the eastern Roman empire became known as the Byzantine empire.

The Byzantine empire reached its peak under **Justinian**. Byzantine armies reconquered North Africa and parts of southern Europe. However, these victories were only temporary, as Justinian's successors later lost these lands. After a fire in 532, Justinian made Constantinople even grander. One of his most important achievements was rebuilding the church of Hagia Sophia. Justinian also had a commission collect and organize the laws of Rome. This collection became known as **Justinian's Code**. It helped unify the empire, which Justinian ruled as an **autocrat**, or with complete authority. His wife, **Theodora**, served as his advisor and co-ruler.

Christianity was practiced differently in the Byzantine empire than in the West. The Byzantine emperor controlled Church affairs and appointed the **patriarch**, or highest Church official in Constantinople. Byzantine Christians rejected the pope's claim to authority over all Christians. During the Middle Ages, the eastern and western branches of Christianity grew further apart, partly due to a dispute over the use of **icons**, or holy images. In 1054, other controversies caused a complete split known as the **Great Schism**. The Byzantine church became known as the Eastern Orthodox Church. The western branch became known as the Roman Catholic Church.

By this time, the Byzantine empire was in decline. In the 1090s, the Byzantine emperor asked the pope for help in fighting the Muslim Seljuks. This started the First Crusade. In 1204, knights on the Fourth Crusade attacked Constantinople. The Byzantines lost control of trade and much of their wealth. In 1453, Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople, renamed it Istanbul, and made it the capital of their empire.

The Byzantines left an influential heritage. Their civilization combined Christian beliefs with Greek science, philosophy, and arts. Byzantine artists created unique religious icons and mosaics. Byzantine scholars preserved Greek literature and produced their own great books, especially in the field of history.

Review Questions

1. How did Constantinople become a wealthy city?

2. How did the Crusades help to weaken the Byzantine empire?

READING CHECK

What was the Great Schism?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *temporary* mean in the underlined sentence? Note that the victories were "only temporary" because Justinian's successors later lost these lands. Use this context clue to help you understand the meaning of *temporary*.

READING SKILL

Recognize Sequence List in chronological order the three names that Constantinople has had.

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Note Taking Study Guide

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Focus Question: What made the Byzantine empire rich and successful for so long, and why did it finally crumble?

As you read this section in your textbook, complete the table below to keep track of the sequence of events in the Byzantine empire.

The Byzantine Empire	Constantinople becomes the capital of the eastern Roman empire.								
		330							