

# The Rise and Fall of the Byzantine Empire

**A**fter the Roman Empire split into two sections, the Eastern Roman Empire was renamed the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine Empire reached its largest size under the emperor Justinian, who ruled from 527 to 565. Justinian dreamed of bringing back the glory of ancient Rome.

Historians remember Justinian best for the way he reformed the law. He had officials collect all the laws of ancient Rome. The laws were gathered together, edited, and organized into a collection called Justinian's Code. The collection included laws passed by Roman assemblies and Roman emperors. It also contained the legal writings of Roman judges. The Code covered subjects like marriage, property, inheritance, and crimes.

Justinian used the law to bring the Byzantine Empire together under his control. He had power over the politics of the empire and over the Church. After Justinian died, the Byzantine Empire stayed strong for many years. Its greatest strengths were a strong central government and a wealthy economy. Trade and industry grew in cities like Constantinople, the capital. The bezant, the Byzantine gold coin, was used in places from England to China.

By the 1000s, the Byzantine Empire was weakening. Constant warfare and struggles for the throne hurt the empire. Powerful local lords took control of some areas. As the empire weakened, its enemies attacked. The Normans conquered southern Italy, and the Seljuk Turks invaded from Asia Minor.

In the 1090s, the Byzantine emperor asked Europe for help against the Seljuk Turks, who were Muslims. Pope Urban II sent Christian knights to help fight the Turks in the first of four Crusades. The Crusades were military expeditions from Europe to take back lands that had been conquered by the Muslims. During the Fourth Crusade, Christian knights attacked Constantinople. They wanted its riches, so they burned the city and stole many valuables. A Byzantine emperor took back the capital in the 1260s, but the Byzantine Empire never recovered.

In 1453, the Ottomans conquered the city of Constantinople. They renamed it Istanbul, and it became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The fall of Constantinople was the end of the Byzantine Empire. However, the culture of the Byzantine era lasted much longer. For example, the Ottomans borrowed features of Byzantine government, social life, and architecture. Byzantine culture continued to influence Europe throughout the Middle Ages.





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## Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ reached its largest size under the emperor Justinian.

- A. Roman Empire
- B. Byzantine Empire
- C. Ottoman Empire
- D. Norman Empire

2. Justinian's Code was \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. a collection of laws
- B. a way to read secret messages
- C. a type of gold coin
- D. a paper that limited the power of the emperor

3. Pope Urban II sent Christian knights to help fight the Muslims in the first of four \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Muslim Wars
- B. Byzantine Reformation
- C. Battle of Hastings
- D. Crusades

4. Constantinople was renamed \_\_\_\_\_ by the Ottomans.

- A. Byzantium
- B. Ottoman City
- C. Istanbul
- D. Alexandria

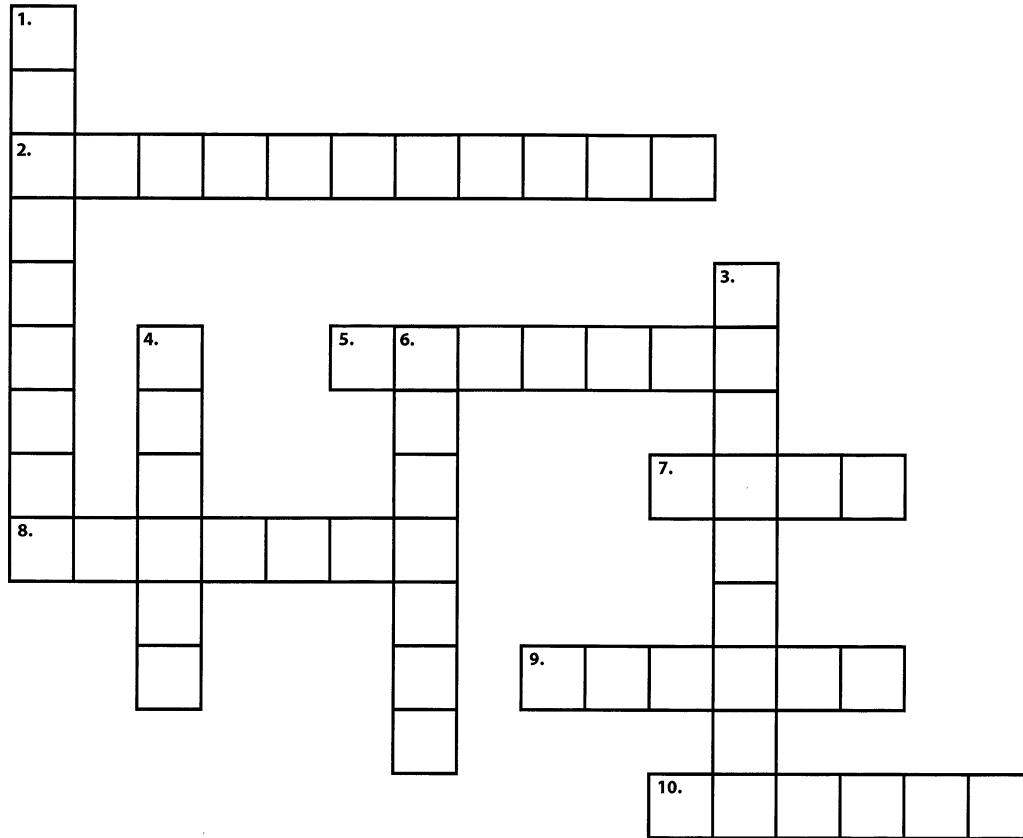
5. The Justinian Code covered \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. marriage
- B. property and inheritance
- C. crimes
- D. all of the above

# The Rise and Fall of the Byzantine Empire

## Crossword Puzzle

Write the best answer in each blank, and complete the crossword puzzle.



### ACROSS

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ invaded the Byzantine Empire from Asia Minor.
5. The Byzantine Empire's greatest strengths were a strong central government and a wealthy \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Justinian got officials to gather, edit, and organize the \_\_\_\_\_ of ancient Rome.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ conquered southern Italy.
9. By the 1000s, the Byzantine \_\_\_\_\_ was weakening because of constant warfare and struggles for the throne.
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ was the Byzantine gold coin that was used from England to China.

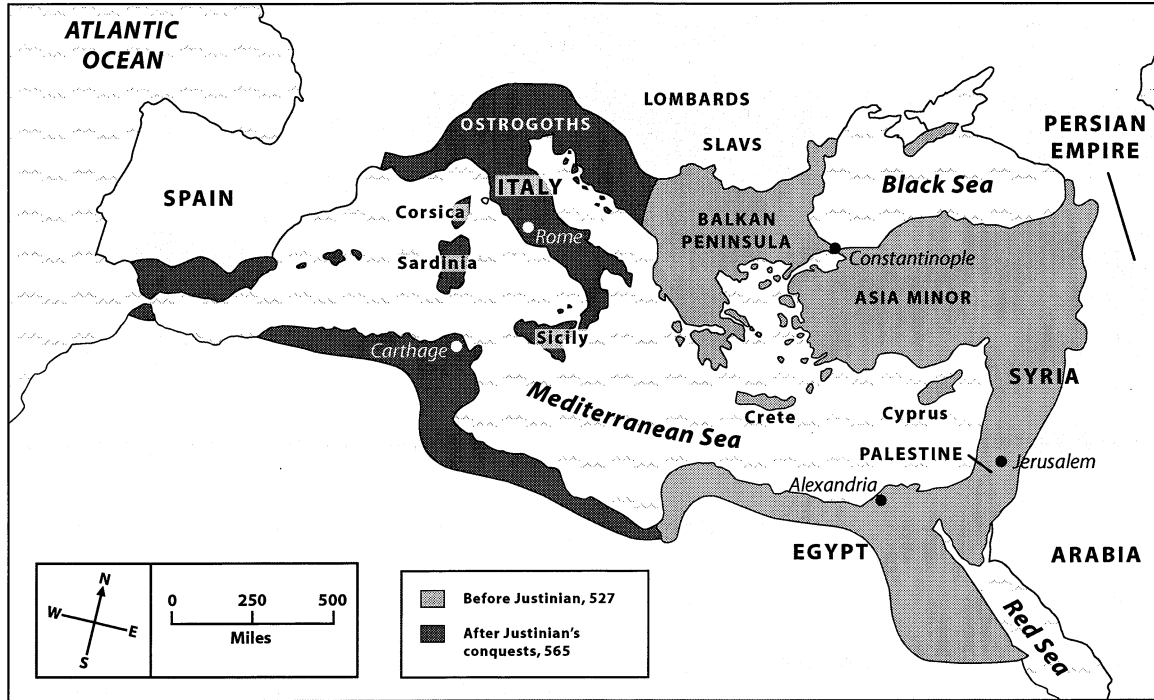
### DOWN

1. \_\_\_\_\_ dreamed of bringing back the glory of ancient Rome.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ culture continued to influence Europe throughout the Middle Ages.
4. Justinian had power over the politics of the Byzantine Empire and over the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. During the Fourth \_\_\_\_\_, Christian knights attacked Constantinople.

# The Rise and Fall of the Byzantine Empire

## Map – Justinian’s Empire, 527–565

Use the map to answer the following questions. Write the answers in complete sentences.



1. Which body of water did Justinian’s Empire surround?

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2. Name two areas that became part of the Byzantine Empire after Justinian’s conquests.

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3. Name two areas that were part of the Byzantine Empire before Justinian’s conquests.

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# Quiz: The Rise and Fall of the Byzantine Empire

## True/False

Decide if each statement is true or false, and write "true" or "false" in the blank.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Istanbul was renamed Constantinople by the Ottomans.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Justinian Code governed the Byzantine Empire.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Pope Urban II sent the Seljuk Turks to help fight the Muslims in the first of four Crusades.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Justinian got officials to gather, edit, and organize the laws of ancient Rome.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The Byzantine Empire had a weak central government and a poor economy.

## Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

6. Justinian dreamed of bringing back the glory of ancient \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. Egypt
  - B. Greece
  - C. Rome
  - D. India

7. Byzantine culture continued to influence \_\_\_\_\_ throughout the Middle Ages.
- A. Europe
  - B. Africa
  - C. Mexico
  - D. China

## Short Answer

Answer the following question in complete sentences.

8. What is one reason the Byzantine Empire weakened?

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