

Byzantine Empire

(395 CE – 1453 CE)

By the 4th century CE (AD) the Roman Empire had become too large to defend and govern from Rome. The borders of the Empire were under constant attack from invaders. Roman Emperor Constantine build a new capital city, **Constantinople**, in 330 CE, in what is now Turkey and moved the government from Rome.

Soon after it became clear that the Empire was still too difficult to govern and the Empire was divided into 2 parts with 2 capital cities – **Rome for the Western Empire** and **Constantinople for the Eastern Empire** - each with their own emperor. The Eastern Empire became known as the **Byzantine Empire** in 395 CE.

Roman Empire - 395 CE



The **Western Empire** continued to come under attacks from groups of northern invaders and in **471 CE (AD)** the city of **Rome** fell and the last Roman Emperor was captured by the Barbarians.

The **Byzantine Empire** would continue for another 1,000 years until the Turks from the **Ottoman Empire** captured **Constantinople** in **1453**.

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE



Over the next 1,000 years the **Byzantine Empire** would become the longest lasting empire outside of China. During Emperor Justinian, it would recapture parts of the old Western Empire. It would hold this land for a few years but unfortunately the Empire was under constant attacks.



The Crusaders of 4th Crusade raided and looted (stole from) Constantinople. They left the city badly damaged and weakened the Empire.

By 1453 CE, at the time of the capture by the Ottomans, the Empire had been reduced to just a small portion of its original size. At its end the Byzantine Empire was completely surrounded by the Ottoman Empire.

Important Leaders of the Byzantine Empire

Constantine the Great (reign/ruled 306-337 CE) - He is responsible for building the new capital Constantinople and moving the capital city of the Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople.

Justinian (527-565 CE) – The emperor Justinian led an army to recapture form the barbarians part of the Western Empire. Under Justinian, *The Code of Justinian*, a book of all of the laws was written and published.

Cultural Life and contributions to the World

Christianity

The **Byzantine Empire** was a Christian state. The leader of the Christian Church in Constantinople was the second most powerful person after the pope in Rome.

Government

The Byzantine Empire was quite modern. Its tax system and administration were so well run that the empire survived more than a thousand years. Peoples of all religions and nationalities were allowed to live freely, each within their own section of the city.



Culture, Science and the Arts

Many religion painting and statues were created. **Science and technology** were also very important. Three examples of scientific inventions are the grenade, pointed arch bridge and flame thrower.

The Byzantine tradition of **public debates** were very important with even emperors taking part in them. The debates kept knowledge of the Greek philosophy and science alive.

The Byzantines are also responsible passing on the Greek knowledge to the Muslims, who later passed this knowledge onto Europe, starting the beginning of European Renaissance.