Chapter 9

The Byzantine Empire and Russia (A.D. 330 – A.D. 1613)
In small groups, find evidence to support the following thesis statements.

1. Justinian was an autocrat.

2. Women could attain positions of power and influence in the Byzantine Empire.

3. Religious differences divided Byzantine Christians from Roman Catholics.

4. The Byzantine empire preserved the achievements of earlier civilizations and influenced later civilizations.
The Byzantine Empire and Russia

After the fall of Rome, the Greco-Roman heritage survived in the Byzantine empire for 1000 years. Byzantine civilization shaped the developing cultures of Russia and Eastern Europe.
Growth of the Byzantine Power

- The Byzantine empire centered around Constantinople, was the Roman Empire, not just the continuation of it in the East.

- The Byzantine empire served as a center of world trade and a buffer between Western Europe and the Arab empire.

- **Emperor Constantine** rebuilt the city of Byzantium in A.D. 330, renaming it Constantinople.

- The city of Constantinople developed a uniquely Greek or Byzantine character as early as during the reign of Diocletian from 284 to 305.

- When Rome was seized by the Goths, the Byzantine empire continued as before, believing *themselves* to be the Roman Empire.

- Over the centuries Byzantium evolved into a very different civilization.
Why was Constantinople so successful?

- It was located in the center of a trade route from Africa to the Balkans and Europe to the East, making it Europe’s busiest marketplace.

- It was easily defensible, located on an isthmus, surrounded on three sides by water.

- Land and sea walls bolstered defenses.

Map of Constantinople (1422) by Florentine cartographer Cristoforo Buondelmonti is the oldest surviving map of the city, and the only one which antedates the Turkish conquest of the city in 1453.
Constantinople in the Byzantine Period
The Age of Justinian

Justinian ruled the Byzantine empire from 527 to 565. During his reign, Justinian

- recovered provinces that had been previously overrun by invaders in the Goth Wars.
  The Byzantine empire reached its greatest size under Justinian.
- launched a program to beautify Constantinople.
  The church of Hagia Sophia improved on earlier Roman buildings.
- reformed the law.
  **Justinian’s Code** was a model for medieval monarchs, the Roman Catholic Church, and later legal thinkers.
- used the law to unite the empire under his control

Justinian ruled as an **autocrat**, or sole ruler with complete authority. He also had power over the Church.
The Quest for Silk

- Silk from China was rare and difficult to get, due to wars in Asia.
- Persia, who controlled the Silk Road, levied high taxes.
- Byzantine Emperor Justinian tries to open new trade routes, without success.
- He was able to obtain smuggled silkworm eggs and by the 700s, state-owned silk factories fed a growing silk industry.

Four of the most important domesticated silk worms, together with their adult moth forms, Meyers Konversations-Lexikon (1885-1892)

Silk Cocoon ↑

Silk filaments being unraveled from silk cocoons, Cappadocia, Turkey, 2007.
The Age of Justinian

- Built the church of Hagia Sophia (“Holy Wisdom”).
- Large dome was considered the greatest achievement in Christendom.

Exterior view of the Hagia Sophia. Photo by David Bjorgen

Hagia Sophia, built by emperor Justinian I in the 6th century AD

Virgin and Child with 12th-cent Byzantine rulers. Photo © Helen Betts
Empress Theodora

- Empress Theodora served as advisor, co-ruler, to Justinian and helped women gain more rights.

- She also helped Justinian keep his empire by refusing to leave the city of Constantinople during the Nica Riots.

- She helped women gain more legal rights.
Heraclius I

- Heraclius I (610 – 641) rescued the empire from the financial ruin caused by Justinian’s ill-fated attempt to retake Italy.

- From the east the Persian Empire under the Sassanid Dynasty threatened to overwhelm Asia Minor.

- From the West, German, Slavic, and Mongolian peoples pressed into Greece and the Balkans.

- Heraclius allowed a group of Huns to settle the Balkans to protect the western border, while he focused on Persia, finally defeating them.

Sassanid King Khosrau II submitting to Emperor Heraclius (titled as Rex due to the existence of the Catholic Holy Roman Empire), from a plaque on a 12th century French cross.
Women's Lives Before the Modern Era

Document 1

Document 2
Byzantine Christianity

- Byzantine emperor controlled Church affairs, as the symbolic representation of Christ on Earth.
- Emperor also appoints patriarchs.
- Icons are Holy images of Jesus Christ, Mary the mother of Jesus, and the saints.

Virgin "Kyriotissa"
The Most Holy Mother of God Enthroned (reigning in majesty)
Iconoclasm

- Iconoclasm means “image-breaking”
- In the 8th century, several bishops, Constantine of Nacolia in Phrygia, Theodosius of Ephesus, Thomas of Claudiopolis, and others expressed a dislike of holy pictures, suspecting that their use was, or might become, idolatrous.
- They gained the ear of Emperor Leo III, the Isaurian (716-41), who concluded that images were the chief hindrance to the conversion of Jews and Muslims.
- Also was the cause of superstition, weakness, and division in his empire, and opposed to the First Commandment.
Iconoclasm (cont.)

- Leo III decided to purify and consolidate the church under the Patriarch of Constantinople, and thereby strengthen the empire.

- When Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople was deposed, a revolt broke out between the Emperor and the Eastern monks – soldiers burned monasteries.

- Pope Gregory II wrote to the Emperor defending the use of images and refusing to remove images from Rome.

- St. John Damascene (d. 754) under the rule of the Khalifa wrote the famous apologies “against those who destroy the holy icons.”

- In Rome, Ravenna, and Naples, people rose against the emperor’s law and Gregory II refused to sent taxes to Constantinople.
Empress Irene

- When Leo III and Pope Gregory II died, the fight continued between their successors, Emperor Constantine V and Pope Gregory III.
- Later, Constantine V was succeeded by Leo IV.
- When Leo IV died, his wife Irene, an avid image-worshipper, became regent for her son, Constantine IV (780-97).
- She restored the pictures and relics to the churches, reopened monasteries, and restored broken communication with Rome.
The Second Council of Nicaea, 787 was convened to discuss the issue.

They resolved to:

- confirm the canons of all former general councils
- forbid appointment of ecclesiastical persons by state
- forbid the consecration of churches without relics
- command restoration of desecrated monasteries
- regulate abuses in monasteries.
Irene reigned for five years, from 797 to 802.

Pope Leo III, who needed help against enemies in Rome and who saw the throne of the Byzantine emperor as vacant (lacking a male occupant), crowned Charlemagne as Roman Emperor in 800.

This insult to Byzantium and the Orthodox Church and caused a rift between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

Refusing to recognize Irene's reign, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor.
The Second Iconoclast Persecution

- Iconoclasm resumed 27 years after the Synod of Nicaea.
- Again the holy pictures were destroyed, and their defenders fiercely persecuted.
- The former story was repeated exactly.
  - Emperors Leo III, Constantine V, Leo IV → Leo V, Michael II, Theophilus
  - Pope Gregory II → Pope Paschall
  - Germanus I → Patriarch Nicephorus
  - St. John Damascene → St. Theodore the Studite
- Empress & Regent, Theodora, ends the storm & restores the old custom finally.

Byzantine Iconoclasm, Chludov Psalter, 9th century
Iconoclasm in the West

- The Frankish bishops sent an imperfect translation of the Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea to Charlemagne.
- The Frankish people had just been converted from idolatry, and so, were suspicious of anything that might return them to it.
- Charlemagne supported abolishment of images.
- The Frankish bishops sent a refutation to the pope in 790, declaring that God only can receive adoration.
- Pope Paul I defended the cult of images.
## Christianity in the East and West

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Byzantine Christianity</th>
<th>Western European Christianity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Byzantine emperor controlled Church affairs</td>
<td>Pope controlled Church affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People rejected pope’s claim to authority over all Christians</td>
<td>People accepted pope’s claim to authority over all Christians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy kept right to marry</td>
<td>Clergy prohibited from marrying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek was language of the Church</td>
<td>Latin was language of the Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Used leaven bread in Eucharist</td>
<td>Use of unleaven bread in Eucharist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easter was main holy day</td>
<td>Christmas was main holy day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emperor outlawed the use of icons, or holy images</td>
<td>Use of holy images permitted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What caused the Schism, or permanent split, between East and West?

- Patriarchs rejected Pope’s claim to authority over all Christians.
- When the Pope crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, the Eastern Church protested, claiming there should be only one emperor.
- The Western Church's insertion of "Filioque" (use of unleaven bread in ucharist) into the Latin version of the Nicene Creed w/o holding a council or gaining consent from the Eastern Churches.
- Disputes in the Balkans, Southern Italy, and Sicily over whether Rome or Constantinople had ecclesiastical jurisdiction.
- 1054 – Differences between east and west provoked a schism, or permanent split, between the Eastern (Greek) Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church.
Byzantine Philosophy

- While classical culture largely disappeared in western Europe, it continued to be studied in Byzantium and was transmitted to the Islamic world.

- Basic education included mastery of Greek literature, such as Homer, and the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle.

- Women actively participated in intellectual pursuits. Though they did not attend schools, they were often well-educated by tutors at home in literature, history, composition, and philosophy.

- Anna Comnena, a woman, is considered the greatest of Byzantine writers.

- Women could also inherit their father’s or husband’s estates in equal portions to men.
Crisis and Collapse

- Traders and missionaries carried Byzantine culture and Eastern Orthodox Christianity to Russia, Eastern Europe, and Ethiopia.
- In the 1090s, the Byzantine emperor called for help from the West against the Seljuk Turks.
- The 1st Crusade regained control of Jerusalem.
- In later Crusades, trade rivalry sparked violence between Constantinople and Venice.
- The 4th Crusade sacked Constantinople in 1204 weakening it.
- In 1453, the Ottomans, led by Muhammad II, conquered Constantinople, renaming it Istanbul, and making it the center of the Ottoman Empire.
The Siege of Constantinople

The 1453 Siege of Constantinople, painted 1499

Muhammad II of the Ottoman Turks, conqueror of Constantinople, 1453.
DECLINE OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

EXTERNAL FACTORS | OUTCOMES
--- | ---
Invasions | Normans conquer southern Italy.
 | Seljuk Turks advance through Asia Minor.
Crusades | Trade rivalries lead to conflict with Venice.
 | Knights capture Constantinople during Fourth Crusade.
Ottoman Attack | Constantinople is captured by Turks.
 | Constantinople is transformed into Muslim Istanbul.
The Byzantine Heritage

For 1,000 years, the Byzantines built on the culture of the Hellenistic world. Byzantine civilization blended Christian beliefs with Greek science, philosophy, arts, and literature.

- The Byzantines extended Roman achievements in engineering and the law.
- Byzantine artists made unique contributions that influenced western styles from the Middle Ages to the present.
- Byzantine scholars preserved the classic works of ancient Greece. They also produced their own great books, especially in the field of history.
Women's Lives Before the Modern Era

Document 3

Document 4
Kievan Rus’


The Geography of Russia

Russia’s varied climate zones helped shape early Russian life:

- A band of fertile land in the south was home to Russia’s first civilization.
- The *steppe* provided a highway for nomads migrating from Asia to Europe.

A network of rivers provided transportation for both people and goods. Major rivers ran north to south, linking Russia to the Byzantine world in the south.

The city of Kiev was located at the heart of the vital trade network linking Vikings, Slavs, and Constantinople. Kiev would later become the center of the first Russian state.
Russia is a vast Eurasian plain stretching from Europe to China. Northern forests supply lumber for building and fuel, animals for fur trapping, but also poor soil for farming and bitter cold. Further south a strip of fertile soil in Ukraine attracted framers. The southern steppe, is an open, treeless grassland good for animal herds and the horses of nomadic people.
In the 700s & 800s Vikings, called **Varangians**, settled in Russia, becoming the ruling class.

**Rurik**, a native of Denmark, founded the Rurikid Dynasty, which later would rule over Rus' and Russia for many centuries.

**Rurik** moved his capital to Novgorod in 864, while his relative **Oleg the Seer** conquered Kiev in 882 and established the state of Kievan Rus'.
Conversion to Christianity

- Two Greek monks, Cyril and Methodius, adapted the Greek alphabet into Cyrillic, so the Bible could be translated into Slavic.
- In 957, Princess Olga converted to Christianity, but it did not spread widely until the reign of her grandson, Vladimir I.
- Vladimir (r. 980 – 1015) converted to Christianity and then organized mass baptisms for his people.
- He imported church leaders from Byzantium to train a literate Russian priesthood. Soon a separate Russian Orthodox church developed.

*Baptism of Saint Prince Vladimir,* by Viktor Vasnetsov
Kiev’s Golden Age

- Kiev enjoyed a golden age under Yaroslav the Wise, who ruled from 1019 to 1054.
- He wrote a law code to improve justice.
- He translated Greek works into Slavic.
- He built many churches.
- He arranged marriages between his children and royal families in Western Europe.
Map showing the major Rus' trade routes, the *Volga trade route* (in red) and the *Trade Route from the Varangians to the Greeks* (in purple). Other trade routes of the 8th–11th centuries shown in orange.
Administering justice in Kievan Rus, by Ivan Bilibin
Invasions and migrations created a mix of ethnic and religious groups in Eastern Europe.

Jews fleeing the Crusades and the Inquisition migrated further into Eastern Europe and the Middle East.
Geography of Eastern Europe

Several geographic features contributed to developments in Eastern Europe:

- Much of Eastern Europe borders on the steppes of southern Russia.
- Trade and travel routes linked the Balkans with the Byzantine Empire and, later, the Muslim Ottoman empire.
- In contrast, the northern regions of Eastern Europe forged closer ties with Western Europe.
A Diverse Mix of Peoples

- Eastern Europe’s geography made it a cultural crossroads.
- The ease of migration encouraged many peoples to seek homes, as well as power, in the region.
- As a result, Eastern Europe now includes a wealth of languages and cultures.
- The region is home to a mixture of religions, including Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Islam.
- This diversity will create a hotbed for conflict.
Early Kingdoms

During the Middle Ages, Eastern Europe included many kingdoms and small states. Sometimes empires absorbed national groups. Alliances or royal marriages bound others together for periods of time.

Poland reached its height of power when Queen Jadwiga married a Lithuanian duke. However, it declined when its rulers were unable to maintain a strong central government.

Hungary was overrun, first by Mongols, and then by Ottoman Turks.

Serbia was overrun by Ottoman Turks.
Jewish Migrations in Europe