

Civilizations in Eastern Europe

Byzantium and Orthodox Europe

A Brief Introduction

- Two major civilizations: Byzantium
Western/Central Europe.
- Byzantine: Balkans, M.E., and E. Mediterranean
 - High levels of politics, economics, culture
 - Continuation of E. Rome with emperors.
- W/C Europe: Catholic Christianity, no imperial center

The Byzantium Empire

The Origins of the Empire

- ✖ The origin of Byzantium began when the city Constantinople was set up. It was actually a continuation of the eastern part of the Roman Empire. This was in 330 C.E..

Justinian's Achievements

- ✖ Justinian (533 C.E.) tried to restore the Byzantine Empire to be like the late Roman Empire. Unfortunately this never happened. Byzantium was under constant threat of invasion.
- ✖ Rebuilt Constantinople after previous riots
- ✖ Systematized Roman legal code.
- ✖ Built the Hagia Sophia- a major Christian church
- ✖ Tried to expand- weakened the empire.
- ✖ Made Ravenna a key artistic center.
- ✖ These wars and tax pressures = his death in 565 C.E.

Arab Pressure and the Empire's Defenses

- ✖ Justinian's successors began to concentrate on defending the empire itself, not on expanding.
- ✖ Now the empire was strong enough to withstand the Arab Muslims.
- ✖ New weapon- Greek Fire(napalm)- devastated the Arabs.
- ✖ Greater dependence on the rural population (because of wars).
- ✖ Bigger emphasis on army and navy.
- ✖ After Arab surge, many weak emperors and Arab pressure cont.
- ✖ Byzantine attacked by Bulgarians.
- ✖ Basil II defeated Bulgarians in 1014 C.E.
- ✖ Despite problems, the empire had real core power.

Byzantine Society and Politics

- ✖ Emperor- ordained by God, Head of State, Head of Church.
- ✖ Ideals of divine, all-powerful emperor, but really he was controlled.
- ✖ Women held the throne: Empress Theodora (981-1056)
 - + Checked unruly nobles, limited bureaucratic corruption, trouble building reliable staff.
- ✖ Byzantine Bureaucrats
 - + Greek education, school paralleled church, recruited from all social classes.
 - + Supplemented centralized imperial authority.
 - + Top officials were eunuchs
- ✖ Careful Military Organization
 - + Recruited local troops, gave them land for service.
- ✖ The empire depended on the capital's control over the rural areas. The bureaucracy controlled trade and food prices. The food prices were kept low to appease the lower classes, whom were vital to supply the goods and taxes.
- ✖ Byzantium now made luxury items such as silks comparable to China's. Trade flourished with India, the Arabs, and east Asia.
- ✖ Byzantine resembles China: merchants never gained political power.
- ✖ Cultural life centered on Hellenism.
- ✖ Byzantine Strength: Preserving past art forms, not developing new ones.
- ✖ Conflict over iconoclasm accusation, threatening a split between church and state.

The Split Between East and West

- ✖ The split was between the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodoxy, in 1054 C.E.
- ✖ Causes:
 - + Different translations of the Bible (Greek, Latin)
 - + Byzantine emperors resisted the papal attempts to interfere with religious issues.
 - + Hostility to Charlemagne (wanted to be emperor)
 - + Eastern church acknowledged the pope as first, but Byzantine thought state was more important.
 - + Disagreement over what type of bread to use in mass and the celibacy for its priests.
 - + Discussion led to more disputes
 - + Officially split in 1054 C.E.
- ✖ After the schism- Not completely separate:
 - + Shared many classical traditions
 - + Frequent commercial and cultural contacts.

The Empire's Decline

- ✖ Byzantium entered long period of decline after the East/West Schism.
- ✖ Turkish invaders pressed on eastern border.
- ✖ By late 11th century, the Seljuk took nearly all of the Asiatic provinces.
 - + Cut off best sources of tax revenue and food suppliers.
- ✖ Doom sealed when the empire lost the battle of Manzikert in 1071, destroying its largest army, and being unable to recover.
- ✖ New independent kingdoms such as Serbia arised.
- ✖ Western Crusade in 1204 C.E. turned against Byzantium.
- ✖ The great eastern empire fell completely to a massive army of Turks in 1461.

The Spread Of Civilization in Eastern Europe

- ✖ Before the decline of the Byzantine Empire, missionaries, Cyril and Methodius, were sent to convert the people in the Balkans. There they developed the Slavic language, Cyrillic.
- ✖ This allowed Christian literacy outside of the Byzantium borders who tolerated other languages unlike Western Catholicism which stresses Latin.

The East Central Borderlands

- ✖ Czech area, most of Hungary, and Poland would be competition between E. and W. political and intellectual models.
- ✖ That strip of land was organized into regional monarchies after conversion to Christianity.
- ✖ Active area for trade and industry
- ✖ Ironworking until 12th century
- ✖ Eastern Europe had major influx of Jews, migrating from M.E. and escaping intolerance in western Europe.
- ✖ Those Jews were resented by the Christian majority and were barred from agriculture, but maintained their cultural and religious traditions. They had a strong emphasis on education and literacy.

The Emergence of Kievan Rus'

- ✖ Russian civilization will become more important after 1450.
- ✖ The Slavic People:
 - + Moved to Russia and E. Europe during Roman Empire.
 - + Mixed with earlier inhabitants and Bulgarians.
 - + Used iron and extended agriculture.
 - + Political organization in family tribes.
 - + Animist
 - + Folk music and oral legends
 - + Loose regional kingdoms
- ✖ Scandinavian traders had regular trade between Scandinavia and Byzantium (6th and 7th centuries).

- + Militarily superior to Slavs.
- ✗ The City of Kiev
 - + First regional prince: Rurik of Denmark.
 - + Kievan Rus' (*rus = russia = red*)
 - + Loosely organized
 - + Became prosperous trading center
 - + Prince Vladimir I took steps of converting to Christianity on behalf of his people
 - ✗ Orthodox Christianity > prevailing animism.
 - ✗ Forced baptisms
 - ✗ New Russian Orthodox Church developed
 - + Largest single state in Europe
 - + Yaroslav: last Slavic prince
 - ✗ Converted religious literature from Greek to Slavic

Institutions and Culture in Kievan Rus'

- ✗ Attracted to the idea that a central ruler should have lots of power.
- ✗ Fervent devotion to the power of God.
- ✗ Traditional polygamy went to monogamy
- ✗ Emphasis on almsgiving described the wealthy's obligation to the poor.
- ✗ Used Cyrillic alphabet.
- ✗ Very religious, no distinct philosophical or scientific current.
- ✗ Art focused on religion
- ✗ Russian church regarded music, street performances and such as pagan.
- ✗ Russians were mainly peasant farmers but aristocrats existed called the boyars.
- ✗ The greatest ruler, Yaroslav the Wise (1019 – 1054) used marriage to connect to many other countries, focusing on Byzantium.

Kievan Decline

- ✗ Began to fade in the 12th century
 - + Rival princes
 - + Conflict of the succession of the throne
 - + Decline of the Byzantine Empire reduced Russian trade and wealth
- ✗ Weak and disunited by 1200
- ✗ Two final blows from Mongols in 1237-1238 and 1240-1241
 - + Mongol intent- add entire Europe to their empire
 - + Called *Tatars* in Russian
- ✗ Under Tatar control for over 200 years
 - + Russian literature declined
 - + Trade lapsed
 - + Commerce never returned
 - + Did not destroy Russian Christianity

- ✖ Byzantium fell (1453) when Russia got its independence back (15th century)

The End of an Era in Eastern Europe

- ✖ Both Byzantium and Russia under siege.
- ✖ Western Europe remained free of outside control.
 - + Clear vigor in politics, economy, and culture.
- ✖ When Eastern Europe returned, it was at a disadvantage.
- ✖ The Tatar invasion and the collapse of the Byzantine Empire were disruptive.
 - + Kievan social structure disappeared.
- ✖ Christianity, E. European assumptions on political rulers and church-state relations, and lively artistic culture turned to rebuilding.