

Near Eastern Civilizations

The Byzantine Civilization

A. The Rise of New Rome

1. Name: Greek Byzantium, Constantinople,
Istanbul
2. Location: peninsula on the Bosphorus Straits separating southeastern Europe from Asia Minor; present day Turkey
3. Importance
 - a. Commercial center where east/west trade routes met
 - b. Capital of the eastern Roman Empire; replaced Rome (after 476) as the primary city of the empire
 - c. One of the major patriarchates of the early Christian church
 - d. Byzantine civilization was more Greek than Roman, more Oriental than European

Geo 9

B. The Reign of Justinian (r. 527-565)

1. His chief objectives was to restore the greatness of the Roman Empire by
 - a. recovering the Roman territory in the West that had fallen to the barbarians (Italy, southern Spain, France, northern Africa) and
 - b. revitalizing the Roman legal system system—this became known as the Justinian Code
2. His reign represented the Golden Age of Byzantine culture through extensive architectural programs (public buildings, roads, aqueducts) and artistic advancements (mosaics)
3. His successors were not prepared to rule. Financially, the empire was drained from wars and building projects. The eastern and northern borders were unprotected.

Reading 9.2