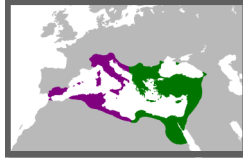


Decline and Fall

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State of the Empire

•The extent of the Empire was at its greatest under Emperor Justinian. It was nearly as large as the late Roman Empire had been – controlling much of the territory around the Mediterranean Sea.



•After the rule of Justinian, the Empire gradually lost territory. With the rise of Islam and the Islamic caliphates in the 600 and 700s, the Byzantine Empire lost all of its north African and much of its Middle Eastern possessions.

•Between 700 & 1400 the Empire swung between loss and re-conquest of territory. At times it seemed the Empire was on its death bed, but then would rebound and fight for survival.

The Crusades

•In 1095, Emperor Alexios I appealed to the Pope for help defending the eastern Christians against the threat of the Seljuk Turks. The Pope seized this opportunity to declare a Holy War to capture the Holy Land.

•The Pope viewed this as a political opportunity to regain power in the East. (The Great Schism occurred in 1054...)

•The first few crusades achieved minor, temporary territorial successes, but the Fourth Crusade was a complete disaster. Western knights sailed to Constantinople and sacked the city – massacring thousands of residents.

•This crusade started the final decline of the Byzantine Empire – it was a blow from which they would not recover. It also illustrated the depths of bad feelings the Great Schism had engendered.



Cracks appear...

•The Empire was almost continuously plagued by groups on its borders seeking territory through conquest. Over time, the Empire's military began to weaken as civil wars took a toll, and mercenaries were hired.



•The Crusades had a devastating impact on the Empire – the fourth crusade in particular dealt a mortal blow to Byzantium.

•The Empire became less and less centralized over the centuries. This ultimately resulted in two civil wars in the 1300s which had a devastating effect on not only the military, but on political unity in general.

•Economically, the tax burden became more and more difficult to shoulder as the tax base shrunk (loss of territory), and expenses increased.



•The tax burden was particularly heavy on the lower classes, and this created increasing social conflict between upper and lower classes.

The Ottomans

•Following in the footsteps of the Seljuk Turks, the Ottoman Turks rose to power in 1300 by seizing control of the Anatolian Peninsula (Turkey).

•The Ottomans laid siege to many of the remaining Byzantine territories (and there weren't many left). Basically, the Byzantine Empire was little more than a city state surrounding Constantinople.

•Sultan Mehmet II became obsessed with conquest of Constantinople. In 1453, he laid siege to the city. After two months, it fell – signaling the end of the Empire as well.



Global History
Decline and Fall

Name _____

1. How big was the greatest extent of the Byzantine Empire? Under which Emperor?

6. Why did the Emperor ask the Pope for help?

2. How did the Empire lose its Middle Eastern & N. African territories?

7. What was the Pope's underlying motive for helping?

3. How did the Empire's military weaken?

8. What happened in the first few crusades?

4. How did gradual de-centralization of the gov't weaken the Empire?

9. In the forth?

5. Why did the tax burden on the lower classes increase? How did this impact social relations?

10. Result of the Crusades for the Byzantine Empire?

11. Describe the end of the Byzantine Empire.

Decline and Fall Key

1. How big was the greatest extent of the Byzantine Empire? Under which Emperor?
The extent of the Empire was at its greatest under Emperor Justinian. It was nearly as large as the late Roman Empire had been – controlling much of the territory around the Mediterranean Sea.

2. How did the Empire lose its Middle Eastern & N. African territories?
With the rise of Islam and the Islamic caliphates in the 600 and 700s, the Byzantine Empire lost all of its north African and much of its Middle Eastern possessions.

3. How did the Empire's military weaken?
The Empire's military began to weaken as a result of continual outside invasion, civil wars, and use of mercenaries.

4. How did gradual de-centralization of the gov't weaken the Empire?
The decentralization of the Empire ultimately resulted in two civil wars in the 1300s which had a devastating effect on not only the military, but on political unity in general.

5. Why did the tax burden on the lower classes increase? How did this impact social relations?
The tax burden became more and more difficult to shoulder as the tax base shrunk (loss of territory), and expenses increased. The tax burden was particularly heavy on the lower classes, and this created increasing social conflict between upper and lower classes.

6. Why did the Emperor ask the Pope for help?
Emperor Alexios I appealed to the Pope for help defending the eastern Christians against the threat of the Seljuk Turks.

7. What was the Pope's underlying motive for helping?
The Pope viewed this as a political opportunity to regain power in the East. The Great Schism had occurred 41 years earlier.

8. What happened in the first few crusades?
The first few crusades achieved minor, temporary territorial successes.

9. In the fourth?
The Fourth Crusade was a complete disaster. Western knights sailed to Constantinople and sacked the city – massacring thousands of residents.

10. Result of the Crusades for the Byzantine Empire?
The crusades started the final decline of the Byzantine Empire – they were a blow from which they would not recover.

11. Describe the end of the Byzantine Empire.
The Ottomans Turks laid siege to many of the remaining Byzantine territories. Sultan Mehmet II became obsessed with conquest of Constantinople. In 1453, he laid siege to the city. After two months, it fell – signaling the end of the Empire as well.

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