Document A


The Byzantines ... [withstood] five years of siege by [the Arabs] hitherto considered irresistible, and in doing so ... saved Western civilization. Had the [Arabs] captured Constantinople in the seventh century...all Europe - and America - might be Muslim today.

Document Analysis
1. What religion dominated western and eastern Europe in 1050? What religion dominated northern Africa and southwest Asia?

2. What Christian city was closest to Muslim lands in Asia?

3. What is the significance of the quote from John Julius Norwich's book?

4. Based on this document, why should we study the Byzantines?
The elaborate defense works that surrounded Constantinople made it in its day the best-fortified city in the world.... The walls were erected in the Fifth Century to protect the city against the Goths and Huns, who had captured Rome. They served their purpose well, holding off invaders for nearly one thousand years ... a single wall bounded the city's seaward sides, which were defended by the Byzantine fleet. On the land side, the Byzantines constructed a moat and three walls that were 25 feet thick. As indicated in the sketch ... invaders were faced first with the moat some 60 feet wide and 22 feet deep that was normally dry but could be flooded by pipes. Behind the moat was a low wall to shield a line of archers. Even if the attackers could overcome this first defense, they were confronted by a second wall, 27 feet high, which sheltered more troops. Beyond the second wall lay the third and strongest bulwark. Its towers, some 70 feet high, housed more archers and missile throwers. Only the force of gunpowder finally demolished the protecting walls, bringing Constantinople down.

Note: During the 1,100-year history of the Byzantine Empire, 24 efforts were made to capture the city of Constantinople. Only two were successful. The Crusaders entered the city in 1204 but were eventually thrown out a few decades later. The Turkish invasion in 1453 marked the end of the Byzantine Empire.

Document Analysis

1. Why were the walls of Constantinople built? Why was it so difficult for an attacking enemy to break through them?

2. Why couldn’t an enemy attack on the seaward side of the city?

3. In its 1,100-year history, how many attempts were made to take the city? How many were successful?

4. Judging from the illustration, what conclusions can you draw about Byzantine engineering and architecture?

5. Based on this document, why should we study the Byzantines?
Document C


Document Note: In the centuries that followed Emperor Constantine’s move to Byzantium, the Christian Church of Rome and the Christian Church of Constantinople gradually grew apart. The final split occurred in 1054, a separation that continues to this day. The reason for the split had to do with some spiritual interpretations of the Bible, whether or not a priest could get married (the Byzantine Church said “yes”), and the refusal by Constantinople to accept the supreme authority of the Pope. Today the Eastern Orthodox Church has a ceremonial leader, the Bishop of Constantinople, also known as the Patriarch, and a number of very independent branches - Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox, and Ukrainian Orthodox.

### Eastern Orthodox Christianity Around the World

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>World Rank in Orthodox Population</th>
<th>Eastern Orthodox Population *</th>
<th>Percentage of Nation’s Population that is Eastern Orthodox</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>106,445,473</td>
<td>75 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34,862,521</td>
<td>76 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34,461,135</td>
<td>44 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18,726,322</td>
<td>88 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11,080,059</td>
<td>98 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5,269,864</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* As of 2010, there were about 250,000,000 Eastern Orthodox in the world. This compares with a total Christian population of about 2 billion.

Document Analysis

1. Why did the Eastern Orthodox Church separate from the western Roman Catholic Church?

2. Which country listed on the chart has the world’s highest Eastern Orthodox population?

3. Which country on the chart has the highest percentage of Eastern Orthodox Christians?

4. Would it be accurate to say that the Patriarch of Constantinople (who used to be the Patriarch of the entire Byzantine Empire) has great power over Russia, Ukraine, and Ethiopia today? Explain.

5. How can you use this document to argue why it is important to study Byzantine history?
Document D

**Document Note:** Justinian I ruled the Byzantine Empire from 527 to 565 CE. When he became emperor, the laws of the crumbled Roman Empire in the West were very disorganized and sometimes contradicted each other. Lawyers often took advantage of this confusion by using long-forgotten laws to support their cases. Justinian knew that a clear and fair legal code was necessary to a unified empire. He therefore appointed a commission of ten experts who created a new code of 4,652 laws. These laws were written (by hand, of course) in 50 books which were further simplified into a single text called *The Institutes*. Together, these writings are called Justinian's Code. The Code dealt with everything from property rights to punishments for religious heresy (crimes). Historians credit Justinian’s Code with shaping our basic ideas about law and justice today.

**Source:** *The Institutes of Justinian's Code*, 531 CE.

Justice is the constant and perpetual [continuous] wish to render every one his due ...The maxims [main guidelines] of law are these: to live honestly, to hurt no one, to every one his due.

**Source:** *The Second Treatise of Civil Government*, John Locke, 1690.

**Note:** John Locke was an influential English political philosopher.

The state of nature...teaches all man kind, who will but consult it, that being equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.

**Source:** *The Declaration of Independence*, Thomas Jefferson, 1776.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

**Document Analysis**

1. Why did Justinian create a new legal code for the Byzantine Empire?

2. According to *The Institutes*, what are the three main guidelines one should follow when writing laws?

3. What is the meaning of “to everyone his due”?

4. What evidence is there that the English philosopher John Locke might have borrowed some ideas from Justinian’s Code?

5. According to the Declaration of Independence, what are three unalienable rights that people have? Are any of these rights similar to ideas in the Code? Explain.

6. How can you use this document to argue why it is important to study the Byzantines?
The most important achievement of the Byzantine revival lay ... in the preservation of a sizable portion of the ancient Greek classics.... From the point of view of Western culture it may even be said that this act of salvage constitutes our greatest debt to Byzantium ... all the [saved classic] literature ... survived because men in the ninth and tenth centuries ... recopied [it] at the time in minuscule script.\textsuperscript{a}... It is remarkable how much has survived.

\textsuperscript{a}A cursive script that made hand-copying much faster

Ancient Greek literature preserved by Byzantine scribes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homer</th>
<th>The \textit{Iliad} and the \textit{Odyssey} are among most widely read poems in American and European schools and colleges today.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Theatrical plays, including \textit{Oedipus Rex}, helped to define a form of literature called tragedy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socrates</td>
<td>Known to us through the writings of Plato and others, Socrates crafted a form of inquiry and debate, called the Socratic Method, that is used in classrooms today. It features questions rather than answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plato</td>
<td>One of Plato's works, \textit{The Republic}, describes an ideal society and explores the importance of justice in that society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td>His many scientific and philosophical writings advanced the use of logic and scientific thought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euclid</td>
<td>He made inquiries into astronomy, music, and mathematics. Regarded as the father of geometry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hippocrates</td>
<td>His medical works and his ethical standards led to the still-used Hippocratic Oath taken by all doctors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Document Analysis

1. How were the Byzantines able to preserve Greek classics?

2. What Greek thinkers influenced science and mathematics?

3. What Greek thinkers influenced literature?

4. Which Greek cultural figure is most likely imitated by a classroom teacher?

5. How can you use this document to argue why it is important to study Byzantine history?