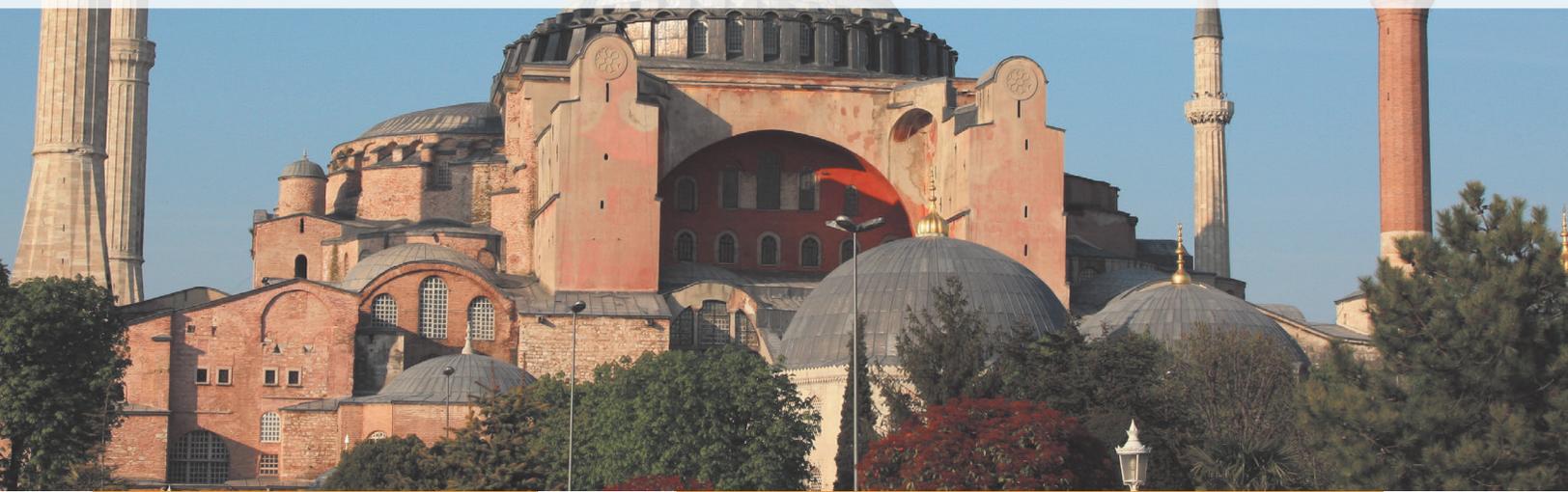


Civilizations of Eastern Europe



Essential Question

How might trade have changed the way eastern European society developed?



About the Photo: Geography, trade, and religious ties connected the civilizations of the Byzantine Empire and early Russia. Hagia Sophia, shown here, was one of the Byzantine Empire's most important churches.

In this module, you will learn about the development of the Byzantine Empire and Russia in eastern Europe.

What You Will Learn...

Lesson 1: The Geography of Eastern Europe	410
The Big Idea The geography of eastern Europe heavily impacted the history of the region's people.	
Lesson 2: The Byzantine Empire.	415
The Big Idea The eastern Roman Empire prospered for hundreds of years after the western empire fell.	
Lesson 3: Early Russia	420
The Big Idea Early Russia was influenced by different cultures and experienced frequent changes in government.	

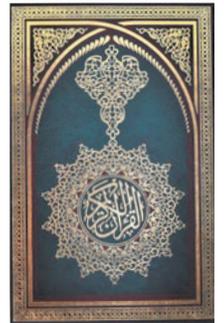
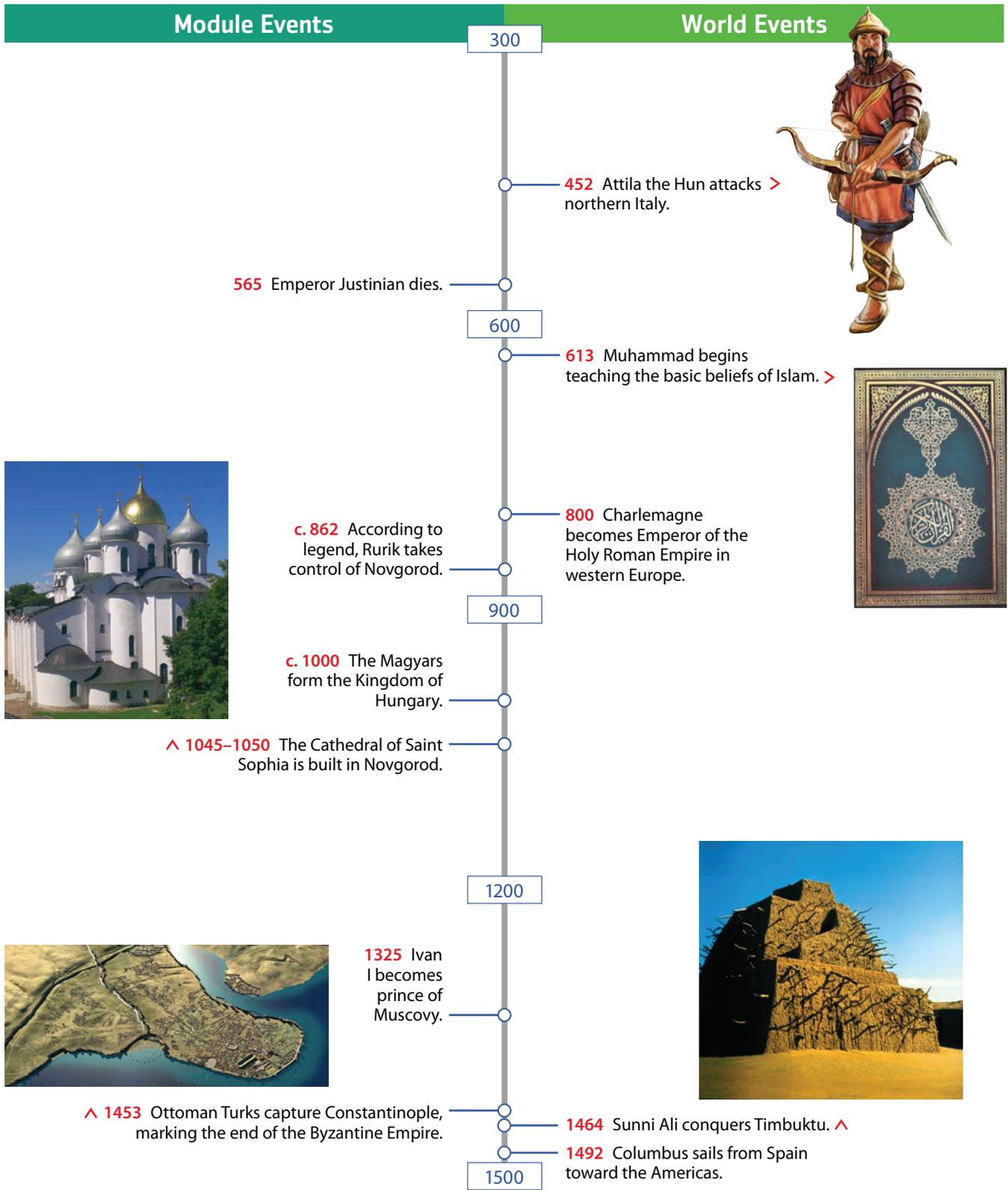
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- ✓ Interactive Map: Early Russia, 860 – 1240
- ✓ Image with Hotspots: View of Constantinople
- ✓ Image Carousel: Russian Religious Architecture



Reading Social Studies

THEME FOCUS:

Politics, Religion

In this module, you will read about the eastern Roman Empire, also called the Byzantine Empire. You will learn how this empire was similar to, and different from, the western Roman Empire. You will read about the importance of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. You will see how the politics of the empire helped spread the religion of Christianity throughout eastern Europe and into Russia.

READING FOCUS:

Stereotypes and Bias in History

Historians today try to be impartial in their writing. They don't let their personal feelings affect what they write.

Byzantine writers, however, didn't always feel the need to be impartial. Their writings were often colored by their pride in their city and their attitudes about other people, places, and ideas.

Identify Stereotypes and Bias Two ways in which writing can be colored by the author's ideas are stereotypes and bias. A **stereotype** is a generalization about a person or group of people. **Bias** is an attitude that one thing is superior to another. The examples below can help you identify stereotypes and bias in the things you read.



You Try It!

Read the following passage and then answer the questions below.

Justinian and Public Funds “As soon as he found himself the head of his uncle’s empire, he at once did his utmost to squander [waste] the public treasure over which he now had control. For he lavished [heaped] wealth extravagantly [wastefully] upon the Huns whom from time to time came across and . . . ever afterwards, the Roman provinces were subject to constant incursions [invasions]; for these barbarians, having once tasted our wealth, could not tear themselves away. . . .”

—Procopius, from *The Secret History of the Court of Justinian*

Answer these questions about the passage you just read.

1. What word in the passage shows the author’s bias toward his fellow citizens?
2. What stereotypes about the Huns does the author express? Are these stereotypes positive or negative?
3. Is the author biased toward or against Justinian? Explain.

As you read this module, look for other examples of bias or stereotypes toward or against people and places.

Key Terms and People

Lesson 1

Ural Mountains
Carpathians
Balkan Peninsula
Danube
Volga
taiga
Rus

Lesson 2

Justinian
Theodora
Byzantine Empire
mosaics

Lesson 3

Ivan III
czar
principalities
icons



The Geography of Eastern Europe

The Big Idea

The geography of eastern Europe heavily impacted the history of the region's people.

Main Ideas

- The physical geography of eastern Europe varies widely from place to place.
- The climate and vegetation of eastern Europe also vary greatly from place to place.
- The early history of eastern Europe was shaped by the movement of different groups of people into the region from other areas.

Key Terms and People

Ural Mountains
Carpathians
Balkan Peninsula
Danube
Volga
taiga
Rus

The Carpathian Mountains run through the center of eastern Europe.

If YOU were there . . .

You are traveling on a boat down the Danube River, one of the longest rivers in Europe. As you float downstream, you pass through dozens of towns and cities. Outside the cities, the banks are lined with huge castles, soaring churches, and busy farms. From time to time, other boats pass you, some loaded with passengers and some with goods.

Why do you think the Danube is so busy?

Physical Features

Geographers and historians sometimes differ over the boundaries of what we call *eastern Europe*. As a political term, *Eastern Europe* often refers to the countries that were controlled by the Soviet Union after World War II, until the Soviet Union broke apart. Geographically speaking, however, there are few defining landforms creating a solid boundary between Europe and Asia. Most modern geographers set the boundary between Asia and eastern Europe at the **Ural Mountains**, in western Russia.



Eastern Europe is a land of amazing contrasts. The northern parts of the region lie along the cold Baltic and Barents seas. In the south, however, are warm, sunny beaches along the Adriatic and Black seas. Jagged mountain peaks jut high into the sky in some places, while wildflowers dot the gently rolling hills of other parts of the region. These contrasts stem from the region's wide variety of landforms, water features, and climates.

Landforms The landforms of eastern Europe are arranged in a series of broad bands. In the north is the Northern European Plain. This large plain stretches across most of northern Europe. It then rises to form the Ural Mountains in the east. These low mountains are worn down and rounded from erosion.

South of the Northern European Plain is a low mountain range called the **Carpathians** (kahr-PAY-thee-uhnz). These rugged mountains are an extension of the Alps of west-central Europe. They stretch in a long arc

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from the Alps to the Black Sea. East of the Black Sea lie the Caucasus (KAW-kuh-suhs) Mountains and the Caspian Sea. The Caspian Sea is the largest inland sea in the world.

South and west of the Carpathians is another plain, the Great Hungarian Plain. As its name suggests, this fertile area is located mostly within Hungary.

South of the plains are more mountains, the Dinaric (duh-NAR-ik) Alps and the Balkan Mountains. These two ranges together cover most of the **Balkan Peninsula**, one of the largest peninsulas in Europe. The Balkan Peninsula extends south into the Mediterranean Sea.

Water Features Like the rest of the continent, eastern Europe has many bodies of water that affect how people live. To the southwest is the Adriatic Sea, an important route for transportation and trade. To the east, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea serve the same functions. In the far north is the Baltic Sea. It is another important trade route, though parts of the sea freeze over in the winter.

In addition to these seas, eastern Europe has several rivers that are vital paths for transportation and trade. The **Danube** (DAN-yoob) begins in Germany and flows east across the Great Hungarian Plain. The river winds its way through nine countries before it finally empties into the Black Sea. The longest river in Europe, the **Volga**, flows south through western Russia to the Caspian Sea. The Volga has long formed the core of Russia's river network. Canals now link the Volga to the nearby Don River and to the Baltic Sea.

Reading Check

Draw Conclusions

What two types of physical features might have affected transportation in eastern Europe?



Many rivers flow across the plains of eastern Europe. The Vistula, shown here, is one of them.

Climate and Vegetation

Like its landforms, the climates and vegetation of eastern Europe vary widely. The climates and landforms affect which plants will grow there.



Mount Kazbek is part of the Caucasus mountain range. As this photograph shows, climate in this range varies due to elevation.

Winters along the Baltic Sea are long, cold, and harsh. This northern part of eastern Europe receives less rain than other areas, but fog is common. In fact, parts of the area have as few as 30 sunny days each year. The climate encourages the growth of huge forests.

The interior plains of eastern Europe are much milder than the far north. Winters there can be very cold, but summers are generally pleasant and mild. The western parts of the plains receive much more rain than those areas farther east.

Because of this variation in climate, the plains of eastern Europe have many types of vegetation. Huge forests cover much of the north. South of these forests are open, grassy plains. In the spring, these plains are covered with colorful wildflowers.

European Russia's northern coast is a type of region called the tundra. Winters are dark and bitterly cold, and the brief summers are cool. Much of the ground is permafrost, or permanently frozen soil. Only small plants such as mosses grow. South of the tundra is a vast forest of evergreen trees called the **taiga** (TY-guh). This huge forest covers about half of Russia. South of the taiga is a flat grassland called the steppe (STEP). With rich, black soil and a warmer climate, the steppe is Russia's most important farming area. Farther south, the climate is warm and wet along the Black Sea.

Along the Adriatic Sea, the Balkan coast has a Mediterranean climate, with warm summers and mild winters. Because a Mediterranean climate does not bring much rain, the Balkan coast does not have many forests. Instead, the land there is covered by shrubs and hardy trees that do not need much water.

Reading Check

Summarize
Which regions of
Russia have the
mildest climates?

Eastern European Peoples

Throughout history, many different peoples ruled in eastern Europe. Each group influenced the culture and customs of the region. Trade patterns also influenced the history of eastern Europe.

The Balts The area around the Baltic Sea was settled in ancient times by many different groups. One of these groups, called the Balts, farmed the land and raised cattle. The Balts also used amber found in the area to barter for other goods. Amber is a fossilized substance from ancient plants and trees that can be used for jewelry. During the Middle Ages, some Balts were conquered by people from Germany. Other Balts were assimilated by a group of people called the Slavs. To *assimilate* means to become part of another group or culture.

The Slavs The Slavs settled in eastern Europe. Part of the lands they settled included what is now Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech (CHEK) Republic, and western Russia. The Slavs developed towns and began trading with

people from other areas. Eventually, the Slavs founded small kingdoms. As time went on and kingdoms grew larger, Slav society began to separate into different classes.

The Rus One group the Slavs most likely traded with was the **Rus** (ROOS). According to legend, the Rus were Vikings from Scandinavia. The word *Russia* probably comes from their name. In the mid-800s, a Rus leader named Rurik was invited to become the ruler of the Slavs. The Slavs had been fighting among themselves and hoped a new ruler could bring order. Rurik put an end to their fighting and took over the city now known as Novgorod, in present-day Russia, to serve as his capital. The Rus shaped the first Russian state among the Slavs.

The Magyars In the 900s, a fierce group called the Magyars swept into what is now Hungary. Some historians think that the Magyars were originally from the Ural Mountains. Around AD 1000, the Magyars formed the Kingdom of Hungary. Although they were later conquered by other countries, the Magyars continued to shape Hungarian culture. The Hungarian language is based on the language spoken by the Magyars. In fact, people in Hungary today still refer to themselves as Magyars.

The Greeks and Romans By the 600s BC, the ancient Greeks had founded colonies on the northern coast of the Black Sea. The area they settled is now part of Bulgaria and Romania. Later, the Romans conquered most of the area from the Adriatic Sea to the Danube River. When the Roman Empire divided into west and east in the late AD 300s, the Balkan Peninsula became part of the eastern empire.

Summary and Preview The landforms of eastern Europe vary widely, as did the groups of people who lived there in the region's early history. In the next lesson, you will read about the growth of the Byzantine Empire in eastern Europe.

Reading Check

Analyze Effects
How did the Slavs influence the region's history?

Lesson 1 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. **Identify** What are the major mountain ranges of eastern Europe?

b. **Describe** Why is the Volga River significant?
- a. **Explain** Why are there few trees along the coast of the Balkan Peninsula?

b. **Identify** Why is the steppe Russia's most important farming area?
- a. **Define** Who were the Rus?

b. **Identify** What group continues to shape the development of Hungarian culture?

Critical Thinking

- Form Generalizations** Draw a chart like the one here. Enter two general ideas for each topic in the chart.

Eastern Europe	
Geography	
People	



The Byzantine Empire

The Big Idea

The eastern Roman Empire prospered for hundreds of years after the western empire fell.

Main Ideas

- Eastern emperors ruled from Constantinople and tried but failed to reunite the whole Roman Empire.
- The people of the eastern empire created a new society that was very different from society in the west.
- Byzantine Christianity was different from Christianity in the west.

Key Terms and People

Justinian
Theodora
Byzantine Empire
mosaics

Constantinople was strategically located where Europe and Asia meet. As a result, the city was in a perfect location to control trade routes between the two continents.

If YOU were there . . .

You are a trader visiting Constantinople. You have traveled to many cities but have never seen anything so magnificent. The city has huge palaces and stadiums for horse races. In the city center, you enter a church and stop, speechless with amazement. Above you is a vast, gold dome lit by hundreds of candles.

How does the city make you feel about its rulers?

Emperors Rule from Constantinople

In the late 200s, the emperor Diocletian divided the Roman Empire into two parts—east and west—hoping to make the empire easier to rule. In spite of his efforts, years of invasions and economic instability eventually led to the fall of the western Roman Empire, in 476.

Even before the fall of Rome, power had begun to shift to the richer, more stable east. The people of the eastern Roman Empire considered themselves Romans, but their culture was very different from that of Rome itself.

The center of the eastern Roman Empire was the city of Constantinople. Constantinople was built on the site of an old Greek trading city called Byzantium (buh-ZAN-tee-uhm).



It lay on a peninsula near both the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. Constantinople was a magnificent city filled with great buildings, palaces, and churches.

Constantinople was located in an ideal place to grow in wealth and power. First of all, the two seas protected the city from attack. The city also had a deep, natural harbor. This allowed large boats to enter the city and drop off or pick up goods and people. Finally, the city was located along major trade routes. One of these, known as the Silk Road, stretched from the Mediterranean to China. Being located on the Silk Road allowed the city to control trade between Europe and Asia.

Justinian After Rome fell in AD 476, the emperors of the eastern Roman Empire dreamed of taking it back and reuniting the old Roman Empire. For **Justinian** (juh-STIN-ee-uhn), an emperor who ruled from AD 527 to 565, reuniting the empire was a passion. He couldn't live with a Roman Empire that didn't include the city of Rome, so he sent his army to retake Italy. In the end this army conquered not only Italy but also a great deal of land around the Mediterranean. Retaking the land was expensive, however. Also, many areas of Italy were unable to pay the taxes required by Justinian's government. In the quote below, Byzantine historian Procopius takes note of how Justinian spent the money he collected. Procopius also indicates that invaders from outside the empire were a constant threat.

“As soon as [Justinian] took over the rule from his uncle, his first measure was to spend the public money without restraint, now that he had control of it. He gave much of it to the Huns who, from time to time, entered the state; and in consequence the Roman provinces were subject to constant incursions [invasions], for these barbarians, having once tasted Roman wealth, never forgot the road that led to it.”

—Procopius, from the *Secret History of Procopius*, translated by Richard Atwater

In addition to reuniting the empire, Justinian's other passions were the law and the church. He ordered officials to examine all of Rome's laws and remove any out-of-date or unchristian laws. He then organized all the laws into a system called Justinian's Code. By simplifying Roman law, this code helped guarantee fair treatment for all.

Despite his achievements, Justinian made many enemies. Two groups of these enemies joined forces and tried to overthrow him in AD 532. These groups led riots in the streets and set fire to buildings. Fearing for his life, Justinian prepared to leave Constantinople.



Justinian and Theodora

Justinian was stopped from leaving by his wife, **Theodora** (thee-uh-DOHR-uh). She convinced Justinian to stay in the city. Smart and powerful, Theodora helped her husband rule effectively. With her advice, he found a way to end the riots. Justinian's soldiers killed all the rioters—some 30,000 people—and saved the emperor's throne.

The Empire After Justinian After the death of Justinian in AD 565, the eastern empire began to decline. Faced with invasions by barbarians, Persians, and Muslims, later emperors lost all the land Justinian had gained. The eastern empire remained a major power for several hundred years, but it never regained its former strength.

In the end, the strategic location and economic importance of Constantinople led to conflict with a group called the Ottoman Turks. In 1453, nearly 900 years after the death of Justinian, the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople. With this defeat, the 1,000-year history of the eastern Roman Empire came to an end.

A New Society

In many ways Justinian was the last Roman emperor of the eastern empire. After he died, non-Roman influences took hold throughout the empire. People began to speak Greek, the language of the eastern empire, rather than Latin. Scholars studied Greek, not Roman, philosophy. Gradually, the empire lost its ties to the old Roman Empire, and a new society developed.

The people who lived in this society never stopped thinking of themselves as Romans. But modern historians have given their society a new name. They call the society that developed in the east after the west fell the **Byzantine** (BI-zuhn-teen) **Empire**, after the Greek town of Byzantium.

Reading Check

Draw Conclusions

Why did Justinian reorganize Roman law?

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The Byzantine Empire, 1025



Interpret Maps

1. **Location** Describe the location of Constantinople.
2. **Location** What impact did Constantinople's location have on trade?



The Church of St. Jason and St. Sosipater on the island of Corfu, Greece, is one of the earliest examples of the Byzantine domed church.

Reading Check

Contrast

What were two ways in which eastern and western Roman society differed?

Outside Influence One way eastern and western Roman society differed was the Byzantines' interaction with other groups. This interaction was largely a result of trade. Because Constantinople was located along trade routes that connected Europe and Asia, it became the greatest trading city in Europe.

Merchants from all around Europe, Asia, and Africa traveled to Constantinople to trade. Not only did the Byzantine Empire grow as a commercial center, but it also grew as a unique cultural center. While the Byzantine Empire preserved some Greek and Roman learning and traditions, its society began to reflect outside influences, such as Arab and Persian elements. For example, Byzantine architecture incorporated Persian styles of decoration, and Byzantine art incorporated Arab patterns. Byzantine architecture and art went on to influence culture throughout eastern Europe.

Government During the early period of the Byzantine Empire, Greek and Roman systems of government were preserved and followed. Over time, a different form of government developed. Byzantine emperors had more power than western emperors did, and they liked to show it off. For example, people could not stand while they were in the presence of the eastern emperor. They had to crawl on their hands and knees to talk to him.

The power of an eastern emperor was greater, in part, because the emperor was considered the head of the church as well as the political ruler. In Constantinople, rulers led processions, or ceremonial walks, to show their wealth and power. The processions showed the power and importance of the emperor as head of the church. The procession began at Hagia Sophia (HAH-juh soh-FEE-uh), the Byzantines' most important church. Citizens and visitors crowded the square to see the royal rulers pass by.

The Byzantines thought the emperor had been chosen by God to lead both the empire and the church. In the west, the emperor was limited to political power. Popes and bishops were the leaders of the church.

Byzantine Christianity

Just as it was to the Romans in the west, Christianity was central to the Byzantines' lives. From the beginning, nearly everyone who lived in the Byzantine Empire was Christian.

Quick Facts

The Western Roman and Byzantine Empires

In the Western Roman Empire . . .

- Popes and bishops led the church, and the emperor led the government.
- Latin was the main language.

In the Byzantine Empire . . .

- Emperors led the church and the government.
- Greek was the main language.

To show their devotion to God and the Christian Church, Byzantine artists created beautiful works of religious art. Among the grandest works were **mosaics**, pictures made with pieces of colored stone or glass. Some mosaics sparkled with gold, silver, and jewels.

Even more magnificent than the mosaics were Byzantine churches, especially Hagia Sophia. Built during Justinian's rule in the AD 530s, its huge domes rose high above Constantinople. According to legend, when Justinian saw the church he exclaimed in delight:

“Glory to God, who has judged me worthy to complete this work! Solomon, I have surpassed thee!”

—Justinian, from *The Story of the Building of the Church of Santa Sophia*

As time passed, people in the east and west began to interpret and practice some elements of Christianity differently. For example, eastern priests could get married, while priests in the west could not. Religious services were performed in Greek in the east. In the west they were held in Latin.

For hundreds of years, church leaders from the east and west worked together peacefully despite their differences. However, the differences between their ideas continued to grow. In time the differences led to divisions within the Christian Church. In the 1000s the split between east and west became official. Eastern Christians formed what became known as the Eastern Orthodox Church. As a result, eastern and western Europe were divided by religion.

Reading Check

Summarize

What led to a split in the Christian Church?

Summary and Preview The Roman Empire and the Christian Church each divided into two parts. As the Byzantine Empire grew, another empire began to develop in eastern Europe. You will read about the beginning of this empire—Russia—in the next lesson.

Lesson 2 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. **Describe** Where was Constantinople located?

b. **Summarize** What were two of Justinian's major accomplishments?

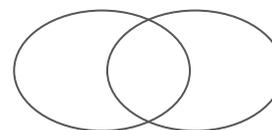
c. **Elaborate** What do you think Theodora's role in the government says about women in the eastern empire?
- a. **Identify** What was one major difference between the powers of emperors in the east and the west?

b. **Explain** How did contact with other cultures help change the Byzantine Empire?
- a. **Define** What is a mosaic?

b. **Form Generalizations** What led to the creation of two different Christian societies in Europe?

Critical Thinking

- Compare and Contrast** Draw a Venn diagram like this one. In the left oval, describe the western Roman Empire. In the right oval, describe the eastern empire. Where the ovals overlap, list features the two had in common.





Early Russia

The Big Idea

Early Russia was influenced by different cultures and experienced frequent changes in government.

Main Ideas

- Russia was invaded by Mongol armies and later freed by Prince Ivan III.
- Trade played an important part in Russian daily life.
- Orthodox Christianity greatly influenced Russian culture.

Key Terms and People

Ivan III
czar
principalities
icons

If YOU were there . . .

You live in a small village in the Russian state of Muscovy. You hear from other villagers that the Mongol army has left Russia for Asia. Some people believe that your ruler, Prince Ivan III, will now try to unite the rest of the Russian states and form one kingdom.

Do you think it will be easy or difficult to unite the various Russian states?

Early Russian History

About the same time as Christianity began spreading throughout eastern Europe, a new power was forming there. A people called the Rus established the kingdom that would eventually be known as Russia.

As you read in Lesson 1, the Rus were Vikings, led by a man named Rurik. In the mid-800s, Rurik was invited to become the ruler of the Slavs in eastern Europe. He then took over the city now known as Novgorod to serve as his capital. After his death, his successor moved the capital south to Kiev (KEE-ehf). Kiev was closer than Novgorod to Constantinople. It was located along the Dnieper River, part of a trade route from Scandinavia to the Byzantine Empire.

Under the Rus, Kiev became the heart of a powerful state. Traders from Kiev traveled far and wide. The Kievan Rus formed alliances with many kingdoms, including the Byzantine Empire and several western European nations.

The greatest of the Kievan rulers was Yaroslav the Wise, who ruled from 1019 to 1054. As ruler, he created a new legal system for his kingdom. He built Kiev's first library and many churches. He also strengthened Russia's alliances and regained some land that previous rulers had lost in wars.

After Yaroslav's death, Kiev broke apart into many smaller states, which often fought among themselves. Then, in the mid-1200s, fierce nomads from Central Asia invaded Russia. They were the Mongols. Mongol armies destroyed Kiev in 1240. In 1243 a writer described the Mongols' nature:

“They use to fight constantly and valiantly [bravely] with javelins [spears], maces [clubs], battle-axes, and swords. But specially they are excellent archers . . . Vanquished [defeated], they ask no favor, and vanquishing, they shew [show] no compassion. . . . And suddenly diffusing [spreading] themselves over a whole province, and surprising all the people thereof unarmed, . . . they make such horrible slaughters, that the king or prince of the land invaded cannot finde [find] people sufficient enough to wage battle against them, . . .”

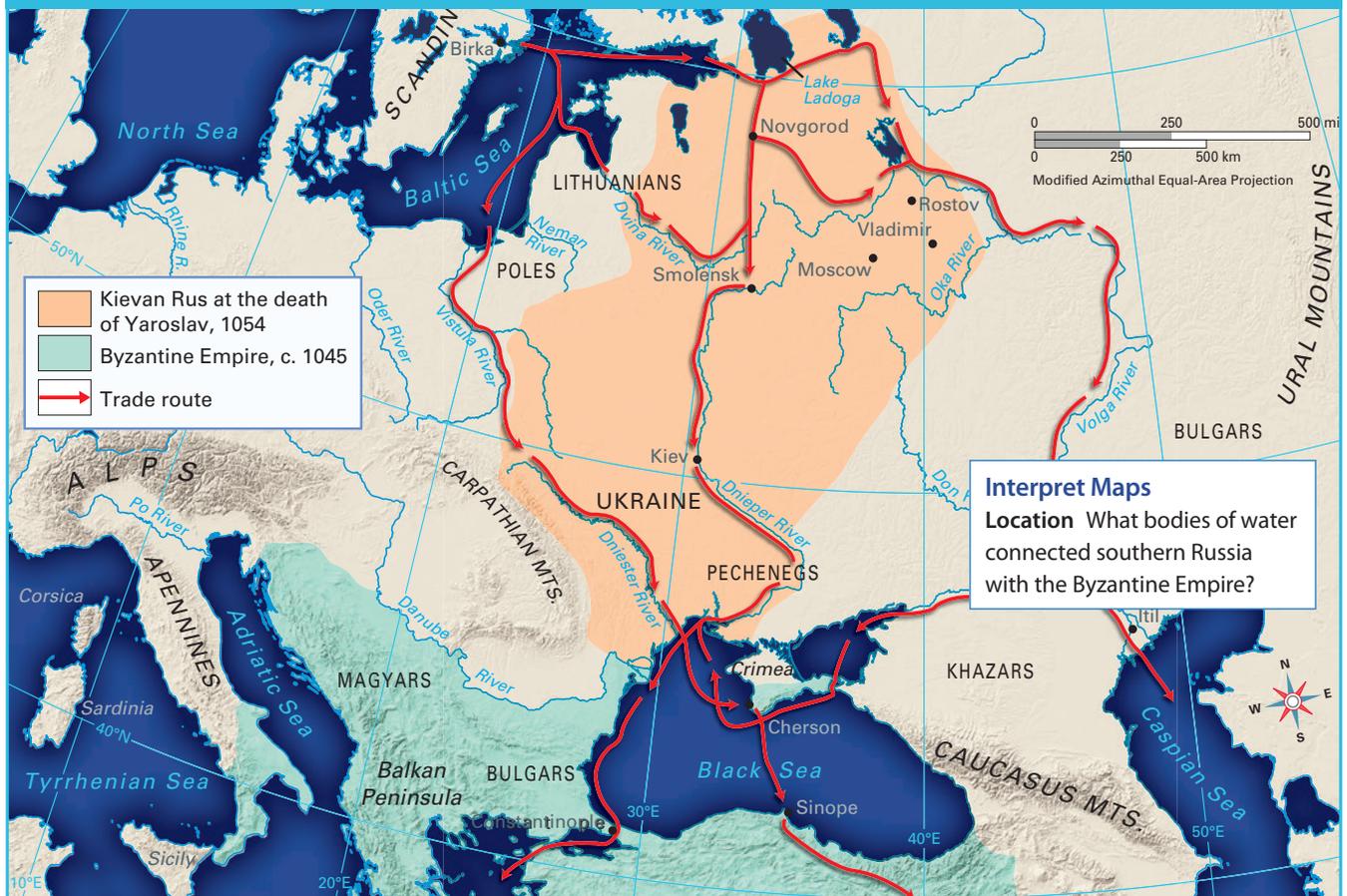
—quoted in *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation* by Richard Hakluyt

For 200 years, Russia remained under Mongol rule. In the end, the effort to free Russia from the Mongols began not in Kiev but in Muscovy, which we now call Moscow. Like Kiev, Muscovy was the heart of a small but powerful trading state. In the 1320s, a prince of Muscovy named Ivan I began to strengthen his rule. Ivan actually worked with the Mongols to prevent rebellions. As a result, he was given additional power and the title Grand Prince. Ivan and his descendants slowly and carefully worked to increase that power even more.

Finally, in 1480, Prince **Ivan III** of Muscovy broke away from the Mongol Empire. Ivan took the title **czar** (ZHR), which later became the title of Russian emperors. When he refused to pay taxes to the Mongols, they sent

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Early Russia, 860–1240



Reading Check

Summarize

What ended Mongol rule in Russia?

an army to force him to pay. However, Ivan would not back down. He led his own army to face the Mongols, but little fighting actually occurred. After a two-month standoff, the Mongols pulled back to Central Asia. Russia was free once again.

Russian Society and Daily Life

Early Russian culture developed from a blend of Slavic, Viking, and other cultures. By the AD 900s, Christianity was one of the most influential elements in shaping life in Russia.

Government During its early history, Russia experienced several changes in government. In the Kievan period, Russia was a cluster of **principalities**—small states ruled by princes. As grand princes, Kiev’s rulers held great power, as much as any other European king of the period.

Under the Mongols, Russian princes remained in power. However, they had to swear allegiance to the Mongols. Princes also had to collect taxes for the Mongols and end any rebellions that began in their territories. For the most part, princes worked peacefully with the Mongols. Their cooperation was largely the result of the efforts of a prince from Novgorod named Alexander Nevsky. Alexander persuaded his fellow princes to work with the Mongols. Other princes listened to him in part because he defended Russia from an army invading from Sweden.

When Ivan III won Russia’s independence from the Mongols 200 years later, he was the most powerful prince in Russia. With the Mongols gone, he was able to launch a series of wars to conquer the other Russian states. By the time of his death, Ivan—the first czar—had unified much of Russia into a single state. Czars ruled Russia until the early 20th century.

Daily Life Despite frequent changes in government, some elements of Russian culture remained constant. One such element was Christianity. According to legend, Christianity was first introduced to the Slavic peoples in the mid-800s. At that time, two brothers, Cyril and Methodius, traveled from the Byzantine Empire to teach the Slavs about Christianity. But Christianity did not immediately become popular in Russia.

In the late AD 900s, a prince of Kiev converted to Christianity. Before long, he made Christianity Russia’s official religion. Russia’s religious leaders had close ties to religious leaders in the Byzantine Empire. As a result, when the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches split in 1054, the Russian church became part of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Economic life in early Russia was mostly devoted to trade. The Russians’ most important trading partner was the Byzantine Empire, but they also traded with the kingdoms of western Europe, the Slavs of northern Europe, and the Muslim areas to the south. Traders often traveled along the Volga River as part of a trade route that connected the Caspian Sea in the south with the Baltic Sea in the north. Among the most valuable trade goods from Russia were fur, wax, and honey. In addition, the Russians sold many slaves. In return they received wine, silk, art objects, spices, and other valuable goods. Trade made Russia very wealthy.



This Russian chalice dates from the 1000s. Its religious symbols reveal the importance of Christianity across the region by this period.

Reading Check

Analyze Causes

Why did Russia become Eastern Orthodox Christian?

Traders were respected in Kiev and other Russian cities. As a result, they ranked just below princes and nobles socially. Because of the importance of religion in Russia, clergy were also well respected. In addition to their religious duties, members of the clergy ran schools, hospitals, and other charities.

Russian Culture and Achievements

Because religion was so central to life in early Russia, most of Russia's cultural landscape reflects a religious influence. Architecture, art, and music from the period illustrate the importance of Orthodox Christianity.

The people of early Russia were master builders. They designed magnificent churches, many of which still stand today. One common feature of Russian churches was the use of multiple domes. Early churches had simple domes, but by the end of the Kievan Rus period, pointed domes had become popular. For example, the Cathedral of Saint Sophia in Novgorod features six gold and silver domes, all of which taper to points on top. Later, during the Muscovite period, domes became even more elaborate. Onion-shaped domes, which flared out from a narrow base before tapering to a point, eventually became a symbol of Russian architecture.

The interiors of Russian churches were filled with mosaics and paintings. Especially popular were **icons**, religious images painted on wood. Most icons showed saints or figures from the Bible and were meant to help people focus on their prayers. Icons could also be found in Russian homes.

From its earliest days, the Russian church embraced music as part of its celebrations. As a result, music filled Russian churches. Early church music featured entire choirs singing together in unison. Later, however, choirs began to sing in complex, beautiful harmonies.



Saint Sophia Cathedral

Built between 1045 and 1050, the Cathedral of Saint Sophia in Novgorod is a beautiful example of early Russian architecture, both inside and out.

Analyze Visuals

How does the Cathedral of Saint Sophia reflect the characteristics of Russian architecture?



The text on the scroll in this Russian icon of Mary, the mother of Jesus, is written in the Cyrillic alphabet. The Cyrillic alphabet was developed by Cyril and Methodius.

Most early Russian music and religious texts were created in a language known as Slavonic. Before the AD 800s, Slavonic could not be written down. Around that time, however, the missionaries Cyril and Methodius developed an alphabet to use with Slavonic. Cyril and Methodius were the men who introduced Christianity to eastern Europe.

The writing system Cyril and Methodius developed is called the Cyrillic (suh-RIL-ik) alphabet. This alphabet is still used to write Russian and other related languages today. The Cyrillic alphabet uses characters

not familiar to most English speakers. For example, in Russian the word Russia is written **Россия** and the name *Yaroslav* is written **Ярослав**. By the time of Yaroslav the Wise, Russian scholars familiar with the Cyrillic alphabet had translated many religious texts from Greek into Slavonic.

Summary The Rus founded a Russian state and made the city of Kiev its capital. The Mongols later invaded Kiev and forced Russian princes to swear allegiance to them. Prince Ivan III eventually forced the Mongols out of Russia and unified most of Russia into a single state. Christianity became a central part of life in Russia.

Reading Check

Find Main Ideas

What features were common to early Russian churches?

Lesson 3 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

1. a. **Explain** Why did the Rus move their capital from Novgorod to Kiev?
b. **Identify** Who was Prince Ivan III?
2. a. **Form Generalizations** How did Russian government change under the Mongols?
b. **Identify** How did Christianity spread into Russia?
3. a. **Describe** What were icons, and for what were they used?
b. **Contrast** In what major way is the Russian language different from the English language?

Critical Thinking

4. **Organize Information** Draw a timeline like this one. Then add four events in Russian history to your timeline.



Social Studies Skills

Chance, Error, and Oversight in History

Define the Skill

History is nothing more than what people thought and did in the past, and the people of the past were just as human as people today. Like us, they occasionally forgot or overlooked things. They made mistakes in their decisions or judgments. Unexpected things happened that they couldn't control. Sometimes, these oversights, errors, and just plain luck shaped history.

Learn the Skill

The text that follows notes several examples of the role of oversight, error, and chance in history.

- 1. Oversight:** Emperor Justinian's subjects failed to appreciate his wife's importance. Theodora was a commoner, so they gave her little respect. When they launched a revolt in 532, Justinian was ready to flee. However, Theodora gave a powerful speech about the rewards of risking one's life for a great cause. Her speech inspired Justinian's supporters to attack and defeat the rebels.

- 2. Error:** After the death of Yaroslav the Wise, Kiev broke apart into many smaller states, which often fought among themselves. As a result, Russian states were not unified when the Mongols invaded and were conquered.
- 3. Chance:** In 1480, Prince Ivan III refused to pay taxes to the Mongols. The Mongols sent an army to force him to pay, but Ivan had organized his own army. After a standoff, the Mongols retreated to Central Asia. If the Mongols had not retreated, Ivan might have been killed in battle, and early Russia might not have been unified.

Practice the Skill

As you read in the module, the eastern Roman Empire flourished after the western Roman Empire fell. Write a paragraph to explain how chance, error, or oversight influenced the eastern Roman Empire's survival and growth.

Module 12 Assessment

Review Vocabulary, Terms, and People

Unscramble each group of letters to spell a term that matches the given definition.

1. **tsraciaanph**—mountain range in eastern Europe
2. **knepnallbaaunin**—extends south into the Mediterranean Sea
3. **lavgo**—longest river in Europe
4. **anzbtiuy**m—the site of the Greek trading city on which the center of the eastern Roman Empire was built
5. **ohtradoe**—empress of the Byzantine Empire
6. **smiacso**—pictures made from pieces of colorful glass or stone
7. **njiasunti**—Byzantine emperor who tried to reunite the entire Roman Empire
8. **yppaiiitcnlr**—a small state ruled by a prince
9. **linalvl**—the first czar of Russia

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

Lesson 1

10. **a. Compare** In what way is the Adriatic Sea similar to the Baltic Sea?
b. Draw Conclusions Do you think more people in Russia live in the tundra or in the steppe? Why?
c. Identify Who were the Balts and the Slavs, and how did they interact?

Lesson 2

11. **a. Identify** Who were Justinian and Theodora, and what did they accomplish?
b. Contrast In what ways was the Byzantine Empire different from the western Roman Empire?

- c. Elaborate** Do you think that Constantinople would have been an exciting place to visit in the AD 500s? Why or why not?

Lesson 3

12. **a. Define** What is a czar?
b. Explain Why did traders in early Russia travel along the Volga River?
c. Draw Conclusions Why might culture in western Russia have similarities with cultures in neighboring eastern European countries?

Review Themes

13. **Politics** “Justinian was an effective emperor.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
14. **Religion** Do you think the split between the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches was avoidable? Why or why not?

Module 12 Assessment, continued

Reading Skills

Stereotypes and Bias in History Use the Reading Skills taught in this module to answer the question about the reading selection below.

“They used to fight constantly and valiantly [bravely] with javelins [spears], maces [clubs], battle-axes, and swords. But specially they are excellent archers. . . . Vanquished [defeated], they ask no favor, and vanquishing [conquering], they show no compassion. . . . And suddenly diffusing [spreading] themselves over a whole province, and surprising all the people thereof unarmed, . . . they make such horrible slaughters, that the king or prince of the land invaded, cannot find people sufficient to wage battle against them. . . .”

—quoted in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* by Richard Hakluyt

15. Is the author biased toward or against the fighting ability of the Mongols? Explain.
16. Would the author suggest that the Russians can trust the Mongols? How can you tell?
17. Overall, does this passage provide a negative or a positive stereotype of the Mongols? Explain.

Social Studies Skills

Chance, Oversight, and Error in History Use the Social Studies Skills taught in this module to answer the questions below.

18. How might the revolt against Justinian in 532 have been caused by an oversight on his part? What might he have done to prevent the revolt?
19. Do you consider the fighting among Russian states to be an error in judgment? Why or why not?
20. After Ivan III met the Mongol army, the Mongols retreated to Central Asia. How might history have been different if the Mongols had not retreated?

Focus on Writing

21. **Write a Poem** Write a narrative poem, or a poem that tells a story, about civilizations that developed in eastern Europe. Choose five or six events to include in your poem. In the first one or two lines, introduce the subject. Write five or six more lines, each one about an event that occurred during the history of the Byzantine Empire or early Russia. Then write one or two lines about the importance of these civilizations. Once you have finished writing, present your poem. Practice altering your voice and the rhythm of your words to make your poem more interesting to listeners.

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