



## THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

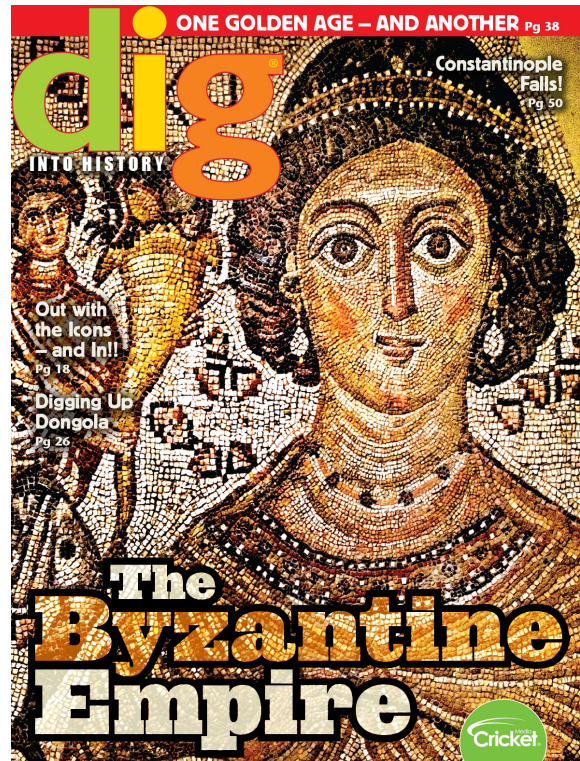
Explore the events that led to the adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Byzantine Empire and the impact of Christianity on Byzantine law.

## CONVERSATION QUESTION

How did religion shape Byzantine society?

## TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the Byzantine Empire.
- Students will explain probable causes and effects of events and developments.
- Students will classify a series of historical developments as examples of historical change and/or continuity.
- Students will analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.
- Students will use details from a text to write historical fiction.
- Students will conduct research and create a multimedia presentation.
- Students will write a summary.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core Social Studies skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

## SELECTIONS

- **Out with Paganism**  
Expository Nonfiction, ~950L
- **Iconoclasts vs. Iconophiles**  
Expository Nonfiction, ~950L
- **The Influence of Byzantine Law**  
Expository Nonfiction, ~1150L

## Out with Paganism

pp. 10–13, Expository Nonfiction

Discover how paganism, once the foundation of Roman society, fell out of favor and how Christianity rose to take its place in both Roman and Byzantine culture.



## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will learn about the Byzantine Empire.
- Students will explain probable causes and effects of events and developments.
- Students will use details from a text to write historical fiction.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **paganism (p. 11)** a religion that has many gods or goddesses and does not have a central authority
- **sacrifice (p. 12)** an act of killing a person or animal in a religious ceremony as an offering to please a god
- **philosophers (p. 13)** people who study ideas about knowledge, truth, and the nature and meaning of life

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** How did religion shape Byzantine society?

Ask students to imagine that their religious beliefs—once popular among the society they live in—have suddenly been outlawed. How would they feel? What conflicts might arise as a result of their religious beliefs being outlawed?

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Ask students to use the meanings of the vocabulary words to make predictions about the topic of the text. If necessary, help students guess the topic by revealing the title of the article. Remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the article.

## READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- What major events helped Christianity spread in Roman society?
- What did Theodosius outlaw? Why?
- Why did Justinian close philosophical schools in Athens?

## SKILL FOCUS: Explain Effects

**INSTRUCT:** Explain to students that events in history have both causes and effects. Continue by explaining that the article tells the story of how Christianity rose to prominence under various leaders in Roman and Byzantine society. Inform students that they will work in pairs to discover the key cause-effect relationships that define this rise to prominence.

**ASSESS:** Have students work in pairs. Have pairs identify three cause-effect relationships that explain how Christianity shifted from a religion followed by small group of persecuted outsiders to the dominant form of religion within the Roman and Byzantine empires.

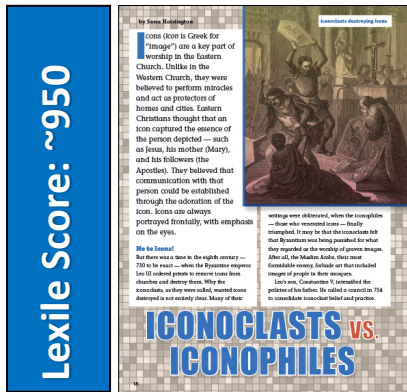
## EXTEND

**English Language Arts** Explain that historical fiction is a genre of literature that dramatizes historical people and events by creating made-up, yet realistic stories about them. Ask students to write a one-page historical fiction narrative about the pagans' struggle to retain their religion during the rise of Christianity.

## Iconoclasts vs. Iconophiles

pp. 18–19, Expository Nonfiction

Learn how the Byzantine Empire became sharply divided over the question of whether objects could hold religious power.



## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will learn about the Byzantine Empire.
- Students will classify a series of historical developments as examples of historical change and/or continuity.
- Students will conduct research and create a multimedia presentation.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **icons** (p. 18) religious images in the Orthodox Christian church
- **enerated** (p. 18) showed respect for something considered holy
- **persecuted** (p. 19) treated someone cruelly or unfairly, especially because of race or religious or political beliefs

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** How did religion shape Byzantine society?

Ask students if they have any paintings or objects representing religious persons or events. Explain that at one point in time, such objects were believed to hold religious power, but disagreements over this belief led to sharp conflict between members of Byzantine society.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Review the vocabulary words and definitions. Then have students work in pairs to use the vocabulary words to write one to three sentences about religious conflict in the Byzantine Empire. Invite students to share their sentences. Then remind them to look for the vocabulary words as they read this article.

## READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- What is the difference between an iconoclast and an iconophile?
- Why might iconoclasts have objected to the veneration of icons?
- How do icons play an important part in Eastern Orthodox Christianity today?

## SKILL FOCUS: Classify Events

**INSTRUCT:** Tell students that events in history can be considered examples of either historical change or continuity, regardless of how many people were affected by them. Explain that historical change occurs when events represent a shift away from a specific historical trend or tradition. Then explain that historical continuity occurs when events represent a continuation of a specific historical trend or tradition.

**ASSESS:** Have students work in pairs to reread the article and identify one example of historical continuity and one example of historical change related to the worship of icons in Byzantine society.

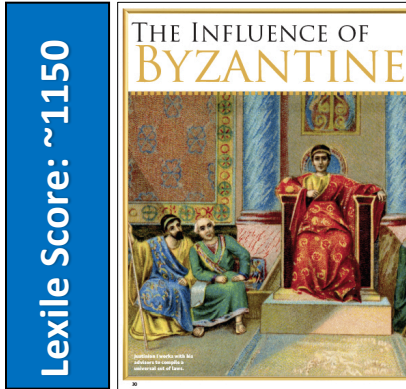
## EXTEND

**Social Studies** Have students choose a religion (such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, or another) and use print and online sources to gather information about conflicts within that religion throughout history. Tell students to choose one of those conflicts and create a three-slide multimedia presentation about it to share with the class.

## The Influence of Byzantine Law

pp. 30–33, Expository Nonfiction

Learn how Byzantine society came to adopt laws that helped establish peace and stability among its members and between the Byzantine Empire and its neighbors.



### RESOURCES

- Analyze Connections

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will learn about the Byzantine Empire.
- Students will analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.
- Students will write a summary.

### KEY VOCABULARY

- **standardize (p. 31)** change things so they are similar and consistent and agree with rules about what is proper and acceptable
- **regulations (p. 32)** official rules or laws that say how something should be done
- **human rights (p. 32)** basic rights, such as the right to be treated well, that many societies believe every person should have

### ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** How did religion shape Byzantine society?

Ask students to identify the principles, or moral beliefs, our legal system is based on. Explain that our modern laws emphasize the values of justice and equality. Ask students if they think these values were the foundation for ancient systems of law. Have them explain their ideas.

### INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Review the vocabulary words and definitions. Then write the following sentences on the board and have students complete them using the vocabulary words. Invite three volunteers to share responses. Then remind students to look for these words as they read the article.

- Various emperors took steps to \_\_\_\_\_ laws, in part because they believed all people shared common \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Byzantine authorities created \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure that the laws were applied equally.

### READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- Why did Justinian want to standardize laws across the empire?
- How did Leo's update to the law improve upon Justinian's accomplishments?
- How did Basil and his son modernize Byzantine law?

### SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Connections

**INSTRUCT:** Explain to students that different historical developments may be related to one another even though they occur at different times. Emphasize that understanding historical context—the political, cultural, economic, or social climate surrounding historical developments—can help students learn how different developments are related. Tell students that they'll examine the article to see if they can determine the historical context that influenced the development of Byzantine law.

**ASSESS:** Distribute the *Analyzing Connections* organizer to students and have them work in pairs to complete it. Afterward, have students share their ideas about the historical context that ties all three major developments in Byzantine law together.

### EXTEND

**English Language Arts** Remind students that the article includes details that explain how changes to Byzantine law helped create a more equal society. Have them identify these details and write a one-paragraph summary to explain how these changes affected Byzantine society.

### Analyze Connections

Review the article to find three key events that occurred in the Byzantine Empire and helped shape Byzantine law. List these events in the left column of the chart. Then use information from the article to draw conclusions about political, cultural, social, and economic factors that helped create the conditions for those developments in Byzantine law. Write these in the chart.

Key Developments in Byzantine Law (list in chronological order)	Political, Cultural, Social, or Economic Factors That Influenced Developments

Use the information in the chart to try to identify a historical trend that connects the three developments even though they occurred at different times. Write your answer on the lines below.

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