

Modern European History
Unit 1 – Post-Roman and Medieval Europe
The Byzantine Empire: Rome of the East
Reading Questions

Read the article thoroughly. Then go back through the reading and highlight the portion of the text that answers each of the following questions, writing the question number in the margins next to the text.

1. What parts of our “classical heritage” does the article list as having been transmitted by Byzantium? (What did they teach us or give to us?)
2. How did Constantine and his mother, Helena, contribute to the religious changes that occurred in Byzantium in the fourth century?
3. How were Byzantine emperors different from western European emperors, such as Charlemagne? What is an example of this difference?
4. How did the government of Constantinople organize (and control) trade? (Show examples)
5. What were some of the punishments meted out against the guilty in Constantinople?
6. Describe the Byzantine military: were they cowardly or clever? What was “Greek Fire?”
7. What lesson was Emperor Basil II trying to teach to the Bulgarian Tsar Samuel (and to any other possible invaders) and how did he “teach” this lesson?
8. How did the Byzantine aversion to change actually help to maintain their culture and society?
9. What is the irony associated with the names of the first and last emperors of Byzantium? What events led to the invasion and end of the Byzantine Empire?
10. Write one question here that was not asked but should have been. Be sure to highlight the answer within the text.
