

Name: _____

Date: _____

Constantine and the Byzantine Empire

By the fourth century, the Roman Empire was under attack by Germanic speaking tribes from north of the Italian peninsula. Rome's many roads made it easy prey for the Franks, the Vandals, the Lombards and the Goths, the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths to invade the Italian countryside. Those Germanic tribes moved into the empire because they were pushed West by the Huns, a violent band of nomadic warriors.

The Emperor Constantine realized the city of Rome was vulnerable to attack. In 324CE, he began construction of a "New Rome" in Byzantium, a Greek city almost 1500 miles to the east. The emperor renamed the city "Constantinople," which means "city of Constantine."

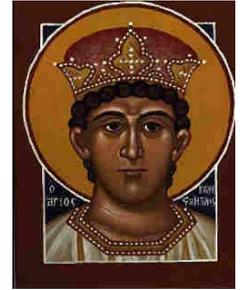
Roman civilization survived for centuries in Constantine's eastern empire, while Rome and the empire's western provinces fell to the Germanic invaders. Historians refer to the Eastern Roman Empire as the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine Empire included parts of modern Greece, Serbia and Turkey. The Byzantine Empire lasted until 1453, when it fell to Turkish warriors. The Turks brought their faith in Islam to Constantinople and converted many Byzantine churches to mosques. Constantinople is now known as Istanbul, Turkey.

While the empire continued in the east, the city of Rome was under attack. Visigoth warriors overran "the Eternal City" in 410. One of them, named Odoacer, made himself emperor of Rome in 476.

The city of Rome continued to exist, but the Western Roman Empire dissolved into many small kingdoms. Western Europe fell into a period of war and disease known as the "Dark Ages." Then, after about 1000 years, the region experienced a "rebirth" known as the Renaissance.

The Renaissance was an era of invention and discovery that saw art, architecture, and science thrive. The people of the Renaissance revered the achievements of the ancient Greeks and the Romans. Renaissance scholars referred to the era of the Greeks and Romans as "the classical age," a term we still use today.

Roman literature, law and language have been studied and adopted by many cultures. Our form of government, many of our laws, and our public architecture are based on Roman models. The Roman Empire is gone, but its influence remains strong in many parts of the world today.



Constantine

Answer in complete sentences

1. Why did Constantine move his capital to Byzantium?

2. Byzantium later became Constantinople. What is the current name of the city?

*3. What happened to the Roman Empire?

*This is a higher order learning question. You will earn credit for any reasonable answer.