

The Fall of Rome and the Byzantine Empire

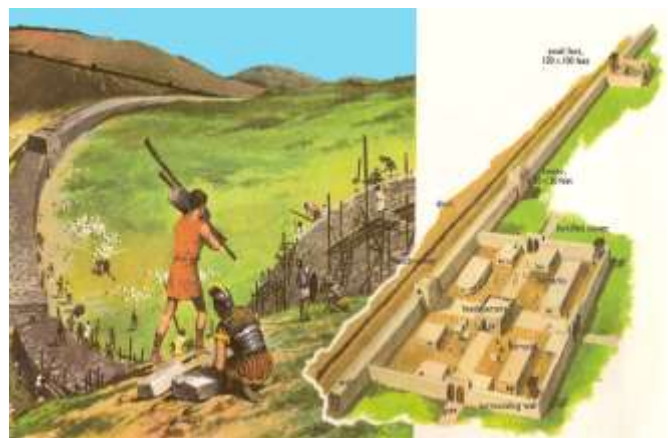


<http://www.military-history.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/CYJPRB-1024x738.jpg>

Just like so many other empires in history, nothing lasts forever. Eventually the mighty Roman Empire toppled. The decline of Rome, however, was gradual and took place over hundreds of years. There were many factors for its decline. It was a slow process that affected Europe for centuries.

Factors That Caused the Decline of the Roman Empire

1. *It cost too much money to have an empire that size.*



<http://www.aboutscotland.com/hadrian/wallph/empire.gif>
http://www.daviddarling.info/images/Hadrians_Wall.jpg

The map on the left shows just how big the empire was. The Roman army even had expenses like building a wall in Britannia (Hadrian's Wall, right) for protection.

The Roman Empire was vast (large). It took a lot of money to maintain a military presence (have an army) in distant lands and to protect the empire's trade.

To pay for these costs, the government continued to raise taxes which caused the population to grow dissatisfied (unhappy). No one likes to pay more taxes. This caused many people to become dependent on the government for food and housing. This, too, costs money and put greater stress on the empire.

2. An emperor thought it would be a good idea to divide the large empire into two smaller parts.



<https://universalhistory.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/romedivided936.jpg>

Emperor **Diocletian** divided the empire into halves with the Eastern Empire governed out of Byzantium (later Constantinople) and the Western Empire governed from Rome. He thought it would make it easier to manage. This good idea had a negative effect. It actually weakened the importance of Rome, and led to several civil wars (basically Romans fighting Romans).

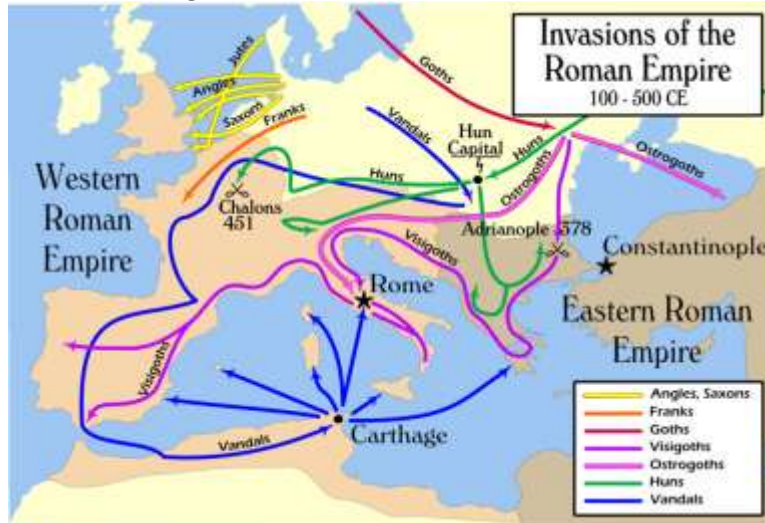
3. Romans forgot what made them great.



http://amichurches.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/morality_thumb.jpg

When Rome began, they valued **morals** (right behavior) and the idea of Rome. These were the keys for Roman success and helped the empire to thrive. However, over time, as Rome grew richer and larger, some of the people slowly started to focus on themselves and became selfish. This caused **corruption** in the government, and caused people to become less responsible for their actions. Corruption means dishonesty. People were lazy and focused on luxuries.

4. The empire was being invaded.



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2d/Invasions_of_the_Roman_Empire_1.png

In the outskirts of the empire, attacks happened often. This wasn't new. Overtime as the empire weakened, and had more problems, groups of people were more successful in their attacks, and were able to invade the borders. These groups included **Germanic barbarians** such as the **Vandals, Angles, Saxons, Huns, and Visigoths**. It was expensive to defend against these attacks. Most attacks occurred in the western part of the empire. Barbarians who lived outside of the empire threatened Rome. These people became a direct threat to the Roman way of life.

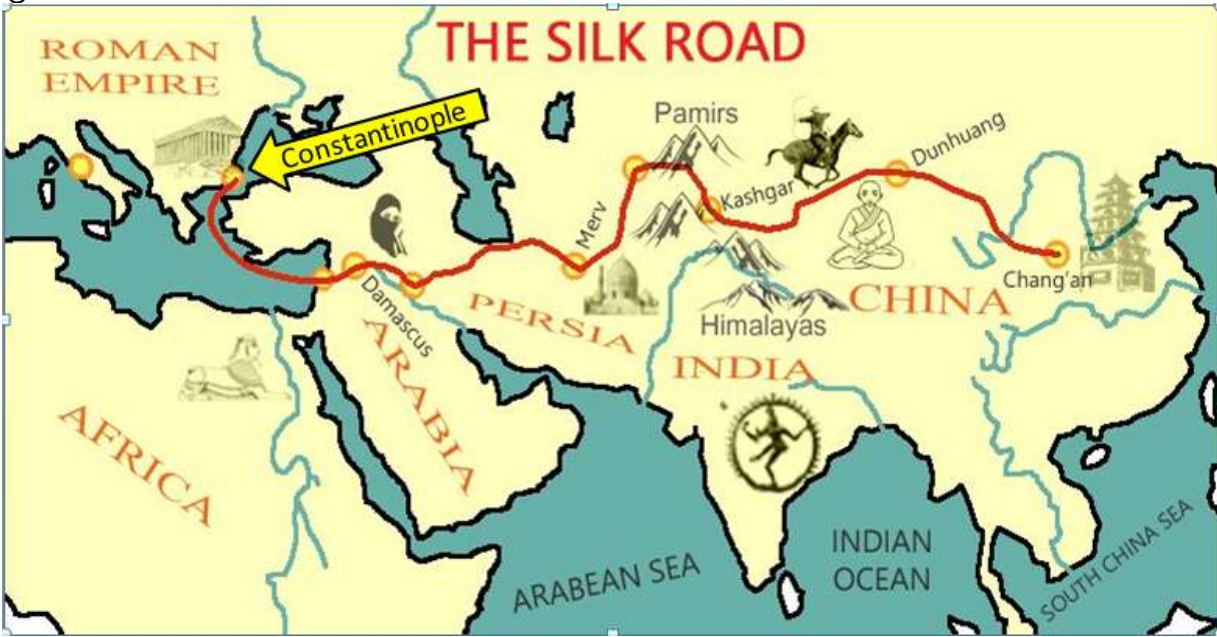
Question: How are factor #1 and factor #4 related?

Question: According to the map, which part of the empire was invaded more?

The Byzantine Empire (The Eastern Roman Empire)

The eastern portion of the Roman Empire continued for almost 1,000 years as the **Byzantine Empire**. The capital city of the Byzantine Empire was **Constantinople**.

It was built at a strategic location. This location served as a **crossroads** for international trade. This means it is where several trade routes meet including the Silk Road. The Silk Road helped make Constantinople very wealthy and significant.



"Modern Trading along the Old Silk Road." gbtimes.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 June 2014.

Constantinople also was located on the **Bosporus Strait** between two continents, Asia and Europe. This site was chosen because the geography made it easy to defend. They also built a series of layered walls that could not be penetrated.

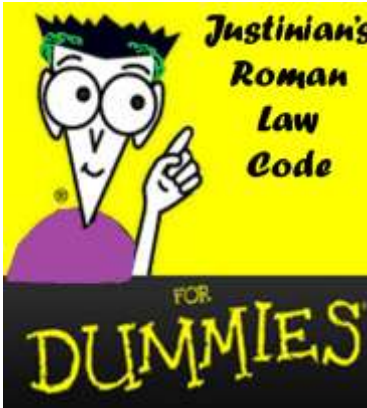


"The Byzantine Empire and the Crusades." Docstoc.com. Ewghwehws, 27 Feb. 2012. Web. 15 June 2015.

Question: Which strait connects the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara?

Question: What goods came to Constantinople from Southeast Asia and India?

As the western Roman Empire fell, the eastern thrived. Constantinople replaced Rome as the center of culture and achievement. The city preserved Greek and Roman culture, and spread it throughout the known world. Education was valued in the eastern empire. They did so to better serve the people of the east.



The Byzantine emperor **Justinian** improved on the Greek and Roman traditions, laws, and government. He organized and simplified the complex Roman laws so it was easier to read and more accessible to the average citizen. This was called **Justinian Code**.

Question: Why is it important for laws to be easy to understand and for all to see?

Did you know? The Byzantines created wonderful works of art called **mosaics**. Mosaics are made of brightly colored pieces of glass carefully glued into stone to make beautiful pictures. To the right is an example of a mosaic depicting Emperor Justinian. This is also an example of the Byzantines preserving Roman art techniques. The Romans were the first to use this technique.



[http://www.langantiques.com/university/index.php/Byzantine Jewelry](http://www.langantiques.com/university/index.php/Byzantine_Jewelry)



Question: List at least three ways the Byzantine Empire continued to thrive after the fall of the western Roman Empire.

Religion in the Byzantine Empire



"Monasteries and Churches of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople." Monasteries and Churches of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople. 2007. Web. 15 June 2015.

Under the western Roman Empire, **Christianity**, a monotheistic religion, was illegal. However, in the Byzantine Empire, it was no longer a crime to practice Christianity. The form of Christianity they practiced in the Byzantine Empire was called Greek Orthodox (Eastern Orthodox). Orthodox means strictly following the early teachings of a faith. They decorated and built Christian churches throughout the Empire, including the **Hagia Sophia** (pictured above). The church was considered the jewel of the entire empire and was greatly admired.

Question: What Greek and Roman influences do you see in the architecture of the Hagia Sophia?