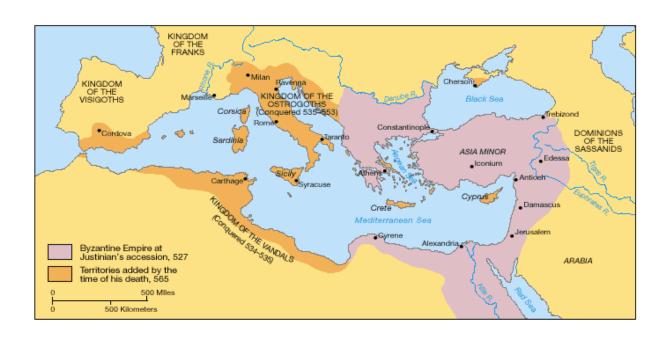
Post Classical World: The Byzantine Empire

Origins

- Started off as part of Roman Empire
 - o Established as Eastern Roman Empire in 395 C.E. by emperor Theodosum I
 - Original capital of Byzantium
 - 460 C.E. name changed to Constantinople
 - In honor of founder Constantine
 - City considered major world center after fall of Rome
 - Crossroads of European and Mesopotamian Culture
 - Still referred to themselves as Romans
 - Referred to as Romans by neighbors
 - Called Orientals by western Europeans
 - Historians established them as Byzantines to separate them from Western Empire
 - Major differences from Romans
 - Greek language usage
 - Viewed Latin as barbaric
 - Emphasis on Greek revived interest in Hellenistic culture
 - Similar to Romans
 - Christianity
 - Constantinople took role of protector of Christianity
 - o Had to deal with rising Muslim threat to holy land
 - Divine Right for Emperors
 - Agrarian based economy
 - Access to eastern Mediterranean agriculture = taxes = rich
 - Facing Barbarian threat
 - Sassanids and Germanic
 - Recruited and used middle Eastern troops instead of Barbarians
 - Elevated Emperor
 - Ceremonial purposes
 - Complex administration and bureaucracy
 - Hippodrome
 - Byzantine high culture centered on horse racing



Emperor Justinian

- **Humble origins**
 - o Born a farmer
 - Brought to Constantinople to be educated at young age
 - o Wife Theodora also of humble origins
 - Father was a bear-keeper
 - Mother was an acrobat
 - She worked as actress
 - Possibly also as prostitute
 - Converted to Christianity and became wool spinner
 - Justinian had law changed so a Patrician was able to marry an actress
- Gains throne in 527
 - Co-Ruler with uncle Justin
- Considered last of the "Roman" Emperors
- Set himself on rebuilding the glory of Rome
- Nika Riots
 - o 532 C.E.
 - Tax riots
 - Led to destruction of much of the city
 - Allowed for building of grand Hagia Sophia
 - Holy Wisdom
 - Also built up cities' defenses
 - Justinian thought about leaving
 - Theodora convinced him to stay
 - Resulted in thousands dead as he reasserted his control

Political Achievements

- Prior to Justinian used system of *Decurions*
 - Roughly 200 members
 - Local wealthy landowners
 - Economic and intellectual elite
 - Heavily taxed
- Barbarian threats
 - Forced Justinian to use more direct control
 - Used loyal Governors instead of Decurions
- Justinian Initiates "One God, One Empire, One Religion"
 - Centralize Government
 - o Increase Legal conformity throughout Empire
- Justinian co-ruler with Theodora
 - o Both held supreme power
 - Viewed all others as vastly inferior
- **Codex Justinianus**
 - o Code Revision of Roman Law established by Roman emperors since Hadrian
 - Code used as basis for western law since 12th century
 - o Novella Justinian's edicts and those made right before him
 - Digest Opinions of old legal experts
 - Institutes Opinions of young legal scholars





Expansion of Byzantine Influence

Military Conquest

- Justinian tried to rebuild Roman empire
 - Starting year 533 C.E.
 - o Conquered Vandal Kingdom in North Africa and Sicily
 - Resistance till 554 C.E.
 - Took lands from Ostrogoths in Italy and parts of Spain
- Expansion's Impacts
 - High Casualties
 - Very Expensive
 - Constantinople sickened by plague
 - Treasury exhausted
 - Not a lasting Empire
 - Most of African gains lost to Lombards and Muslims
 - Italy remained in Byzantine control till 11th Century
 - o Stresses helped contribute to Justinian's death in 565 C.E.

Religious Conquest

- Byzantines facing pressure in North
 - Avars, Slavs, Bulgars attacking Balkan area
 - Eventually converted to Eastern Orthodox Christianity
- Byzantines hoping to gain allies
 - Threatened by Roman Christianity and Franks
 - Used religion to helped unify eastern European people
- Language
 - Byzantines send missionaries Cyril and Methodius to Moravians to convert and develop language
 - Helped Slavs create Greek based alphabet
 - Allowed Slavs to have written language
 - Alphabet called Cyrillic
 - Language spread
 - First to Bulgars
 - o Then Bohemians, Kievan Rus, and Ukranians
 - Allowed for cultural developments within eastern Europe
- Growing threat
 - After Justinian Byzantines soon had to deal with ever growing threat of Muslim empires to the south