

Name: _____

Different Perspectives from Different Professionals

Career: Archaeologist

What the career focuses on:

Studying the artifacts and remains of prehistory and history in order to understand our connections to the past and the people who lived before us.

Claim:

The Byzantine Empire declined because of disease and climate change.

Evidence:

In studying sites and artifacts dating back to the time of the Byzantine civilization, archaeologists have discovered that disease and impact of climate change actually sped up the decline of the Byzantine Empire. For example, archaeologists carbon dated objects they found in a trash pit. They learned that trash disposal stopped at about the 6th century C.E. This is almost a century earlier than what historians have suggested. One important event that may have contributed to this decline was a great plague that swept through Europe, Asia and the Middle East, killing over 100 million people. A plague is a contagious disease that can easily spread among people and animals. This would have impacted basic daily activities in an area as people became too sick to work and there were fewer people to take on jobs. For example, trash pickup and disposal would be less frequent because of death and illness.

Want more information?

Check out this article: <https://www.livescience.com/65069-byzantine-trash-heaps.html>



Name: _____

Different Perspectives from Different Professionals

Career: Military Historian

What the career focuses on:

Understanding events in history through the study of wars and how battles impacted larger historical events.

Claim:

The Byzantine Empire collapsed as a result of a number of battles that weakened the empire.

Evidence:

Evidence: Beginning with the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 and ending with the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Byzantine Empire became so weak, it eventually collapsed. This allowed groups such as the Seljuk Turks, the Lombards, the Slavs and the Muslims to conquer lands belonging to Byzantium. The warfare also weakened the Byzantine army making it less effective to fight because it had fewer soldiers. There was also fighting between the nobility of the empire as families quarreled over power and territory. This also weakened the army. Over two centuries of warfare made it difficult for the Byzantine Empire to hold onto its wealth. This was because territory that contained natural resources were conquered by enemy armies. The final blow came in 1204 when the capitol city of Constantinople was invaded by Christian crusaders who destroyed the city and took much of its wealth.

Want more information?

Check out this article: <https://historycollection.co/5-reasons-byzantine-empire-finally-collapsed/3/>



Name: _____

Different Perspectives from Different Professionals

Career: Environmentalist

What the career focuses on:

Studying how environments change over time and how this change affects land, people, and animals.

Claim:

A change in climate helped cause the decline of the Byzantine Empire. drought caused the decline of the

Evidence:

A change in climate known as the the Late Antique Little Ice Age This event caused dramatic weather changes throughout Europe, the Middle East and Asia. During the 6th century C.E., temperatures began to drop, making the weather cooler. In addition, a series of volcanic eruptions occurred. The eruptions would have caused a large amount of particles to fill the air. These particles helped block the sunlight. This in turn would have affected the growth and harvest seasons. The lack of sunlight and cooler weather would mean fewer crops to be harvested. A shortage of food led to famine with many people dying of starvation. This would also impact trade as there would be no extra food to sell in order to buy other goods. As a result, the Byzantine Empire declined.

Want more information?

Check out this article: <https://www.techtimes.com/articles/131843/20160209/late-antique-little-ice-age-may-have-shaped-rise-and-fall-of-empires.htm>



Name: _____

Different Perspectives from Different Professionals

Career: Economist

What the career focuses on:

Studying how societies manage their resources and how this impacts a nation or group.

Claim:

The decline of the Byzantine Empire came as the result of a declining economy and loss of trade and increased unrest against unfair taxes.

Evidence:

Evidence: For many years, the Byzantine Empire was one of the wealthiest regions in the world. Agricultural production and strong trade relationships helped the empire greatly. However, over time, increased taxes started to hurt the economy. Many people could not afford to pay the taxes so the empire was losing money. Also, the empire made a number of bad trade deals that caused the empire to lose money. This meant that the empire was not making as much money as it once did from trade. The empire became weaker too because many of the nobility stopped paying their taxes. Wars also impacted the empire's economy. People were forced to move because of the conflicts. This impacted the production of crops and goods. Cities were abandoned as people moved to get away from the conflicts.

Want more information?

Check out this article: <https://medium.com/@christoss200/the-economy-of-the-byzantine-empire-fc91bc96bfc9>



Trash Pits



<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/trash-piles-byzantine-collapse/>

This is a photograph of ancient trash mound located in Israel. At one time, this region was part of the Byzantine Empire. But over a period two centuries, many towns and cities throughout the Empire collapsed. To learn why, archaeologists depend on trash pits to find answers. Trash pits and mounds are some of the most important tools that archaeologists use to learn about the past. This mound is part of a 1500-year-old trash heap that held seeds, pottery and animal bones among other finds.



<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/trash-piles-byzantine-collapse/>

This is a photograph of an archaeologist excavating a trash pit in an area that was once part of the Byzantine Empire. The archaeologist will carefully dig and sift through layers of dirt looking for artifacts and trash. The process is slow and painstaking as the archaeologists must look carefully through many layers of dirt.



<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/2019/03/ancient-garbage-dump-elusa-reveals-surprising-city-collapse/>

This is a photograph of ancient olive pits. Trash pits hold important clues to what a culture ate. In this case, the archaeologists found these olive pits, animal bones such as goat, sheep and fish, as well as grapes, wheat and barley. Also found was charcoal from burned wood that would have been used to cook with and ashes that were probably cleaned out of ovens.

Trash Pits



<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/2019/03/ancient-garbage-dump-elusa-reveals-surprising-city-collapse/>

This photograph shows other objects that were found in this trash pit. Broken pottery pieces most likely came from pots and bowls that would be used in a kitchen or for storage in a home or business. Archaeologists also found building blocks that would have been used in construction. Pieces of mortar also suggest building activity. Each object helps to build a picture for archaeologists, historians and cultural geographers to understand the daily life of people living under the Byzantine empire.



<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/trash-piles-byzantine-collapse/>

This is a photograph of seeds that were found in the trash mounds. In studying the seeds, archaeologists discovered hundreds of grape seeds that would have been used to make Gaza wine. The wine was very popular throughout the Byzantine Empire. The wine was exported from this region and is evidence of trade activity.



<https://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/byzantine-empire-decline-001668>

This photograph shows the different layers of dirt that the archaeologists discovered in this trash pit. Based on the layers, the archaeologists concluded that the mound had served as a dumping ground for the area. This suggests that the city had organized trash collections. Each layer of dirt represented a different time period for the garbage collection. By identifying the different layers, archaeologists were able to get a sense of how old objects were that were found.

Name: _____

Creating an Artifact

Step 1: Choose your Artifact

- Use the information provided in [Handout: Sources about the Collapse of the Byzantine Empire](#) to choose an artifact you would like to create.
- The artifact I am going to create is: _____

Step 2: Plan your Artifact

- Sketch out a plan for what the artifact you are going to build will look like. Use the space below to create your sketch.

Step 3: Create your Artifact

- Gather art supplies and building materials and create build your artifact.
- Wait at your desk until your teacher gives you further instructions.

Sources about the Collapse of the Byzantine Empire

This is a map of the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine Empire began as the eastern region of the Roman Empire. Even after the Roman Empire collapsed in 476 BCE, the Byzantine Empire remained. This powerful empire lasted for almost 1000 more years before it finally collapsed in 1453. Notice how the empire grows smaller as time goes on. The decrease in size of the empire also meant fewer resources that could be used for trading. This also meant less money was coming in. As a result, the empire began to weaken.



<https://www.britannica.com/place/Byzantine-Empire>

This is a painting showing the effects of the bubonic plague in Constantinople, the capital city of the Byzantine Empire. In 541 BCE, the bubonic plague swept across three continents, including the Byzantine empire. The bubonic plague was a deadly disease that was carried by infected rats that traveled on ships to different countries. More than 300,000 people died in the city in the first year of the epidemic. It was also estimated that almost 5,000 people died every day. This caused a huge strain on the empire. For example, because cities could not dispose of the bodies quickly enough, many people were left to die and rot in the streets. Business and trade came to a halt because people were afraid to leave their homes. It is estimated that the empire lost almost 30 percent of its total population.



<https://listverse.com/2016/10/17/10-scary-facts-about-the-justinian-plague/>

This is a picture of some bread that might have been similar to what people in the Byzantine Empire ate. One effect of the plague was the destruction of the Byzantine economy. Farmers, merchants, store keepers all died. As a result, there was a food shortage that spread throughout the empire. People who did not die from the plague, died from hunger. Trade came to a standstill. This meant that little to no money was coming in to support the Byzantine economy.



<https://listverse.com/2016/10/17/10-scary-facts-about-the-justinian-plague/>

Sources about the Collapse of the Byzantine Empire

This is a mosaic showing the emperor Justinian I with his advisors and his army. The Byzantine Empire was also weakened by civil wars among different groups who wanted to control the throne and the empire. These conflicts were ongoing between different families and groups for centuries. In one ten-year period during the 8th century BCE, there were over a dozen different revolts in the empire. Each of these conflicts weakened the empire a little more. The civil wars also used up resources, disrupted trade which hurt the empire economically too.



<https://historycollection.co/5-reasons-byzantine-empire-finally-collapsed/3/>

This is a picture of some of the different gold coins used by people living in the Byzantine Empire. One way the Byzantine Empire supported itself was through taxes. Over time though, as the Byzantine Empire lost land, it also lost money from trade. That money was used to build armies, construct buildings and structures and hire people. In addition, the numbers of people able to pay taxes decreased. This was because as taxes were raised, many people could not pay and so they lost their land. As a result, the empire's treasury grew smaller, making it more difficult to run the empire on a day-to-day basis.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_economy#/media/File:Solidus-Justinian_II-Christ_b-sb1413.jpg

These pictures show the life of serfs living in Byzantium. Because of high taxes in the empire, many people could not afford to keep their land. Instead, they became serfs. Serfs were the lowest members of Byzantine society. They served as workers on lands owned by the wealthy. A serf could not leave the property he or she worked on. Sometimes serfs were paid for their work. The picture at the bottom shows serfs working in the field, harvesting. The picture at the top shows them being paid.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_economy#/media/File:Byzantine_agriculture.jpg

Sources about the Collapse of the Byzantine Empire

This is a painting showing the battle of Manzikert in 1071. The collapse of the Byzantine Empire came as the result of many different events. But historians believe that defeat at the battle of Manzikert to the Seljuk Turks, so weakened the Byzantine empire that it would never regain the power it once had. This is because the Byzantine rulers had to turn over much of their territory. As a result, more Turks came into the area posing an even bigger threat to the empire than ever before.



<https://about-history.com/the-battle-of-manzikert-1071-and-the-beginning-of-seljuk-dominance/>

This painting shows the destruction of the city of Constantinople by Christian crusaders in 1204. On April 12, 1204, an army of almost 20,000 European Christians attacked the city of Constantinople. The attackers were Crusaders, men who had gone to the Holy Land to fight against the Muslims. The Crusades was a holy war fought between Christians and Muslims for control of the Holy Land. Instead, the Crusaders went to Constantinople and attacked the city, destroying buildings, stealing valuable artifacts and killing many people. Although the city would recover, it became weaker economically and militarily.



<https://www.ancient.eu/image/8052/the-venetians-attack-constantinople-1204-ce/>

This painting shows the Byzantine army attacking its enemies. At one time, the Byzantine army was considered one of the strongest armies in the ancient world. But by the 12th century, this once-great army was ready to collapse. To collapse means to break down. The Byzantine army relied on a system called the “theme” system. This meant that the empire was divided into different regions. Each region raised troops for the empire’s army. However, over time, the army began shrinking. This was due in part to the plague. But the most important factor was as the empire lost territory, it lost the ability to raise an army. This meant that the Byzantine empire over time had fewer troops to protect itself.



<https://listverse.com/2011/05/11/another-10-great-historical-warriors/>

Name: _____

Analyzing an Artifact

Step 1: Choose a Career

- Before you analyze an artifact, you will choose a career. Your career will determine your perspective during your creation and analysis of an artifact.
- Choose one of the careers outlined on [Handout: Different Beliefs From Different Professionals](#). Circle your choice.
 - Archaeologist
 - Environmentalist
 - Military Historian
 - Economist

Step 2: Artifact Analysis

Wait for your teacher to tell you where to move in the classroom. You will be assigned another student's artifact to analyze. Once you have been assigned your artifact for analysis, follow the steps below.

- Begin by identifying the artifact. Use the information you have read about the decline of the Byzantine Civilization to decide what you think the artifact in front of you is.
- Use the spaces below to take notes on the artifacts you have found. While you are taking notes, think about the following:
 - Describe the shape of the artifact.
 - Describe any decoration or details on the artifact.
 - What do you think the artifact could have been used for?

Name: _____

Step 3: Write Your Claim

- Use what you think you have learned about the Byzantine Civilization from the artifacts you have found to write a claim about the collapse of the Byzantine Empire. A claim is a statement that explains a conclusion drawn from evidence.

- What listed career do you think is most closely tied to the found artifact? Why?
