CHAPTER 9 SUMMARY

In addition to the great civilizations of Asia and North Africa forming during the postclassical period, two related major civilizations formed in Europe. The Byzantine Empire, in western Asia and southeastern Europe, expanded into Eastern Europe. The other was defined by the influence of Catholicism in western and central Europe. The Byzantine Empire, with territory in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the eastern Mediterranean, maintained very high levels of political, economic, and cultural life between 500 and 1450 C.E. The empire continued many Roman patterns and spread its Orthodox Christian civilization through most of Eastern Europe, Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia. Catholic Christianity, without an imperial center, spread in Western Europe. Two separate civilizations emerged from the differing Christian influences.

1. How did Byzantium originate? How did the state survive 1000 years?
Byzantium was originally a town in the Roman Empire, and around 4 CE Constructed many elegant buildings and churches in Byzantium and renamed it Constantinople, which became the capital of Eastern Rome. The Byzantine State can be considered to have started when Constantinople became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. The Byzantine Empire flourished and warded off rivals such as the Huns; they also had a steady tax base from the peasant agriculture. They recruited armies from the Middle East rather than relying on barbarian troops. The Byzantine state spread cultural and political influence by conquering areas such as the Balkans and Western Russia that had never been controlled by an official state. The capital, Constantinople, was situated perfectly to make the Byzantine state a hub for trade between the Mediterranean, the Arabs, parts of Asia, and the Black Sea. Byzantines also imported methods of silk production to reduce reliance on foreign trade.

2. How were the political, social, and religious institutions of the Byzantine Empire similar to and different from those of the later Roman Empire?
The Byzantine Empire was very similar to the Roman Empire. Byzantine emperors saw themselves as Roman emperors and in many ways the government was a direct continuation of the Eastern Roman government. Much like the Roman Empire leaders of the Byzantine Empire were seen as divine and had greater power than the Church, yet unlike later Rome the ceremonies for Byzantine emperors often inhibited and even prevented policy. The Byzantine law system, Justinian’s Code, was a revised form of the previous Roman legal system and reflected many Roman values and ideas. Similar to Roman military, Byzantine military recruited people locally as well as from outside the empire and provided them land as payment. Unlike Rome the land could not be sold but was rather inherited and bound those inheriting it to military service. The Byzantine Empire allowed all social classes to become part of the bureaucracy as long as they were knowledgeable in classics, philosophy, and science. The Byzantine Empire is religiously similar to the later Roman Empire because both Empires were Christian, yet the Byzantine Empire was Eastern Orthodox Christianity whereas Rome was before the Schism. In both the Byzantine and the Roman Empire the peasant class was pressured with heavy taxes, and the peasant class performed much of the farming. The Byzantine Empire left much of the cultural life unchanged from Roman culture, yet they did form distinct forms of Byzantine art and architecture using bright colors, adapted Roman domes, and icons.

3. What led to the split between Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches?
There were many factors contributing to the division of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. Different rituals developed as the west translated the Greek bible into Latin. The Byzantine Empire resisted the papal attempts to become more powerful than the state. Religious art represented different ideas and beliefs, and the monastic ceremonies operated according to different rules. Quarrels broke out over seemingly small issues such as whether or not to use yeast in making communion bread, or whether or not priests should be allowed to marry. Eventually discussions and disputes over these issues lead to the pope excommunicating the patriarch and visa versa.

4. How did Orthodox Christianity spread throughout Eastern Europe and how did it influence Byzantium and Eastern Europe?