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The historical periods of many modern powerful entities in the political and cultural map of the world have been numerous and diverse; it is simply impossible to reject the influence of certain states and the historical processes that took place in them in the overall historical period. Thus, one can also note that the formation of modern Europe has been heterogeneous and turbulent, with a set of actors producing particular influences on the image it had, and shaping the contemporary profile thereof. One of such powerful actors that played a significant role in the making of Europe was the Byzantine Empire; it was a rich, influential state that had many features of progressive political entities, and its heritage was explored by the Western artists and scientists many centuries after the period of prosperity was over (McKay et al., 2008). The religious roots, the social order, the fundamentals of medical practice and military science have taken a firm place in the European profile, so the impact of the Byzantine Empire on the overall European historical process has to be studied better in order to understand what paths of development it predetermined for Europe, and how they were implemented (McKay et al., 2008).

As it is often understood by scientists and researchers nowadays, the role of the Byzantine Empire and its capital Constantinople is largely underestimated and not understood nowadays. Sayles (2003) notes that the city was located at the economic, political, and cultural center of Europe, so it worked as a linking hub for all trade routes and cultural exchanges that were more or less significant at the medieval time. The serious attitude to church and religion also marked the effect of the Byzantine Empire on the neighboring states in the Middle Ages and later; Justinian, the Emperor, built

the Hagia Sofia, the Church of the Holy Wisdom (Vess & Marlowe. 2006). The icons also played an important role in the Empire, and the image of Christ Pantocrator was one of the most commonly used and met ones (Vess & Marlowe, 2006). The Iconoclastic controversy that occurred in the Byzantine Empire at the time when Muslims threatened the integrity of borders proved once more how seriously religion was perceived by followers who resisted the reform and abolition of religious images, and predetermined the subsequent flow of the religious development of Christianity in Europe (Vess & Marlowe, 2006). However, one of the notable contributions of Justinian is still considered to be his revision of the Roman law in the Corpus Iuris Civilis, the Body of Civil Law. The same referred to the codification of the Digest, the collection of the imperial decrees.

All this together constituted the collection of laws on which the functioning of the Empire relied until its collapse in the 15th century. It also performed as the basis for major European laws, and was considered a reliable source for reference (Vess & Marlowe, 2006). Altogether, the religious, economic, and legislative contribution to the formation of basic features of the Middle Ages' Europe, and its further progress and advancement can be assessed as enormous. The Byzantine Empire paid much attention to the development of trade and was a highly powerful and reputable state within the European territory for several centuries. In addition, the major features of Orthodox Christianity that is now the dominant religion in the world have been formed and disseminated by the Byzantine Empire.

The present trends are very similar to the main trends of the Muslim world's development (that had many more similarities and relationships with the

Christian and Jewish world) and the Eastern world. Assessing the meaning of trade and religion in all three regions, one can assume that these are the most influential factors that designated themselves in the formation of the Middle Ages' states. It is clear that Buddhism in China and neighboring regions (as well as the economic revolution under Song dynasty) shaped the middle-ages China, while Islam and its relation to Christianity have influenced the peace and warfare, cultural exchange, and relations in other aspects between the Muslim and Orthodox world (McKay et al., 2008). All these examples draw a sketch of the civilizations' development and the influence of various factors in the process.

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