

**Excerpt from GCSE History Textbook: The Eastern Roman Empire, Module 1, Chapter 30:
Alexander, the Regency of Constantine VII and the Macedonian Renaissance**

From 306-920, the Eastern Roman Empire was positioned at the heart of ancient Europe. Since Constantine the Great founded Constantinople, the powerful Mediterranean state had witnessed the invasion of the Huns, the fall of Rome, and the Frankish renaissance under emperor Charlemagne. Christianity and Islam had become the dominant religions in Europe, north Africa and the Middle East. The empire survived the fourth and fifth centuries amidst invasion and civil war, from the brink of collapse to the pinnacle of its prominence under Justinian the Great. As Europe entered the Dark Ages the Eastern Roman Empire faced constant Persian and Arabic invasions. By the end of the seventh century only a fraction of its original territory remained. The second Arab Siege of Constantinople saw the empire's near destruction; saved by Leo III and his use of Greek Fire. At the turn of the ninth century territorial, economic and cultural stability ensued. By 920, the population had recovered, the military was strong, and the economy had expanded so much so that the Eastern Roman Empire stood on the threshold of a second golden era.