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**The Byzantine Empire**

According to Procopius

*Much of what we know about the Byzantine Empire under the rule of Justinian I comes from Procopius, a Byzantine historian. Below are two primary source accounts written by Procopius on the emperor. Interpret each account in order to create a broad understanding of Justinian and his legacy.*

**Account #1**

“In our own age there has been born the Emperor Justinian, who, taking over the State when it was harassed by disorder, has not only made it greater in extent, but also much more illustrious, by expelling from it those barbarians who had from of old pressed hard upon it. […] He has already added to the Roman domain many states which in his own times had belonged to others, and has created countless cities which did not exist before.

And finding that the belief in God was, before his time, straying into errors and being forced to go in many directions, he completely destroyed all the paths leading to such errors, and brought it about that it stood on the firm foundation of a single faith.

Moreover, finding the laws obscure because they had become far more numerous than they should be and in obvious confusion because they disagreed with each other [Justinian] preserved them by cleansing them of the mass of their verbal trickery, and by controlling their discrepancies with the greatest firmness” He wedded the whole State to a life of prosperity.”

**Account #2**

“When Justinian took over the Empire he immediately succeeded in bringing confusion upon everything. For things which previously had been forbidden by law he kept introducing into the constitution, and tearing down all existing institutions and those made familiar by custom. […] For in his eagerness to gather all men into one belief as to Christ, he kept destroying the rest of mankind in senseless fashion, and that too while acting with a pretence of piety. For it did notº seem to him murder if the victims chanced to be not of his own creed.

And he rendered judgment, not according to the laws which he himself had written, but according as he was influenced by the vision of a greater or more magnificent promise of money. For he even believed that to take away the property of his subjects by small thefts brought no disgrace whatever upon him […] And while he ruled over the Romans, neither good faith nor belief in God remained secure, no law remained fixed, no transaction safe, no contract valid.”

*Answer the following questions using simple sentences, bullets, or lists.*

1. Does Account #1 describe Justinian in a positive or negative light? What clues led you to this decision?

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2. Does Account #2 describe Justinian in a positive or negative light? What clues led you to this decision?

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3. Compare the two accounts of Justinian and list any similarities and differences that exist between the two.

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