

The Siege of Constantinople and Early Islamic Expansion

History · Practice Test · 20 Questions

1. According to the text, what was a traditional Hadith asserting about Prophet Muhammad's desire?

- A) To conquer Rome
- B) To conquer Constantinople
- C) To expand into Persia
- D) To establish peace with Byzantium

2. What extreme conditions did the besieging Arabs face during the siege of Constantinople in AD 717, according to Michael the Syrian?

- A) Plentiful food and water
- B) Overwhelming Byzantine naval power
- C) Severe hunger leading to cannibalism and eating of refuse
- D) A swift and decisive victory

3. Who was the Byzantine Emperor in Constantinople during the summer of the seventh century AD when Arab forces attacked?

- A) Justinian II
- B) Heraclius
- C) Leo III
- D) Constans II

4. How many ships were part of the Arab navy that attacked the islands of Cyprus, Kos, Crete, and Rhodes?

- A) Around 100
- B) Around 200
- C) Around 300
- D) Around 500

5. What was a popular Arabic street phrase mentioned in the text that described the Arabs' perception of the sea and religious practice?

- A) The sea is a gift from Allah
- B) The flatulence of camels is more pleasing than the prayers of the fishes
- C) We conquer the seas with faith
- D) The ocean remembers our prayers

6. What was the traditional maritime advantage of Constantinople before the Arab attacks?

- A) A recent naval innovation
- B) A tradition stretching back to its founding by sailors
- C) Reliance on foreign naval powers
- D) A small but highly trained fleet

7. How did Emperor Constans II escape after the initial Arab-Byzantine conflict?

- A) He surrendered to the Arabs
- B) He was captured and imprisoned
- C) He jumped overboard dressed as a common sailor and fled
- D) He led a counter-attack

8. What was the Muslim name for the Battle of the Masts?

- A) The Battle of the Golden Horn
- B) The Battle of the Straits
- C) The Battle of the Masts
- D) The Battle of the Dromons

9. What new models of boats were mentioned as being used in the Battle of the Masts, which were roped together for hand-to-hand fighting?

- A) Triremes and Quinqueremes
- B) Dromons and Shalandiyat
- C) Galleys and Caravels
- D) Biremes and Liburnians

10. For how long was Constantinople physically and psychologically besieged after the Battle of the Masts?

- A) A decade
- B) Half a century
- C) A century
- D) Two centuries

11. What was Constantinople's belief about its own invincibility?

- A) It would be conquered by the end of the world
- B) It was divinely favored and would remain unconquered until the end of the world
- C) It would fall within a generation
- D) It was protected by its formidable walls alone

12. Who was considered the 'commander in chief' of Constantinople due to the people's faith?

- A) Emperor Constans II
- B) The Virgin Mary
- C) The Archangel Michael
- D) The Pope

13. After fleeing Constantinople, where did Emperor Constans II eventually travel for security?

- A) Constantinople
- B) Sicily
- C) Alexandria
- D) Syria

14. Within a few years of Prophet Muhammad's death in AD 632, which Byzantine territory had Arab forces conquered?

- A) Egypt
- B) Syria
- C) Persia
- D) North Africa

15. What event, starting from AD 661, is mentioned as a world-shaping split within the Muslim community?

- A) The First Fitna
- B) The Battle of the Masts
- C) The conquest of Egypt
- D) The rise of the Umayyad Caliphate

16. What was the name of the mutilating punishment introduced by the imperial dynasty, involving splitting noses?

- A) Decapitation
- B) Rhinotomy
- C) Crucifixion
- D) Imprisonment

17. In which region did Byzantine populations fortify themselves by burying their settlements into soft rock?

- A) Peloponnese
- B) Cappadocia
- C) Sicily
- D) Asia Minor

18. What was Constantinople's 'diabolic secret weapon' used to hold back the Arab attacks?

- A) Greek Fire
- B) A superior navy
- C) Fortified walls
- D) A large standing army

19. From where did the Arabs launch their attacks each spring on Constantinople?

- A) Gibraltar
- B) Alexandria
- C) Cyzicus
- D) Sicily

20. In AD 717, Muslim armies returned to Constantinople, having secured a base in which part of Europe?

- A) Italy
- B) Gibraltar
- C) Sicily
- D) Greece