GMAT-Reading-Test 07

**Passage 7**

Between the eighth and eleventh centuries A.D., the

Byzantine Empire staged an almost unparalleled

economic and cultural revival, a recovery that is all the

more striking because it followed a long period of severe

**(5)** internal decline. By the early eighth century, the empire

had lost roughly two-thirds of the territory it had

possessed in the year 600, and its remaining area was

being raided by Arabs and Bulgarians, who at times

threatened to take Constantinople and extinguish the

**(10)** empire altogether. The wealth of the state and its

subjects was greatly diminished, and artistic and literary

production had virtually ceased. By the early eleventh

century, however, the empire had regained almost half of

its lost possessions, its new frontiers were secure, and its

**(15)** influence extended far beyond its borders. The economy

had recovered, the treasury was full, and art and scho-

larship had advanced.

To consider the Byzantine military, cultural, and

economic advances as differentiated aspects of a single

**(20)** phenomenon is reasonable. After all, these three forms

of progress have gone together in a number of states and

civilizations. Rome under Augustus and fifth-century

Athens provide the most obvious examples in antiquity.

Moreover, an examination of the apparent sequential

**(25)**connections among military, economic, and cultural

forms of progress might help explain the dynamics of

historical change.

The common explanation of these apparent conn-

ections in the case of Byzantium would run like this:

**(30)** when the empire had turned back enemy raids on its

own territory and had begun to raid and conquer enemy

territory, Byzantine resources naturally expanded and

more money became available to patronize art and lit-

erature. Therefore, Byzantine military achievements led to

**(35)** economic advances, which in turn led to cultural revival.

No doubt this hypothetical pattern did apply at times

during the course of the recovery. Yet it is not clear that

military advances invariably came first. economic

advances second, and intellectual advances third. In the

**(40)** 860’s the Byzantine Empire began to recover from Arab

incursions so that by 872 the military balance with the

Abbasid Caliphate had been permanently altered in the

empire’s favor. The beginning of the empire’s economic

revival, however, can be placed between 810 and 830.

**(45)**Finally, the Byzantine revival of learning appears to

have begun even earlier. A number of notable scholars

and writers appeared by 788 and, by the last decade of

the eighth century, a cultural revival was in full bloom, a

revival that lasted until the fall of Constantinople in

**(50)**1453.Thus the commonly expected order of military

revival followed by economic and then by cultural

recovery was reversed in Byzantium. In fact, the revival

of Byzantine learning may itself have influenced the

subsequent economic and military expansion.

1. Which of the following best states the central idea of

the passage?

(A) The Byzantine Empire was a unique case in

which the usual order of military and economic

revival preceding cultural revival was reversed.

(B) The economic, cultural, and military revival in the

Byzantine Empire between the eighth and

eleventh centuries was similar in its order to the

sequence of revivals in Augustan Rome and fifth-

century Athens.

(C) After 810 Byzantine economic recovery spurred a

military and, later, cultural expansion that lasted

until 1453.

(D) The eighth-century revival of Byzantine learning

is an inexplicable phenomenon, and its economic

and military precursors have yet to be discovered.

(E) The revival of the Byzantine Empire between the

eighth and eleventh centuries shows cultural

rebirth preceding economic and military revival,

the reverse of the commonly accepted order of

progress.

2. The primary purpose of the second paragraph is

which of the following?

(A) To establish the uniqueness of the Byzantine

revival

(B) To show that Augustan Rome and fifth-century

Athens are examples of cultural, economic, and

military expansion against which all subsequent

cases must be measured  
 (C) To suggest that cultural, economic. and military

advances have tended to be closely interrelated in

different societies.

(D) To argue that, while the revivals of Augustan

Rome and fifth-century Athens were similar, they

are unrelated to other historical examples

(E) To indicate that, wherever possible, historians

should seek to make comparisons with the

earliest chronological examples of revival

3. It can be inferred from the passage that by the

eleventh century the Byzantine military forces

(A) had reached their peak and begun to decline

(B) had eliminated the Bulgarian army

(C) were comparable in size to the army of Rome

under Augustus

(D) were strong enough to withstand the Abbasid

Caliphate’s military forces

(E) had achieved control of Byzantine governmental

structures

4. It can be inferred from the passage that the Byzantine

Empire sustained significant territorial losses

(A) in 600

(B) during the seventh century

(C) a century after the cultural achievements of the

Byzantine Empire had been lost

(D) soon after the revival of Byzantine learning

(E) in the century after 873

5. In the third paragraph, the author most probably

provides an explanation of the apparent connections

among economic, military, and cultural development

in order to

(A) suggest that the process of revival in Byzantium

accords with this model

(B) set up an order of events that is then shown to be

not generally applicable to the case of Byzantium

(C) cast aspersions on traditional historical

scholarship about Byzantium

(D) suggest that Byzantium represents a case for

which no historical precedent exists

(E) argue that military conquest is the paramount

element in the growth of empires

6. Which of the following does the author mention as

crucial evidence concerning the manner in which

the Byzantine revival began?

(A) The Byzantine military revival of the 860’s led to

economic and cultural advances.

(B) The Byzantine cultural revival lasted until 1453.

(C) The Byzantine economic recovery began in the

900’s.

(D) The revival of Byzantine learning began toward

the end of the eighth century.

(E) By the early eleventh century the Byzantine

Empire had regained much of its lost territory.

7. According to the author, “The common explanation”

(line 28) of connections between economic, military,

and cultural development is

(A) revolutionary and too new to have been applied

to the history of the Byzantine Empire

(B) reasonable, but an antiquated theory of the nature

of progress

(C) not applicable to the Byzantine revival as a whole,

but does perhaps accurately describe limited

periods during the revival

(D) equally applicable to the Byzantine case as a

whole and to the history of military, economic,

and cultural advances in ancient Greece and

Rome

(E) essentially not helpful, because military, economic,

and cultural advances are part of a single

phenomenon

**ANSWERS**

E

C

D

B

B

D

C