Early Christianity
33-550 AD
about 500 years

Outline
- Christianity – from underground to emperor Constantine
- Shift from Roman Empire to Byzantine Empire – Justinian
- Changes in art & thoughts about music
- Islam goes forth
- Byzantine art
- Iconoclasm

Catacombs
- Burial places
- From the Greek “cata” which means down
- Secret meeting places for Jews and Christians
- Worship areas
- Some of the earliest artwork that can be called Christian

Detail from a painting at Dura Europos (in present-day Iraq) text p. 107

Moses giving water to the twelve tribes of Israel
Christ as the Good Shepherd – Catacomb of Priscilla

This theme comes from artwork of other groups, particularly Roman, but becomes the Christian icon for compassion.

Fresco technique
Flat pictorial space

Emperor Constantine in pieces. ruled 312-337; statue from 313

1st Roman emperor to become Christian

Monumental scale

• seated, draped like a Roman god
• NOT very realistic
• note far-off gaze in eyes (p. 109)
• revival of Archaic traits

Compare this other portrait
Arch of Constantine, Rome, 312-315

Will the last person leaving Rome please turn out the lights?

Last arch of the Roman empire; Constantine establishes Constantinople as seat of Byzantine Empire to the East

an example of the move away from realism to an emphasis on pattern & rhythm

Basilica form of architecture: *Old St. Peters*

Prototype of Christian churches

Compare this basilica style to the Santa Clara Mission here in the Bay Area!
Basilica plan – a Roman idea

Outline

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Byzantine Empire under Justinian

Hagia Sophia 532-537

Minarets and other additions after 1453

Recognize this for exam
Hagia Sophia
“Divine or Holy Wisdom”

- on a site of a 4th c. building by Constantine
- built 532-537 by East Roman Emperor Justinian
- in Constantinople (previously Byzantium, now Istanbul)

Hagia Sophia Interior

“A sphere of gold suspended in the sky” Procopius

Construction

- Dome of brick
- Rising up from 4 main piers
- Dome is much higher and lighter than Pantheon
- No oculus for light - 40 small clerestory windows

Also by Justinian, San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy 526-547 AD

San Vitale plan

Stylistically far from Classical Rome – it’s Byzantine

8 = ?
The 8th day?

MEMORIZE DATE: 547
San Vitale interior

Capital at San Vitale

- No longer the Greek orders
- Trapezoids!

XP

Halo!!

Halos originated in Persian and non-Christian, Late Roman art

Including Julianus Argentarius - the banker who underwrote the project

This Justinian

p. 119

Theodora

3 Magi

p. 119

Dematerialization

- Human figure is becoming less human
- Especially in the context of the church (holy ground)

These images are still a type of royal propaganda placing the royalty within a holy context

Outline

- Christianity – from underground to emperor Constantine
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Changes in art

• shift away from Greek idealism & Roman realism; the beginning of dematerialization
• slower rate of change in art

Brilliant colors for mosaics

Innovation: gold leaf behind glass tiles

p. 117
Procession of Virgin Martyrs
C. 560
Ravenna

Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, 359 (p.108)
Music?
- common but unknown what combination of Jewish or Greek music used in the early church
- wary of pagan spectacle
- Instruments forbidden at times despite precedent set by Psalm 150

from Psalm 150
Praise [the Lord] with the sound of the trumpet, praise him with the psaltery and harp . . . the [drum] and dance . . . stringed instruments and organs . . . praise him upon the loud cymbals [and] upon the high sounding cymbals.

St. Augustine’s doubts (c. 400)
- Music is a "dangerous pleasure," a distraction from the spiritual meaning of the words
- Yet it may bring "weaker minds" to devotion, so music might be a good thing as a servant of the Church
- "... when it happens to me to be more moved by the singing than what is sung, I confess myself to have sinned criminally..."
- similar to some Islamic attitudes about music

Boethius (c. 480-524)
Early 6th c. treatise, The Principles of Music
- Continues attitudes from Pythagoras & Plato: music is a corollary of arithmetic, reflecting in sound fundamental principles of order in the universe

Three kinds of music
- musica mundana (cosmic music, the music of the spheres)
- musica humana (harmonious relationships within the human soul)
- musica instrumentalis (audible music)

Music is "the skill of examining carefully the diversity of high and low sounds by means of reason and the senses"

Why do we name notes with letters?
- Ancient Greek origin
- Latinized by music theorist Boethius

An interesting gap . . .
Our coverage of Early Christianity covers about 500 years. After 547 (San Vitale), the textbook doesn’t mention much in Christian/European history until 800. What happened in the missing 250 years?

CHINA – T'ang Dynasty, 618-906 CE, a high point of the arts in China. In the eighth century, court performers (musicians, dancers, actors) numbered 11,307 at one time

CELTIC CULTURE – ISLAM – 622
Plague in Europe 542-594 – 50% population loss in some areas
Outline

- Christianity – from underground to emperor Constantine
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Great Mosque of Cordoba, interior

Spain

C. 736

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By 1000, half of the top ten largest cities in the world are Islamic

Top 10 Cities of the Year 1000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Cordova, Spain</td>
<td>450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Kaifeng, China</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Constantinople (Istanbul), Turkey</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Angkor, Cambodia</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Kyoto, Japan</td>
<td>175,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Cairo, Egypt</td>
<td>135,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Baghdad, Iraq</td>
<td>125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Nishapur (Neyshabur), Iran</td>
<td>125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Al-Hasa, Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>110,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Patan (Anhilwara), India</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Byzantine Art

5th – 15th c.
Gold background
Stiff, formal, unrealistic quality – sacred, otherworldly
Full of symbols
Icons – a way of praying, not just an illustration

Christ Pantocrator
("world-ruler")

Frontal portrait

Type of image

Lingering influence to 13th C – Baptistry in Florence
**ICONOCLASM**

Smashing of icons in the Byzantine Church, 730-843

“You shall have no graven images”

Long-standing Judeo-Christian suspicion of images; reinforced by competing Islamic rigor

Counterargument: “Christ is the image of God”

p. 123

**SUMMARY**

- RELIGION – Jewish and Christian traditions evolve
- ARTS & IDEAS – “otherworldly” Christian reaction against worldly Roman attitudes
- POLITICS – Decline of Rome, rise of (Christian) Byzantine Empire
- RELIGION & POLITICS – Rise of Islam, 622-750
- IDEAS v. ARTS – Iconoclasm in the Byzantine Church

**Up to dates?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start of CLASSICAL GREEK PERIOD</th>
<th>480 BC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just after the start of the ROMAN EMPIRE; Caesar Augustus reigns</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN VITALE; sort of end of Early Christian period</td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISLAM begins</td>
<td>622</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Name/type:**

**What:** ICON - symbolic

**Opposite idea:** iconoclasm

**Christ Pantocrator**

**Culture:** Byzantine

p. 122

**see text**

p. 127

**WHAT:**

Great Mosque of Cordoba

**REMEMDS US OF:**

Fast spread of Islam from (date): 622
WHAT: San Vitale, Ravenna
WHO BUILT IT: Justinian
WHEN: 547
WHICH WE ASSOCIATE WITH:
END OF EARLY CHRISTIAN ERA

WHERE: San Vitale, Ravenna
WHO IS IT: Justinian
WHEN: 547
WHICH WE ASSOCIATE WITH:
END OF EARLY CHRISTIAN ERA
MEDIUM: MOSAIC

Know the relative locations

See map p. 112

p. 118

p. 119

hah-JEE-ah

Hagia Sophia
Justinian
Christian church

p. 113