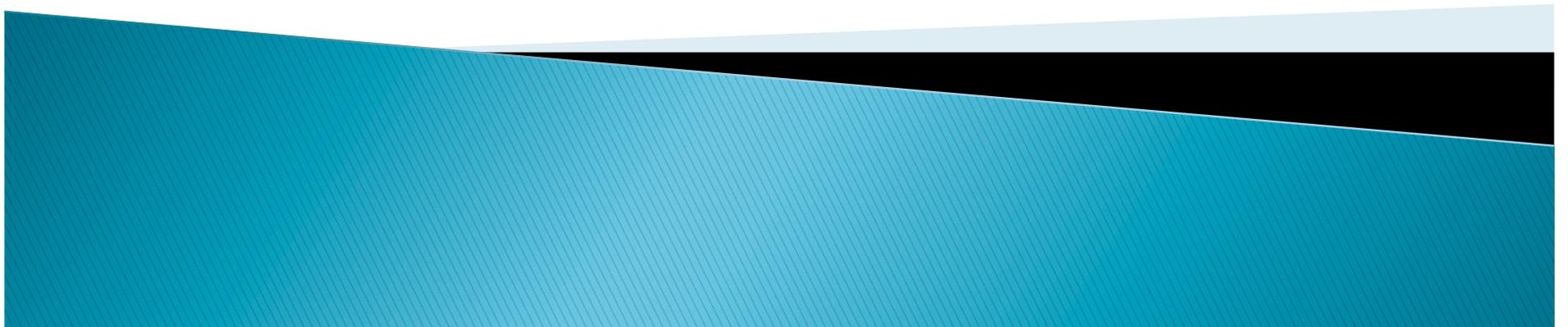


The Byzantine Empire

One God, One Empire, One Religion



The Eastern Empire

- ▶ As Western Europe succumbed to the Germanic invasions, imperial power shifted to the Byzantine Empire (the eastern part of the Roman Empire).

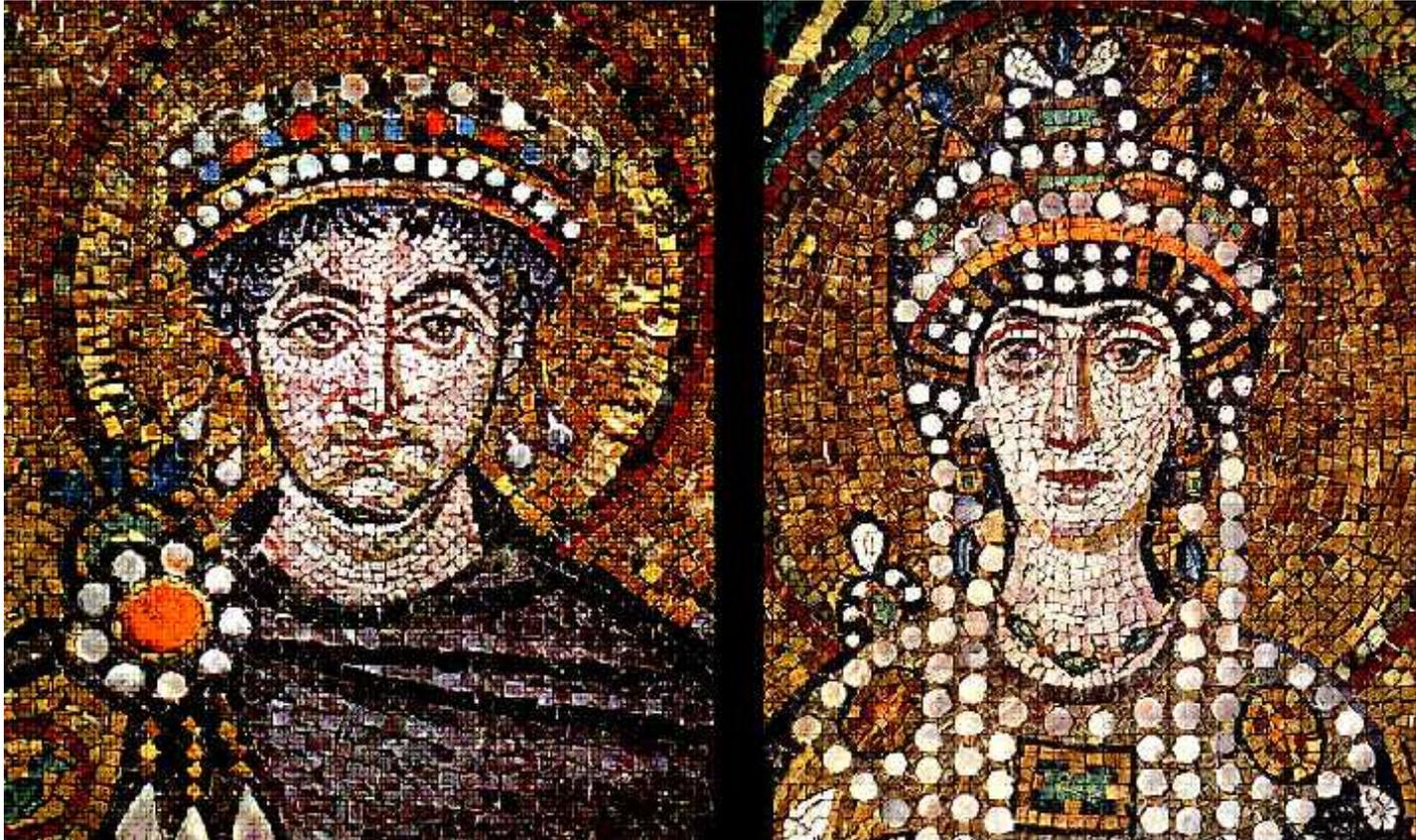


Constantinople

- ▶ Constantinople became the sole capitol of the empire and remained so until the successful revival of the western empire in the 8th century by Charlemagne.



The Reign of Justinian



- ▶ The height of the first period of Byzantine history (324–632) was the reign of Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565) and his wife Empress Theodora (d. 548)

The Imperial Goal: Unity

- ▶ The imperial goal in the East was to centralize government and impose legal and doctrinal conformity.



One God
One Empire
One Religion



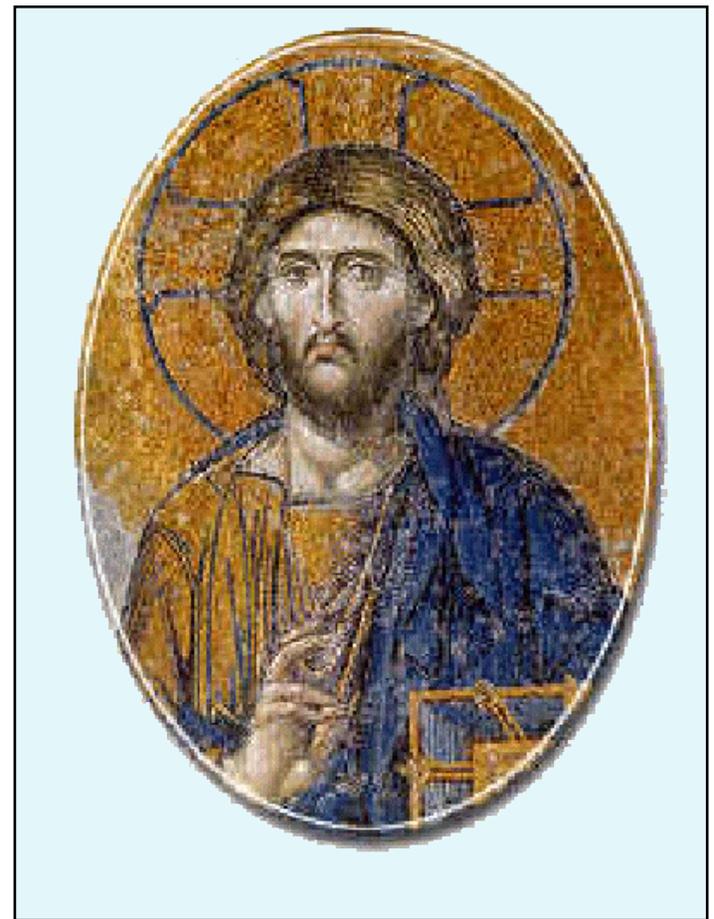
1st Method: Law

- ▶ Justinian collated and revised Roman law. His *Corpus Juris Civilis* (body of civil law) had little effect on medieval common law. However, beginning with the Renaissance, it provided the foundation for most European law down to the 19th century.



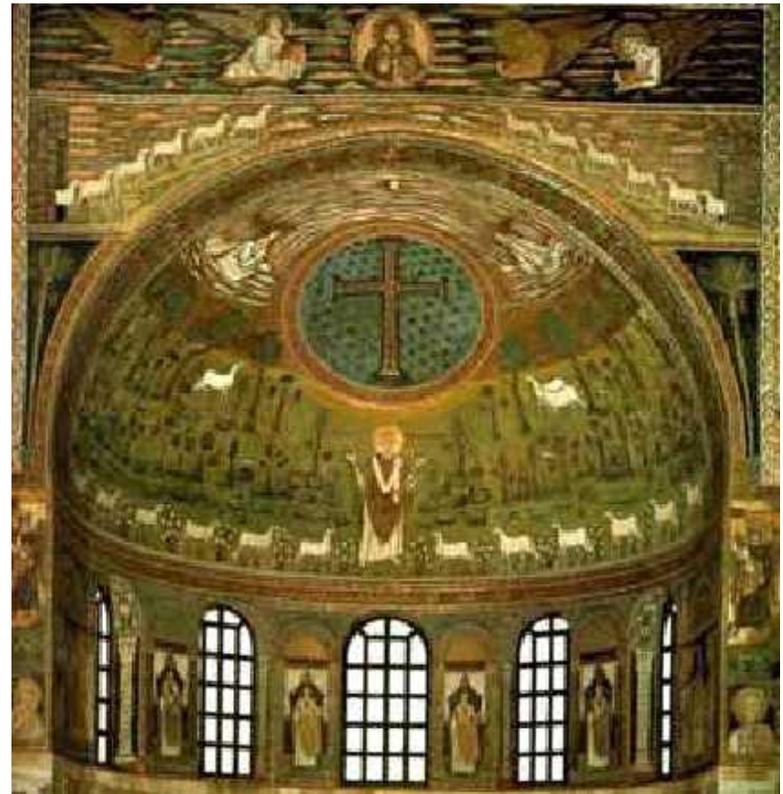
2nd Method: Religion

- ▶ Religion as well as law served imperial centralization. In 380, Christianity had been proclaimed the official religion of the eastern empire. Now all other religions were considered “demented and insane.”



Increase in Church Wealth

- ▶ Between the 4th and 6th centuries, the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem acquired enormous wealth in the form of land and gold.



Increase in Clergy

- ▶ The prestige and comfort that the clergy enjoyed swelled the ranks of the clergy in the Eastern Church.



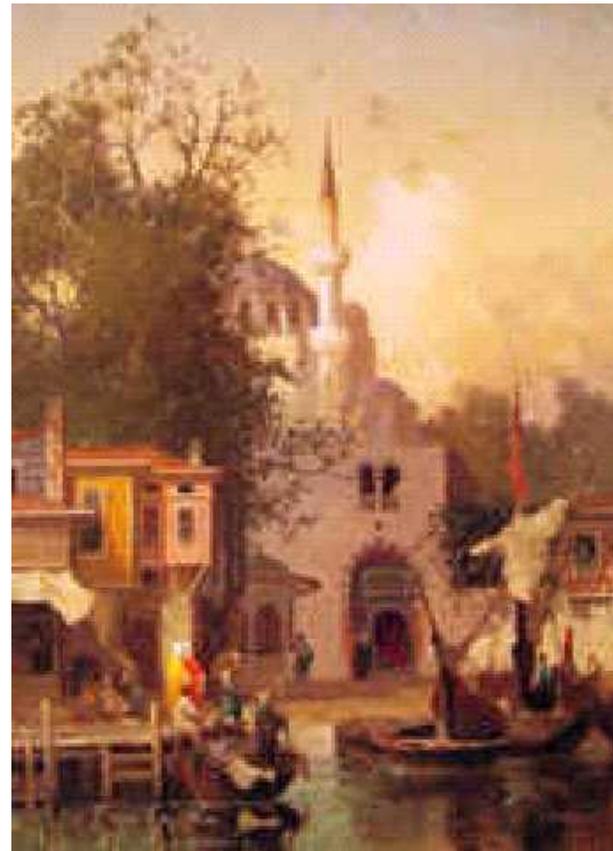
Independent Thinking

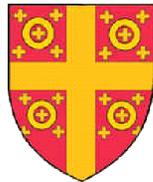
- ▶ Ideas thought to be heresies by the Roman Catholic Church received imperial support:
 - Arianism denied that Father and Son were equal and coeternal.
 - Monophysitism taught that Jesus had only one nature, a composite divine–human one.
 - Iconoclasm forbid the use of images (icons) because it led to idolatry.



3rd Method: Strong Cities

- ▶ During Justinian's reign, the empire's strength was its more than 1,500 cities. The largest with 350,000 inhabitants, was Constantinople, the cultural crossroads of Asian and European civilizations.





"Not since the world was made was there . . . so much wealth as was found in Constantinople. For the Greeks say that two-thirds of the wealth of this world is in Constantinople and the other third scattered throughout the world."

- ▶ --Robert of Clari, a French crusader who witnessed the pillage of the city in 1204, describing Constantinople.

Loyal Governors and Bishops

- ▶ Between the 4th and 5th centuries, councils were made up of local wealthy landowners, who were not necessarily loyal to the emperor. By the 6th century, special governors and bishops replaced the councils and proved to be more loyal to the emperor.

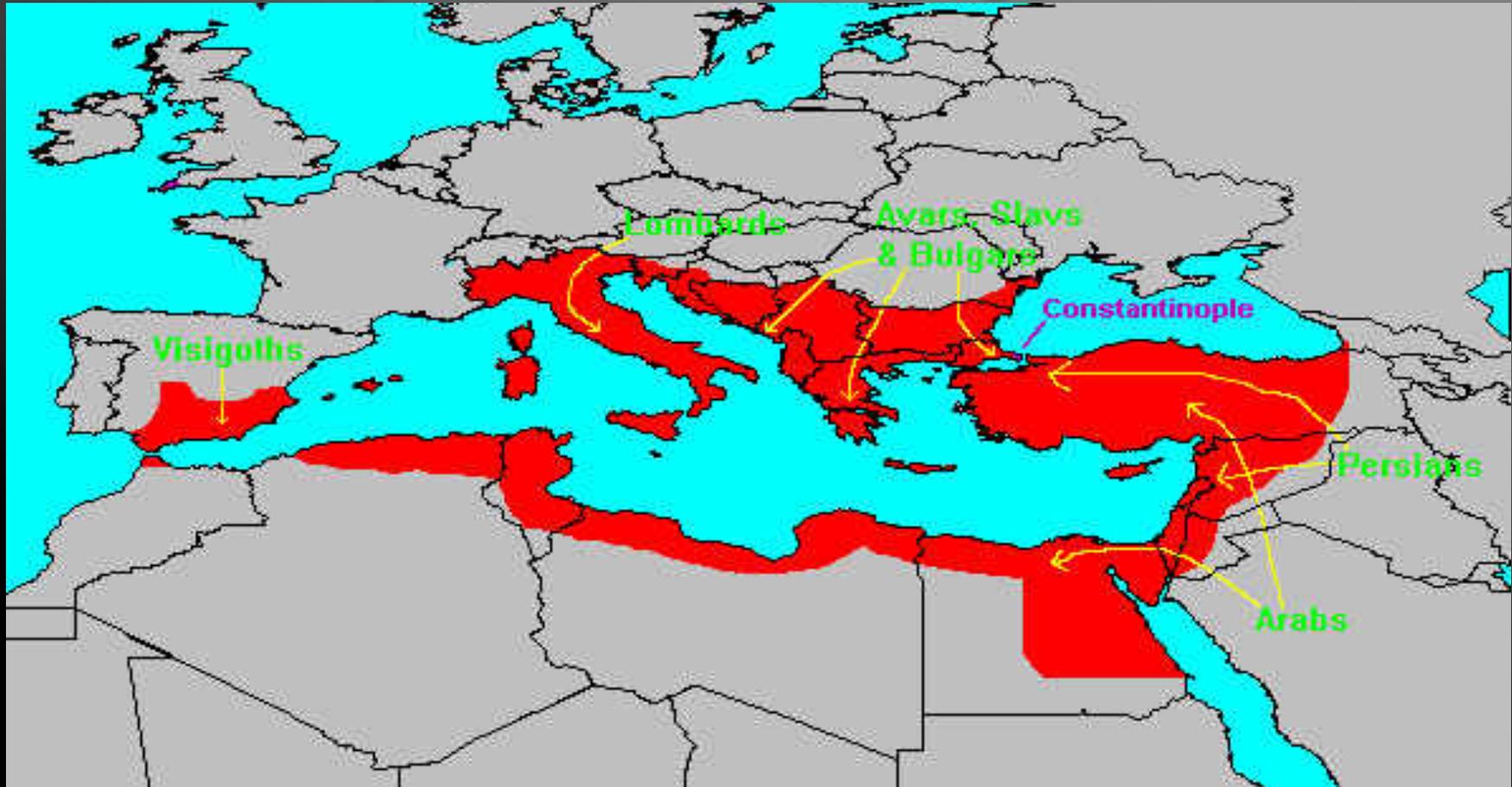


Extensive Building Plans



Justinian was an ambitious builder. His greatest monument was the magnificent domed church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom), which was constructed in just five years (532-37).

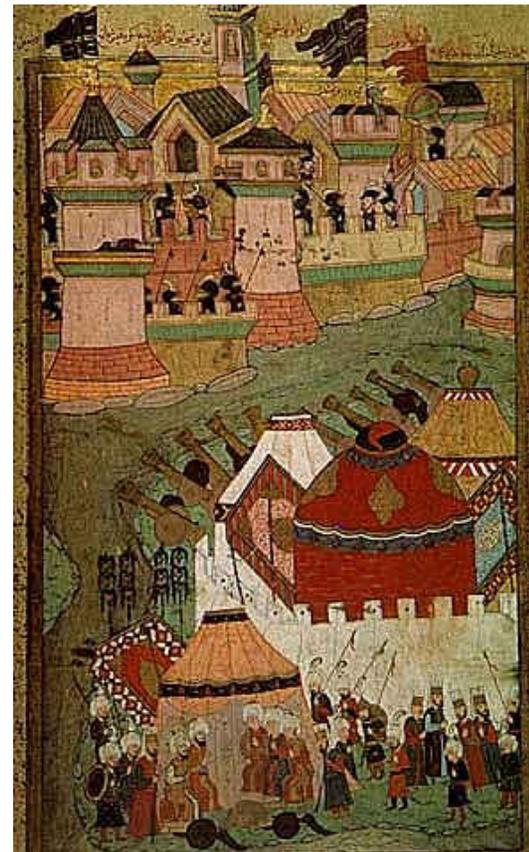
The Empire at Its Height



The empire was at its height in 565, during Justinian's reign. It included most of the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

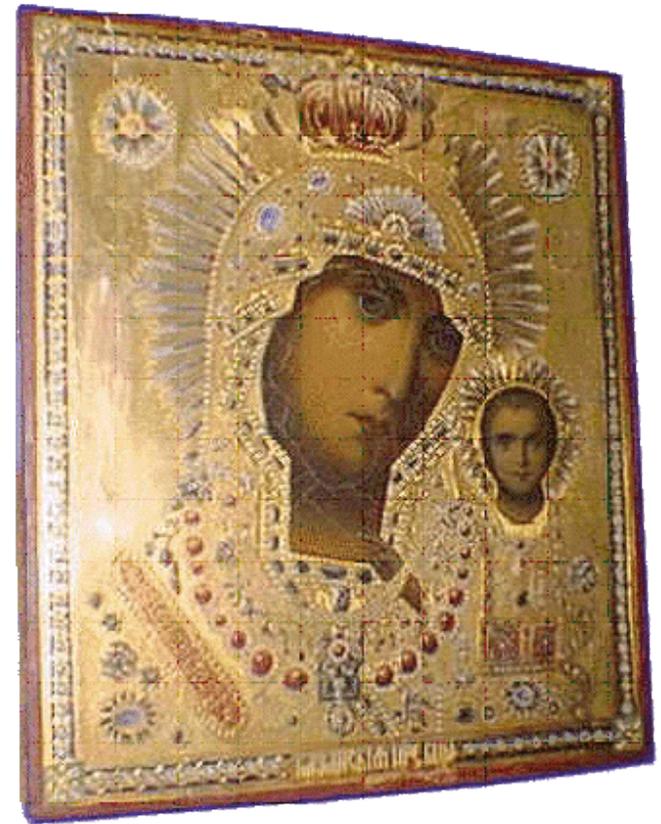
Decline in the 7th Century

- ▶ In the seventh century the empire lost Syria, the Holy Land, Egypt, and North Africa to invading Islamic armies.



The Iconoclastic Controversy

- ▶ The Iconoclastic Controversy, a movement that denied the holiness of religious images, devastated much of the empire for over a hundred years.
- ▶ During the eighth and early ninth centuries the use of such images was prohibited, but icons were restored by 843.



Recovery of Territory

- ▶ The Byzantines called upon the European states to push back the Muslim conquerors. The European states complied, successfully pushed back the Seljuks, returned territory to the Byzantines, and carved out kingdoms of their own in Syria and Palestine.



The Fall of Constantinople

- ▶ in 1204, the Crusaders attacked, conquered, and pillaged the city of Constantinople, a goal that the Muslims had been trying achieve for centuries



Conquered by the Ottoman Turks

- ▶ In 1453, the city was finally and permanently conquered by the Ottoman Turks and renamed Istanbul. Byzantine culture, law, and administration came to its final end.



Contribution to Western Civilization

- ▶ Throughout the early Middle Ages, the Byzantine Empire remained a protective barrier between western Europe and hostile Persian, Arab, and Turkish armies.
- ▶ The Byzantines were also a major conduit of classical learning and science into the West down to the Renaissance. While western Europeans were fumbling to create a culture of their own, the cities of the Byzantine Empire provided them a model of a civilized society.

