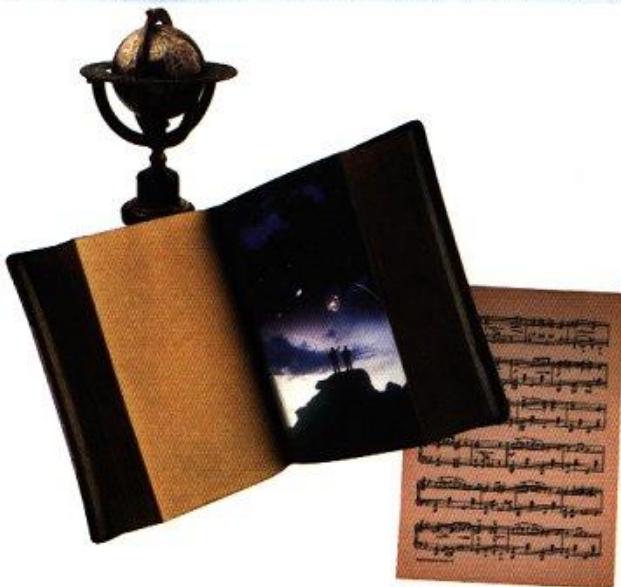


COURSE GUIDEBOOK



The World of Byzantium

Part I

- Lecture 1: Imperial Crisis and Reform
- Lecture 2: Constantine
- Lecture 3: State and Society Under the Dominate
- Lecture 4: Imperial Rome and the Barbarians
- Lecture 5: The Rise of Christianity
- Lecture 6: Imperial Church and Christian Dogma
- Lecture 7: The Friends of God—Ascetics and Monks
- Lecture 8: The Fall of the Western Empire
- Lecture 9: The Age of Justinian
- Lecture 10: The Reconquest of the West
- Lecture 11: The Search for Religious Unity
- Lecture 12: The Birth of Christian Aesthetics and Letters



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COURSE GUIDEBOOK



The World of Byzantium

Professor Kenneth W. Harl

Tulane University

Part I



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The World of Byzantium

Scope:

The civilization of East Rome, or Byzantium, is seldom studied on its own merits because this seemingly remote world is a curious, even unsettling, mix of the classical and medieval. Byzantine arts and letters, deeply steeped in traditional orthodoxy, seldom appeal to the modern Westerner, a product of the Enlightenment and the changes wrought by modernization, or even to the Muslim whose own civilization owes much to Byzantium. Yet, the Byzantine Empire played a pivotal role in defining the geographic and cultural boundaries of the civilizations that emerged out of the late Roman world, and the history of the Byzantine world is an essential part of how the modern world emerged in Europe and the Middle East. This course is designed in three components to explain the historic role and achievements of the Byzantine world.

The first twelve lectures examine the transformation of the classical heritage as seen during the Roman peace of the second century A.D. into the early medieval world of Byzantium. These five centuries of Late Antiquity, from 150 to 650 A.D., witnessed the emergence from the Roman world of three related but distinct cultures: the Latin Christian West, which integrated the Germanic and Celtic peoples of northwestern Europe; the Muslim world, stretching from Tangier to the Indus (thereby incorporating the southern and eastern provinces of Rome and the former Sassanid Empire of Iran and central Asia); and Byzantium, centered at New Rome, or Constantinople, that gave birth to an Orthodox Christian world of eastern Europe.

The lectures of the first component examine how the later Roman Empire responded to political and military crises in the troubled times of the third century. Roman responses wrought great changes in state and society, seen in the reign of Diocletian (284–305), the greatest of the soldier emperors, whose reforms ended these crises. His Christian successor, Constantine (306–337), took the Roman world in a new direction. Foremost, Constantine assured the role of Christianity. As the favored religion of the imperial family, Christianity enjoyed cultural dominance over the Mediterranean world, even though pagans were the majority well into the fifth century and, in some regions, well into the sixth century. The pace of cultural transformation was accelerated by the emperor Justinian (527–565), who sought to restore the Mediterranean world to his vision of the empire of Constantine. His policies bankrupted the treasury and plunged the Roman world into a new series of crises that ended the classical world forever.

The next set of nine lectures deals with the achievements of Middle Byzantine state and society, with the capital at Constantinople, or “New Rome,” which was forged in the Greek and Anatolian provinces on the ruins of the eastern half of the Roman Empire. This was the medieval world of Byzantium, familiar to poets and novelists, and its institutions, although based on classical models, were

medieval in tone. During the Byzantine Dark Age (610–867), emperors warded off new invaders, checked the power of Islam, and directed a transformation of government, society, and culture. The Macedonian emperors (867–1056) presided over a recovery, constructing institutions that endured even after inept rulers had lost Asia Minor to the Seljuk Turks. The Comnenian emperors (1081–1185), who summoned the Crusaders as allies, restored imperial prosperity and power in the twelfth century, but their efforts failed to reverse decline. In 1204, Crusaders captured and sacked Constantinople, thereby ending the Byzantine historic role as the great Christian power.

The last three lectures deal with the late Byzantine world. Even though the political history of the Byzantine world after 1204 is a dismal record, the cultural legacy of Byzantium proved enduring. The Orthodox lands of eastern Europe, represented foremost by Russia and Serbia during the later Middle Ages, emerged as the spiritual and cultural successors to Byzantium. But even the Ottoman sultans, who reconstituted the last great Muslim empire in the Middle East and Mediterranean worlds in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, owed much to their Byzantine predecessors. Finally, Byzantine arts and letters, as well as the classical tradition's aesthetics and texts, were carried by Greek scholars to western Europe so that Byzantine civilization played an important role in the Renaissance that reshaped the West.

Lecture One

Imperial Crisis and Reform

Scope: The century of crisis between the reigns of Septimius Severus (193–211) and Diocletian (284–305) propelled the Roman world out of the classical and into the medieval age. In 100 A.D., the Roman emperor Trajan (98–117), who ruled as *princeps*, “first citizen,” of the Republic, over sixty million subjects, stood at the apex of a social pyramid. Just below him, an imperial aristocracy (senators and equestrians) and civic elites (*decurions*) administered provinces and patronized cities out of a patriotic sense that honor carried social responsibilities. A professional army of legions defended the frontiers. After 235, Rome faced simultaneous civil wars and invasions that ended the Roman peace and profoundly changed all aspects of life. Diocletian, greatest of the soldier emperors, restored peace, but at the price of an autocracy, the Dominate.

Outline

- I. An introduction to Byzantium.
 - A. Ours will be a journey of 1,000 years. We will start in the classical world of Rome and end in the middle of the Italian Renaissance, when Constantinople fell in 1453.
 - B. “Byzantine,” or Byzantium, takes its name from an early Greek colony on the Bosphorus. The term refers to the East Roman civilization based in that city, later known as Istanbul.
 - C. In common parlance, “Byzantine” usually denotes lurid court politics and the worst aspects of despotism. To be sure, these lectures describe a fair amount of that.
 - D. We will also introduce some key themes to explain how Byzantium played a fundamental role in shaping the West:
 1. The great political dynasties of the Eastern Empire
 2. The important migrations of barbarians
 3. The role of heretics and doctrinal evolution
 4. The role of visual arts and letters in transmitting the classical heritage and enriching the Italian Renaissance.
 - E. The first half of the course treats the evolution of the classical to the late Roman world, from 200–c.700 A.D., a period known as “Late Antiquity” by many scholars. Three civilizations emerged during this time: western Europe, eastern Europe (Byzantine), and Islam.
 - F. The second half of the course deals with the middle and late Byzantine world (seventh through fifteenth centuries), a civilization that can only

be understood by first considering the context of the late Roman Empire.

II. This first lecture introduces three broad topics:

- A.** The Principate, the Roman Empire (31 B.C.–284 A.D.), is defined as the classical order governed according to the laws and constitutional fictions of the Republic.
- B.** The political, military, and economic crisis of the third century (193–305 A.D.) reshaped the classical world into the world of Late Antiquity (c. 300–750 A.D.).
- C.** The Dominate, the later Roman Empire (284–476), in which the emperor ruled as an autocrat based on divine right, emerged from the crisis of the third century.

III. The Roman Principate proved to be the most successful civilization in the West until the Industrial Revolution.

- A.** *Pax Romana* under Trajan (98–117), regarded as the apex of imperial civilization, depended on unprecedented economic growth by ancient standards.
 - 1. Prosperity depended on imperial defense and high government expenditure to prime economic growth.
 - 2. The legions and auxiliaries formed the first professional army and were stationed on the frontiers.
 - 3. Imperial government was also committed to expensive ceremonies and building projects to obtain legitimacy.
- B.** Augustus (27 B.C.–14 A.D.) created the imperial administration of the Principate on the principle that high social rank carried high social obligation.
 - 1. The emperor, as *princeps* (first citizen of the Republic), expended private wealth in public service.
 - 2. The imperial *familia* (family) of freedmen and slaves staffed most bureaucratic posts at no public expense.
 - 3. The emperor and his family socially mixed as equals with members of the imperial aristocracy (Senate and equestrian order).
 - 4. Senators and equestrians served, at their own expense, as governors, officials, and generals out of family duty and patriotism to Rome.
 - 5. Senators and equestrians as patrons expended wealth in public display and buildings in the cities of Italy and the provinces.
- C.** Provincial administration rested on the same social values, as well as intense loyalty to native cities, the units of administration at the local level.
 - 1. The *decurions*, the landed elites of provincial cities, administered their cities out of a sense of patriotism and out of their own purses.

- 2. Western provincial cities were modeled after Rome.
- 3. Eastern provincials were based on the values of the *polis*, the Greek city-state, that antedated Roman rule.
- 4. Egypt was administered as the private estate of the emperor, but the district capital (metropolis) of a nome functioned culturally as the equivalent of a *polis*.
- 5. Decurions met obligations to Rome and maintained local institutions so that imperial government was spared expense.
- D.** The two prime weaknesses in the imperial order created by Augustus were a succession crisis and a costly frontier war.
 - 1. A change of emperor (or of dynasty) risked a civil war if no clear heir was in place or if an emperor proved unacceptable to the ruling classes.
 - 2. The emperor, as “first citizen” of the Republic, had to court the Senate and equestrian orders, which were essential to central administration.
 - 3. The emperor used patronage and dynastic appeals to win over the army, urban plebians (residents of Rome), and provincial elites.
 - 4. Frontier defense was premised on superior Roman strategy, tactics, armament, and logistics.
 - 5. The main armies stationed in Britain and along the Rhine, Danube, and Euphrates Rivers aggressively defended the frontiers.
 - 6. Roads, depots, and fortifications gave the Roman army strategic mobility so that reserve forces were not needed.

IV. Political and military crises in the third century rapidly transformed administrative, economic, and social institutions.

- A.** Severan military emperors (193–235) consolidated monarchy and society.
 - 1. Septimius Severus (193–211) based power on a regional army; his legitimacy was voted by the Senate after victory in a civil war.
 - 2. Severan emperors evoked the Augustan image and patronized provincial cities and shrines.
 - 3. The assassination of Severus Alexander (222–235) resulted in a succession crisis and civil war bred by rivalries of frontier armies.
- B.** Succession problems and rising frontier wars plunged the empire into crisis (235–268).
 - 1. Arhashir (227–240) and Shapur I (240–272), shahs of a resurgent Persian Empire, threatened the Roman East.
 - 2. The East took priority; emperors withdrew forces from northern frontiers.
 - 3. German confederations exploited Roman weakness and overran the Rhine and Danube frontiers.
 - 4. Regional armies proclaimed their generals to be emperors in the face of new, more powerful foes and so ignited civil wars.

- 5. Rising military costs compelled emperors to raise taxes and hire more officials.
- 6. Rising costs and a contracting tax base compelled emperors to debase the silver coin, *antoninianus*, thereby setting off inflation and economic crisis.
- 7. Defeats of Trajan Decius (249–251) and Valerian (253–260) marked a failure of traditional leadership and imperial strategy.
- 8. The Roman Empire was fragmented into three competing states (260–274).

C. Soldier emperors (268–284) of Balkan origin restored military discipline and drove off invaders.

- 1. Aurelian (270–275) reunified the Roman Empire.
- 2. Aurelian reformed the currency in 274 and fought inflation.
- 3. Soldier emperors were associated with the gods and ended the Republican fictions of a first citizen.

D. Diocletian (284–305) restored political stability and prosperity.

- 1. Diocletian institutionalized collective imperial rule, the Tetrarchy.
- 2. Diocletian expanded and reformed the court, administration, and army.
- 3. Diocletian revived cities and cults, the basis of classical civilization.

V. Transformation of state and society: With the accession of Diocletian (284–305), a new Roman order emerged, the Dominate. Its main features were:

A. Diocletian institutionalized trends in government since the late second century.

- 1. The emperor, *dominus noster* (“our lord”), ruled as an autocrat, exalted by ceremony.
- 2. Imperial government and society was militarized; senatorial rank became a reward rather than a requirement for imperial service.
- 3. The capital was shifted from Rome to provincial centers.
- 4. Diocletian reformed taxation and currency in 293 and issued the Edict of Maximum Prices in 301 to halt inflation.

B. Imperial reforms transformed society.

- 1. Imperial reforms militarized society and sharpened class distinctions between *honestiores* and *humiliores*.
- 2. Taxation and compulsory services drove decurions to seek imperial service to escape onerous civic service, thereby undermining the social and financial stability of classical cities.
- 3. Honor and public service were redefined in the fourth century so that local patrons failed to maintain cults and cities.
- 4. The emperor emerged as the supreme patron in the Roman world.
- 5. Repeated currency reforms and debasement fueled inflation and limited prosperity in the fourth century.

- C. Imperial defense was compromised because of the civil and frontier wars of the third century.
- 1. Wars ruined the professional army after 235 and ravaged the crucial recruiting grounds on the frontier.
- 2. Emperors hired more and more barbarians to fill up the ranks and cut down on military costs.
- 3. Regional field armies were created, from the reign of Constantine on, to defend the emperor and counter major barbarian invasions.
- 4. Defense on the frontier was turned over to inferior garrison forces (*limitanei*); cities and installations were fortified to impede invasions by barbarians.

D. Imperial crisis intensified religious beliefs, but sporadic persecutions initiated since 250 suggest a powerful conservative revival in belief in the gods.

- 1. The emperor was associated with the gods of the entire Roman world in the era of crisis; political loyalty and piety were intertwined.
- 2. Christians and Manichees were persecuted for denying the ancestral gods by refusal to sacrifice.
- 3. There is no evidence for widespread disillusion with the gods, but rather, where documents have survived, in Italy, Africa, and the eastern provinces, we see that cults and festivals were maintained.

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Questions to Consider:

- 1. What were the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the Principate on the eve of crisis? Why did the matter of succession determine political stability?

2. How serious were the new threats on the northern and eastern frontiers? Who was the more formidable threat, northern barbarians or Sassanid Persians?
3. How serious was the fiscal and economic crisis after 235, and how did this crisis transform other aspects of life?
4. What accounted for the revival of Roman power under the soldier emperors of the late third century?

Lecture Two

Constantine

Scope: Diocletian (284–305) applied military logic to restore security and prosperity. To combat invasion and civil war, Diocletian shared imperial power with three colleagues—an arrangement known as the Tetrarchy, or “rule of four.” With Diocletian at the helm, this college of Illyrian emperors reformed government, army, and society and restored the worship of the gods. But on the retirement of Diocletian, a new round of civil wars erupted. Constantine (306–337) reunited the empire in 324 and took Rome in new directions. Convinced that the Christian God gave him victory at the Milvian Bridge (312), Constantine embraced the new faith and made Christianity the dominant force in Western civilization. Constantine created an imperial church, defined dogma at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325), and founded a Christian capital, Constantinople, “New Rome,” laying the foundations of the Orthodox Byzantine Empire.

Outline

- I. The Tetrarchy (“rule of four”) was intended to provide for more effective defense and administration in the regions of the Roman world.
 - A. Diocletian created the imperial college in 285–293 based on precedents since the mid-third century, and he linked the rulers by marriage and adoption.
 1. In 286, Diocletian reigned as senior emperor, Augustus, in the East; his comrade Maximianus ruled as Augustus in the West.
 2. In 293, junior emperors Caesars Constantius I in the West and Galerius in the East were created as heirs of the Augusti.
 3. Emperors issued all laws jointly, but each took charge of a vital frontier from capitals at Treveri (Trier), Milan, Nicomedia (Izmit), and Antioch.
 - B. With Diocletian at the helm, the Tetrarchs suppressed rebellions and restored frontiers.
 - C. The Tetrarchs restored prosperity and upheld classical civilization.
 1. Provincial and palace administration was reorganized.
 2. Currency and fiscal reforms were effected.
- II. Rise of Constantine: Constantine, son of Constantius I, emerged as victor from civil wars in 306–324 to reunite and redirect the Roman Empire.
 - A. The Tetrarchy failed, because Galerius, successor of Diocletian in the East, lacked the influence and ability to direct a college of rulers.

1. In 305, Diocletian and Maximianus abdicated; Galerius and Constantius were promoted to Augusti.
2. Galerius's choice of Caesars, Severus II in the West and Maximinus II in the East, ensured an outbreak of civil war by denying hereditary succession to Constantine and Maxentius.
3. In 306, the western army declared Constantine emperor on the death of his father, Constantius I; at Rome, Maxentius was declared Augustus in Italy.

B. Constantine adroitly played off rival emperors and consolidated his hold over the Roman West from Treveri (modern Trier, Germany).

1. Civil wars in 306–324 led to the creation of rival regional empires and regional field armies.
2. In 324, Constantine defeated Licinius and reunited the Roman world, but he arranged for the division of the empire among his three sons; divided imperial rule was, henceforth, the norm.
3. Earlier, in 312, Constantine defeated Maxentius at Milvian Bridge to become master of the Roman West; his ally Licinius I reunited the Roman East in 313.

III. The Christian monarchy: From 312 on, Constantine created the institutions of a Christian monarchy, as well as an imperial church headed by bishops and with a common creed.

A. Constantine converted to Christianity after a vision or dream of the Christogram on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312.

1. Constantine likely converted out of a conviction that God had granted him victory, inasmuch as Christians were an insignificant minority.
2. Constantine issued a so-called "Edict of Milan" (313), ending the persecutions and upholding Christianity.
3. In 324, on unification of the Roman world, Constantine legislated in favor of Christians and took measures against pagan cults.

B. Constantine created an imperial church, headed by bishops, funded by imperial revenues, and based on imperial administration. Constantine upheld bishops as the new leaders in civic society, in tandem with imperial officials, against pagan decurions.

C. In 324–330, Constantine rebuilt the Greek city of Byzantium into a Christian capital, Constantinople, destined to be the "Queen of Cities" in Christendom.

1. The new capital, dedicated as a Christian city in 330, became the ceremonial and administrative center, growing from 35,000 to 350,000 residents in 330–400 A.D.
2. Constantinople attracted provincial elites into imperial service and provided a model for Christianizing eastern cities.

3. In the East, the spiritual and secular power joined together in the figure of the emperor, in sharp contrast to the later division of the two in medieval western Europe.
4. Constantinople emerged as the economic and financial center of the eastern Mediterranean world.
5. Constantinople defended the strategic crossings into Asia Minor, thus acting as the bastion of the Roman East against northern barbarians entering the Balkans.
6. The founding of Constantinople marked the emergence of an eastern Roman or Byzantine power on the Bosphorus.

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Questions to Consider:

1. How conservative was Diocletian in his approach to restoring the Roman order? How did his military background shape his approach to government? In what ways did Diocletian influence subsequent developments in the Roman world?
2. Why did the succession arrangements of the Tetrarchy so quickly lead to civil war in 306–324? How did these civil wars transform the imperial state and society?
3. Why did Constantine convert to Christianity, and how did his conversion change the course of Roman history? What was the impact of the founding of Constantinople, "New Rome," as the capital of a Christian empire?

Lecture Three

State and Society under the Dominate

Scope: Abandoning Republican fictions, emperors of the Dominate reigned as autocrats, perfecting ceremony to focus their power so that they no longer dealt as social equals with aristocrats. Henceforth, honor was redefined from the requisite for public service to the reward gained in the emperor's employ; ambitious decurions and soldiers climbed the social pyramid by imperial service. Emperors paid a high price in widespread corruption and loss of control over the workings of government. Cities paid an even higher price, because imperial demands eroded civic life and put classical civilization, along with worship of the gods, in jeopardy. On the eve of the fifth century, the bonds that had tied local elites to Rome were loosened and, in the western provinces, with the collapse of imperial power, aristocrats would come to terms with barbarian rulers—an action unacceptable to their ancestors in the third century.

Outline

- I. The Dominate: Diocletian and Constantine created the new style of imperial government, which responded to wider needs and, at the same time, carried a price for late Roman society.
 - A. The emperor, as *dominus noster* ("our lord"), focused his power by ritual, exalting himself above his subjects and generating consent to his rule.
 1. Emperors conducted public acts as rituals, such as arrivals in provincial cities (*adventus*), the epitome of courting divine favor.
 2. Panegyrics delivered at ceremonies in the palace exalted imperial piety and legitimacy before the court, officials, and foreign dignitaries.
 3. Building programs and patronage of cities awed subjects and foes, as seen in palace complexes at Treveri (Trier) and Constantinople.
 - B. The Christian emperor Constantine magnified the emperor's role, backed by the iconography and dogma of an imperial church.
 1. Constantine ruled by favor of God as the "equal of Apostles."
 2. Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, in his *Tricentennial Oration*, provided the ideology for "Caesaropapism."
 - C. Emperors skillfully used ritual to magnify their power.
 1. By ritual, soldier emperors commanded obedience from servants, soldiers, and subjects without the need to play Republican magistrate.

2. Emperors reduced the political role of senators and equestrians, guardians of the pagan and Republican Roman traditions.
3. Festivals and gift-giving generated consent among subjects; their expectations can be demonstrated by their outcries against the thrifty Julian (360–363), who slashed ceremonial costs.
4. Imperial ceremony resulted in dramatic increases in court spending, which burdened the treasury. New capitals and lesser imperial residences were required to stage the ceremonies, such as the imperial palaces at Spolato (Split) or the villa of Piazza Armerina in Sicily.

D. Administering the late Roman world required the expansion of imperial offices and costs. The number of senior officials rose from some 3,000 to 35,000 in the third century.

1. The palatine, "palace," administration required servants and courtiers to attend on the sacred persons of the imperial family.
2. Eunuch ministers, depending on imperial favor and despised by the elites, executed imperial will and served as a shield for the imperial person.
3. Provincial administration was divided into three tiers: four prefectures, between thirteen and fifteen dioceses, and over one hundred provinces, in place of the thirty-five provinces of the Principate.
4. Civil and military administration was divided in the provinces to check rebellion by powerful governors.
5. Increased supervision and record-keeping improved tax collection.
6. Imperial revenues could not meet higher administrative costs and salaries; corruption ensued and undermined taxation and law.
7. Bureaucrats sought wealth and honor in imperial service. They ceased to serve their native cities, causing successive emperors to rule to return decurions to their cities.

E. Diocletian created the tax system and currency of the Dominate.

1. Diocletian improved assessments by imposing the units of *iugum* and *caput* for the land and head taxes, revised on a fifteen-year cycle, or Indiction.
2. Direct taxation was imposed on Italy and Roman colonies.
3. Tetrarchic assessments enabled calculation of an imperial budget with adjustments for inflation.
4. Unfair assessments and corruption among officials undermined imperial taxation in the fourth and fifth centuries.

II. Society under the Dominate.

A. Cities and decurions suffered from the impact of rising fiscal demands, inflation, and the destruction of wars in the third century.

1. Imperial laws redefined honor from a requirement for civic service into a reward for imperial service (along with tax exemptions), thereby draining cities of local patrons.
2. The numbers of decurions declined at varying rates; town councils in the cities of the Mediterranean lands fared better than those in frontier zones.
3. The cities of Italy, Africa, and the East long prospered; in Greek cities, decurions still served out of a sense of piety to the gods and patriotism to their *polis*, well seen at Aphrodisias or Stratonicea.
4. The loss of civic service, most evident in the northwestern provinces, resulted in the withdrawal of many aristocrats to their villas.
5. Decurions grew unwilling to serve as local patrons, tax collectors, and officials who had run routine administration at their own expense. Emperors passed laws to compel service.
6. Decurions had to share patronage with imperial officials and bishops, who enjoyed exemptions from taxation and onerous services.
7. The decline of funding by decurions of pagan cults, civic buildings, and social activities put the classical city in jeopardy.
8. Ultimately, the more densely populated eastern half of the empire was better suited to absorb the administrative costs of ruling.

B. The decline of the Roman world has often been written in terms of the rise of landlords and the manor, and the causes are traced to climatic changes, inefficient agricultural techniques, soil exhaustion, or demographic collapse due to plague, but little evidence exists to support such views. Instead, continuity of social classes and in economic activity characterized the late Roman countryside.

1. Under the Dominate, the landed classes (*honestiores*) consolidated their holdings and legal privileges, including exemption from direct taxation.
2. Patterns of agriculture remained remarkably diverse, and traditional arrangements persisted, as we can see in leases surviving from Egypt.
3. Imperial peace in the fourth century led to a revival in agriculture and trade, thereby supporting higher incidences of imperial taxation and even corruption by officials.
4. In the frontier lands of Europe, barbarians were settled on vacant lands, and many peasants (*coloni*) were bound to their landlords, who assumed fiscal responsibility for their tenants.
5. The triumph of landlords, living on the precursor of the medieval manor, was far more the result, rather than the cause, of the collapse of the western Roman Empire in the fifth century.

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Questions to Consider:

1. What impact did the demands of imperial government have on society in the Dominate? Did fiscal demands fuel economic growth or undermine prosperity? How successfully did Diocletian reform taxation and currency?
2. How effective was imperial government in enforcing its will compared to earlier imperial government under the Principate? What motivated imperial servants, and how detrimental was corruption?
3. How had life changed in the classical city in the Dominate? What was the situation in the Roman countryside? How did conditions of city and country vary from region to region? Why was the city and, therefore, classical civilization and the worship of the gods in jeopardy?

Lecture Four

Imperial Rome and the Barbarians

Scope: For three centuries, citizen legionaries had defended imperial frontiers, but civil war and invasion after 235 undermined the professionalism of the Roman army. Emperors recruited barbarians, simplified drill and weapons, and created field armies to protect the imperial person rather than the *limes* (frontier). Frontier lands along the Rhine and Danube were turned over to devastation or settlement by barbarians, which meant that the *limes* was no longer a boundary. Deficiencies in discipline, drill, and logistics were already evident in the dismal performance of the field army during Julian's Persian expedition (362–363) and the embarrassing defeat of Valens by rebellious Goths at Adrianople (378). But emperors from the mid-fourth century recruited ever more tribal armies (called federates) under native leaders, ironically creating the foes who toppled imperial power in the West after 395.

Outline

- I. The foes of Rome posed greater threats to the Roman Empire after 227 when the Sassanid Persian shahs overthrew the weak Arsacid kings of Parthia.
 - A. Sassanid shahs of Persia, centered in Iran beyond the reach of Roman armies and backed by a Zoroastrian state religion, threatened the eastern provinces.
 1. Ardashir (227–240) and Shapur I (240–272) conquered central Asia and aimed to conquer the Roman East, compelling the Romans to concentrate on the Euphrates and in Armenia.
 2. The Sassanid army was based on heavy cavalry (*cataphracti*) and possessed siege craft and the logistics to wage a war of conquest.
 3. From 227 to 299, Roman forces were redeployed against the Persian threat; Valerian suffered a humiliating defeat and capture in 260.
 4. In 299, Diocletian secured the strategic advantage over Persia.
 - B. Northern peoples, Germans and Iranians, posed a major threat along the Rhine and Danube frontiers, whereas other western frontiers in Britain and Africa were secondary theaters.
 1. Romans, despite prejudices and fears of Germans (*gentes externae*), prized them as settlers in frontier lands (*hospitium*).
 2. Germanic kings with retinues of warriors, subsidized as allies, were no match in arms or tactics against the legions.

3. From 200, western Germanic tribes coalesced into powerful confederations: Franks, Saxons, Alamanni, and Sueves.
4. East Germanic tribes (Vandals, Goths, Herulians, and Gepidae) from Scandinavia threatened imperial frontiers on the Middle and Lower Danube.
5. By 300, Germanic peoples were settled along the northern frontier; perhaps one in five provincials was of recent barbarian origin.

II. Imperial defense, from 200–400 A.D., changed from an aggressive defense premised on intercepting and destroying invaders beyond the frontier to a defense-in-depth based on fortifications, highways, and mobile field armies that aimed to destroy raiders or invaders in the empire.

- A. The professional army of the Principate was composed of citizen legions and provincial auxiliaries (*auxilia*).
 1. Legionaries were trained in close-order fighting with swords (*gladius*) and possessed superb engineering skills; auxiliaries served as cavalry and specialized light-armed infantry.
 2. The imperial army had the logistics to wage offensive operations or siege warfare.
 3. The frontiers in Britain and along the Rhine, Danube, and Euphrates were defended by base camps of legions, and roads, bridges, and depots gave the Romans strategic mobility to shift forces from one frontier to another threatened frontier.
 4. The Roman army stimulated the growth of cities and Romanized provincial society on the frontiers.
 5. Costs and size of the professional army climbed steadily, and emperors were driven to lower costs and induce enlistment.
 6. From 125 on, recruitment was primarily on the frontiers, and discipline was slowly relaxed during the Severan age.
- B. The civil wars and invasions of 235–324 undermined the integrity of the imperial army.
 1. Because civil wars took a toll on officers and veterans, training declined, tactics and weapons were simplified, and barbarians beyond the frontiers were recruited in greater numbers.
 2. The army also lost its professionalism, because many soldiers, employed as bureaucrats, sought advancement in imperial administration.
 3. Constantine formally created field armies, stationed in the interior, to intercept invaders and wage civil war against usurpers.
- C. The army of the Dominate increasingly relied on barbarian recruits and lost the discipline of the army of the Principate.
 1. A strategy of defense-in-depth required frontier zones to be defended by second-rate garrison forces (*limitanei*), while field armies destroyed invaders deep within the empire.
 2. Field armies (*comitatenses*) relied on cavalry.

3. Discipline and engineering skills steadily declined, and morale was eroded among frontier forces.
4. Cities were fortified and populations migrated from frontier lands, which were settled by German tribes under imperial auspices, such as the Franks on the Lower Rhine.
5. From the 350s, emperors recruited tribes as federates (*foederati*), mercenary soldiers; the imperial army lost its Roman quality.
6. The Roman *limes* was eroded as a political and cultural boundary, and a frontier society, German and provincial in origin, emerged by 350.

III. The late Roman army in action: Twice in the fourth century, the Roman army suffered humiliating defeats that revealed weaknesses far beyond problems of leadership or strategy.

- A. In 362–363, Julian II waged a Persian war, following the classic Roman strategy, to compel Shah Shapur II to sue for peace and withdraw from Armenia.
 1. Julian invaded the wealthy cities of lower Mesopotamia (Iraq) to draw Shapur II into a decisive battle or negotiations, but the shah opted for a strategy of attrition.
 2. The army did not perform to a professional level, and Julian, who mistimed the campaign, had to retreat in the blistering summer heat.
 3. Julian fell fighting in the retreat, and his successor, Jovian (363–364), surrendered the fortresses of northern Mesopotamia, henceforth giving the shah the strategic advantage to threaten the Roman East.
- B. The rebellion of the Goths (377–382) in the Balkans revealed the weaknesses of the northern frontiers and destroyed the eastern Roman field army.
 1. Out of fear of the newly arrived Huns, the emperor Valens agreed to settle the Goths on the Lower Danube as federates in 375–376.
 2. Roman mismanagement drove the Goths into rebellion, and they defeated and slew Valens at the battle of Adrianople in 378.
 3. Theodosius I (379–395) negotiated with the Goths to take imperial service, and from 382 on, German officers were promoted and federate tribes were recruited as units of the field armies.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Why did the Sasanid Persians and German barbarians pose greater threats in the third and fourth centuries? How did the Roman imperial army respond to these threats? How did weapons and tactics change in the imperial army?
2. Why were civil wars far more destructive to the Roman army? How did rising costs force emperors to measures that compromised imperial defense?
3. Why were the defeats of Julian and Valens so significant for the imperial army? What weaknesses did they reveal about the army and the imperial frontiers?
4. Was the security of the Roman Empire irretrievably compromised on the death of Theodosius I (379–395)? What were the respective strengths and weaknesses of the eastern and western imperial governments in 395?

Lecture Five

The Rise of Christianity

Scope: The triumph of Christianity has customarily been explained as the decline of paganism before Christian missionaries, martyrs, and apologists (defenders of the faith). But preaching was outlawed; martyrs and apologists impressed few other than Christians; and pagan cults prospered under the Roman peace. Therefore, in 312, Christians were few in number, comprising families who differed little from Pauline Christians. They lived in Mediterranean cities and in the shadow of the synagogue. By the late second century, bishops in the Apostolic churches asserted their authority and fixed canon so they could decide on a common dogma. Christian self-definition was far more significant than numbers, for in the Roman world, a god was judged by the success of his followers. Constantine, once he converted in 312, provided the patronage that made mass conversions possible. Christian emperors and bishops reshaped the classical world, even though pagans remained a large majority into the fifth century.

Outline

- I. Pagan piety and ritual: Pagans believed in easy access to the divine world through traditional rites, customarily climaxing with sacrifices, and they judged the validity of gods based on their antiquity and ability to reward followers.
 - A. Civic cults ensured the favor of tutelary divinities, including the spirit (*genius*) of the Roman emperor, for the public or familial prosperity, with little desire or sense of an afterlife.
 1. Sacrifice was premised on a reciprocal legal arrangement between worshiper and god: *do ut des* or "I give in order that you give."
 2. Decurions upheld family and rank, as well as piety and patriotism, by patronizing festivals and shrines.
 3. In the western provinces, cults were recast along Roman lines (*interpretatio Romana*), whereas in eastern cities, architecture, cult statues, and rites were steadily Hellenized.
 4. All civic cults were linked to veneration of the imperial family and, thus, loyalty to Rome.
 5. Contrary to common arguments, there is no evidence for a crisis in faith among pagans on the eve of the third century.
 6. The so-called mystery cults shared initiation rites but otherwise conformed to the expectations of pagans; they did not offer a personal salvation or morality, as often argued, that prepared pagans to convert to Christianity.

- B. Intellectual speculation from the second century affirmed traditional rites and promoted an attitude of syncretism, whereby sundry national gods were viewed as manifestations of the same divinity under different names. Zeus, Jupiter, Baal, and Amon were proclaimed the same divinity.
 1. Syncretism tolerated diverse worship rather than promoted incipient monotheism.
 2. Plotinus (205–270) summed up Platonic speculation with a vision of a "great chain of being," a doctrine of henotheism, that is, a single divine power manifested in innumerable national gods—the intellectual basis for the revival of cults in the fourth century.
 3. Iamblichus of Chalcis (260–325) founded Neoplatonic theurgy, the doctrine justifying ancestral rites in moral terms.
- II. Disseminating the Christian message: Christians faced major obstacles in preaching their faith and converting pagans inasmuch as the Christian community had long lived in the shadow of the synagogues of the Diaspora.
 - A. Many modern accounts are based on anachronistic misconceptions.
 1. There is no evidence for decline of belief in pagan cults before more irrational eastern mystery cults or a rejection of faith by the learned classes of the Roman world.
 2. Christian apologists (defenders of the faith) and martyrs in the arena evoked few comments by pagans and likely inspired few conversions.
 - B. After the Apostolic age, Christians were limited in their means to win converts, and many Christian sectarians disdained to convert pagans.
 1. In 64, Christians were outlawed and persecuted at Rome; Pliny the Younger devised the sacrifice test to detect Christians.
 2. Before 250, persecutions, while local and sporadic, discouraged preaching. The missionary career of Gregory the Wonderworker in the 230s and 240s is probably a later fiction.
 3. In numbers and wealth, Christian churches could not compete as patrons with synagogues or with the emperor and pagan aristocratic classes.
 4. Christians, organized into regional churches, were divided along sectarian lines.
 5. Apologists, such as Justin Martyr and Tertullian, or theologians, such as Origen, wrote primarily for Christian readers. Few Christian tracts circulated among pagans, most of whom knew little of Christianity before the age of Constantine.

III. Persecution and conversion: Persecutions after 250 were sponsored by the imperial government in an empire-wide effort to compel Christians to renounce Christ and sacrifice to the gods, but the impact of the Great Persecutions (250–313) is still debated.

- A. Emperors and pagan elites persecuted out of piety, blaming Christian denial of the gods (who were thus dubbed atheists) for bringing down divine wrath on the Roman world.
 - 1. Martyrs (“witnesses”) were consigned to the beasts in the arena after legal proceedings in which they refused to sacrifice.
 - 2. Given the cult of blood in the arena, few pagans were impressed by martyrs.
 - 3. The actual number of Christians sent to the arena was probably very few in comparison to the number of gladiatorial combatants.
- B. Martyrs, however, defined the Christian mission and evoked images of the Apocalypse, offering inspiring voluntary martyrdom.
 - 1. Martyrs gave rise to the cult of saints, “the holy dead,” as the heroes of the Christian faith.
 - 2. Bishop martyrs, such as Ignatius of Antioch or Polycarp of Smyrna, promoted the authority of bishops as leaders of regional churches.

IV. The emperor and the Christian faith: The Christian emperors proved decisive in the spread of Christianity beyond the urban classes of certain Mediterranean cities. Although Christians captured political and cultural institutions with Constantine, they were still not a majority well into the fifth century.

- A. Constantine (306–337) created the institutions of the medieval church
 - 1. Bishops were upheld as arbiters and patrons in civic society.
 - 2. Many tribal mercenaries in Germany came to embrace the Christian faith of emperors who were all Christian except Julian.
- B. Julian II (360–363), declared emperor by the western army, restored the cults under imperial patronage and upheld by a solar Neoplatonic theology.
 - 1. Restoration of the cults depended on imperial patronage, but Julian’s death in Persia discredited the pagan cause.
 - 2. Julian’s laws to restore cities and pagan elites, while denying access of the classics to Christian intellectuals, ended with his death.

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Questions to Consider:

1. How was piety defined among pagans, and how satisfying were the communal and family rituals to the gods? Why were shrines and cults of indigenous gods assimilated either to Greek or Roman counterparts? Why were new gods, such as those of the mystery cults, so readily assimilated into worship?
2. How powerful was the cult to the imperial family? What motivated Romans to persecute Christians? What impact did persecutions have on pagans and Christians?
3. By what means could Christians spread their faith? What were the limitations encountered by Christians in the era before Constantine? What was the purpose of apologetic literature in the second and third centuries?

Lecture Six

Imperial Church and Christian Dogma

Scope: The Christian thinker Origen (185–254) first explained the Trinity in terms of Plato's cosmology in the *Timaeus*. His conclusions sparked the Trinitarian debate, settled by the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea (325). Athanasius, later Patriarch of Constantinople (329–373), upheld the Trinity, and Constantine enforced this view as doctrine. Arius, who taught that Christ was a generated inferior being, was condemned, but the Arians converted the Vandals and Goths vital to the imperial army. Trinitarian debate led to controversy over the nature of Christ's person. The Ecumenical Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) condemned Nestorians and Monophysites, respectively. Because the distinctions between Chalcedonians and Monophysites were so slight, emperors strove to reconcile the Monophysites, perceived as dissidents rather than heretics, but the Monophysites also commanded the loyalty of most Christians in the vital provinces of Egypt, Syria, and eastern Anatolia.

Outline

- I. The birth of Christian theology: Christian thinkers, on accepting a realized *eschaton* in the crucifixion of Jesus, turned to Greek philosophy to elucidate who Jesus was.
 - A. Christ's parables were collected and edited in the generation of the Apostles; in the next generation, the Synoptic Gospels (c. 70–85 A.D.) were composed and letters of Paul and his followers were collected and edited.
 1. By 190, the main canonical books of the New Testament were fixed.
 2. Apostolic bishops based their teachings on the canon to meet the challenges of Marcion, founder of a sectarian church in 144, and Gnostic teachers, who edited their own bibles or composed apocryphal texts.
 - B. Bishops emerged as the leading authority in Apostolic churches, taking the lead in combating heresy, fixing canon, and overseeing religious discipline.
 1. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (107 A.D.), based his authority on imitation of Christ.
 2. With Polycarp of Smyrna (c. 150 A.D.), bishops claimed succession from Christ.
 3. By 250, Christians in Apostolic churches recognized the doctrinal superiority of the Petrine sees of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch.

- II. Defining dogma: In the third century, Christian intellectuals came to terms with classical aesthetics and letters as culture and used the polished prose of Greek rhetoric and terminology of Platonic thought to elucidate their faith, thereby making Christian doctrine potentially appealing to educated classes.
 - A. Origen of Caesarea (185–254), a brilliant biblical scholar and Platonist, brought Christian theology to new heights.
 1. In *On First Principles*, Origen fused Platonic thought with Christian faith to produce the first serious exposition of the Trinity.
 2. Origen proposed that Christ was "eternally generated" from the Father, and so set the debate for the fourth century.
 3. Origen composed biblical commentaries and collated the "proof texts" of the Old Testament that anticipated the Christian message.
 - B. The emperor Constantine summoned the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea (325) to define the creed, or declaration of faith. He thus presided over the first debate on the Trinity.
 1. Arius proposed that Christ was a creature of the Father, whereas Athanasius argued for Father and Son as co-eternal—a difference summed up in the emperor's terms of *homoiosia* (similar essence) as opposed to *homoousia* (identical essence) of the two persons.
 2. The bishops vindicated the Nicene creed of Athanasius; Arius was condemned.
 3. Theodosius I reinstated the Athanasian view of the Trinity and ruled on the order of Petrine sees at the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople (381). Constantinople, as New Rome, held a rank equal to that of Rome (canon 2).
 4. In 391–392, Theodosius ruled that the Nicene faith was the only religion.
 - C. Theologians in the fifth century debated the Christology, or the relationship of the two natures of the person of Christ, human and divine. There were three different positions on this controversy: *Monophysite*, *Chalcedonian*, and *Nestorian*.
 1. Nestorius taught that Mary had given birth only to the human person of Christ and was condemned by Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria.
 2. The Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus (431) proclaimed the doctrine of Cyril, namely that Mary Theotokos ("mother of God") gave birth to Christ, both human and divine, condemning the *Nestorian* position.
 3. The Nestorians either migrated to Persian Mesopotamia or reunited with the imperial church under the Formula of Reunion (433).
 4. Dioscurus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who succeeded Cyril, enforced the *Monophysite* ("one nature") theology of the persons of Christ at the Latrocinium, or "Robber Council of Ephesus" in 449.

5. Dioscorus sought the primacy of Alexandria in the East and deposed Patriarch Flavian of Constantinople, who taught that the two natures of Christ were co-mingled but distinct.
6. Pope Leo I penned his *Tome* in support of the two natures, accepted as the touchstone of the Chalcedonian position.
7. The imperial couple Marcian and Aelia Pulcheria summoned the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon (451) to depose Dioscorus and proclaimed the Chalcedonian creed, upholding the two natures of Christ.

III. Christian disunity and the Roman Empire: The political and cultural ramifications of Christian theological disputes in the fourth and fifth centuries are still debated.

- A. The emperor was henceforth styled the defender of the Orthodox faith, but he faced recalcitrant heretics who refused to compromise their faith.
 1. Laws were passed against heretics and schismatics, such as the Donatists of Africa, who split on church discipline rather than doctrine.
 2. “Confessors” of sectarian Christianity defied the emperor and his bishops, thereby splitting the imperial church.
- B. Sectarian Christians are often interpreted as espousing the aspirations of social classes, regions, or ethnic groups outside the Roman order, but this approach is simplified; doctrinal issues were at the heart of the debate.
 1. Donatists in Africa defied imperial authority down to the Vandal conquest, but they are difficult to define as a popular Berber movement in opposition to the Romano-Punic cities.
 2. East Germanic peoples retained their Arian faith as their national tradition. Although they served in imperial field armies, they did not assimilate into Roman provincial society.
 3. Nestorians migrated to Persian Mesopotamia, founding an Aramaic-speaking church.
 4. Monophysites remained strong in Egypt, eastern Syria, Anatolia, and the client kingdom of Armenia, so reconciliation was urgent.
 5. Emperors after 451 needed to obtain a common wording for the creed, as Monophysite and Chalcedonian prelates vied for imperial patronage and control over the great sees of the Roman Empire.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Why did Christians need to fix canon and develop ecclesiastical institutions in the second century A.D.? Why did bishops emerge as the leaders of Apostolic and many sectarian churches?
2. Why did Christian thinkers use Platonic philosophy to explain their faith? How did Origen set the theological debate of the fourth century? What were the issues raised in the debates over the Trinity in the fourth century and Christology in the fifth century? How important was the role of the emperor (or empress) at the ecumenical councils?
3. Why did Arians refuse to compromise on their faith? What accounted for the popularity of the Arian confession among East Germanic peoples? What happened to the Nestorians and Donatists? Was reconciliation between Chalcedonians and Monophysites possible after 451? Did religious disputes compromise imperial unity?

Lecture Seven

The Friends of God—Ascetics and Monks

Scope: Solitary anchorites of the Egyptian desert inspired the ascetic movement that gave birth to medieval monasticism in the fourth century. Ascetics, by their continual sacrifice, elevated themselves to a heavenly state, and pilgrims sought out these friends of God as living icons and arbiters. Saint Antony (250–357), a wealthy Alexandrine, devoted six decades in a quest for holiness that inspired many to embrace an ascetic life. Because few could follow Antony's example, S. Pachomius (c. 280–346) founded the first ascetic community (*cenobium*) at Tabennesi in Upper Egypt (323). Within a century, thousands of monasteries studded the Nile valley, and Constantinople alone counted one hundred houses. Saint Basil of Caesarea (330–379) penned rules regulating monastic life. His western counterpart, St. Benedict of Nursia (480–543), wrote the rule for Latin-speaking monasteries four generations later. Monasteries, the hallmark of medieval Christianity, were to play a decisive role in civilizing and converting Europe.

Outline

- I. Quest for the holy: The appearance of Christian ascetics in Egypt during the fourth century led to the birth of monasticism, a fundamental institution of medieval Christianity.
 - A. Christian ascetics created a tradition of authority and piety outside the control of the lay clergy of the imperial church.
 1. Ascetics imitated the life of Christ and his temptations in the wilderness and looked to Jewish ascetics, such as the Essenes.
 2. Celibacy had been hailed as the mark of piety in early Apostolic churches, particularly conferring status on women, such as Saint Thecla. Celibacy was not unknown in the pagan world, notably among the Greek aristocracy.
 3. Christian sectarians, such as Encratites, founded ascetic communities in the second and third centuries.
 4. Ascetics, in effect, succeeded to the role of martyrs.
 - B. Saint Antony (c. 250–357 A.D.), born of a wealthy Hellenized family of Alexandria, set the standard for ascetic life when he heard the calling in c. 280 A.D.
 1. Antony gained training from anchorites in the desert community at Nitra (Wadi Neutron).

2. Overcoming trials and temptations, Saint Antony attained spiritual serenity that virtually elevated him to heaven beyond earthly concerns.
3. Saint Antony, hailed triumphant over evil by Christians, inspired imitators and pilgrims.

- II. Christian monasticism: The demands of ascetic life were beyond the moral courage of many Christians. Ascetic living was institutionalized in Egypt and Palestine in the fourth and fifth centuries.
 - A. During the lifetime of Saint Antony, Christian asceticism moved from the solitary ascetic to cenobism ("living together").
 1. Saint Marcarius (c. 300–390) established communities of cells (*lavrae*) to enable ascetics to support each other in communal prayers and ward off the sin of pride.
 2. Saint Pachomius (c. 290–346), a convert to Christianity, founded the first *cenobium* (monastery) at Tabennesi in Upper Egypt in 323.
 3. Communal asceticism spread rapidly from Egypt to the rest of the Roman world.
 - B. The reception of communal asceticism in the Roman world required organization and discipline, because ascetics, male and female, came to number a significant proportion of Christians.
 1. Saint Basil of Cappadocia (330–379) penned his *Ascetica*, regulating monastic life and still the rule of the Orthodox Church.
 2. Saint Benedict of Nursia (480–543) penned his *Opus Dei*, the rule of his monastery at Monte Cassino, destined to dominate the western Catholic Church in the Middle Ages.
 3. Episcopal authorities sought to bring monastic communities under their direction.
 4. Edward Gibbon's later contention that celibate ascetics endangered public life is overdrawn. A celibate clergy did not cut decisively into Roman demographics.
 - C. Monasticism and solitary ascetics had a major impact on Christians, defining piety and inspiring conversion by pagans.
 1. Monasteries emerged as cultural centers under imperial or episcopal patronage, thereby ensuring the composition of hagiology and transmission of texts of both pagan and Christian classics.
 2. Monastic architecture and decorative arts played a decisive role in the birth of Christian aesthetics.
 3. Monks took a leading role in the conversion of pagans, such as Barsuma in eastern Syria.
 4. Ascetics and monks were sought by Christians as arbiters and patrons of the secular communities, notably villages.

5. Ascetics and monks, such as Symeon Stylites or Saint Theodore of Syceon, were credited with powers of healing and exorcism. They were seen as the spiritual heirs of the Old Testament prophets.
6. In popular piety, ascetics and monks stood as agents of intercession, or “friends of God,” between the worshiper and the merciful awesome God; hence, they were regarded as “living icons” and commanded the respect of most Christians.

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Questions to Consider:

1. What were the spiritual and physical demands required of ascetics, such as Saint Antony? Why did Saint Antony capture the imagination of so many Christians in Late Antiquity?
2. What were the consequences of Saint Pachomius’s creation of monastic communities? Why did monasteries attain such popularity in the Roman world? Why did bishops seek to bring monastic houses under their supervision?
3. Why did monks and ascetics play such a powerful role in the villages and towns of the Roman world? Why was intercession so powerful? Why did healing miracles and exorcisms by the “friends of God” convince pagans to embrace the new faith?

Lecture Eight

The Fall of the Western Empire

Scope: In 395, the brothers Arcadius (395–408) and Honorius (395–423) succeeded to the eastern and western halves of the Roman Empire. Stilicho, *magister militum* (commander of field armies) in the West, aimed to dominate the weak brothers, but his ambitions drove Alaric and his Visigoths into rebellion. By exploiting rivalries between the courts of Ravenna and Constantinople, Alaric forged a tribal army that sacked Rome and carved out the first Germanic kingdom on Roman soil. Valentinian III (425–455) ruled a western empire reduced to its Mediterranean core. His *magister militum*, Aetius, intimidated German federates by alliance with the Huns, but Attila (437–452), when he invaded Gaul, forced Aetius back to the German federates. Aetius’s victory at Châlons (451) confirmed the Germans rather than the Huns as heirs to Roman power. The eastern court, secure behind Constantinople’s Theodosian Walls, defied barbarian invaders, paid off Attila, and with Marcian (450–457), reformed the army. But reform in the East came too late to save the West. In 476, Odoacer and his federates deposed Romulus Augustus.

Outline

- I. The Roman Empire on the eve of crisis: In 395, Stilicho, *magister militum*, held supreme power in the West, commanded the majority of field forces, and aspired to impose his regency over the brothers Honorius and Arcadius. Within a decade, however, Roman power in the West was seriously compromised. Why?
 - A. The imperial frontiers in northern Europe had ceased to be a cultural boundary in 395.
 - B. The civilian government at Constantinople retained control over policy, even though Arian and pagan Germans monopolized high military offices in both empires.
 - C. The Roman East possessed far more cities and, thus, trade and taxes, as well as two-thirds of the population.
 - D. At the death of Theodosius in 395, the Western Empire, in some ways, never looked better. But it had far greater institutional weaknesses than the East.
 - E. What is ultimately surprising is not that the Western Empire collapsed, but that the Eastern Empire survived.

II. Imperial crisis, 395–410: In 395–397, Alaric and his Visigoths posed a threat to the Roman East and demanded high office and rewards.

- A.** Stilicho, *magister militum*, used Alaric as a threat to pressure the court of Constantinople into concessions.
 1. Stilicho aspired to an imperial marriage and a regency over both emperors, rather than imperial defense.
 2. Stilicho, in Greece and Italy, failed to destroy Alaric to preserve the Gothic king as a possible future ally in a bid for power.
- B.** Alaric, thwarted from high office in the Roman army, played the role of king of the Visigoths and erstwhile rebel.
 1. By rebellion, Alaric sought to extort from Rome arms, horses, and supplies.
 2. By campaigns in the Balkans, Alaric armed his tribal army and forged a Visigothic nation.
 3. In 400–410, Alaric migrated to Italy, exploiting the clash between the western and eastern Roman courts.
- C.** Stilicho, facing a Visigothic threat in Italy and rising opposition at Ravenna, redeployed western field armies to Italy.
 1. By design, Stilicho failed to destroy Alaric in northern Italy.
 2. In the winter of 406–407, German tribes crossed the Rhine and overran Gaul and Spain; rebellion in Britain led to the loss of the island province in 410–411.
 3. Honorius's execution of Stilicho and the Visigothic sack of Rome (410) reveal a bankrupt western government.
 4. The Visigoths were settled in southern Gaul as an independent kingdom, in 411–417, thereby initiating the breakup of the Roman West.
 5. Bugundians and Franks migrated into eastern Gaul; Sueves and Vandals entered Spain.

III. Disintegration of the western Roman Empire: Between 410 and 425, the imperial government had lost control of the western provinces and ruled over only the Mediterranean core of Italy, Africa, and the Mediterranean littoral and islands.

- A.** Valentinian III (425–455), guided by his mother Galla Placidia, was likewise a pawn of Aetius, *magister militum* and successor to Stilicho.
 1. Aetius premised control of the western provinces by alliance with the Huns to check German federates.
 2. The rise of King Attila (437–452) undermined Aetius's policy, because Attila desired to plunder the Roman world and gain control over barbarian tribes beyond the frontier.
 3. Aetius could not prevent the Vandal conquest of Africa in 427–442.

- 4.** Attila's invasion of the Roman West was checked at Châlons (451), a battle that confirmed that the Germans, rather than the Huns, would succeed to the Roman West.
- 5.** In 452, Pope Leo I was perceived as convincing Attila to withdraw.
- 6.** Valentinian III was too weak to profit from the disintegration of the Hun Empire; his death in 455 ended legitimacy in the West.
- B.** Phantom emperors reigned by sufferance of German *generalissimos* in 455–476, but the court of Ravenna controlled little beyond Italy. The deposition of Romulus Augustus (476) by Odoacer ended the puppet emperors in the West; henceforth, Odoacer ruled Italy with the blessings of the eastern Emperor Zeno.

IV. Reform and recovery of the eastern Roman Empire: Emperors between Marcian (450–457) and Zeno (474–491) reformed the imperial army and confronted the Hun threat so that Constantinople surmounted crisis.

- A.** The barbarians of the fifth century never threatened the heartland of the Roman East; imperial resources were intact.
 1. Alaric and his Visigoths, and later Attila and the Huns, plundered the Balkans, but turned their armies west.
 2. The Shah of Sassanid Persia was preoccupied defending his northern frontiers.
- B.** The eastern court was able to meet the costs of survival in the early fifth century despite uninspired imperial leadership.
 1. Prefect Anthemius fortified the land side of Constantinople with the Theodosian Walls in 413–414 to make the city impregnable.
 2. Theodosius I paid heavy tributes in gold to Attila and still amassed a huge reserve.
 3. Marcian (450–457) ended tribute to the Huns and reformed the imperial army, recruiting warlike provincials as Isaurians in place of Germans.
 4. In 439–442 and 452, the eastern court sent significant military aid to the West.
- C.** The eastern ruling classes, in response to the crisis of the fifth century, redefined their identity as Orthodox citizens of the New Rome and accepted the loss of the West.
 1. Coronation ceremony and ideology defined an emerging "Byzantine" court at Constantinople.
 2. The western German kings were regarded as reigning as agents of Zeno (474–491).
 3. Zeno and Anastasius I (491–518) saw reconciliation with the Monophysites as urgent.

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Questions to Consider:

1. What were the respective resources and strategic situations of the eastern and western Roman Empires at the death of Theodosius I (379–395)? How critical was imperial leadership in the crises of 395–410? Why did the eastern court fear Stilicho? Did Stilicho bungle the imperial defense by his dealings with Alaric?
2. How did migrations within the Roman Empire forge the Visigoths into a nation? What were Alaric's aims? Why did Honorius commission the Visigoths to restore order in the West?
3. By what stages did the western Roman Empire fragment in 406–476? At what point did collapse become inevitable? Did Aetius offer a plausible policy? What were the aims of King Attila of the Huns? What was determined by the Battle of Châlons (451)?
4. Why did the eastern Roman Empire survive? How important was the position of Constantinople? Could the eastern emperors have prevented the collapse of the West?

Lecture Nine

The Age of Justinian

Scope: Justinian (527–565), who strove to restore the empire of Constantine, was served by brilliant ministers and a remarkable wife, Theodora, with a talent for selecting loyal ministers and generals. Justinian's jurist Tribonian codified Roman law; his generals Belisarius and Narses pulled off military miracles; his financial ministers John of Cappadocia and Peter Barsymes creatively funded wars and building projects for five decades. Foremost, Justinian desired to restore Roman order in the West, casting out the Arian Germanic rulers in Italy, Africa, and Spain. A professional army and a full treasury promised success. In 532, Justinian crushed dissident aristocrats in the Nike Revolt and negotiated a peace with Shah Chosroes I of Persia (531–579) that released the field armies for the West. Justinian adroitly isolated the Vandal kingdom of Africa, then the Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy. He planned swift campaigns of reconquest, followed by a return to Roman rule and taxation. In his expectations, Justinian erred, and so condemned his empire to decades of war and suffering.

Outline

1. Justinian (527–565), last of the great Roman emperors, defined the future institutions of the medieval Byzantine Empire.
 - A. Justinian viewed himself as the new Constantine, and he intended to restore the Christian Roman order to the entire Mediterranean world.
 1. Justinian, a Latin-speaking Illyrian provincial, was Roman in outlook and Orthodox in faith.
 2. He had a superb education in law and theology, and his restless genius earned him the epithet "the emperor who never sleeps."
 3. He reigned as co-Augustus with his uncle Justin I (518–527) and succeeded to the throne as a mature, experienced ruler in 527.
 4. His policy of restoration included recovery of the western provinces, union in the imperial church, conversion of the barbarians, codification of Roman law, and promotion of Christian arts and aesthetics.
 - B. Justinian surrounded himself with a brilliant court and inspired greatness and loyalty in his ministers and generals.
 1. The empress Theodora, former prostitute and twenty years Justinian's junior, proved a savvy advisor, as seen in the Nike Revolt of 532.
 2. His quaestor (senior legal official), Tribonian, a provincial barrister, proved the greatest Roman legalist, producing the *Corpus*

Juris Civilis and devising the “law of citations.” His code ensured the survival of Roman law.

3. Finance ministers John of Cappadocia and Peter Barsymes funded imperial ventures by slashing budgets, manipulating currency, and devising new taxes primarily aimed at the privileged classes.
4. His generals Belisarius and Narses led a small but tough professional army based on *cataphracti* (heavy cavalry) and *bucellarii* (private retainers) in stunning victories over Persians, Vandals, and Goths.

II. The Mediterranean world in the sixth century: Viewed from his throne, Justinian still beheld a late Roman order across the Mediterranean. His task was an apparently simple one of returning the lost imperial provinces to ordered rule.

- A. But western European kings were devolving power into private and local hands and lacked the means to maintain more than the facade of Roman political and social institutions. The Roman order had disintegrated at varying rates since the late fifth century.
 1. In Anglo-Saxon England, Roman institutions had all but vanished.
 2. Clovis (484–511), king of the Franks, had imposed his hegemony over Gaul by an adroit alliance of his Merovingian house with the Catholic Church and Gallo-Roman landed classes.
 3. In Italy, Theoderic (489–526), the enlightened Arian Ostrogothic king, had overthrown Odoacer, 489–491 and reigned with the cooperation of the Roman Senate and the papacy.
 4. In Africa, King Hilderic (523–530), who embraced Catholicism, alienated the Arian warrior caste of Vandals.
 5. The Visigoths ruled as an Arian military caste over Spain.
- B. Byzantine emperors since Marcian (450–457) could not reverse the decline of the Roman West and looked to their eastern provinces.
 1. Zeno (474–491) recognized the Germanic kings, and he used diplomacy to destroy foreign foes, pitting Theoderic against Odoacer in Italy in 489–491.
 2. Anastasius (491–518) thwarted Persian ambitions by subsidies and diplomacy.
 3. Zeno and Anastasius, in effect, endorsed the Monophysite creed at the price of schism with Rome (484–519) and religious disorder in Constantinople.
 4. Anastasius reformed imperial currency in 498–512 and amassed a huge imperial reserve that funded Justinian’s wars.
 5. Imperial peace ensured prosperity of eastern cities.
 6. Emperors steadily restored a professional army and navy.

III. Justinian in power: At his accession, Justinian, who inherited a Persian war from his uncle Justin (526–532), reversed imperial priorities henceforth to pursue a reconquest of the West.

- A. Justinian pursued a defensive eastern policy based on the Euphrates frontier and the client Georgian kingdoms in Iberia and Lazica, whereas the Persians controlled Armenia and the strategic fortresses of northern Mesopotamia.
 1. By his victory at Daras (530), Belisarius enabled Justinian to negotiate the Perpetual Peace to end the First Persian War (526–532).
 2. Shah Chosroes I (531–579) aimed to blackmail Justinian or plunder the Roman East while imperial armies were engaged in the West.
 3. Justinian sacrificed eastern security for his western wars.
- B. Justinian had to master his capital, for he faced dangerous aristocratic opponents who patronized the circus factions, crucial to the control of Constantinople.
 1. Justinian, given his lowly origins and his notorious wife, Theodora, was outrageously unacceptable to the Byzantine nobility.
 2. The *Secret History* of Procopius reports the social prejudices and resentment of the aristocrats, who were smarting from taxes and promotion of able but humble ministers.
 3. The patrician nephews Anastasius and Areobindus, husband of the imperial princess Anicia Juliana, were potential rivals.
 4. Constantinople was crucial as the ceremonial capital of the empire and, in January 532, Justinian crushed the Nike Revolt, staged by the nobility, and secured his throne and rebuilt his capital.

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Questions to Consider:

1. How did Justinian play a decisive role in shaping the future of the Byzantine Empire? What accounted for Justinian's western policies? How can Justinian's genius be best measured?
2. What conditions of the Mediterranean world in the sixth century would lead Justinian to conclude that restoration of the Roman world was possible? What indications suggested that the fragmentation of the Roman West and the decline of classical institutions were far too advanced? How did conditions vary in the former Roman West?
3. What were the relative strengths of East Rome and Persia in the sixth century? What were the risks of Justinian's eastern policy?
4. Why did Justinian and Theodora, facing unpopularity and social prejudice, pursue policies objectionable to the imperial aristocracy? How did Justinian use the Nike Revolt to crush opposition? Did Theodora and Belisarius deserve credit for the suppression of the rebels?

Lecture Ten

The Reconquest of the West

Scope: Justinian (527–565), given his finances, could not afford long wars against the Arian German kingdoms, and he counted on support from the Roman populations in the West. Justinian also realized that the Persian Shah Chosroes I (531–579), bought off by the Perpetual Peace, could be expected to capitalize on Roman reverses in the West. In 533, Belisarius overthrew the Vandal kingdom, but Africa proved harder to rule than to conquer. Mutinies and Moorish rebellions rocked the African provinces for over a decade (535–548). Against the Ostrogoths, Belisarius initially scored swift victories, but King Wittigis (536–540) pursued a war of attrition. Although Wittigis surrendered in 540, Belisarius was compelled to return to the East with the outbreak of a Persian war (540–545). The Goths rallied under Totila (541–552), and the ensuing desultory fighting ruined Italy. Narses, the eunuch general, crushed the Goths at Busta Gallorum (552), but the cost of the Gothic War bankrupted Justinian's empire and exposed imperial frontiers to new invaders.

Outline

- I. The strategy of reconquest: Justinian erred in his strategy of a rapid occupation of the entire Roman West, because his armies conquered only Africa, Italy, and southern Spain after prolonged, desultory fighting.
 - A. Justinian had limited information on the former Roman West.
 1. Imperial sources of information were based on reports of exiled Catholic clergy or aristocrats, emissaries, and merchants.
 2. Justinian, based on reports and history, was led to believe that the Romans in the West would welcome return of imperial rule.
 3. Justinian failed to perceive the erosion of imperial institutions, privatizing of local government in the West, and the decline of long-distance trade and cities.
 - B. Justinian counted on swift victories, paid for by the surplus inherited from Anastasius and current taxes in the East, but lengthy wars could undermine his finances.
 1. The crack imperial field army, 15,000 to 20,000 men, based on *cataphracti* (heavy cavalry), was expected to end the war by decisive battle rather than attrition.
 2. The imperial fleet of dromons, rigged with lateen sails, dominated the sea and ensured imperial logistics.

3. Desultory fighting and the plague (542–544) ruined the West; rapacious imperial soldiers and corrupt officials alienated western provincials.

II. Reconquest of North Africa (533–548): Belisarius overthrew Vandal rule in North Africa by two decisive battles within four months, but mutinies and Moorish rebellions drained imperial resources.

A. Justinian exploited a succession crisis in the Vandal kingdom when Gelimer (530–533) overthrew Hilderic (523–530).

1. Gelimer (530–533) faced Moorish revolts, persecuted Catholics, and broke with the Ostrogothic and Visigothic courts.
2. Justinian diplomatically isolated Gelimer; Belisarius strategically caught Gelimer and the Vandal fleet off guard.
3. Belisarius maneuvered Gelimer into decisive battles at Ad Decimum and Tricamaron in 533–534 and secured Carthage and Gelimer.
4. In 534, Belisarius and the field army were recalled for service in Italy.

B. Roman institutions in Africa were unable to support the restoration of imperial administration of the African *limes*. The work of restoration by Solomon was cut short by the Easter Mutiny (535), Moorish incursions, and outbreak of the plague (543).

III. The Gothic War (535–552): Misled by initial successes in Africa, Justinian ordered an immediate intervention in the Ostrogothic Kingdom of Italy.

A. Justinian framed a similar strategy, exploiting the succession crisis in the dynasty of Theodoric to allow Belisarius to attack a divided foe.

1. The Queen Amalasuntha, who had acted as regent for her young son, Athalaric (526–534), was overthrown by her husband, Theodahad (534–536).
2. The Roman Senate and papacy were alienated from the Gothic monarchy and looked to Constantinople.

B. Belisarius conducted a masterful series of campaigns in 535–540 that nearly won the Italian peninsula, but he was recalled to face a Persian invasion.

1. The conquest of Sicily (535) and occupation of Rome (536) promised deceptively easy success.
2. King Wittigis (536–540), elected by the Goths, pursued a strategy of attrition and put Rome under siege (536–537), compelling Justinian to pour reinforcements and money into Italy.
3. Belisarius resumed the offensive and tricked Wittigis into surrender, thereby earning the distrust of Justinian (538–540).
4. Belisarius was recalled before the field army could secure northern Italy, allowing King Totila (541–552) to quickly recover the region.

5. Rebellions in Africa, the Second Persian War, and plague (542–543) delayed an imperial reconquest. The plague in particular proved a demographic disaster.

C. Despite financial crisis and defeat, Justinian was committed to reconquering Italy if he were to keep his throne.

1. Belisarius, with limited forces, defended Rome against Totila in a second siege (545–547).
2. The fall of Rome to Totila after a third siege (549–550) compelled Belisarius to launch a massive expedition under Narses. This war was far more destructive than anything that happened in the fifth century.
3. At the Battle of Busta Gallorum (552), Narses destroyed Gothic power and repelled Frankish invasions.

IV. The cost of military recovery: Justinian and his empire paid a high price for a fleeting victory, and the fighting transformed the western provinces.

A. The western provinces required emergency administrative measures, and easterners staffed bureaucratic posts to the resentment of local aristocrats.

1. Justinian passed the Pragmatic Sanction to restore order in Italy.
2. Bishops and landlords assumed the roles of imperial officials in Italian cities.
3. Rome declined to a minor town of 20,000, and the Senate disappeared. The papacy emerged as the only effective power in central Italy by the pontificate of Gregory I (590–604).

B. Imperial expenditures exhausted the reserve by 540, and taxes in the East failed to meet the rising costs of war.

1. Demographic collapse resulted from the plague (541–543); taxes fell, trade contracted, and cities declined.
2. Desultory fighting ruined the professional field army. Justinian recruited more barbarians, but the army was reduced to 150,000 men by 565.
3. Fortification of the frontiers and payments of subsidies to Sassanid Persia were perceived as imperial weakness by the new barbarians, Lombards, Avars, and Slavs, who swept away Justinian's vision of a restored Roman Empire.
4. For a short time, at least, the empire was restored to its earlier Mediterranean dimensions.

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Questions to Consider:

1. How well did Justinian comprehend conditions in the former western provinces? What were his sources of information? Why did the reconquests of Africa and Italy prove so difficult? Did the sacrifices along the eastern frontier compromise imperial security?
2. Was Belisarius a military genius mistreated by his emperor? What were the strengths and weaknesses of the imperial army? What were the costs of military recovery?
3. How did the wars of Justinian transform life in the former western provinces? Was the collapse of Justinian's restored empire inevitable? What was the impact of the plague?
4. Why did the Vandal kingdom collapse so quickly but the African provinces prove so difficult to restore to imperial rule? Why did the Goths prove tougher opponents? Had Belisarius achieved victory in Italy when he was recalled in 540? Why did the Goths recover so successfully under Totila? Did Justinian needlessly prolong the fighting in Italy because of his growing distrust of Belisarius?

Lecture Eleven

The Search for Religious Unity

Scope: Justinian, a brilliant theologian, believed that a common creed could unite Chalcedonians and Monophysites, but he failed to reckon with the Petrine sees in Rome, Constantinople, and Alexandria. Rome argued for primacy and refused to renegotiate the Council of Chalcedon. Constantinople, based on the canons of Chalcedon, insisted on equality with Rome. Monophysites demanded a reversal of Chalcedon and the vindication of Alexandria. Because Justinian needed the good will of Rome for his western wars, he sought to win over Rome by a common formula, the Theopascite theology, but his policy was delayed by the fighting in Italy and a search for moderate bishops to broker a compromise. At the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553), summoned to condemn Nestorian writings known as the "Three Chapters," Justinian proposed his common creed. But Justinian was thwarted by Pope Vigilius (536–555), who suffered arrest and exile rather than compromise. Monophysites, too, were dissatisfied, and the imperial church was even more bitterly divided.

Outline

- I. Christian division and imperial policy, 451–519: Most viewed the dispute over the creed at Chalcedon as a division in the imperial church and believed that a common wording was theologically possible if accepted by the leading prelates.
 - A. The Patriarch of Constantinople and the pope of Rome accepted the creed of Chalcedon.
 1. Greek-speaking Orthodox theologians based their theology on the writings of Cyril and were linked to Monophysite counterparts.
 2. The Patriarch insisted on equality with Rome (canon 28).
 3. The Patriarchate was willing to negotiate on Chalcedon.
 4. The Western Church accepted the *Tome* of Pope Leo I as a touchstone of faith and insisted on Roman primacy (canon 28).
 5. Western prelates, notably in Africa, refused to compromise on Chalcedon.
 - B. The Monophysites became committed to revising the creed of Chalcedon and rehabilitating the reputation of Dioscorus.
 1. Justinian's policies of reconquest were premised on the support of the Western Church.
 2. He saw all three positions of the controversy as nuances of the same creed.

3. In essence, Justinian had inherited the first case of ill will between Constantinople and Rome.

C. The Acacian Schism (484-519) split the eastern (Orthodox) and western (Catholic) churches in the empire over the issue of reconciliation with the Monophysites.

1. Zeno issued the *Henoticon* of Zeno (482), upholding the first Three Ecumenical Councils, affirming the theology of Cyril and Leo I without mention of Chalcedon, and ordering an end to theological debate.
2. In the East, Patriarch Acacius of Constantinople accepted *Henoticon*, and Monophysite bishops interpreted it as imperial favor.
3. Negotiation between Constantinople and Alexandria ensued.
4. In the West, Pope Felix III condemned *Henoticon* (484); Felix III and Acacius excommunicated each other.
5. The schism sharpened prejudices between Greek and Latin churches.
6. Anastasius I (491-518) promoted the Monophysite creed and clergy, leading to a clash between emperor and patriarchs of Constantinople.
7. Orthodox riots erupted in Constantinople (513-516); Rome and the Catholic West were alienated.

II. Religious policy of Justinian: Justinian faced a daunting task in reconciliation, which he viewed as his Christian duty, but he needed the cooperation of Rome and the loyalty of his Monophysite subjects to realize his ambitious military schemes.

A. In 519, Justin I and Justinian reconciled with the papacy of Rome, ending the Acacian Schism.

1. Communion with Pope Hormisdas was obtained by condemning Acacius and his successors.
2. The admission of error by patriarch and emperor bred resentment in the Greek churches and gave the papacy a moral victory.
3. Justin I, on papal demand, deprived Monophysite clergy of sees, thereby embittering Monophysite clergy (519-523).

B. Justinian acted as the new Constantine, "equal of the Apostles."

1. Trained in theology, Justinian believed that a rewording of creed should produce union; he perceived the dispute in the imperial church as doctrinal.
2. Justinian failed to account for rivalries among great sees.
3. Justinian had few moderate clergy who were willing to broker reconciliation.

C. From 527, Justinian devised a common creed with his Theopaschite theology (stressing "One in the Trinity had suffered for us"), which could be passed by a new ecumenical council.

1. Justinian made overtures to Monophysites in 532.
2. Theodora sought moderate clergy to work for compromise, such as Anthimus, Patriarch of Constantinople (535-536).
3. Vigilius (537-555) was elected pope to effect compromise, but desultory wars in Italy postponed the Ecumenical Council.
4. Justinian proposed that the "Three Chapters" (Nestorian writings) be condemned as a pretext for the Fifth Ecumenical Council to allow a common creed to be voted.
5. The opposition of Pope Vigilius (547-555) and of Monophysites led to an anticlimactic Fifth Ecumenical Council (553).
6. Justinian's policy deepened divisions in the imperial church.

III. Christianizing the Roman world: Justinian sought to eradicate heresy and idolatry and to promote the Christian message within and beyond the empire.

A. Imperial persecution and censorship set the standard for the medieval world.

1. Justinian applied the Theodosian laws, arresting crypto-pagans in the capital (528-529).
2. Pagan shrines were closed or converted into churches, as in Egypt.
3. Civil disabilities were enacted against Jews; reading the Hebrew Torah was prohibited.
4. Laws against heretics were applied and extended.

B. Justinian also funded missions and patronized construction of churches in his empire.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Why did the patriarchs of the great sees find compromise over the creed so difficult after 451? What were the causes of rivalry among Rome, Constantinople, and Alexandria? Could a common creed have been devised for Chalcedonians and Monophysites?
2. How did the policies of Zeno and Anastasius I make religious reconciliation more difficult? Was Justinian's religious policy sound? Why did the Fifth Ecumenical Council achieve so little?
3. How did Justinian promote a Christian empire? Why did festivals and architecture prove so effective in converting classical cities? How did Christian holy men impress peasants? Why did peoples beyond the imperial frontier accept Christianity?

Lecture Twelve

The Birth of Christian Aesthetics and Letters

Scope: Justinian presided over the synthesis of Jewish, classical, and provincial arts into a Christian art and architecture that dictated the aesthetics of the medieval world. Yet Christian aesthetics and letters did not end classical arts in private settings. Imperial artists decorated San Vitale at Ravenna, seat of the Byzantine governor, with the finest of mosaics. Decorative arts, such as metal work and ivory carving, dignified buildings and ritual. Foremost, Justinian's architects created masterpieces of basilican and centrally planned churches. Justinian rebuilt Hagia Sophia with a magnificent pendentive dome, and it is still the greatest domed building in Istanbul. Hagia Sophia provided the model for great domed churches in the cities of the empire, which proved decisive in creating a Christian skyline in Byzantine cities and inspiring the conversion of pagans. The creation of Christian arts and letters not only rewrote the cultural life of East Rome but also advanced Christianity to a majority faith.

Outline

- I. Evolution of Christian architecture: Constantine turned the Roman basilica into a Christian church ideally suited for the performance of the mass in splendid settings.
 - A. The basilican church, as a Roman imperial building, gave prominence and dignity to the new faith.
 1. The prototype was the Basilica Ulpia of Trajan at Rome.
 2. The basilica was made possible by Roman concrete, bricks, and vaults.
 3. The basilica was premised on an architecture of interiors to enclose space and accommodate crowds.
 4. Imperial basilican churches at Rome, Constantinople, and Treveri provided the models for bishops in provincial cities, such as Ephesus or Sardes in Asia Minor.
 5. Pagan temples were readily converted into basilican churches, as at Aphrodisias or Diocaearea in Asia Minor.
 - B. The centrally planned churches provided the model for the creation of the domed church, with either a square or basilican floor plan.
 1. The prototype was the Pantheon of Hadrian at Rome.
 2. The architectural task was to place a dome on a square building.
 3. Saint Polyeuctus, dedication by Anicia Juliana in 524–527, was the first domed church in Constantinople.

4. Justinian dedicated the church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus (527–532).

C. Hagia Sophia, with its dome of heaven, was the climax of early Christian architecture, because Justinian's architects succeeded in combining the basilican church with a dome.

1. San Vitale at Ravenna had used a squinch dome.
2. The architects Anthemius of Tralles and Isidore of Miletus used a pendentive dome for Hagia Sophia. Dedicated in 548, Hagia Sophia has the largest dome in Istanbul today.
3. The niches of domed churches were symbolically decorated with the Christian message.

II. Evolution of Christian arts: Christian artists adapted Roman floor mosaics and frescoes from decorative arts to religious iconography in churches.

A. Figures of frescoes and mosaics were simplified and elongated to convey the message to viewers from below.

1. Iconography, as in the case of the mosaics of San Vitale, instructed the worshiper with a familiar story of faith, providing spiritual comfort and clear orientation.
2. These messages of the faith cut across confessional lines, whether one adhered to Monophysite or Orthodox beliefs.

B. The development of Christian rituals required icons and liturgical objects.

1. Ivory and silver liturgical objects, such as diptychs or chalices, used classicizing forms to convey Christian stories.
2. The David plates, from the early seventh century, are among the most famous liturgical objects.

III. Creation of the classics: Christian intellectuals between the late second and early seventh centuries created the classics in the Western tradition, thereby ensuring the survival of their pagan literary heritage.

A. Classical letters inspired new Christian literature between the fourth and seventh centuries.

1. Rhetoric was studied for its value in preaching, as seen in the orations of John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople.
2. Hagiography, such as the *Life of St. Antony*, was based on classical biography, but it offered Christian moral examples.

B. Classical letters and aesthetics were fundamental to education; Christians objected when Julian (360–363) legislated against Christians learning the classics.

1. The Greek historical authors Herodotus and Thucydides provided the models for Byzantine historians, such as Procopius.
2. Byzantine intellectuals edited and wrote commentaries on Plato.
3. The epics of Homer and Athenian tragedies were the basis for poetic training.

Readings:

Beckwith, J., *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, New York: Penguin Viking, 1979.

Kitzinger, E., *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd–7th Century*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980.

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Rice, D. T., *Byzantine Art*, revised edition, New York: Penguin Viking, 1968.

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Runciman, S., *Byzantine Style and Civilization*, New York: Penguin Viking, 1971.

von Simpston, O. G., *Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Questions to Consider:

1. How did architecture and decorative arts increase the prospects of converting pagans to Christianity? How did architects and artists adapt classical forms to the Christian message?
2. What was the impact of the basilican church on the worshiper? What was the effect of the imperial churches at Constantinople? How was Hagia Sophia the climax of the Roman architectural achievement? How did Hagia Sophia influence subsequent building of churches?
3. Why did Christian Byzantines premise their education on pagan classical texts? What texts and subjects were vital for the education of a Byzantine gentleman? How did the Byzantines create the classics in the Western tradition?

Timeline

27 B.C. Augustus (27 B.C.–14 A.D.) establishes Principate (Early Roman Empire)

64 A.D. Persecution of Christians by Nero at Rome

98 Accession of Trajan (98–117); height of the Roman peace (*pax Romana*)

c. 107 Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch

c. 155–165 Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna

161 Accession of Marcus Aurelius (161–180); first signs of frontier stress

193 Accession of Septimius Severus (193–235); last stable dynasty of Rome; prosperity and widespread building programs in the Roman world

225 Origen (185–254) composes *On First Principles*; emergence of Christian theology

227 Ardashir I (227–240) establishes Neo-Persian (Sassanid) Empire; Persian armies threaten Roman East (229–299)

235 Assassination of Severus Alexander (222–235); end of political stability; “Crisis of the Third Century” (235–284); civil war and barbarian invasions; debasement of the currency and inflation (238–274)

249–251 Great Persecution of Trajan

251 Defeat and death of Trajan Decius at the hands of the Goths; Goths ravage the Balkans (251–269)

260 Defeat and Capture of Valerian I (253–260) by Shah Shapur I; fragmentation of the Roman Empire (260–274)

270–275 Accession of Aurelian; restoration of imperial unity

c. 270–280 Saint Antony enters an ascetic life in the Libyan desert

284 Accession of Diocletian (284–305); return of stability and prosperity; administrative, fiscal, and monetary reforms; inception of Dominate (Late Roman Empire)

293 Diocletian creates the Tetrarchy (rule by four emperors)

301 Edict of Maximum Prices

303–313 Great Persecution of Christians

306 Western army declares Constantine I (306–337) emperor; outbreak of civil wars (306–324)

312 Battle of Milvian Bridge; conversion of Constantine to Christianity

313 “Edict of Milan”; toleration of Christians

323 Saint Pachomius founds monastery at Tabennesi, Upper Egypt

325 First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea; proclamation of the Trinity (Nicene creed); confession of Arius, Arianism was condemned

330 Dedication of Constantinople as the Christian New Rome; shift of imperial power to the eastern provinces; birth of Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire

337–361 Accession of Constantius II (337–361), who upholds Arian confession; conversion of East Germans (Goths, Vandals, Burgundians) to Arianism

360 Accession of Julian II (360–363); restoration of pagan cults

362–363 Defeat and death of Julian on his Persian expedition; Roman surrender of strategic provinces in Mesopotamia

c. 370 Saint Basil of Caesarea composes *Aselectica*, rule for monastic life

378 Battle of Adrianople; defeat and death of Valens at the hands of the Goths

379–382 Theodosius I (379–395) restores order by hiring federate German tribes

381 Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople reinstates Trinity

391–392 Theodosius I outlaws pagan cults and proclaims Nicene Christianity the official faith of the Roman world

395Accession of Honorius in the West and Arcadius in the East; division of Roman Empire; Stilicho fails to contain Alaric and the Visigoths (395–397)

400Alaric and the Visigoths migrate toward Italy; clash with Stilicho (400–408)

406Migration of German tribes over Rhine; collapse of Roman northern frontiers

408Execution of Stilicho; end of effective leadership in the West; accession of Theodosius II (408–450) as Eastern emperor

410Sack of Rome by Alaric; migration of Goths into southern Gaul (411–417); Roman field army of Britain withdrawn and end of effective Roman rule

413–414Construction of the Theodosian Walls of Constantinople

425Accession of Valentinian III (425–455); disintegration of the Western Empire; Aetius maintains order by alliance with Huns

429–442Vandals conquer North Africa

431Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus; affirmation of Mary Theotokos; condemnation of Nestorian confession

438Promulgation of Theodosian Code

441–447Attila, King of the Huns (433–452) ravages the Balkans

443Formula of Reunion; reconciliation of Nestorians in the Roman world

449Robber Council (Latrocinium) of Ephesus; proclamation of Monophysite doctrine; Pope Leo I pens his *Tome* (“Letter”) in support of the two natures of Christ

450Accession of Marcian (450–457); reform of imperial army

451Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon; proclamation of the two natures of Christ (Chalcedonian creed); Battle of Châlons; Attila the Hun defeated by Aetius and German allies

452Death of Attila; collapse of the Hun Empire in central and eastern Europe

455Death of Valentinian III; collapse of effective power in the Roman West; phantom emperors reign in the West at the behest of German generals; Vandals sack Rome

457Accession of Leo I; Eastern Empire has surmounted its crisis

476Odoacer deposes Romulus Augustus (475–476); end of Western Empire

482Zeno (474–491) issues *Henoticon* in an effort to reconcile Monophysites; Acacian Schism between Rome and Constantinople (484–519)

491Accession of Anastasius I (491–518); fiscal and monetary reform

518Accession of Justin I (518–527)

527Accession of Justinian (527–565)

530Battle of Daras; decisive victory of Belisarius over the Persians

532Nike Revolt in Constantinople; conclusion of the Perpetual Peace with Persia; Justinian rebuilds Constantinople (532–537)

533–534Belisarius reconquers North Africa from the Vandals; publication of *Corpus Iuris Civilis*

535–552The Gothic War; reconquest of Italy

537Dedication of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople

542–544Plague ravages Near East and Europe; demographic collapse (542–750)

547Dedication of San Vitale at Ravenna

553Fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople; condemnation of “Three Chapters”; failure of plans to reconcile Monophysites

565Accession of Justin II (565–578) and Sophia; collapse of Justinian’s empire; migrations of Lombards into Italy, Avars and Slavs into the Balkans

572Outbreak of Persian Wars (572–591, 602–628)

Biographical Notes

Acacius. Patriarch of Constantinople (471–489), he accepted the *Henoticon*, and so clashed with Pope Felix III (493–492). The two prelates excommunicated each other in the first, Acacian, schism between the eastern and western Churches.

Adhemar. Bishop of Le Puy (c. 1050–1098), he was the papal legate on the First Crusade and friend of Count Raymond the IV of Toulouse. The most respected and objective among the leaders, his sound judgment was missed by the Crusaders after his death.

Aelia Pulcheria (399–453). Sister of the emperor Theodosius II (408–450) and wife of the emperor Marcian (450–457), she set the role of a Christian empress. Created Augusta in 414, she directed policy for her weak-willed brother and upheld Orthodox positions at Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451).

Aetius, Flavizus. Scion of a provincial military family, he is often hailed as the “last of the Romans.” He rose to command the armies of the West (*magister militum*) and dominated the court of Valentinian III (425–455) until his execution for treason in 454. Aetius used the Huns as allies to check the barbarian federates that were settled in the empire until Attila invaded the Western Empire twice, in 451 and 452.

Alaric. King of the Visigoths (395–410), he was opposed by Stilicho and pressured the eastern and western courts for high command. In migrating to Italy in 400–406, he forged the Visigothic nation, but he died soon after the sack of Rome (410). His successor, Athaulf, with imperial permission, settled the Visigoths in Gaul.

Alexander (Emperor, 912–913). Son of Basil I and brother of Leo VI, he precipitated a major Bulgarian War (912–924) with Tsar Symeon.

Alexius I Comnenus (Emperor, 1081–1118). Domestic of the East and scion of a great military family, Alexius seized power and established the last effective dynasty of the Middle Byzantine state. He restored finances, cemented relations with Venice, and regained important lands lost in western Asia Minor by the efforts of the First Crusade. At his death, the Byzantine Empire stood once again as a leading Christian state.

Alexius III (Emperor, 1195–1203). This feckless Angelan emperor deposed his brother Isaac II and failed to halt imperial decline. He fled Constantinople after the initial attack by members of the Fourth Crusade.

Alexius IV (Emperor, 1203–1204). Son of Isaac II, this Angelan prince invited the Fourth Crusade to restore him to his throne; he bore immediate responsibility for the Crusader sack of Constantinople. He, along with his father, was deposed and murdered by Alexius V Ducas (1204), who faced the final Crusader attack.

Alp Arslan. Second great sultan of the Seljuk Turks (1063–1072), this nephew of Tughril Bey defeated Romanus IV at Manzikert (1071) and opened Anatolia to Turkish conquest and colonization.

Amalasuntha. Daughter of King Theodoric of the Ostrogoths in Italy (489–526), she acted as regent for her son Athalaric (526–534). She then was married to a vicious distant relative, Theodahad (534–536), who arranged for her murder (535), which was the pretext for Justinian’s invasion of Italy.

Anastasius I (Emperor, 491–518). Second husband of Ariadne (daughter of Leo I), he restored imperial finances and faced renewed pressure from Sassanid Persia. He proved unpopular because of his Monophysite views, which resulted in repeated riots over religious issues in Constantinople.

Andronicus II (Emperor, 1282–1337). The second Palaeologan emperor and a devout Orthodox ruler, he hired the mercenaries led by Roger Blum, the Catalan Company, to regain northwestern Asia Minor from the Ottomans. The Catalans, short on pay, revolted, besieged Constantinople, and seized a principality in Greece (1302–1311). This failure marked the demise of Byzantine political and military power.

Anna Comnena (1083–1153). Daughter of the emperor Alexius I and political opponent to her brother, John II, she composed the *Alexiad*, a history of the first order.

Anthemius. A native of Tralles (modern Aydin), this engineer and theorist designed the Hagia Sophia of Justinian in 532–537.

Saint Antony (c. 250–357). Son of a wealthy Greco-Egyptian family of Alexandria, he assumed an ascetic life sometime after 270. His example and his life, written by Patriarch Athanasius, inspired many Christians to embrace the ascetic life.

Arcadius (Emperor, 395–408). The weak-willed son of Theodosius I, he succeeded as eastern Roman emperor and failed to cope with Alaric in 395–397. His ministers and his wife, Eudoxia, directed the affairs of state and so ensured the survival of the Eastern Empire.

Arius (c. 260–336). Presbyter in the church of Alexandria, he argued that Christ was generated as an inferior creature from God the Father. His theology, Arianism, was condemned at the First Ecumenical Council (325), but his followers converted the East Germans to the Arian confession.

Athanasius. Patriarch of Alexandria (328–373), he presented the Orthodox position at the First Ecumenical Council and opposed the emperor Constantius II, a devoted Arian, and the pagan emperor Julian II. His writings are regarded as the touchstone of orthodoxy.

Attila. King of the Huns (437–452), he murdered his brother and co-ruler Bleda in 445, then imposed Hun hegemony over the tribes of central and western

Europe. He exploited the weakness of the eastern Roman Empire to extort tribute (441–447), but his invasion of Gaul was halted by Aetius at Châlons (451). In 452, Pope Leo dissuaded Attila from marching on Rome, and the Hun king died soon after his return to his capital.

Aurelian (Emperor, 270–275). “Restorer of the Roman world,” an Illyrian soldier who rose through the ranks to commander of the elite cavalry. Declared emperor by the Danubian legions, Aurelian restored unity to the Roman Empire and reformed the currency, thereby initiating the recovery that culminated with Diocletian.

Baldwin I. Younger brother of Godfrey of Bouillon and first king of Jerusalem (1100–1118), he was an inspired leader of the First Crusade. Baldwin carved out the County of Edessa (1098) before he was summoned to be king of Jerusalem.

Baldwin I (Latin emperor, 1204–1205). Count of Flanders and a prominent leader of the Fourth Crusade, he was elected the first Latin or Crusader emperor in Constantinople. He was defeated and captured by the Bulgarians outside of Adrianople.

Baldwin II. The second king of Jerusalem (1118–1131) and nephew of Baldwin I, he was first Count of Edessa. He built the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem and cemented ties with the Italian maritime republics and the Byzantine emperor John II.

Baldwin IV. King of Jerusalem (1174–1185), he succeeded as a minor on the death of his father, King Amalric I. Known as “the Leper King,” he proved a talented ruler, but his untimely death signaled a succession crisis in the Crusader East exploited by Saladin.

Bardas Phocas. Nephew of the emperor Nicephorus II Phocas, he was commissioned by the young Basil II to defeat the rebel Bardas Sclerus (967–978), Domestic of the East. Bardas Phocas grew so powerful that he staged his own revolt (987–989), which Basil II defeated by a timely alliance with Prince Vladimir of Kiev.

Barsymes, Peter. Quaestor and finance minister of Justinian (541–554), he devised ingenious schemes to raise taxes, cut bureaucratic costs, and manipulate the currency. A Syrian provincial of humble origin and a protege of the empress Theodora, Peter loyally served his emperor, thus gaining the hatred of the nobility.

Saint Basil of Cappadocia (330–379). Born of a prominent Christian family and bishop of Caesarea in 370, this intellectual penned the *Ascetica*, or ascetic rule, still used by Orthodox monasteries, as well as major works on the Trinity.

Basil I (“the Macedonian,” 867–886). Of humble origin from northern Greece, Basil rose to be the favorite of Michael III, then seized power in a court plot. Founder of the Macedonian dynasty, Basil conducted important wars in the East

and in Italy, upheld the Orthodox faith, and initiated the cultural renaissance of the Middle Byzantine state.

Basil II (“Bulgar-slayer,” 976–1025). One of the greatest medieval warrior kings, he ascended the throne as a minor in 963, but after 976, he ruled in his own right. His reign was the zenith of the Middle Byzantine state. Basil II broke the power of the eastern military families, legislated on behalf of the poor and soldiers, conquered Bulgaria, and established diplomatic relations with Fatimid Egypt.

Belisarius (c. 505–565). Brilliant general of Justinian, he won his first major victory over the Persians at Daras (530), then reconquered North Africa and Italy. His recall from Italy by a suspicious Justinian led to the revival of Gothic power. With the death of Empress Theodora, Belisarius lost his patron at court and was treated poorly by Justinian.

Saint Benedict (480–543). Born at Nursia, he founded the monastery of Monte Cassino in 529, and his regulations for monastic life (*Opus Dei*) became the rule of the Benedictine order in the Western Church.

Beyazid I (“the Thunderbolt”). Ottoman sultan (1389–1402) and son of Murad I, he succeeded to the throne on the eve of the Battle of Kosovo, where he crushed the Serbian kingdom. He defeated the Crusaders from the West at Nicopolis (1396) and besieged Constantinople, but he was defeated and captured by the Mongol conqueror Tamerlane, “Prince of Destruction,” at Angora (1402).

Bohemond (c. 1056–1111). Son of Robert Guiscard, he campaigned against Byzantium in 1081–1085 and proved the most able general of the First Crusade. In 1098, Bohemond kept the city of Antioch and ruled thereafter as prince, in opposition to Alexius I.

Boniface III. The Count of Montferrat and leader of the Fourth Crusade, he carved out the feudal kingdom of Thessalonica (1205–1207) in northern Greece.

Boris I. Tsar of Bulgaria (858–899), he converted to Orthodox Christianity in 866, ensuring the conversion of the southern Slavs. He presided over the conversion of the Bulgar *khanate* into a Christian Slavic kingdom.

Charlemagne (Charles the Great). King of the Franks (768–814), this Carolingian ruler was crowned Roman emperor in 800 and so founded the Holy Roman Empire. He built the first effective state in western Europe since the collapse of Roman power.

Chosroes (Khusrau) I. Shah of the Sassanid Empire (531–579), he proved the rival of Justinian and extorted tribute payments for his alliance while imperial armies were reconquering the West. In 572, he declared war on Byzantium, initiating the last series of the Roman-Persian Wars.

Chosroes (Khusrau) II. Shah of the Sassanid Empire (591–626), he was backed by the emperor Maurice Tiberius against a pretender and concluded a peace with

Byzantium. In 602, he declared war on Phocas, usurper at Constantinople, and overran the eastern provinces, but his defeat at the hands of Heraclius marked the political collapse of the Sassanid state.

Clovis. King of the Franks (481–511), this Merovingian ruler converted from paganism to Catholic Christianity, thereby winning the cooperation of the Gallo-Roman ruling classes. He forged the Frankish kingdom, destined to reunite the Christian West.

Conrad III. Holy Roman Emperor (1138–1152), Conrad led the German contingents of the Second Crusade that met with disaster at the hands of the Seljuk Turks near Dorylaeum. He concluded a marriage alliance with the Byzantine emperor Manuel I.

Constans II (Emperor, 641–668). Grandson of Heraclius, he succeeded as a minor under the regency of Patriarch Paul II (641–654). He battled Arab attacks, carved out the themes in Asia Minor, and reorganized naval defenses in the West. He clashed with Pope Martin I (649–655) over the monothelete (“one will”) doctrine.

Constantine I (“the Great,” Emperor, 306–337). Son of Constantius I, Augustus in the West (305–306), he was declared emperor by the western army, which ignited civil wars that undermined the Tetrarchy. He reunited the Roman Empire in 324. At the Milvian Bridge (312), he converted to Christianity, ensuring the future of the new faith by his patronage. He summoned the First Ecumenical Council (325) and built a new Christian capital at Constantinople (330).

Constantine IV (Emperor, 668–685). Son of Constans II, he repelled the first Arabic siege of Constantinople (674–677). An able administrator and soldier, Constantine IV ended the search for religious reunion with the Monophysites when he upheld the Orthodox faith at the Sixth Ecumenical Council (681).

Constantine V (Emperor, 741–775). Son of Leo III and the second Isaurian emperor, he was a convinced iconoclast who attacked monasteries and summoned his own Iconoclastic Council in 754. He campaigned brilliantly in Armenia and the Balkans, reformed the imperial administration and army, and sponsored resettlement of vacant lands.

Constantine VI (Emperor, 780–797). Son of Leo IV (775–780) and Irene, he ruled under the regency of his mother, who restored the veneration of icons. An inept emperor, Constantine was overthrown and blinded by Irene.

Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (Emperor, 913–959). Son of Leo VI and Zoe Carbospina, he was the most learned and generous of the Macedonian emperors, patronizing arts and letters. He ruled under a series of regents, most notably his father-in-law, a scion of an eastern military family, Romanus I Lecapenus (919–944).

Constantine VIII (Emperor, 1025–1028). The younger brother of Basil II, he remained in the background, handling imperial ceremony. After the death of his distinguished brother, the elderly and weak-willed Constantine failed to secure the positions of his daughters Zoe and Theodora; a dynastic crisis ensued with his death.

Constantine IX Monomachus (Emperor, 1042–1055). Third husband of the empress Zoe, he patronized the arts but otherwise neglected affairs of state and indulged bureaucratic corruption. His debasement of the currency and military cutbacks were responsible for later imperial defeats at the hands of the Seljuk Turks.

Constantine X Ducas (Emperor, 1059–1067). The choice of the civil government as emperor on the retirement of Isaac I, he proved unequal to the task of reforming government and confronting the Seljuk Turks. With his death, the eastern aristocrats compelled his widow, Eudocia, to marry the general Romanus IV Diogenes.

Constantine XI Palaeologus (1448–1453). The son of Manuel II (1391–1425) and the last Byzantine emperor. He was a generous patron of the arts while Despot of Mistra (1443–1448) and heroically led the defense of Constantinople against Mehmet II in 1453.

Constantius I Chlorus (Emperor, 305–306). A tough Balkan soldier, he was created Caesar of the West in 293 and briefly succeeded Maximianus as western Augustus. He was later remembered as a friend of Christians, because his son Constantine converted to Christianity.

Constantius II (Emperor, 337–361). The second eldest surviving son of Constantine I, he succeeded to the eastern provinces and, by 353, he had reunited the empire. A staunch Arian Christian, he promoted Arian missionaries among the East Germans. He died en route to battle his cousin, the pagan emperor Julian II, declared emperor by the western army.

Cucuras, John. Domestic of the East under Romanus I, John Cucuras initiated the Macedonian offensive in eastern Anatolia and Armenia (923–944). His capture of Melitene secured the Upper Euphrates, and he obtained from Edessa the famed relic the Mandylion.

Cyril. Patriarch of Alexandria (412–444), he elevated Alexandria to the leading see of the eastern Roman world. He condemned the doctrines of Nestorius in his *Twelve Anathemas*. Cyril defined the tenets of the Trinity and Mary Theotokos, and his writings were accepted at the Third and Fourth Ecumenical Councils.

Saints Cyril (Constantine, 827–869) and **Methodius** (826–885). The fraternal monks, born at Thessalonica, were the “Apostles to the Slavs,” converting Moravians, Serbians, and Bulgarians. Cyril devised the “Cyrillic” alphabet to translate the Bible into Slavic.

Dandolo, Enrico. Doge of Venice (1192–1205), he led the Venetian fleet during the Fourth Crusade and ensured Venetian naval domination in the eastern Mediterranean after 1204. He died at Constantinople and is buried in Hagia Sophia.

Diocletian (Emperor, 284–305). A humble Dalmatian soldier, he was declared emperor by the eastern army. Diocletian ended the crisis of the third century and retired in 305. His administrative, monetary, and fiscal reforms established the Dominate, or late Roman state. His Tetrarchy, the college of four rulers, proved less successful.

Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria (444–451), this successor of Cyril failed to impose the Monophysite doctrine as the Orthodox faith. He was condemned and deposed at the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451).

Eugenius IV. (Pope, 1431–1447). This Venetian pope presided over the reunion with the Orthodox Church at Florence (1439), and his pontificate saw the arrival of Byzantine scholars and artists in Italy and the beginning of the Renaissance in Rome.

Eusebius. Bishop of Caesarea (260–340), he was bishop from 314 and a friend of the emperor Constantine. He composed important theological works, as well as the first *Ecclesiastical History*, the prime source for early Christianity.

Ficino, Marsilio (1433–1499). Italian humanist patronized by Cosmo de' Medici, he wrote *Theologica Platonica* (1469–1474), which inspired a revival of Platonic study in the West.

Flavian. Patriarch of Constantinople (447–449), he was deposed at the “Robber Council” of Ephesus for opposing the Monophysite doctrines upheld by Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria. Pope Leo I wrote his *Tome* in support of Flavian, and Flavian's position was vindicated at the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451).

Frederick I Barbarossa. Holy Roman Emperor (1154–1189), this Hohenstaufen emperor was regarded as a brilliant general and led the German contingent of the Third Crusade. His drowning in the river Calycadnus (modern Göksuyu) led to the breakup of the German Crusade.

Gaiseric. King of the Vandals (427–477), he overran Roman North Africa (429–442) and made the Vandals a leading naval power, enabling him to sack Rome in 455.

Gelimer. King of the Vandals (530–533), he overthrew his cousin and legitimate king Hilderic at the head of the Arian Vandal nobility. His usurpation provided the pretext for Justinian's reconquest of Africa.

Godfrey of Bouillon (1088–1100). A brave warrior, he was one of the senior Frankish princes of the First Crusade. He briefly ruled at Jerusalem as *advocatus* of the Holy Sepulcher (1099–1100).

Gregory I (“the Great,” Pope, 590–604). Loyal to the emperor at Constantinople, this pope was cut off from effective Byzantine aid by the Lombards; he then took the first measures in building the medieval papal state in central Italy. He also extended papal authority by sponsoring the missionaries to the Anglo-Saxons in 597.

Guustiniani Longo, Giovanni. The Genoese mercenary captain who directed the defense of Constantinople (April 1–May 29, 1453) against the Ottoman Turks. His retiring from the walls during the final fighting panicked the garrison and led to the fall of the city. He died soon after from wounds sustained during the siege.

Guy of Lusignan. King of Jerusalem (1186–1192) and second husband of Queen Sibylla, daughter of King Amalric I, he was regarded as an adventurer by the nobility of Outremer. He was responsible for the disastrous defeat of the Crusader army at Hattin (1187) at the hands of the sultan Saladin.

Harun ar-Raschid (786–809). He was the most celebrated of the Abbasid Caliphs and foe of Byzantium, but with his death, the Caliphate experienced civil war and fragmentation.

Heraclius (Emperor, 610–641). Son and namesake of the respected exarch of Carthage, he seized power in the darkest hours of the last Roman-Persian War. He waged brilliant campaigns in 622–626 that destroyed Persian power and restored the eastern provinces. He labored for reunion with the Monophysites by proposing his monothelete (“one will”) doctrine, but his efforts failed as the Muslim armies overran Syria and Egypt.

Hilderic. Vandal king (523–530) and grandson of Valentinian III, he converted to Catholicism and alienated the Vandal aristocracy. His overthrow by his cousin Gelimer gave Justinian the pretext to conquer North Africa.

Honorius (Emperor, 395–421). The younger son of Theodosius I, he succeeded to the Western Empire. He was under the domination of Stilicho to 408. Honorius's reign witnessed the collapse of the northwestern frontiers and the sack of Rome in 410.

Hugh of Vermandois (born c. 1055). Younger brother of King Philip I of France (1060–1108), he represented the French monarchy on the First Crusade and again during the Crusade of 1101. Noble in lineage, Hugh proved an indifferent leader.

Saint Ignatius. Bishop of Antioch (c. 107 A.D.), he wrote seven letters to Christian churches while being conveyed to Rome for execution. His writings are the first insight into the authority and role of bishops in Apostolic churches.

Pope Innocent III (1198–1216). Among the greatest of medieval popes, he sought to keep the Fourth Crusade on the path to Jerusalem. A brilliant canon lawyer, he summoned the Lateran Council of 1216.

Irene (Empress, 797–802). Mother of Constantine VI, she restored veneration of icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787). Her overthrow and blinding of her son led Pope Leo III to crown Charlemagne (768–814) Holy Roman Emperor in 800.

Isaac I Comnenus (Emperor, 1057–1059). He was proclaimed emperor by the eastern army, but when he failed to reform the corrupt bureaucracy, he retired to monastic life.

Isaac II Angelus (1185–1195). Although he inherited a bankrupt state, this first Angelan emperor lost Bulgaria (1186) and nearly lost his throne to Frederick I Barbarossa and the Third Crusade. He was deposed and blinded by his brother, Alexius III, and he was then briefly restored with his son by members of the Fourth Crusade in 1203–1204.

Isidore. Native of Miletus, this mathematician designed the pendentive dome of Hagia Sophia in 532–537. His nephew, Isidore the Younger, repaired the dome after a partial collapse from the earthquake of 558.

John of Cappadocia. Prefect of the East (531–541), he was the unscrupulous finance minister of Justinian and rival to the empress Theodora, who masterminded his downfall. Implicated in treason, John was stripped of his office and retired into obscurity.

John of Damascus (c. 676–749). Saint and theologian resident in the Umayyad Caliphate, he wrote the definitive defense of the veneration of icons during the First Iconoclastic Controversy.

John the Grammarian. (Patriarch, 834–845). An intellectual of the first order, John headed the commission of 815 that led to the second edict against the veneration of icons.

John Orphanotropus (“the Many-Eyed”). The chief eunuch minister at Constantinople in the reigns of Zoe’s first two husbands, he amassed a powerful position at court and introduced his brother, Michael IV, as the lover and then husband of empress Zoe. He fell from power during the purges by Michael V in 1041–1042.

John I Tzmisces (Emperor, 969–976). Nephew and assassin of Nicephorus II, he seized the throne as the second regent emperor of Basil II and Constantine VIII. He defeated Prince Sviatoslav of the Varangians in 971 and campaigned in Syria and Armenia (974–975).

John II Comnenus (Emperor, 1118–1143). Son of Alexius I, this able emperor imposed his authority over the Crusader princes of Antioch and the zupans of Serbia.

Julian II (“the Apostate,” Emperor, 360–363). Nephew of Constantine, he was declared emperor by the western army. Julian, who sought to restore worship of the gods, was killed on campaign in Persia.

Justin I (Emperor, 518–527). A Balkan peasant soldier, Justin bribed his way to the throne during the crisis following the death of Anastasius I. He adopted as heir his brilliant nephew Justinian, who was associated in the imperial government from 519.

Justin II (Emperor, 565–578). The nephew and heir of Justinian I, he precipitated a Persian War in 572. From 574, because of mental illness, he was under the regency of his wife, Sophia (niece of Theodora), and the Caesar Tiberius II.

Justin the Martyr (c. 100–165 A.D.). This early Christian author formulated an early doctrine of the Trinity. His *Apology* is the earliest defense of the faith to survive intact.

Justinian I (“the Great,” Emperor, 527–565). He succeeded his uncle and adoptive father, Justin I, as a mature, experienced ruler of forty-six. Justinian proved the greatest emperor since Constantine. He promoted the most talented at his court without regard to birth. He restored imperial rule in Italy and Africa, sought religious reconciliation, and sponsored arts and letters. His most enduring achievements are Hagia Sophia and the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*.

Justinian II Rhinometus (“Slit nose,” 685–695, 705–711). The last Heraclian emperor, he was an unbalanced tyrant. His Quinisextum Council precipitated the Iconoclastic Controversy, and his foreign policy led to defeats at the hands of the Arabs and opened Constantinople to a second Arabic siege.

Krum. Khan of the Bulgars (c. 803–814), he defeated in battle the iconodule emperors Nicephorus I and Michael I; he then negotiated the first treaty with Byzantium that marked off the limits of the Bulgar state.

Lactantius (c. 250–325). Christian Latin author, he wrote *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, which is a primary source for the Tetrarchy and contains the earliest description of the conversion of Constantine in 312.

Leo I (“the Great”). This pope of Rome (440–461), a Roman aristocrat by birth, upheld the Orthodox position in his *Tome*, or *Letter*, of 449, the first clear exposition of the Christology in Latin, which was accepted as canonical at the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451). He won prestige for the papacy by persuading Attila, King of the Huns, to retire from Italy (452).

Leo I (Emperor, 457–473). A high-ranking Dacian officer, he was declared emperor of the East on the death of Marcian and the end of the Theodosian dynasty. Leo broke the power of the barbarian commander Aspar, aspiring to play king-maker, and so ensured the domination of the bureaucratic government at Constantinople.

Leo III (“Isaurian,” Emperor, 717–741). First of the Isaurian emperors, he proved to be an able diplomat, then *strategos* of the Anatolikon theme. Declared emperor by the eastern army, Leo repelled the second Arabic siege of

Constantinople (717–718) and reformed the army and central administration. In 726, he issued his edict against the veneration of icons, which initiated the Iconoclastic Controversy.

Leo V (“the Armenian,” Emperor, 813–820). An officer who had risen through the ranks, he betrayed Michael I and seized power. In 815, he initiated a Second Iconoclastic Controversy. He was murdered and succeeded by his comrade Michael II.

Leo VI (“the Wise,” Emperor, 886–912). Son of Basil I and Eudocia, he was the second Macedonian emperor who issued a revised law code and was credited with a military manual on tactics. His reign saw steady imperial recovery on the frontiers, but his need for an heir led to an uncanonical fourth marriage with Zoe Carbospina that produced a succession crisis after his death and a clash between the papacy and Patriarchate.

Louis VII. King of France (1137–1180) and first husband of Eleanor of Aquitaine (c. 1122–1204), he led the French contingent on the Second Crusade. His army suffered privations and losses during the march over Asia Minor, and his failure to capture Damascus put the Crusader states in jeopardy.

Leo IX (Pope, 1048–1054). Native of Lorraine and kinsman of Holy Roman Emperor Conrad II, he reformed the church in Italy but failed to contain the Normans. He was defeated at Civitate (1053) and died a prisoner of Robert Gusicard. His legates in Constantinople delivered the papal bull of excommunication that led to the Great Schism.

Saint Macarius (c. 300–390). Egyptian ascetic who established *lavrae* (“cells”) in which holy men could live in support of one another—an innovation that led to the establishment of monastic houses.

Maniaces, George. Loyal and talented officer of Basil II, he commanded field armies in the East and Italy (1032–1043). Driven into an abortive revolt against the corrupt Constantine IX in 1043–1044, he was killed by an arrow while besieging Constantinople.

Manuel I Comnenus (Emperor, 1143–1180). Grandson of Alexius I, he sought marriage alliances with the leading western European and Crusader monarchs and favored Westerners at his court. His defeat by the Seljuk Turks at Myriokephalon resulted in the Byzantine retreat from central Anatolia and the end of the Comnenian revival.

Manuel II Palaeologus (Emperor, 1391–1425). An adroit diplomat, Manuel II fashioned the alliance of western Crusaders defeated by Sultan Beyazid I at Nicopolis (1396). Although Constantinople was saved from Ottoman conquest by the invasion of Tamerlane, Manuel II was in no position to rebuild the Byzantine state or to secure sufficient Western aid.

Marcian (Emperor, 450–457). A senior general of humble origin, he married Aelia Pulcheria and proved a judicious emperor, refusing tribute to Attila and reforming the imperial army. He presided over the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451).

Maurice Tiberius (Emperor, 582–602). A distinguished soldier, Maurice gained legitimacy when he was adopted as the heir of Tiberius II. He restored imperial frontiers in the Balkans, settled the Persian war in 591, and consolidated the western provinces into exarchates. He was murdered by mutinous soldiers led by the centurion Phocas in protest to wintering north of the Danube.

Maxentius (Emperor, 306–312). Son of Maximianus, Augustus in the West (285–305), he was declared emperor at Rome. He was defeated and slain by Constantine at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312).

Mehmet II (“the Conqueror,” 1451–1481). Son of sultan Murad II (1421–1451), he captured Constantinople in 1453, the natural capital of his emerging Ottoman Empire. He conquered the sundry Turkish emirates of Asia Minor and the Byzantine principalities of Mistra (1460) and Trebizond (1461).

Metochites, Theodore (d. 1332). The finance minister of Andronicus II (1315–1321), he rebuilt and decorated the Church of the Savior in Chora (Kariye Camii); the mosaics and frescoes there are masterpieces of late Byzantine art.

Mevlana, born as **Jalal ud-din Rumi** (1207–1273), this Persian mystic and poet founded the Mevlevi mystical order of Sufism; the order’s members, “the Dervishers,” converted Anatolia into a Muslim land by 1350.

Michael I (Emperor, 811–813). Iconodule emperor, he was the son-in-law of Nicephorus I. He was betrayed in a battle against Khan Krum near Versinicia by Iconoclast officers of the eastern army. He was deposed and succeeded by Leo V.

Michael I Cerularius. A strong-willed Patriarch (1043–1058), he upheld orthodoxy and provoked the Great Schism in 1054 with the Western Church.

Michael II (“the Stammerer,” Emperor, 820–829). Founder of the Amorian dynasty, he murdered his former comrade, Leo V; seized the throne; and warded off a siege of Constantinople by rebels led by his other comrade, Thomas the Slav (821–824). This Iconoclastic emperor witnessed the loss of naval bases in Sicily and Crete to Arab pirates. He sought dynastic legitimacy by a second marriage to Euphrosyne, daughter of Constantine VI.

Michael III (“the Drunkard,” Emperor, 842–867). The last Amorian emperor, he succeeded as an infant under the regency of his mother, Theodora, who restored the icons at the Synod of Constantinople (843). His uncle, Bardas Caesar, administered the empire until his favorite, and eventual assassin, Basil the Macedonian executed Bardas and made himself co-emperor in 866.

Michael IV (Emperor, 1034–1041). Second husband of the empress Zoe, he was an epileptic of humble origins in the hands of his brother John Orphanotropheus, the corrupt senior minister at court. He faced a serious rebellion in Bulgaria, and his reign marked a worsening of the political fortunes of the Byzantine Empire. He prevailed on Zoe to adopt his nephew, Michael V (1041–1042), as their successor, but this ruler proved unpopular and was overthrown.

Michael VI (Emperor, 1056–1057). A senior court official, he was adopted as heir by the empress Theodora, last member of the Macedonian house. He alienated the eastern army and was soon deposed by the first military emperor, Isaac I Comnenus.

Michael VII Ducas (Emperor, 1072–1078). Son of Constantine X and protege of the historian Michael Psellus, he proved incompetent in dealing with the Turkish migrations after 1071. He was overthrown in a military coup.

Michael VIII Palaeologus (Emperor, 1258–1282). Nicene general, he usurped the throne from the infant John IV and reoccupied Constantinople in 1261. He courted Western aid by adopting Catholicism at the Council of Lyons (1274), and he restored imperial rule in northern Greece at the expense of the Anatolian provinces.

Muawiya (Caliph, 661–689). The general of the Syrian army and father of the Arabic navy, he refused to accept Ali, cousin of Muhammad, as fourth Caliph because of Ali's implication in the murder of Caliph Uthman (644–656). Muawiya triumphed over the forces of Ali and founded the first hereditary Umayyad Caliphate at Damascus.

Muhammad (570–632). The prophet of God (Allah), he was called to cleanse the religion of Abraham and so founded Islam. His revelations, the direct, uncreated word of God, were collected into the *Koran*. Driven from his native Mecca in 622, Muhammad created a *umma* (community of believers) at Medina that defeated the Meccans. At his death, Muhammad had united all Arabia under Islam.

Narses (c. 485–573). A eunuch of Armenian origin, he was already an officer of distinction at the Battle of Daras (530). Narses commanded the final expedition that conquered Ostrogothic Italy in 549–554; he then reorganized war-torn Italy.

Nestorius. Patriarch of Constantinople (429–431), this theologian of Antioch taught that Mary was Christokos, or mother of the human nature. His views were condemned at the Third Ecumenical Council (431); he was deposed and exiled. His followers established a Nestorian church in Persian Mesopotamia or rejoined the imperial church under the Formula of Reunion (433).

Nicephorus I (802–811). Treasurer (*logothetes*) of Irene and an Arabian by birth, this minister seized power as Irene lost popularity. He suffered humiliating defeats at the hands of Caliph Harun-ar-Raschid; he was defeated and slain by Khan Krum of the Bulgars.

Nicephorus II Phocas (963–969). Scion of a leading Anatolian family with ties to the Georgian aristocracy, he reconquered Crete from Arabic pirates (961). He married the empress Theophano, widow of Romanus II (957–963), and assumed the regency for the brothers Basil II and Constantine VIII. An indomitable warrior against the Arabs, his tactless actions nearly led to war with the Holy Roman Emperor Otto I, and he precipitated a crisis in the Balkans by encouraging Prince Sviatoslav of Kiev to attack Bulgaria.

Nicholas I Mysticus. This controversial Patriarch (901–907; 912–925) opposed the fourth marriage of Leo VI and so clashed with the papacy. He proved an unsuccessful regent for Constantine VII and was forced out of politics by the empress Zoe Carbospina.

Nicholas V (Pope, 1447–1455). Patron of artists and thinkers, he made Rome the capital of Renaissance Italy. He worked to send aid to the besieged city of Constantinople in 1453.

Nur-ad-Din. Sultan of Aleppo (1148–1174), he united Muslim Syria and welded the Turkmen tribes into an invincible army destined to sweep the Crusaders out of the Levant. He died en route to battle his rebellious general Saladin, who had conquered Egypt.

Orhan (1324–1360). The son of Osman (1281–1324), eponymous founder of the Ottomans, he forged the Ottoman state in northwestern Anatolia. He was hailed sultan in 1337 and, at the time of his death, the Ottomans had secured the Thracian hinterland of Constantinople and were, thus, a Balkan power as well.

Origen (185–254). Brilliant Christian theologian, he wrote numerous commentaries on books of the Bible and *On First Principles*, the first serious theological work that reconciled Christian faith and Platonic philosophy.

Saint Pachomius (c. 290–346). A pagan convert to Christianity who undertook an ascetic life, founding the first monastery at Tabennesi, in Upper Egypt (323).

Peter the Hermit (c. 1050–1115) and **Walter the Penniless** (c. 1050–1097). Respectively, an itinerant hermit and knight who led the first wave of humble Crusaders known as the People's Crusade (1096–1097). This rabble, which had conducted pogroms in the Rhineland and plundered Byzantine territory, were annihilated by the Seljuk Turks outside of Nicaea (1097).

Philip II Augustus. King of France (1180–1223) and the son of the Crusader King Louis VII, he vied with Richard I of England for control of the Third Crusade. He departed for home in 1191 to conspire with John, brother of Richard, to undermine the Angevin domains in France.

Phocas (Emperor, 602–610). A centurion of the Balkan army, he usurped the throne by leading a mutiny against the emperor Maurice Tiberius. His tyranny in Constantinople alienated the ruling classes and led to a declaration of war by

Shah Chosroes II. Phocas suffered repeated defeats and was overthrown by Heraclius.

Photius. Patriarch of Constantinople (858–867, 876–886), he ran afoul of the emperor Basil I. Photius possessed a versatile mind and revived serious study of Plato.

Phrantzes, George (1401–1477). The last great Byzantine historian, he served Constantine XI and wrote an eyewitness account of the siege of Constantinople.

Plethon, born as **George Gemistus** (c. 1355–1452). Celebrated philosopher, he studied at the court of Mistra in the Byzantine Peloponnesus and revived the study of Plato on his own terms. He called for a cultural and political revival under the banner of Hellenism.

Plotinus (205–270). This Neoplatonic thinker, whose disciple, Porphyry of Gaza, compiled his teachings into the *Enneads*, offered a synthesis of Platonic thought that provided the intellectual basis for the revival of the pagan cults by the emperor Julian (360–363).

Saint Polycarp. This bishop of Smyrna was martyred at an uncertain date during a persecution (c. 150–165 A.D.). He established the role of bishops in Apostolic churches and was in the forefront of fixing the canon by editing books of the New Testament.

Psellus, Michael (1018–1096). Philosopher, courtier, and monk, he penned the *Chronographia*, a lurid account of emperors following Basil II. His protege, Michael VII, proved unfit for imperial rule.

Raymond III. Count of Tripoli (1152–1187), he rallied the native Crusader nobility against King Guy and urged a moderate policy against Saladin. Guy failed to heed Raymond's warning not to risk battle at Hattin.

Raymond IV. Count of Toulouse (1088–1105), he led the Provençal contingent of the First Crusade. He and his descendants, who established the County of Tripoli, allied with the Comnenian emperors against their common Norman foes.

Richard I Lion-hearted. King of England (1189–1199), he was the son of Henry II (1154–1189) and Eleanor of Aquitaine. A knight and troubadour, he was perceived as the greater monarch on the Third Crusade (1189–1192), but he failed to recover Jerusalem.

Robert Curthose (1054–1134). The eldest son of William I (1066–1087), he succeeded as Duke of Normandy. He was an indifferent leader of the First Crusade and returned to lose his duchy to his brother, King Henry I (1100–1135), at the Battle of Tinchebray (1106).

Robert Guiscard (1015–1085). He succeeded his brother William the Strong-arm as count of the Norman adventurers in southern Italy. He took the title Duke

of Apulia (1059–1085), expelled the Byzantines from Italy (1071), and invaded Greece (1081–1085).

Romanus I Lecapenus (Emperor, 919–944). Drungarius (admiral) of the imperial fleet in 919, he seized power and ruled as regent emperor for Constantine VII, to whom he married his daughter Helena. A tireless administrator and legislator, he concluded the war with Tsar Symeon and opened the eastern offensives against the Arabs.

Romanus III Argyrius (Emperor, 1028–1034). A senior courtier and prefect of Constantinople, he was the first husband of the empress Zoe. He proved unequal to the task of imperial government. He was murdered by Zoe and her paramour, the future Michael IV.

Romanus IV Diogenes (Emperor, 1068–1072). A leading general of the eastern army, he married Eudocia, widow of Constantine X, in a bid to reform the state and halt Turkish invasions. He was betrayed at the Battle of Manzikert and suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Sultan Alp Arslan (1071).

Romulus Augustus (Emperor, 475–476). The last puppet emperor of the western Roman Empire, this boy emperor was deposed by Odoacer, commander of the German soldiers—an act that symbolized the end of Roman rule in the West.

Saladin. Ayyubid sultan of Egypt and Syria (1174–1193), he was a general of Nur ad-Din. He faced hostility from the Turkish military elite because of his Kurdish origins and led a holy war (*jihad*) against the Crusaders. A generous and intelligent ruler, he destroyed the Crusader army at Hattin (1187) and thwarted the Third Crusade from retaking Jerusalem.

Samuel. Tsar of Bulgaria (976–1014), he raised the standard of revolt against Byzantine rule and forced Basil II to wage a war of pacification (990–1014). He died in despair soon after the Battle of the Cleidon Pass, after Basil had captured and blinded the Bulgarian army.

Septimius Severus (Emperor, 193–211). A Roman senator from North Africa, he seized the throne in a civil war and established the Severan dynasty, the last stable imperial family of the Principate. A patron of provincial cities and an able general, Septimius Severus upheld the image of the Antonine Roman peace but ruled as a military emperor.

Shapur I. The second Shah of the Sassanid or Neo-Persian Empire (240–272), he waged three great wars against Rome, inflicting a humiliating defeat on the emperor Valerian in 260.

Stefan Dushan. Great Prince of Serbia (1331–1355), he united Slavic and Greek principalities in the Balkans and briefly aspired to capturing Constantinople. Patron of the Orthodox Church, he initiated the flowering of Serbian arts.

Stephen. Count of Blois (c. 1056–1102), he was married to Adelaide, daughter of King William I (1066–1087). He was a reluctant Crusader, but his letters are a vital source for the First Crusade.

Stilicho. Flavius. The *magister militum* in the Western Empire (395–408), he dominated the court of the weak emperor Honorius. Stilicho failed to contain Alaric or extend his sway over the eastern court. He compromised the northern frontiers to defend Italy in 405–406 and was executed for treason in 408.

Sviatoslav. Prince of Kiev (964–972) and son of Queen Olga (Helga), who had embraced Orthodox Christianity in 957, he defeated the Khazars, but he suffered defeat at the hands of Byzantine armies in Bulgaria (967–971).

Symeon. Tsar of Bulgaria (893–927), this second son of Tsar Boris had been destined for a religious career and studied at Constantinople. In two wars (894–899, 912–924), he challenged the Macedonian emperors for domination of the Balkans.

Tancred (1078–1112). The nephew of Count Bohemond, he was a dashing knight of the First Crusade who briefly held the lordship of Galilee. From 1103, he served as regent for his uncle, Prince Bohemond of Antioch.

Tertullian (c. 160–240). Former lawyer of Carthage, he wrote the first major Christian works in Latin. Of foremost importance was his *Apology*, defending Christianity.

Theoderic the Great. King of the Ostrogoths (489–526), he conquered Italy from Odoacer on orders of the emperor Zeno. This Arian German king, ruling from Ravenna, imposed enlightened rule over Italy, winning the cooperation of the papacy and the Senate at Rome.

Theodora (c. 505–548). A courtesan of the streets of Constantinople, she married Justinian in 524 and ruled as his partner and advisor until her death in 548. A shrewd judge of character, she selected loyal, able ministers and generals, such as Belisarius.

Theodora (Empress, 1042, 1055–1056). The second daughter of Constantine VIII, she ruled briefly with her sister Zoe, then alone after the death of her brother-in-law Constantine X. Less vain than her older sister, she was nonetheless a pawn of her corrupt ministers.

Theodore I Lascaris (Emperor, 1204–1222). A leading general in 1204, he retired and founded a Byzantine “splinter empire” at Nicaea that was destined to recover Constantinople.

Theodosius I (“the Great,” Emperor, 379–395). Son and namesake of a celebrated Spanish general, he was elevated as emperor in the East in the aftermath of the Battle of Adrianople. In 379–382, he restored the imperial army by enrolling federate tribes. He briefly reunited the empire in 394–395. A devout

Nicene Christian, he summoned the Second Ecumenical Council (381) and outlawed the pagan cults in 391–392.

Theodosius II (Emperor, 408–50). Son of Arcadius, Theodosius proved a weak emperor. He was directed by his older sister, Aelia Pulcheria, and his ministers, who were responsible for the achievements of his reign, notably the Theodosian Walls, the Theodosian Code (438), and the Third Ecumenical Council (431).

Theophano. Empress and wife of Romanus II (957–963), she secured the succession of her infant sons, Basil II and Constantine VII, by her political marriage to the leading general Nicephorus Phocas. She conspired with John Tzimisces to murder the discredited Nicephorus II, but she was excluded from power and it was rumored later that she had poisoned her accomplice, John I Tzimisces, in 976.

Theophilus (Emperor, 829–842). The last Iconoclastic emperor and second emperor of the Amorian dynasty, he was learned in philosophy and sponsored arts. Theophilus built the sea walls of Constantinople and faced the last serious Abbasid attack in 838.

Tiberius II (Emperor, 578–582). A senior officer, he was created Caesar in 574 by the empress Sophia when mad Justin II proved unfit to rule. He faced a Persian War and Avar-Slav inroads into the Balkans, but he nominated the able Maurice Tiberius as his heir.

Totila. King of the Ostrogoths (541–552), this nobleman was elected king by the army. Totila rallied the Ostrogoths and recovered much of Italy from Byzantine forces. He was defeated and slain by Narses at the Battle of Busta Gallorum (552).

Trajan (Emperor, 98–117). A distinguished Roman senator and general of Spanish descent, he proved to be the greatest emperor since Augustus. He was the second of the “Five Good Emperors.” By his conquests of Dacia and in the East, he brought the Roman Empire to its territorial zenith.

Trajan Decius (Emperor, 249–251). Declared emperor by the army of the Danube, he launched the first empire-wide persecution of Christians in 250. He was defeated and slain by the Goths.

Tribonian. A lawyer from Side of modest descent, he was appointed quaestor, chief jurist of Justinian (527–54). Tribonian, the greatest Roman legalist, produced the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* in 533–537.

Troglitas, John. A talented professional officer of Justinian, he took command of the army in North Africa and crushed the Moorish rebels (546–548). He restored administration and defense, ensuring the prosperity of the African provinces down to the Arabic conquest in 696–698.

Tughril Bey. First great sultan (1037–1063), he welded together the Turkomen tribes of central Asia, invaded Iran, and restored the power of the Sunni Abbasid Caliphate at Baghdad in 1055.

Urban II (Pope, 1088–1099). This French pope reformed papal administration and finances and preached the First Crusade at the Council of Clermont (1095).

Valens (Emperor, 364–378). Brother and colleague of the western Emperor Valentinian I (364–375), he was an Arian by faith. Valens campaigned successfully in the East, but he was defeated and slain by the rebellious Goths at Adrianople (378).

Valentinian III (Emperor, 425–455). Nephew of the emperor Honorius, he was a weak emperor of the West dominated by his general Aetius and his mother and regent, the empress Galla Placidia. His reign saw barbarians overrun the Mediterranean province in the West, and his death marked the end of the Theodosian dynasty in the West.

Valerian (Emperor, 253–260). A senior senator, he was declared emperor by the Rhine army and ruled jointly with his son Gallienus (253–268). His reign represented the nadir of imperial power, and he was defeated and captured by Shah Shapur I.

Vigilus or Vigilius (Pope, 537–555). He was elected pope with the support of Theodora so that he could work for religious unity with the Monophysites. An exile at Constantinople after the Gothic recapture of Rome in 546, he refused to compromise the papal position and opposed Justinian at the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553). His arrest, exile, and premature death undermined Justinian's popularity in the Western Church.

Villehardouin, Geoffrey (c. 1150–1218). French nobleman, he composed an eyewitness history of the Fourth Crusade and the founding of the feudal Latin Empire.

Vladimir. Prince of Kiev (980–1015), he embraced Orthodox Christianity in 989 as part of a marriage alliance with Basil II. He founded the royal institutions of the medieval Russian state.

Wittigis. King of the Ostrogoths (536–540), he was elected by the army after Theodhad was deposed. He resorted to a war of attrition against Belisarius but was driven into Ravenna and forced to surrender in 540.

Zengi. The brilliant Turkish *atabeg* of Mosul (1127–1146) who conquered Aleppo and recaptured Edessa from the Crusaders, thus precipitating the Second Crusade. His son Nur-ad-Din united Muslim Syria.

Zeno (Emperor, 474–491). An Isaurian officer, he married Ariadne, daughter of Leo I and succeeded to the Eastern Empire. He sought reconciliation with the Monophysites by issuing the *Henoticon* (482) and crushed serious rebellions of the provincial armies.

Zoe (Empress, 1042). The daughter of Constantine VIII, she was childless and nearly fifty-five at the death of her father. A vain and foolish woman, she was easily controlled by her ministers, who arranged for her marriage to weak husbands Romanus III, Michael IV, and Constantine X. She ruled briefly with her sister Theodora in 1042.

Zoe Carbospina. Empress and fourth (uncanonical) wife of Leo VI, she assumed the regency of her son Constantine VII (915–919) but was driven from power by the admiral Romanus I Lecapenus.

COURSE GUIDEBOOK



The World of Byzantium

PART II

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- Lecture 17: Recovery Under the Macedonian Emperors
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- Lecture 19: Imperial Collapse
- Lecture 20: Alexius I & the First Crusade
- Lecture 21: Comnenian Emperors & Crusaders
- Lecture 22: Imperial Exile & Restoration
- Lecture 23: Byzantine Letters & Aesthetics
- Lecture 24: The Fall of Constantinople

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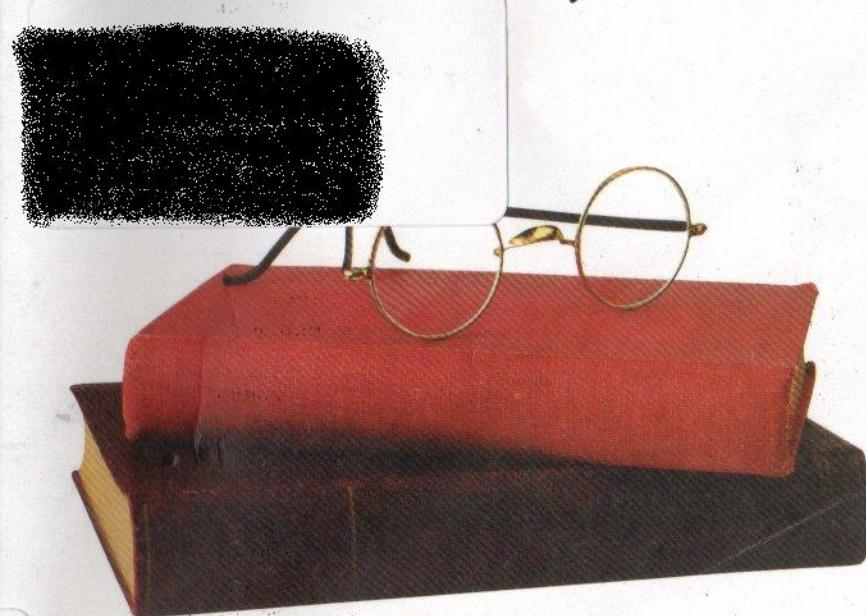


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The World of Byzantium

Part II

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The World of Byzantium

Part II

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The World of Byzantium

Scope:

The civilization of East Rome, or Byzantium, is seldom studied on its own merits because this seemingly remote world is a curious, even unsettling, mix of the classical and medieval. Byzantine arts and letters, deeply steeped in traditional orthodoxy, seldom appeal to the modern Westerner, a product of the Enlightenment and the changes wrought by modernization, or even to the Muslim whose own civilization owes much to Byzantium. Yet, the Byzantine Empire played a pivotal role in defining the geographic and cultural boundaries of the civilizations that emerged out of the late Roman world, and the history of the Byzantine world is an essential part of how the modern world emerged in Europe and the Middle East. This course is designed in three components to explain the historic role and achievements of the Byzantine world.

The first twelve lectures examine the transformation of the classical heritage as seen during the Roman peace of the second century A.D. into the early medieval world of Byzantium. These five centuries of Late Antiquity, from 150 to 650 A.D., witnessed the emergence from the Roman world of three related but distinct cultures: the Latin Christian West, which integrated the Germanic and Celtic peoples of northwestern Europe; the Muslim world, stretching from Tangier to the Indus (thereby incorporating the southern and eastern provinces of Rome and the former Sassanid Empire of Iran and central Asia); and Byzantium, centered at New Rome, or Constantinople, that gave birth to an Orthodox Christian world of eastern Europe.

The lectures of the first component examine how the later Roman Empire responded to political and military crises in the troubled times of the third century. Roman responses wrought great changes in state and society, seen in the reign of Diocletian (284–305), the greatest of the soldier emperors, whose reforms ended these crises. His Christian successor, Constantine (306–337), took the Roman world in a new direction. Foremost, Constantine assured the role of Christianity. As the favored religion of the imperial family, Christianity enjoyed cultural dominance over the Mediterranean world, even though pagans were the majority well into the fifth century and, in some regions, well into the sixth century. The pace of cultural transformation was accelerated by the emperor Justinian (527–565), who sought to restore the Mediterranean world to his vision of the empire of Constantine. His policies bankrupted the treasury and plunged the Roman world into a new series of crises that ended the classical world forever.

The next set of nine lectures deals with the achievements of Middle Byzantine state and society, with the capital at Constantinople, or “New Rome,” which was forged in the Greek and Anatolian provinces on the ruins of the eastern half of the Roman Empire. This was the medieval world of Byzantium, familiar to poets and novelists, and its institutions, although based on classical models, were

medieval in tone. During the Byzantine Dark Age (610–867), emperors warded off new invaders, checked the power of Islam, and directed a transformation of government, society, and culture. The Macedonian emperors (867–1056) presided over a recovery, constructing institutions that endured even after inept rulers had lost Asia Minor to the Seljuk Turks. The Comnenian emperors (1081–1185), who summoned the Crusaders as allies, restored imperial prosperity and power in the twelfth century, but their efforts failed to reverse decline. In 1204, Crusaders captured and sacked Constantinople, thereby ending the Byzantine historic role as the great Christian power.

The last three lectures deal with the late Byzantine world. Even though the political history of the Byzantine world after 1204 is a dismal record, the cultural legacy of Byzantium proved enduring. The Orthodox lands of eastern Europe, represented foremost by Russia and Serbia during the later Middle Ages, emerged as the spiritual and cultural successors to Byzantium. But even the Ottoman sultans, who reconstituted the last great Muslim empire in the Middle East and Mediterranean worlds in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, owed much to their Byzantine predecessors. Finally, Byzantine arts and letters, as well as the classical tradition's aesthetics and texts, were carried by Greek scholars to western Europe so that Byzantine civilization played an important role in the Renaissance that reshaped the West.

Lecture Thirteen

The Emperor Heraclius

Scope: Justinian (527–565) slashed the military budget, and the army was unable to defend the frontiers of a Mediterranean empire. Justinian's nephew, Justin II (565–578), proved mentally unfit; from 574, his wife, Sophia, and the Caesar Tiberius operated as regents. In 568, the Lombards migrated into Italy; henceforth, the peninsula was divided between the imperial coastal cities and the Lombard dukes in the interior. Maurice Tiberius (582–602) entrusted Italy and Africa to exarchs, independent military governors at Ravenna and Carthage, respectively. The Avars, dreaded Turkish-speaking horsemen, and pagan Slavs invaded the Balkans. Crazed Justin II and the usurper Phocas (602–610) each ignited a Persian war. The second nearly lost the East until Heraclius (610–641) humbled the Sassanid foe. But his timing proved fateful. Heraclius next faced the Arabic armies that conquered Syria, Egypt, and Libya and the entire Persian Empire. Heraclius died with his empire, so briefly restored, on the brink of collapse before the might of Islam.

Outline

- I. Collapse of Justinian's restored empire: The successors of Justinian, with an empty treasury and a weakened army, faced three new threats that nearly destroyed the eastern Roman Empire.
 - A. Justinian hired barbarian mercenaries in great numbers from 540; they were familiar with imperial weakness, as well as Italy and the Balkans.
 1. In 568, the Lombards migrated into Italy, overrunning the hinterland of northern and central Italy.
 2. Italy was divided between Lombard princes and Byzantines, who held the coastal cities and Mediterranean zones.
 3. From 580, the exarch (governor) at Ravenna and the papacy in Rome were independent of each other.
 4. Avars (Turkish nomads) and Slavs invaded the Balkans, sacking cities of the interior and driving the Greek and Roman population to the shores.
 5. A resurgent Sassanid Persia threatened the eastern frontier.
 - B. Justin II (565–578) and Tiberius II (578–582) faced a serious Persian war (574–590) that prevented assistance to the hard-pressed European provinces.
 1. The mad emperor Justin II provoked a Persian war. From 574, he was under a regency headed by his wife, empress Sophia.

2. The imperial army suffered defeat without leadership, money, or manpower.

C. Maurice Tiberius (582–602), the ablest of Justinian’s successors, restored imperial frontiers, but fiscal crisis undermined his efforts and he fell in a mutiny that plunged the empire into crisis.

1. Maurice Tiberius concluded an alliance with Shah Chosroes II (590–626), who was restored to the Persian throne.
2. Italy was fragmented—the southern sections remained under Byzantine control, while central and northern Italy were linked to northern Europe.
3. With the eastern field army, Maurice restored the frontiers in the Balkans (590–602), but new peoples pushed into the heartland.
4. The mutiny by Phocas provoked a new Persian War (602–626); Chosroes II overran the eastern provinces in 602–619.
5. Monophysites, heretics, and Jews welcomed Persian armies.
6. The tyrant Phocas was overthrown by the revolt of Heraclius in Africa in 610.

II. Heraclius (610–641) seized Constantinople and took emergency measures to restore discipline and training in the imperial army. He launched a brilliant offensive against the Persians that reversed defeat.

A. Heraclius appreciated the strategic position of Constantinople and the imperial fleet, as well as his allies, the Christian lords in Armenia and Georgia and the Turkish-speaking nomads, Khazars, of southern Russia.

1. Heraclius reorganized the imperial army.
2. Heraclius borrowed the wealth of the church.
3. Administrative budgets were slashed; imperial currency was debased; and taxes were raised from the propertied classes.

B. Heraclius used the imperial fleet to land his army on the Euxine shores of northeastern Anatolia so that he could link up with his allies.

1. In 623–626, Heraclius overran Armenia and invaded Persia.
2. At the battle of Nineveh (626), he defeated Shah Chosroes II, who was overthrown by his nobility.
3. The Persians surrendered, restored imperial provinces, and released prisoners and the True Cross that had been carried off from Jerusalem.
4. Heraclius promulgated the Ecthesis (638), proclaiming the Monothelete (“one will”) creed to reconcile the Monophysites.

III. The rise of Islam: The armies of Islam burst upon the Near East from a hitherto insignificant Arabian frontier at the moment when Byzantium and Sassanid Persia had fought themselves to mutual exhaustion.

A. Muhammad (570–632) heard the call from God (Allah) and proclaimed the final revelation of the faith of Abraham.

1. Muhammad’s preaching of monotheism and religious reform at Mecca provoked opposition from the elite.
2. In 622, Muhammad fled (*hegira*) to Medina, creating the *umma*, a community of believers that transcended traditional Arab ties of kinship.
3. By 632, Muhammad had united Arabia and proclaimed Mecca with the Kaaba the first holy city of Islam.
4. Al-Khalid, “Sword of Islam,” welded Arab veterans of Byzantine and Sassanid armies into an invincible cavalry army.

B. The first four Orthodox Caliphs, “successors,” conquered the heartland of the future Islamic world in 632–661 and adapted Roman and Persian imperial institutions.

1. At the Battle of Yarmuk, Arab armies overran Byzantine Syria.
2. Arab armies conquered Egypt (641) and Tripolitania, putting the heirs of Heraclius on the defensive and reducing Byzantium to its Orthodox, Greek-speaking core in Anatolia, the Balkans, and southern Italy.

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Questions to Consider:

1. What were the weaknesses of the Roman world in the generation after Justinian? How dangerous were the new foes who invaded Italy and the Balkans?
2. How did the resourceful Heraclius single-handedly restore an empire on the brink of destruction? What was the state of the empire in the aftermath of victory over Persia?

Lecture Fourteen

The Christian Citadel

Scope: For over two centuries, the heirs of Heraclius (610–641) battled a triple threat: Lombards in Italy, Slavs and Bulgars in the Balkans, and the Arabs in Anatolia. Heraclian emperors thwarted the Umayyad caliphs from capturing Constantinople. After Constantine IV (668–685) repelled the first Arab siege of Constantinople, the empire was on the defensive. Isaurian and Amorian emperors, bred in the frontier lands of Anatolia, conducted a grim defense and reorganized the empire. Leo III (717–741) repelled a second Arab siege of Constantinople, but the Abbasid caliphs, resident in Baghdad, lost interest in New Rome. Independent emirs raided the eastern frontier and seized Crete and Sicily as pirate bases. The victory at Poson (863) marked a turning point, for the Macedonian emperors drove back Muslim and northern foes and carried Christianity and the civilized arts to the peoples of eastern Europe. In the crucible of these wars, a Byzantine Empire was born: Roman in government; orthodox in faith, and Hellenic in language.

Outline

- I.** The Heraclian emperors fought a grim defensive war, but they long refused to accept the losses of Armenia, Syria, and Egypt and upheld the vision of a united Roman Mediterranean world.
 - A.** Heraclian emperors were compelled to raise revenues and reform government while fending off Arabic attack.
 - B.** Constans (641–668), who succeeded as a minor, campaigned to recover lost provinces and reorganized the Byzantine West.
 - 1. Patriarch Paul II (641–654) assumed regency for Constans II after a succession crisis in 641.
 - 2. Constans campaigned in Egypt and Armenia.
 - 3. With the Battle of Masts off Attaleia (655), Constans confronted an Arabic naval threat.
 - 4. Constans reorganized naval defenses in the West (663–668) but clashed with Pope Martin I over the Monothelete doctrine (649–653).
 - 5. Constans exploited the Muslim civil war between Ali and Muawiya (656–661).
 - 6. Muawiya established the Umayyad Caliphate at Damascus with the avowed aim to conquer New Rome (Rum).

- C.** Constantine IV (668–685) succeeded as a minor and faced an Umayyad invasion.
 - 1. Constantine returned the court from Syracuse to Constantinople.
 - 2. The imperial navy and Greek fire thwarted the first Arabic siege of Constantinople (674–677).
 - 3. Bulgars, Turkish-speaking nomads, migrated into the Lower Balkans.
- D.** Justinian II (685–695, 705–711), the last and unbalanced member of the Heraclian family, precipitated the downfall of his dynasty and a general crisis.
 - 1. Carthage and Africa were lost to the Arabs (696–698), and Muslim armies easily overran Visigothic Spain in 711–713.
 - 2. Justinian II's religious policy led to civil war and instability.
 - 3. Imperial weakness resulted in renewed Umayyad expansion.
- II.** Isaurians and Amorians (717–867) consolidated the Middle Byzantine state as the Christian citadel and reformed the imperial army and administration, enabling later Macedonian emperors to launch an offensive against the Muslim foe.
 - A.** Leo III (717–741), a veteran officer of the eastern army, seized power in a civil war and with the threat of an Arabic invasion.
 - 1. Leo III repelled a second Arabic siege of Constantinople (717–718).
 - 2. By his victory at Acorinum, Leo III renewed the offensive in the East.
 - 3. Leo III reorganized the army and administration and upheld Iconoclasm as the faith of victory.
 - B.** Constantine V (741–775) exploited the Muslim civil war that contributed to the downfall of the Umayyad Caliphate (749–751), but he faced growing opposition at home to his Iconoclastic policy.
 - 1. The Abbasid Caliphate, once established at Baghdad, henceforth conducted "prestige campaigns" against Byzantium.
 - 2. Constantine V campaigned in Armenia and against the Bulgars.
 - 3. Iconoclasm provoked civil upheaval and dynastic crisis.
 - C.** The heirs of Constantine V discredited the dynasty, but they sponsored an uneasy peace over religious controversy.
 - 1. Constantine VI (787–797) and Irene (797–802) proved unpopular.
 - 2. Campaigns by Caliph Harun ar-Raschid and the challenge of the Frankish King Charlemagne (768–814) in Italy compromised imperial defense and led to the downfall of the Isaurians.
 - 3. The emperors Nicephorus I (802–811) and Michael I (811–813) failed to heal divisions in court and army over Iconoclasm.
 - 4. Leo V, "the Armenian" (813–820), candidate of the Anatolian armies, restored Iconoclasm and Isaurian policies.

- D. The Amorian emperors, by policy and marriage links, styled themselves as the heirs of the Isaurian emperors, but defeats and a renewal of Iconoclasm led to opposition.
 - 1. Michael II (802–829) failed to contain the Arabic naval threats from Crete and Sicily.
 - 2. Thomas the Slav (821–824) raised a revolt in Asia Minor.
 - 3. Theophilus (829–842) fortified Constantinople with sea walls.
 - 4. Theophilus suffered a humiliating defeat at Dazimon (838) and appealed to the Franks for aid against the Muslim foe.
 - 5. Michael III (842–867) restored icons and ended religious controversy.
- E. The Byzantine Dark Age transformed New Rome into a medieval state.
 - 1. Roman law and administration were maintained.
 - 2. The Orthodox faith defined the Byzantine state.
 - 3. Greek language and classical letters dominated high culture.
 - 4. Society was militarized.

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Questions to Consider:

- 1. How successfully did the descendants of Heraclius defend their empire against the Arabs? Why were they unable to reconquer Transcaucasia, Syria, and Egypt? Why did the Arabs fail to capture Constantinople in 674–677 and 717–718? How serious were the threats posed by Slavs and Avars in the Balkans?
- 2. How did Leo III and Constantine V consolidate the Byzantine Empire? Why did victory give their religious policies legitimacy?

Lecture Fifteen

Life in the Byzantine Dark Age

Scope: Emperors of the Dark Age cracked down on corruption, which their smaller empire could ill afford, and reformed provincial administration. They based their power on Anatolia and the commerce of the Aegean and Black Seas. Heraclian emperors stationed field armies in cantonments throughout Anatolia, which became themes, or provinces, under military governors (*strategos*). Theme armies, based at fortified cities, responded rapidly to Arab attacks, but society paid a price. Coastal cities declined, whereas fortified citadels along military highways prospered. Constantinople, “Queen of Cities,” fueled economic recovery by offering ready markets, but many cities shrank to local significance. Agriculture, too, suffered from warfare and pestilence that led to a demographic collapse by 700. Emperors, desperate for revenues and recruits, settled Slavs, Armenians, and Christian sectarians as soldiers or peasants; sponsored trade; and regulated prices. In response to crisis, emperors and subjects heroically reformed their world.

Outline

- I. Reorganizing imperial government: Emperors of the Dark Age pulled off the remarkable achievement of reforming state and society in the midst of crisis and civil war.
 - A. Given fiscal crisis, the size of imperial administration was reduced and corruption was suppressed as emperors reshaped Roman institutions.
 - 1. Orthodox ideology upheld the emperors as heirs of David.
 - 2. Court ritual was elaborated, particularly in the reign of Theophilus (829–843).
 - 3. Greek was declared the language of administration; Leo III issued the *Ecloga*, the translation of Roman law into Greek.
 - 4. Budgetary cuts and fiscal consolidation led to creation of new central offices, each under a *logothete* (auditor).
 - B. The provinces (themes) were redrawn to meet military needs, and civil and military authority was combined.
 - 1. Themes in Asia Minor (Armeniakon, Anatolikon, and Opsikion) were originally cantonments for recruitment and provisions.
 - 2. The *strategos* (military governor) overshadowed civil officials.
 - 3. Isaurian emperors created new themes by subdivision (Thracesion, Bucellarion, and Optimation).
 - 4. European provinces were reorganized into themes in the ninth century.

C. Emperors forged a professional army, recruiting soldiers and warlike barbarians beyond the frontiers.

1. The theme armies and naval squadrons were designed for defense against raiders and pirates, respectively.
2. The field army (tagmatic units) was stationed at Constantinople.
3. Theme soldiers commuted their service, and mercenaries were hired.
4. The imperial strategy of defending central Anatolia wore down by Abbasid armies or Arab raiders crossing the Taurus.

II. End of the classical city: Byzantine society adjusted to the conditions of continual warfare and demographic collapse as a result of pandemic outbreaks.

A. Invasions led to a decline of cities in 600–825, but conditions varied throughout Italy, the Balkans, and Asia Minor.

1. Cities on the Mediterranean shores of Greece and Asia Minor, such as Ephesus, declined or were sacked by Arab pirates.
2. Fortified centers in Anatolia, such as Amorium, emerged on the nexus of imperial highways or as centers of theme armies.
3. Citizens withdrew to citadels; in Cappadocia, provincials built the underground cities of refuge of Derinkuyu and Kaymakli.

B. Demographic collapse transformed economic life, institutions, and the religious outlook of cities.

1. The plague of 542–544 was on the order of the later Black Death, and outbreaks of plague continued for the next two hundred years.
2. Demographic decline resulted in contraction of markets and economic hardship that ruined many cities.
3. Population in the Byzantine world recovered from 825.

C. Constantinople, “Queen of Cities,” was the prime market stimulating economic growth, and imperial expenditure and taxation preserved the monetized economy of antiquity.

1. Repairs of churches and walls and provisioning of Constantinople stimulated economic recovery in the Isaurian and Amorian ages.
2. Development of the silk industry revived the cities of Greece.
3. Export of silk garments and luxury goods to the West brought specie to Constantinople.
4. Imperial officials regulated wages, prices, and quality of goods by the *Book of the Prefect* to meet the needs of government and capital.
5. Emperors repeopled the capital. By 1025, the population of Constantinople perhaps peaked at between 600,000 and 1,000,000 residents.

D. The revival of cities in 825–1100 depended on imperial expenditure, episcopal patronage, and the markets of Constantinople.

1. Improvements in shipbuilding (skeleton versus shell construction) aided in the revival of commerce.
2. Byzantine merchants reopened trade routes to northern Europe and in the lands of the Black Sea.
3. Rising coin use indicated monetization of markets in 825–1100.
4. Peace and demographic recovery allowed for revival of coastal Greek and Latin cities that served as markets for the hinterlands of the Balkans and Italy.

III. The Byzantine countryside: Agriculture revived with the rise of population and cities, which provided new markets for consumables.

A. Emperors sponsored settlements of immigrants to meet labor shortages.

1. Slavs, Armenians, Kurds, and Christian Arabs were prized.
2. Immigrants learned Greek and embraced the Orthodox faith.
3. Imperial polices led to the re-Hellenization and re-Christianization of Greece in 800–1000.
4. Immigrants were often settled as theme soldiers in European provinces.
5. The loss of Egypt as a source of grain compelled development of agriculture and stock raising in Anatolia and the Balkans.

B. Agriculture in the Byzantine age did not change significantly from the methods and management of antiquity.

1. Holders of military tenures developed absentee farming.
2. Byzantine peasants pursued Mediterranean dry farming, as described in the *Farmer's Law*.
3. Fiscal obligations were owed by peasants, including payment of taxes on abandoned lands (*allelengyon*).
4. Great estates emerged on the Anatolian plateau, where raising stock was profitable.
5. A new provincial elite (*dynatoi*) emerged in the ninth century with rank and wealth gained from imperial service and invested in land.
6. Monasteries and ecclesiastical foundations were important in bringing more arable land under cultivation.
7. The growth of estates in the Byzantine world never led to the society of the manor or the Western arrangements of feudalism.

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Questions to Consider:

1. How did fiscal crisis and military defeats compel emperors to reform state and society? What were the aims of the emperors? Why were imperial reforms so conservative? Why did the local feudal order, seen in western Europe, fail to appear in the Byzantine Empire?
2. How effective was imperial government and its army in the Dark Age? Why did Byzantine armies halt Muslim and barbarian invaders by the late ninth century?
3. What was the role played by the imperial government, army, and Constantinople in ensuring the economic survival of Constantinople?
4. What led to the revival of cities and agriculture? How important was population growth?

Lecture Sixteen

The Iconoclastic Controversy

Scope: Many Byzantines became convinced that veneration of icons was tantamount to pagan worship and that God had visited war, pestilence, famine, and death on his new chosen people. In 726, Leo III (717–741), an Iconoclast, ordered the removal of icons. His son, Constantine V (741–775), attacked monasteries as strongholds of icons, but his extreme measures led to a moderate compromise. In 787, Empress Irene restored icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea. Icons were defined and sculptures were prohibited as idols. Defeats provoked a second wave of Iconoclasm, but in 843 at the Synod of Constantinople, the empress Theodora restored icons. The dispute defined Orthodox ritual and widened the divide between the Catholic and Orthodox churches. Popes at Rome, aghast by imperial interference, turned to the Franks as protectors. This new relationship was cemented by the coronation of Charlemagne as Roman emperor (800). Henceforth, Rome looked to western Europe, and Byzantium recreated herself as the capital of eastern Europe.

Outline

- I. Roots of conflict: The place of icons and relics in Christian worship was linked to a wider debate on what was considered "holy."
 - A. Veneration of icons and relics had increased since the late fourth century; in part, the practice and terminology was inspired by veneration of the emperor.
 1. Iconodules, such as St. John of Damascus, upheld icons as inspiring the memory of Christ, Mary Theotokos, or the saints.
 2. Icons were important for instruction of illiterate converts.
 3. The use of icons in public rituals linked the cult of local saints to civic patriotism.
 4. Ascetics and monks were invoked as living icons against demons or in intercession for the mercy of God; the belief in healing saints, such as Symeon Stylites, rose from the sixth century.
 - B. Invasions and plague of the Dark Age intensified the debate between Iconoclasts and Iconodules, who as Orthodox Christians, agreed that icons were not holy.
 1. Icons were invoked to ward off invaders; successful intercessions were credited to the Mandylion of Edessa (544), relics of Saint Demetrios at Thessalonica, and the Hodegetria of Constantinople (626).

- 2. Iconoclasts denied the holy status of icons, claiming that veneration was tantamount to idolatry.
- 3. There is little evidence for Jewish and Muslim influences among the Iconoclasts.

C. Justinian II (685–695, 705–711) precipitated civil war and religious controversy.

- 1. The Quinisextum Council (691–696) called for the depiction of Christ in human form.
- 2. Military defeats were interpreted as God's anger against the impious.

II. First Iconoclastic Controversy (727–787).

- A. The Isaurian emperors, bred in a stark Anatolian Christianity, saw icons as idols that had incurred the wrath of God on Byzantium, the New Israel.
 - 1. In 726, Leo III, by a moderate edict, removed icons from public view.
 - 2. Coins indicated, henceforth, that the cross was the sole Christian symbol, and iconography was recast to exalt the imperial family.
 - 3. Leo's victories over the Arabs gave Iconoclasm legitimacy in the eyes of the eastern army.
 - 4. Constantine V crushed the Iconodule Revolt of Artavasdos (741–743).
 - 5. In 754, Constantine V summoned a council at Hiera; he legislated extreme measures against icons.
 - 6. Imperial soldiers assaulted monasteries, destroyed icons and relics, and drove monks overseas to Italy.
 - 7. The papacy and Western Church were alienated by Iconoclasm.
- B. Iconoclasm under Constantine V spent its fury, and moderates moved to compromise under Constantine VI (780–797) and his regent mother, Irene.
 - 1. In 787, the Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea restored and carefully defined the role of icons.
 - 2. The usurpation of Irene (797–802) and defeats of Nicephorus I (802–811) and Michael I (811–813) discredited Iconoclasm.
 - 3. The eastern army elevated Leo V, who stood for Iconoclasm and Isaurian policies.

III. Second Iconoclastic Controversy (815–843): The military emperors Leo V and Michael I, styling themselves as heirs of Leo III, launched a second period of Iconoclasm.

- A. Leo V (813–820) and Amorian emperors faced strong opposition to their edict.
 - 1. The edict of 815 by John the Grammarian was moderate in tone.

- 2. When Iconoclasm failed to bring victory, the Amorian dynasty was in jeopardy.

B. Theodora, regent and mother of Michael III (842–867), restored icons in a second compromise.

- 1. The Synod of Constantinople (843) restored and defined icons.
- 2. St. Theodore of Studion reformed monastic institutions, bastions of Iconodule worship.

IV. Impact of Iconoclasm in the West: The Iconoclastic Controversy propelled the papacy and Italy into alliance with the rising power of the Carolingian monarchy.

- A. The papacy, informed by exiled Greek monks, could not appreciate the depth of the controversy.
 - 1. Pope Gregory III (731–741) excommunicated the emperor Leo III.
 - 2. The fall of Ravenna to the Lombards (751) compelled Pope Stephen III (752–757) to seek alliance with Pepin the Short, King of the Franks.
 - 3. The papacy received the "Donation of Pepin" so that henceforth the papacy and the Frankish monarchy were allied.
- B. Pope Leo III (795–815) transferred the imperial title to Charlemagne, but this ritual signaled the emergence of a new, vigorous western Europe.
 - 1. The usurpation of Irene (797–802) precipitated a crisis at Rome.
 - 2. By papal invitation, Charlemagne (768–814) conquered northern Italy.
 - 3. The coronation of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor in 800 resulted in protests from the Byzantine court.

V. Impact of Iconoclasm in the East: With the end of Iconoclasm, the Byzantine church devoted its energies to missionary work and the revival of arts and letters.

- A. The triumph of icons led to the articulation of the Orthodox liturgy and arts.
 - 1. Free-standing sculpture was prohibited; henceforth, icons were not accorded holy status.
 - 2. The flowering of religious visual arts followed as churches were redecorated.
 - 3. Monasteries resumed a leading role in religious life.
- B. Emperors sponsored missions among the pagan peoples of central and eastern Europe.
 - 1. The return of town life and consolidation of kingdoms by native princes provided ideal conditions for proselytizing in the Balkans.
 - 2. Cyril (827–869) and Methodius (825–885), Apostles to the Slavs, were sent to Ratislav, king of Bohemia in 863.

3. Byzantine missionaries offered a Bible translated into Slavonic and autonomous patriarchates for national churches.
4. Tsar Boris of Bulgaria (866) and the South Slavs embraced Orthodox Christianity as a means to strengthen their rule.
5. Varangian merchants and mercenaries spread Christianity among the Rus of Kiev and promoted the conversion of Queen Olga (957).
6. Prince Vladimir of Kiev converted to Orthodoxy in 988–989.
7. Byzantine missionaries failed among the Turkish tribes of southern Russia, who embraced Islam, or in the case of the Khazars, Judaism.

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Questions to Consider:

1. What fundamental issues led to the eruption of the Iconoclastic Controversy? How did Justinian II precipitate the controversy? How sincere were the convictions of Iconoclastic emperors? What issues other than religious ones contributed to the dispute?
2. How did the papacy view Iconoclasm? Why did popes feel compelled to seek an alliance with the Frankish monarchy? What were the ramifications of the coronation of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor in 800?

Lecture Seventeen

Recovery under the Macedonian Emperors

Scope: Basil the Macedonian (867–886), an illiterate favorite who seized power, and his heirs sought legitimacy by victory and patronage of the arts. They could not have acted more opportunely, because the strategic advantage had shifted to imperial armies. Basil I defeated the Paulicians, heretic renegades who had terrorized Anatolia. His son and grandson, Leo VI (886–912) and Constantine VII (913–957), triumphed over Tsar Symeon (893–927) of Bulgaria. Three times dynastic crises enabled Anatolian generals—Romanus Lecapenus (919–944), Nicephorus Phocas (963–969), and John Tzimisces (969–976)—to declare themselves regent emperors, and they exploited the fragmentation of the Abbasid Caliphate. The Macedonians also directed missions by the Orthodox Church. In 866, Khan Boris of the Turkish Bulgars was baptized as Tsar of Bulgaria. Conversion of the South Slavs and Varangians of Russia followed. By 1025, the peoples of eastern Europe were members of a Byzantine commonwealth based on the Slavic language, Byzantine aesthetics, and imperial institutions. Eastern Europe had emerged.

Outline

- I. Founding the Macedonian dynasty (867–919): The Macedonian emperors presided over the zenith and collapse of the Middle Byzantine state and sponsored the revival of arts and letters that ultimately had a profound impact on Western civilization.
 - A. Basil I (867–886), favorite of Michael III, deposed his master and thereafter was committed to winning legitimacy.
 1. Basil I courted church and aristocracy.
 2. He built churches at Constantinople and Trebizond.
 3. He provided a classical education for his son, Leo VI, "the Wise."
 4. Basil led campaigns against Paulician heretics and sent forces to recover Byzantine control of southern Italy.
 - B. Leo VI (886–912) faced a succession crisis at home, because his first three wives failed to produce male heirs and because of the rising power of Bulgaria.
 1. Leo's fourth marriage to Zoe Carbospina strained relations between pope and patriarch and divided the court.
 2. Leo VI issued a new law code.
 3. Desultory fighting ensued against Tsar Symeon of Bulgaria.
 4. Arab pirates sacked Thessalonica (904), second city of the empire.
 5. Gains on the eastern frontier resulted from Muslim weakness.

II. The regent emperors (919–976): The success of Macedonian arms was owed to three regent emperors.

- A. Constantine VII (913–957)** succeeded as a minor whose legitimacy was not accepted by the Orthodox Church.
 1. Romanus I Lecapenus (919–944) seized power and directed a second, successful, war against Tsar Symeon (915–927).
 2. His Domestic of the East, John Curcuras (932–944), conducted imperial offensives on the Upper Euphrates and Armenia.
 3. Constantine VII devoted himself to letters and managing the ceremony of the court.
- B. Nicephorus II Phocas (963–969)** assumed the regency by marrying Theophano, widow of Romanus II (957–963).
 1. The infant sons of Romanus II, Basil II and Constantine VIII, were declared emperors in 963.
 2. Nicephorus captured Tarsus and Antioch, securing the eastern frontier.
 3. Disputes over policy led to the assassination of Nicephorus II.
- C. John I Tzimisces (969–976),** nephew of Nicephorus II, represented a rival faction of Anatolian nobles.
 1. John I defeated Svitoslav of Kiev and conquered eastern Bulgaria.
 2. He arranged a marriage alliance with Holy Roman Emperor Otto I (936–973) to secure Byzantine Italy.
 3. He campaigned in Syria and Armenia (974–975); Muslim Aleppo was reduced to tributary status.
 4. His successor, Basil the Bulgar-slayer, reigned fifty years.

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Questions to Consider:

1. How did the need for legitimacy motivate early Macedonian emperors in their military, religious, and cultural policies?
2. What accounted for imperial recovery in the early tenth century?

Lecture Eighteen

Imperial Zenith—Basil II

Scope: Basil II, the Bulgar-slayer (976–1025), the greatest warrior of his age, reasserted the capital over the Anatolian lords, the “powerful ones” (*dynatoi*) who staged revolts in 976–979 and 968–989. Basil II crushed rebellions and annexed Armenian and Georgian borderlands, whose princes were linked to the Anatolian *dynatoi*. Basil conquered Bulgaria as a new base of imperial power. Scoring imperial ceremony, Basil ruled in splendid isolation. In 922, the regent emperor Romanus I had issued a Novel, “new law,” restricting the alienation of property by soldiers and peasants. In 996, Basil turned this legislation into a campaign against Anatolian aristocracy. Basil reduced further his reliance on the great families by forging a professional army recruited from mercenaries, such as the famed ax-wielding Varangian guardsmen. But Basil left no heir, and his very success created a sense of security among his inept successors, who plunged the empire into crisis.

Outline

- I. The career of Basil II (976–1025):** Basil the Bulgar-slayer vastly extended the size of the empire and ruthlessly suppressed his over-mighty subjects.
 - A. In 976, Basil II had to master his court and battle rebellions staged by the powerful military families of Anatolia.**
 1. Basil II freed himself from his eunuch uncle, Basil Parakioimomenus.
 2. Twice Basil II faced major revolts, by Bardas Sclerus (976–989) and Bardas Phocas (987–989).
 3. Consequently, Basil created the Varangian Guard and formed an alliance by marriage with Prince Vladimir of Kiev.
 4. Basil broke the power of Anatolian aristocrats and annexed the lands of unruly Armenian and Georgian border lords.
 5. Basil asserted the primacy of the central government at Constantinople.
 - B. Basil II gained glory and secured a new imperial heartland by his conquest of the Balkans in 990–1016.**
 1. Bulgarians resented imperial taxes and Greek clergy.
 2. The rebel Tsar Samuel (979–1014) exploited popular loyalty to the Bulgarian house.
 3. After an initial setback at Serdica (Sofia, 986), Basil waged a war of pacification that climaxed in his victory at the Cleidon Pass (1014).
 4. Basil II concluded treaties with Venice to secure the Adriatic Sea.

5. He granted lands to his supporters in the Balkans.

6. He respected the Slavic rites and local customs of Bulgaria.

C. Basil II restored imperial domination over the strategic Armenian and Georgian lands in Transcaucasia, so vital to the Heraclian and Isaurian emperors.

1. Basil II annexed the main Armenian kingdoms (968–1018) and resettled Armenians in southeastern Asia Minor (“Lesser Armenia”).
2. Basil chastised George I, first king of a united Georgia, in 1021–1022.
3. In 1001, Basil II concluded a treaty with the Fatimid Caliphate of Cairo to protect the rising number of western European pilgrims to Jerusalem.
4. Basil assumed a defensive posture against Muslim Syria, depending on the imperial army at Antioch and Muslim vassal princes of Hamandid Aleppo.

II. The regime of Basil II: Basil II ruled in splendid isolation, and his very success proved the demise of his weak successors.

A. Emperors from Romanus I to Basil II reorganized the imperial army into a professional force.

1. “Theme soldiers” commuted service or were recruited into the elite units.
2. Basil imposed taxation to hire mercenaries, notably Franks and Normans as heavy cavalry, Armenians and Georgians, and Turkish horse archers from the Pecheneg tribes.

B. In tandem with victory, Basil II amassed revenues and fostered prosperity.

1. Administrative and military costs stimulated prosperity and added to taxes.
2. Basil amassed the first reserve in the treasury since Justinian.

III. Macedonian land legislation: The price of imperial victory and prosperity was, in part, paid by the villages and military settlers of the empire as wealth eroded traditional social institutions.

A. In the ninth century, a social crisis was brewing in the countryside of the Balkans and Anatolia.

1. The *dynatoi* (“powerful ones”) had gained wealth and rank from imperial service; they were the proud patrons and arbiters of provincial society.
2. The Anatolian aristocrats sought to increase stock raising at the expense of villages engaged in Mediterranean dry farming.
3. Subdivision among heirs, inflation, and distant wars undermined the holders of theme military tenures.

4. Peasants were ruined by meeting the fiscal obligations for abandoned land (*allelengyon*).

B. Byzantine emperors between Romanus I and Basil II legislated in favor of holders of military tenures and peasants against nobles and prelates, but the laws were conservative in trust and failed to solve social and economic problems.

1. Romanus I established the pre-emption right of the poor, who had alienated their lands by his Novel of 922; his Novel of 934 restricted *dynatoi* from acquiring lands.
2. Nicephorus II redefined military obligations and restricted acquisition of lands by ecclesiastical institutions.
3. By his Novels of 996 and 1002, Basil II curbed the Anatolian military elite. Alienation of property by peasants was restricted; the pre-emption right was upheld; and the burden of the *allelengyon* was assigned to the *dynatoi*.
4. Conservative legal remedies failed to address economic reality.
5. A mercenary, professional army ruled out the need for theme soldiers.
6. Collusion of imperial officials and landowners undermined the laws. Romanus III (1028–1034) rescinded the laws.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Why was Basil II able to crush opposition from the Anatolian nobility and impose central authority on the Byzantine Empire?
2. How did economic recovery assist in the success of Basil II? In what ways did Basil further posterity and imperial revenues?

Lecture Nineteen

Imperial Collapse

Scope: Out of fear of rivals, Basil II failed to marry off his nieces, Zoe and Theodora, and the ensuing succession crisis enabled corrupt officials to gain control of the government. Zoe, too elderly to bear children, was married to three weak husbands who failed to curb venal courtiers and slashed the military budget. Imperial finances and leadership were bankrupt as new threats emerged. The Normans, under Duke Robert Guiscard, swept the Byzantines out of Italy. Tughril Bey (1037–1063) and his Seljuk Turkomen, recent converts to Sunni Islam, restored the Abbasid Caliph of Bagdad. Tughril Bey directed his Turkomen horseman against Anatolia, while he marched against his principal foe, the Fatimid Caliphate. The demoralized imperial army offered little resistance until the Anatolian nobles forced Eudocia, widow of Constantine X (1059–1067), to marry their candidate, Romanus IV Diogenes (1068–1072). On August 19, 1071, Romanus IV was betrayed, and the imperial army was annihilated by Sultan Alp Arslan (1063–1072). Thereupon, Turkish tribes migrated into Asia Minor, carving out Muslim states in the Byzantine heartland.

Outline

- I. Succession crisis: Basil II, out of fear of rivals, had failed to secure the succession. His feckless brother, Constantine VIII (1025–1028), and elderly nieces, Zoe and Theodora, proved unworthy rulers.
 - A. Constantine VIII, with a sense of military and fiscal security, allowed corrupt courtiers and bureaucrats.
 1. Constantine VIII ruled ineffectively; his chief eunuch minister, John the Many-eyed, gained control over government patronage.
 2. Zoe's first husband, the elderly Romanus III Argyrus (1028–1034), was defeated before Aleppo and failed to end corruption.
 3. The frivolous sisters Zoe and Theodora were too elderly to bear children.
 4. Corrupt courtiers selected Zoe's second and third husbands, Michael IV (1034–1041) and Constantine IX (1042–1055).
 5. Michael IV, an epileptic of humble origin, turned over administration to his brother, John the Many-eyed.
 6. The court aristocracy found a congenial ruler in Constantine IX (1042–1055), who spent recklessly on a depraved court.
 - B. The deaths of Zoe (1050) and Theodora (1056) ended the Macedonian house.

1. The civil aristocracy of the capital clashed with the military aristocracy of Anatolia over succession to the throne.

2. Military emperors such as Isaac I (1057–1059) and Romanus IV (1068–1072) were unable to reform the central administration.

II. Internal decline: The failure of imperial leadership was part of a wider failure of imperial institutions and the alienation of the provinces from the central government.

A. The fiscal irresponsibility of Zoe and her husbands cost the army and taxpayers dearly. Lavish patronage of arts and letters could not conceal the empire's weakness by the mid-eleventh century.

1. Constantine IX initiated debasement of the currency, and the empire was faced with rising prices and worthless money by 1078.
2. Corrupt officials sold justice and demanded payoffs.
3. Slavic and Armenian subjects were alienated by the haughty manners and oppressive demands of imperial officials.

B. Provincials were alienated from Constantinople during the eleventh century.

1. Imposition of Greek liturgy and clergy on Balkan sees angered Slavic subjects.
2. Popular revolts protested the Macedonian land legislation, high taxes, and bureaucratic corruption.
3. The capital increasingly alienated itself from the countryside.

C. The husbands of Zoe proved inept generals, and Constantine IX deliberately cut military budgets for fear of rivals.

1. The Varangian attack in 1043 revealed the weakness of the imperial navy.
2. George Maniaces revolted in frustration (1043–1044); his death signaled the end of an effective professional army.

D. From 1056, aristocratic factions clashed over control of the state inasmuch as Theodora's hastily adopted heir, Michael VI (1056–1057), proved a weak ruler. At this point, two new foes appeared: one in the East, one in the West.

III. The new foes: Normans and Seljuk Turks proved formidable because of the failure of imperial leadership and the weakened condition of the Byzantine Empire.

A. The Normans migrated as mercenaries from France to southern Italy during the early eleventh century.

1. Robert Guiscard (1046–1085) welded the Normans into an effective army against Lombard princes and Byzantine governors.

2. Pope Leo IX and Emperor Constantine IX failed to contain the Norman threat; the papal defeat at Civitate (1053) confirmed Norman power.

3. Papal envoys sent to Constantinople to negotiate an alliance provoked the "Great Schism of 1054," whereby pope and patriarch mutually excommunicated each other.

4. With the fall of Bari (1071), Robert Guiscard consolidated Norman rule in Italy and invaded Byzantium (1081–1085) with aspirations for the imperial throne.

B. The Seljuk Turks emerged unexpectedly on the eastern frontier in the late 1050s, threatening Armenia and Anatolia, the heartland of imperial power.

1. Seljuk Turkomen of central Asia were converted to Sunni Islam.
2. The Turkomen combined traditions of *ghazi* (nomad warriors) with Muslim *jihad* (holy war).
3. Sultan Tughril Bey (1037–1061) united the Seljuk Turkomen tribes, overran Iran and Iraq, and restored the power of the Sunni Caliphate of Baghdad in 1055.
4. Tughril Bey waged holy war against the Shi'ite Fatimid Caliphate in Cairo, which controlled the Levant and the holy cities of Arabia.
5. Seljuk *ghazi* raided the Byzantine Empire, allied to Fatimid Cairo, but given the weak imperial response, they conquered Armenia (1055–1071).
6. The Anatolian nobility clamored for action by Romanus IV.

C. Romanus IV waged a series of campaigns to recover imperial control over the strategic fortresses and routes of Armenia; the fighting climaxed at the battle of Manzikert on August 19, 1071.

1. Romanus IV faced court intrigues and military unpreparedness.
2. At Manzikert, Romanus IV was betrayed, and the sultan Alp Arslan (1061–1072) slaughtered the imperial army and captured the emperor.
3. Civil war erupted in the Byzantine Empire, and the Turkomen tribes migrated into Anatolia, finding a climate similar to central Asia.
4. The Sultanate of Rum (Konya) emerged as a new Muslim Turkish power in Anatolia.
5. Alexius I Comnenus (1081–1118), victor of the civil wars, appealed for Western aid, but he received instead the First Crusade.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Why did the empire face continual succession difficulties after 1025? How did courtiers and officials manipulate imperial succession to their advantage? Why did Zoe's husbands and the adoptive heirs Michael V and Michael VI prove incapable? The Byzantine historian Michael Psellus dates the turning point to the death of Michael IV (1032–1041); how sound is this assessment?
2. With the end of the Macedonian dynasty in 1056, why did civil and military aristocrats clash over succession? What issues divided the ruling classes? What advantages did civil aristocrats possess? Why were the candidates of the Anatolian army, Isaac I and Romanus IV, unsuccessful in reforming the state?
3. Was the failure of this imperial legislation an underlying cause for dramatic social and economic changes that led to political decline after 1025? Could this legislation have solved agrarian problems and, thus, ensured the military power of the state? How did revolts after 1025 reflect serious flaws in Byzantine society and economy?
4. How dangerous were the threats posed by the Normans and Seljuk Turks? Could Romanus IV have reformed the Byzantine state if he had won a decisive battle at Manzikert in 1071?

Lecture Twenty

Alexius I and the First Crusade

Scope: Alexius I Comnenus (1081–1118) won cooperation from Anatolian nobles by granting hereditary imperial titles and European estates. In contrast to Basil II, Alexius ruled at the head of a consortium of great families who shared in the imperial dignity. Alexius, committed to the reconquest of Anatolia, appealed to western princes for knights. In 1095, Pope Urban II reinterpreted an appeal for mercenaries as a summons to western Europeans to liberate the Holy Land. The ensuing First Crusade (1095–1099) brought tens of thousands of western Europeans on armed pilgrimage. The ambitious princes, Bohemond, Baldwin of Flanders, Raymond of Toulouse, and Godfrey of Bouillon, carved out states in the Levant, which Alexius and his heirs regarded as threats. The failure of the Crusader princes and Alexius to cooperate left the Seljuk Turks entrenched in central Anatolia, and required future crusades to reinforce the western principalities of Outremer; thus, new clashes arose between Western and Byzantine.

Outline

- I. The Comnenian revival: The first three Comnenian emperors initiated a brilliant recovery based on the Balkan hinterland conquered by Basil II and exploiting the rising trade and prosperity of the eastern Mediterranean.
 - A. Alexius I (1081–1118) needed to create legitimacy after fifty years of succession crises and defeats.
 1. Alexius I co-opted nobles by grants of hereditary imperial titles and land (*pronoia*) in the Balkans to families who had lost Anatolian estates.
 2. Alexius affirmed his Orthodoxy by building churches and suppressing heretics.
 3. In 1092, Alexius conducted fiscal and monetary reform, issuing a new gold coin, the hyperpyron.
 4. Alexius secured the northern frontiers against the Pechenegs, made a marriage alliance with Hungary, and defeated the Norman invasion of Greece (1081–1085).
 5. The treaty of 1082 gained the naval cooperation of Venice.
 6. Alexius opened negotiations with the papacy for religious union.
 - B. Alexius and his heirs, however, were limited in their efforts to revive imperial power.
 1. The loss of Anatolia denied manpower, revenues, and war material.
 2. A Muslim Turkish civilization was emerging at Konya.

3. Fiscal weakness limited imperial expansion, and Comnenian emperors faced rising costs of mercenary armies.

4. Comnenian emperors faced serious western European rivals in the Norman kingdom, Holy Roman Empire, and Hungary.

II. Byzantium and the First Crusade: Alexius appealed for Western aid when he faced a dual threat from the Pechenegs and Anatolian Turks in 1092.

A. In his appeal, Alexius I intimated to Pope Urban II (1088–1099) that the Turks had disrupted the pilgrimage routes to Jerusalem.

1. Alexius appealed to Western piety so that he could recruit mercenaries for a limited war in Asia Minor.
2. Alexius also promised to heal the Great Schism of 1054.

B. Urban II judged the tenor of western Europe by issuing an appeal to liberate Jerusalem with the promise of remission of sins for those who fell for the faith.

1. Urban could appeal to piety bred by increasing numbers of western pilgrims to Jerusalem since 1000.
2. Urban had a precedent for Crusader vows in the Truce of God proclaimed in southern France.
3. Urban also could appeal to the example of knights who had served in wars against the Muslims in Spain and Sicily.
4. The Council of Clermont, November 27, 1095, was greeted with enthusiasm by the French nobility.
5. Urban appealed for contingents led by warrior princes, because no king of western Europe assumed the cross.
6. Popular apocalyptic preaching led to the premature departure of undisciplined groups, known as the People's Crusade, who conducted pogroms in the Rhineland (1096).

C. The First Crusade (1096–1099) was hailed as a stunning triumph of faith by western Europeans, but victory brought little advantage to the Byzantine Empire.

1. The People's Crusade, led by Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless, cut a path of destruction through Byzantine territory.
2. The defeat outside of Nicaea was blamed on Alexius I.
3. The princes' armies proved too difficult to direct.
4. Alexius played off the divisions among the Crusaders, who included eastern Franks, led by Godfrey Bouillon and Baldwin; northern Franks, led by Hugh of Vermandois, Robert of Flanders, Robert Curthose of Normandy, and Stephen of Blois; the southern Normans, led by Count Bohemond and Tancred; and the Provençals, under Raymond IV of Toulouse and the papal legate Bishop of Adhemar of Le Puy.
5. In return for aid, the princes swore oaths of allegiance to Alexius I.
6. Byzantine-Crusader cooperation was strained by Nicaea (1097).

7. The Crusader victory at Doylaeum (1097) and the siege and capture of Antioch (1097–1098) gave the Crusaders the justification to renounce their loyalty to Alexius I.

8. The capture of Jerusalem (1099) confirmed the Crusader faith.

III. Foundation of Crusader states: In 1099–1100, the Crusader princes seized major cities as the capitals of principalities in violation of their oaths taken to Alexius I; the Comnenian emperors viewed these states as hostile.

A. Count Bohemond kept Antioch, a former imperial city with a large Greek and Armenian Christian population, as his own principality in 1098.

1. Bohemond aimed to rule over Byzantine Cilicia and Cyprus.
2. Bohemond clashed with Raymond of Toulouse, who allied with Constantinople.

B. Baldwin, on his own initiative and by invitation of the Armenians, occupied Edessa, a strategic city east of the Euphrates, where he reigned as count.

1. Baldwin won the cooperation of Armenians.
2. From Edessa, Baldwin threatened Muslim Aleppo and checked the advance of Turkish armies from Mosul.
3. Baldwin succeeded his brother Godfrey as king of Jerusalem in 1100.

C. The Crusader princes elected Godfrey as *advocatus* of the Holy Sepulcher (1099–1100) upon the capture of Jerusalem.

1. Godfrey rewarded his followers with fiefs and lordships.
2. Most Crusaders departed for home; scarcely 3,000 men remained to defend Jerusalem in 1100.
3. Short of manpower and money, Crusader princes needed either a Byzantine alliance or western reinforcements, so that future Crusades were inevitable.

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Questions to Consider:

1. What factors limited the ability of Alexius I and his successors John II and Manuel I to revive Byzantine power? In what areas were Comnenian emperors successful? How did imperial government and army change in the twelfth century?
2. How serious was the threat posed by the Turkish states in Anatolia? Why did Alexius summon Westerners to assist in fighting against the Anatolian Turks?
3. What were the motives and aims of the western Crusaders? How did mutual suspicions and religious differences undermine cooperation between Alexius and the First Crusade?
4. Why did Crusader princes, such as Bohemond, Baldwin, and even Raymond IV, feel justified in carving out their own states in the Levant? Did their actions violate their oaths to Alexius I? Why were Comnenian emperors apprehensive over Crusader states on their eastern borders?

Lecture Twenty-One

Comnenian Emperors and Crusaders

Scope: John II (1118–1143) and Manuel I (1143–1180) courted western European monarchs and the maritime Republics of Venice and Genoa. They campaigned to impose imperial hegemony over Crusader princes in Antioch and Edessa. With limited manpower, the Franks of Outremer needed reinforcements from Europe. The Crusade of 1101, the Second Crusade (1146–1148), and even the famous Third Crusade (1189–1192) ended in failure. Westerners blamed Byzantine treachery rather than their own poor logistics and strategy and came to view their Greek co-religionists as heretics. Comnenian emperors, distracted by these Crusades, failed to deal with the Seljuk Turks. The defeat of Manuel I at Myrioccephalon (1176) confirmed Turkish control of the Anatolian plateau. With a change of dynasty in 1185, the weak-willed Angelan emperors used foreign alliances to prop up their power. Angelan emperors, unable to pay the bills for the Comnenian revival, invited the Crusaders to attack a weakened Constantinople in 1204.

Outline

- I. Comnenian emperors and Crusaders: In 1100–1180, Comnenian emperors found their task complicated by Crusader states in the Levant (an encouragement to dissidents and rebels in the empire) and periodic disruptions of Crusades from western Europe.
 - A. Princes of the Crusader states (Outremer) depended on naval support from the Italian maritime Republics of Genoa, Pisa, Amalfi, and Venice along with immigrants and Crusaders from western Europe.
 1. Kings Baldwin I and II (1100–1131) of Jerusalem enfeoffed knights and faced Muslim Damascus and Fatimid Egypt.
 2. Antioch and Edessa, the strategic northern principalities, clashed with Byzantines, Cilician Armenians, and Muslim Aleppo and Mosul.
 3. Crusaders, a minority among native Christians, Jews, and Muslims, depended on military monastic orders (Hospitalars and Templars) and impregnable castles, such as Krak des Chevaliers.
 4. Muslim divisions in Fatimid Egypt and Turkish Syria allowed for Crusader expansion.
 - B. Comnenian emperors, who viewed Antioch and Edessa as imperial cities, courted the Italian republics and strove to impose imperial hegemony over the Anatolian Turks, who were marked for conversion and assimilation.
 1. Alexius I was blamed for the failure of the Crusade of 1101.

2. Bohemond led an abortive crusade against Byzantium (1104–1106).
3. Regents Tancred and Roger of Salerno refused to return Antioch, as required by the Treaty of Devol (1108).
4. John II (1118–1143) sought to impose his lordship over Antioch and Edessa (1137–1142) and restore sees to Greek prelates.
5. Manuel I (1143–1180) promoted Westerners at court and sought marriage alliances with the Crusader and European monarchs.

II. The Second Crusade: The royal Crusade of 1146–1148 failed to aid Crusader princes and contributed to the growing hostility between Byzantium and the West.

- A. The unification of Mosul and Aleppo under Zengi and Nur-ad-Din threatened the security of the Crusader states from 1137. With the Muslim capture of Edessa (1144), Pope Eugenius III and St. Bernard of Clairvaux preached the Second Crusade.
- B. Conrad III, Holy Roman Emperor, and King Louis VII of France pursued royal interests in tandem with their Crusading vows.
 1. The German Crusade suffered a humiliating ambush at Dorylaeum.
 2. Manuel I courted Conrad as an ally against Louis VII.
 3. French Crusaders suffered hardships in their march across Anatolia (1146–1147), which author Odo of Deuil blamed on the Byzantines.
 4. Louis VII, an uninspired leader who clashed with his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, led an abortive campaign against Damascus (1148).
 5. The failure of the Second Crusade resulted in surrender of Damascus to Nur-ad-Din (1154) and conquest of Egypt by Saladin (1169–1171).

III. Crisis in the Christian East: With the failure of the Second Crusade, Byzantium and the Crusader states drifted into crisis as Saladin (1171–1193), the chivalrous Kurdish general, united Egypt and Syria.

- A. Manuel I failed to restore imperial power in Anatolia and pursued costly diplomacy and war in Italy.
 1. The Norman War ended in defeat and fiscal crisis.
 2. Manuel was defeated at Myricephalon (1176) by the Seljuks.
 3. The Byzantines retreated from central Anatolia, and so could lend no assistance to the Crusaders.
- B. The accession of Baldwin IV, “the Leper King” (1174–1185), led to a succession crisis in the Kingdom of Jerusalem.
 1. Queen Sibylla and her husband, Guy of Lusignan (1186–1192), seized the throne.
 2. Saladin, with the resources of Egypt and Syria, proclaimed *jihad* (holy war) to capture Jerusalem.

3. King Guy foolishly risked battle at Hattin (1187), where the Crusader army was annihilated by Saladin.
4. Saladin, who captured Jerusalem and most of the Crusader East, was checked at Tyre, as western kings mobilized a Third Crusade.

C. The Third Crusade (1189–1192) included three mighty royal armies led by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, King Philip II of France, and King Richard I of England.

1. Frederick Barbarossa clashed with Byzantines in the Balkans; Isaac II (1185–1195) allied with Saladin in fear of the Germans.
2. With Frederick’s death, most German Crusaders returned home.
3. Richard concluded a treaty with Saladin to return the coastal cities and allow pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which remained Muslim.
4. Calls for a new Crusade were raised in western Europe.

D. The Angelan emperors (1185–1204) proved weak successors to their Comnenian cousins.

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Questions to Consider:

1. What were the flaws in Comnenian policies that mortgaged the future of the Byzantine Empire?
2. Should the Crusader princes have sought alliance with Byzantium? Why did the Second and Third Crusades fail to achieve success?

Lecture Twenty-Two

Imperial Exile and Restoration

Scope: On April 15, 1204, members of the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople, then elected Baldwin IX of Flanders the first "Latin" emperor. The Crusaders, however, failed to conquer the empire. Crusader nobles carved out lordships in Greece; Byzantine generals established independent "splinter empires." The general Theodore Lascaris I (1204–1222) built a powerful Anatolian state at Nicaea. In 1261, the Nicene general-turned-usurper, Michael VIII Palaeologus (1258–1282), recaptured Constantinople, but Michael sacrificed his Anatolian empire for this victory. He sought Western aid by conversion to Catholicism and promises to reunite the Orthodox Church under papal authority. His son Andronicus II (1282–1337) bankrupted the treasury by hiring Catalan mercenaries, who turned their arms against Constantinople rather than the Ottoman Turks. Thereafter, Byzantium was finished even as a regional power. In the fourteenth century, Serbians in Europe and Ottomans in Anatolia conquered the hinterlands of Constantinople, while petty Frankish lords ruled over Greece, and Genoa and Venice dominated commerce.

Outline

I. The Fourth Crusade: In 1198–1203, the Fourth Crusade was intended to win back Jerusalem by an invasion of Egypt, but rivalries among leaders and lack of money diverted the venture to Constantinople.

- A.** Boniface of Montferrat, elected leader of the Crusade, faced rivals, foremost Count Baldwin IX of Flanders
 - 1. The Crusaders negotiated passage with Venice (1201) but failed to appear in sufficient numbers so that Venice faced bankruptcy.
 - 2. No evidence exists of a conspiracy against Byzantium directed by Venice or Pope Innocent III (1198–1216).
 - 3. Doge Enrico Dandolo committed Venice to Crusade in return for the capture of Zara (1202).
 - 4. In return for aid, the Crusaders promised to restore Alexius IV to the Byzantine throne (1203), and so sailed to Constantinople.
- B.** What the Crusaders and Venetians intended when they arrived at Constantinople (1203) is still a matter of debate, but by spring 1204, they had agreed to conquer and partition the Byzantine Empire.
 - 1. Alexius IV, restored in 1203, failed to deliver promised support, and cooperation collapsed.
 - 2. Crusaders had extravagant expectations; they were hostile and jealous of Byzantium.

- 3. Alexius IV was overthrown by the anti-western usurper Alexius V
- 4. Crusaders assaulted and sacked Constantinople (April 15, 1204).

II. Partition of the Byzantine Empire: The Crusaders carved out feudal states, and Venice acquired ports and islands that laid the foundation of its commercial empire in the eastern Mediterranean.

- A.** The Crusaders crowned Count Baldwin (1204–1205) the first "Latin" emperor with claims to Byzantine provinces in the Balkans and Anatolia.
 - 1. Latin emperors (1204–1261) reigned from a ruined capital, facing chronic fiscal crisis.
 - 2. Crusader lords founded states in Greece: Boniface of Montferrat as King of Thessalonica, Otto as Duke of Athens and Thebes, and Geoffrey Villehardouin as Prince of Achaea.
 - 3. Crusaders ruled as a military caste, resented by their Orthodox subjects.
 - 4. Imposition of the Latin rite and western clergy alienated Orthodox Greeks and Slavs.
 - 5. Venice and Genoa, with trade concessions and ports, abandoned the weak Latin Empire to its fate.

B. Greek splinter empires rose in the peripheral lands of the Byzantine Empire to challenge Crusader rule.

- 1. The despots of Epirus organized Orthodox resistance in the Balkans.
- 2. The Empire of Trebizond, on the Black Sea, prospered as a remote commercial state linked to Georgia and Genoa.
- 3. Theodore I Lascaris (1204–1224) founded the Empire of Nicaea, the Orthodox successor to Constantinople.
- 4. John III (1222–1254) defeated the Seljuk Turks and consolidated western Anatolia.
- 5. The usurper Michael VIII Palaeologus recovered Constantinople by alliances with Genoa and Venice (1261).

III. Palaeologan restoration: The Palaeologan emperors lacked the resources to recreate an imperial order. They lost the European and Anatolian hinterlands of Constantinople to the Serbians and Ottoman Turks, respectively, in the fourteenth century.

- A.** Michael VIII (1258–1282), by adroit diplomacy and promises of religious reunion with Rome, briefly restored Byzantium as a regional power.
 - 1. Michael VIII depended on the navies of Venice and Genoa.
 - 2. Military recovery led to fiscal crisis and debasement of the currency.
 - 3. Union under the Catholic Church at the Council of Lyons (1274) alienated his Orthodox subjects.

4. Michael VIII neglected western Anatolia, thereby allowing for the rise of the Ottoman Turks.

B. Andronicus II (1282–1337), a pious and noble Orthodox emperor, presided over the collapse of Byzantine power.

1. The unpopular union under Rome failed to bring aid.
2. Ottoman advances in Anatolia (1282–1302) compelled Andronicus II to hire western mercenaries, the Catalan Company.
3. The abortive Catalan expedition (1302–1309) bankrupted the imperial government; the rogue Catalans carved out a state in Greece.
4. The Ottomans conquered northwestern Anatolia and, in 1356, entered Europe by Byzantine invitation.

C. Later Palaeologan emperors, who indulged in petty civil wars and intrigues, could not ward off decline in the changing conditions of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

1. Gunpowder and artillery increased the costs of war and rendered the Theodosian Walls of Constantinople obsolete.
2. Constantinople never recovered from the impact of the Black Death (1347–1349), because the Balkans and Anatolia had been lost.
3. Venice and Genoa controlled the financial life of Constantinople.

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Questions to Consider:

1. How much did dynastic struggles and internal weakness contribute to the sack of Constantinople in 1204?
2. Were the Crusaders justified in capturing Constantinople?

Lecture Twenty-Three

Byzantine Letters and Aesthetics

Scope: As guardians of the classical heritage, Byzantine scholars transmitted Greek classical texts to the West—their single greatest accomplishment. From the tenth century on, emperors endowed imperial schools and promoted intellectual life. Michael Psellus and Anna Comnena wrote contemporary histories in the classical tradition; the Patriarch Photius revived the study of Plato. Even in the melancholy fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the despots of Mistra, the cadet imperial family ruling in the Peloponnese, patronized savants, such as Plethon, the greatest of medieval Platonic scholars. Hagia Sophia inspired no other grand churches. Later Byzantine donors and architects preferred smaller, private chapels, decorated with frescoes and mosaics so that the worshiper was surrounded by a familiar Orthodox iconography, as in the Chora Church (Kariye Camii), dedicated by Theodore Metochites in 1315. These mannerist paintings compare with the best of contemporary Italian art. Classicizing painting at Mistra a century later reveals sophisticated styles transmitted by Byzantine artists to Renaissance Italy on the eve of the Ottoman conquest.

Outline

- I. Byzantium, heir to the classical tradition: Byzantines saw themselves as the heirs to the Greek classical traditions, and they transmitted the Hellenic heritage to western Europe in the Renaissance.
 - A. Macedonian and Comnenian emperors sponsored the revival of classical arts and letters (850–1180) as arbiters of taste.
 1. Bardas Caesar and Patriarch Photius reorganized the imperial chairs at the University of Constantinople in the reign of Michael III (842–867).
 2. Basil I and Leo VI encouraged arts and letters; Constantine VII (913–957) was a prodigious scholar and artist in his own right.
 3. Zoe and Constantine IX (1042–1055) and the Comnenian emperors continued patronage.
 4. The curriculum of the upper classes was based on the Greek classics; imperial libraries ensured that books were copied.
 - B. Classical letters were selected and interpreted in conformity with the Christian message, rather than studied on their own merits.
 1. Homer and the Athenian tragedians were the models for poetry, as seen by the familiarity of Anna Comnena with these texts.
 2. Select pagan lyric poems were collected into the *Palatine Anthology*.

3. Patriarch Photius (858–867; 878–886) and the Macedonian courtier and author Michael Psellus (1018–1078) revived the study of Plato.

4. Michael Psellus, in his *Chronographia*, and Princess Anna Comnena (1083–c. 1150), in her *Alexiad*, composed history in the manner of Thucydides, rather than chronicles characteristic of the medieval West.

C. Popular literature, too, flourished from the ninth century, revealing that vernacular Greek was diverging in vocabulary, morphology, and syntax from the polished literary language that imitated classical Greek.

1. *Digenes Akrites* was a Christian epic in vernacular Greek that affirmed the martial ethos of borderlands in Cappadocia.
2. Saints' lives (hagiography) proliferated from the tenth century.

II. Visual arts and architecture: The impact of Iconoclasm, the architectural legacy of Justinian, and changes in the Orthodox liturgy that stressed private devotions influenced the rebirth of religious arts from the ninth century.

A. With the completion of Hagia Sophia, emperors and noble patrons ceased to construct grand basilican churches; rather, smaller, domed, centrally planned churches, designed for private worship, gained favor.

1. Because of Iconoclasm, figural art was avoided; mosaics and frescoes on walls and ceilings, as well as icons, were the prime religious decorations.
2. The development of the cross-in-dome plan created niches and vaults that were decorated according to a strict iconography to orient the worshiper; the architecture came to symbolize the liturgy.
3. The Church of the Savior in Chora (Kariye Camii) epitomized the iconography and architecture of the Middle and Late Byzantine ages.
4. Provincial patrons and artists emulated the styles and iconography of the capital, as seen in the rock churches of Cappadocia.
5. Byzantine religious arts were transmitted to the West via Venice and Norman Italy, as well as into Germany and Hungary, as the result of marriage alliances from the tenth through twelfth centuries.

B. The triumph of icons in Orthodox worship is best appreciated from the nearly complete program of mosaics and frescoes in the Church of the Savior in Chora (Kariye Camii), donated by Theodore Metochites (1285–1315).

1. The Byzantine church was based on an architecture of interiors; the rich decorative program inside the church stood in contrast to the exterior.
2. The main mosaic programs of the exonarthex and narthex narrate the story of Christ and the Virgin Mary, respectively.
3. The donor panels in the narthex honor Theodore Metochites.

4. The mortuary chapel of the parecclesion was decorated with frescoes stressing the Last Judgment and Resurrection (Anastasis).

III. The Byzantine legacy: Byzantine arts were transmitted to Italy and to the Christian East under Muslim rule during the Middle Ages, but the pace of transmission quickened, and the Greek classical texts began to arrive, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

A. The Palaeologan renaissance in arts and letters ensured the transmission of the Hellenic legacy to western Europe on the eve of the Renaissance.

1. The court of the despots of Mistra, Byzantine Sparta, patronized the arts and letters from the late thirteenth century.
2. George Gemistus Plethon (1360–1452) revived Platonism.
3. Orthodox mystics founded the spiritual movement of Hesychism.
4. Scholars redefined the Hellenic identity as they gained a new perspective on their classical past.
5. Late Byzantine historians, such as George Phrantzes (1400–1477), applied the method of Thucydides in interpreting imperial decline.

B. Byzantine scholars arrived in the West in increasing numbers as imperial power waned from the mid-fourteenth century.

1. Masons, architects, and painters brought techniques and styles to Italy and Spain; Byzantine artists profoundly influenced painting in Venice.
2. Greek scholars carried Greek texts to the West and, as in the case of George of Trebizond, prepared Latin translations.
3. Unionist Orthodox clergy members in the West, such as Cardinal Bessarion, sponsored Byzantine scholars.
4. Civic patronage in the Florentine Enlightenment (1380–1450) and the papal courts of Eugenius IV (1431–1447) and Nicholas V (1447–1455) encouraged the migration of Greek artists and scholars.
5. The manuscripts and translations of Plato enabled Marsilio Ficino to produce his *Theologica Platonica* (1469–1474).
6. Western Europe regained the Hellenic legacy.
7. The Hellenic component in the Renaissance led to new methods and revival of biblical studies necessary for the Reformation and the recovery of the classical heritage that inspired the European Enlightenment.

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Questions to Consider:

1. What elements of classical civilization appealed to Christian Byzantines, and how did they understand this heritage in the Middle Byzantine period (600–1200)? How did perceptions change in the later Byzantine age?
2. What was the role of imperial, private, and ecclesiastical patronage? How did classical texts dictate the education and letters of Byzantines? How did they influence “popular” literature?
3. What were the main developments in Byzantine visual arts after 600? What was the impact of Iconoclasm? How does iconography and architecture of the Church of the Savior in Chora (Kariye Camii) epitomize the triumph of Orthodoxy?
4. What accounted for the last flowering of Byzantine arts and letters at Mistra in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries? What was the Byzantine contribution to the Italian Renaissance?

Lecture Twenty-Four

The Fall of Constantinople

Scope: The Palaeologan emperors preserved their dying empire by promises of religious union under Rome and trade concessions to the Italian maritime republics. Western aid never turned the tide. Successive popes failed to direct an effective war against the Ottomans. At Nicopolis (1396) and Varna (1447), Ottoman armies smashed these later Crusades and overran the Balkans. From Adrianople (Edrine), Ottoman sultans created a European heartland, Rumelia, by land grants (*timars*) to military colonists. Murad II (1421–1451) formalized the levy of Christian adolescent boys, who were converted to Islam and trained into the dreaded infantry corps of Janissaries. Orthodox Christians even preferred the tolerant rule of Ottoman sultans over union with Rome. In 1453, Mehmet II (1449–1481) boldly besieged Constantinople. The last emperor Constantine XI (1448–1453) and his gallant 7,000 defenders fell fighting as the historic capital of the Christian East was defeated at last by the Muslim foe. Even more boldly, Mehmet II decided to rebuild the ruined city as a new Muslim city, Istanbul, seat of the last great Islamic Empire.

Outline

- I. The Ottoman sultanate: The Ottoman sultans gave political unity to the Turkish Muslim civilization that had evolved in Anatolia since the late eleventh century.
 - A. The Seljuk sultans of Konya (1180–1243) forged a powerful Muslim state in central Anatolia.
 1. The Seljuk sultans developed caravan routes and minted a substantial Muslim silver coinage.
 2. Persian craftsmen, merchants, and clergy immigrated to Anatolian cities.
 3. Seljuk sultans patronized Muslim arts and architecture; mosques and madresses (religious schools) Islamized Anatolian cities.
 4. Disruption of Christian institutions enabled Muslim mystics, such as Jalal al-din Rumi, “Mevlana” (1204–1261), to convert Christians.
 5. A new wave of Turkomen tribes emigrated from central Asia to Anatolia ahead of the Mongol advance in the early thirteenth century.
 6. Mongol victory at Köse Dağ (1243) shattered political unity in Muslim Anatolia.

B. Orhan (1326–1362) created the Ottoman sultanate by waging *jihad* (holy war) against the Byzantine provinces in northwestern Anatolia.

1. The foundation of Bursa, first Ottoman capital (1326), marked the emergence of the Ottoman state (Porte).
2. Persian and Arab officials created a central administration; slave soldiers (Janissaries) were the elite of a professional Ottoman army.
3. *Timars* (land grants) were awarded to members of a Muslim provincial military caste.
4. Muslim institutions (medresse and mosques) were endowed.
5. Jews and Christians were organized into millets (subject communities) and were tolerated with payment of the head tax.
6. The conquest of Gallipoli and Thrace (1354–1362) led to the settlement of Rumelia, European Turkey, and the second base for Ottoman power.

C. The Palaeologan emperors, by clever diplomacy, convinced western Europeans to wage the last Crusades against the Ottoman sultans in the Balkans.

1. Sultan Murad I (1362–1389) moved his capital to Edrine (Adrianople) in European Turkey (1365).
2. Bayezid the Thunderbolt (1389–1402) defeated the Serbians at Kosovo and imposed Muslim hegemony over the Balkans.
3. The western Crusade preached against the Ottoman threat ended in defeat at Nicopolis (1396).
4. Bayezid abortively besieged Constantinople (1399–1402) as the source of inspiration for western Crusades.
5. The Mongol conqueror Tamerlane smashed Ottoman power at Angora (1402).
6. Murad II (1421–1451) revived Ottoman power, reforming the Janissaries and the artillery corps.
7. The last western Crusade was defeated at Varna (1444).

II. Siege of Constantinople: Mehmet II (1451–1481) understood that Constantinople was the capital for the emerging Ottoman Empire, and Constantine XI (1448–1453) calculated that a successful defense could undermine Ottoman power.

A. Mehmet II saw the siege as a means to assert his authority over his father's ministers, led by the Grand Vizier Halil and the traditional Turkish nobility.

1. Mehmet II mobilized vast forces (100,000 men) and a fleet to ensure quick victory out of fear of western intervention.
2. Mehmet isolated Constantinople by courting Venice and Genoa.
3. Mehmet preached *jihad*, proclaiming his intention to fulfill the goal of Muhammad to capture the New Rome.

B. Constantine XI calculated that a prolonged siege would undermine Mehmet and allow for the arrival of western aid.

5. Constantine embraced Catholicism in return for aid, but Pope Eugenius IV could not mobilize European monarchs; Venice responded too late.
6. Western mercenaries, notably the Genoese Company of Giovanni Giustiniani, and Venetian residents of Constantinople proved vital.
7. The arrival of a Venetian or Genoese fleet would have tipped the balance.

B. The great siege (March 31–May 29, 1453) saw innovations in artillery and naval warfare, but the small imperial army, behind the ruined Theodosian Walls, almost drove off the Ottoman army.

1. In late March 1453, the Ottoman fleet blockaded the Bosphorus, but the imperial fleet held the Golden Horn.
2. Turkish artillery, notably Urban's bombard, attacked the four miles of land walls in preparation for a general assault.
3. Byzantine and western defenders, numbering a mere 7,000, heroically repaired the walls, repelled successive Turkish assaults, and thwarted mining operations for two months.
4. Constantine XI and Giovanni Giustiniani were inspired leaders.
5. Even though only four galleys arrived from Italy with reinforcements, the defenders fought the Ottomans to stalemate.
6. On May 29, 1453, Mehmet gambled on a final assault, and luck delivered an open gate and the city to Ottoman forces.
7. With the capture of Constantinople, Mehmet went on to found the Ottoman Empire, sweeping away the last outposts of Byzantine rule in the Peloponnesus and at Trebizon.
8. Eventually, Russia fell heir to the political and religious legacy of Byzantium.

III. The legacy of Byzantium: We began with one Constantine, and we end with another—Constantine XI. We have seen three new civilizations evolve from the old Roman tradition: western Europe, eastern Europe, and the Islamic world. We have seen Classical institutions evolve through the Middle Ages into a new political order, one that has shaped our concept of Europe and the Middle East.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Why did the Ottomans succeed to the Byzantine legacy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries? What institutions proved critical to the Ottoman sultans forging of a great Islamic Empire?
2. Why did the western Christian powers fail to check Ottoman power? Why did they fail to render aid during the siege in 1453?
3. How significant was the capture of Constantinople for Mehmet II and the emerging Ottoman Empire? If Constantine XI had repelled the Ottomans, what would have happened to Ottoman power?

Timeline

| | |
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| 580 | Creation of the exarchates of Africa and Italy; disintegration of Byzantine rule in the West |
| 582 | Accession of Maurice Tiberius (582–602); recovery in the Balkans and East |
| 602 | Assassination of Maurice Tiberius; crisis in the Byzantine Empire |
| 610 | Accession of Heraclius (610–641); transformation of the Late Roman Empire (or Dominate) into the Middle Byzantine Empire (610–1204) |
| 622 | Heraclius opens his Persian campaigns (622–626) and reconquers the East; the prophet Muhammad flees from Mecca to Medina (Hegira) |
| 632 | Unification of Arabia under Islam; first Arab raids against Byzantine Syria; death of Muhammad; Abu Bakr (632–634) proclaimed first caliph ("successor") |
| 636 | Battle of Yarmuk; Arab conquest of Syria |
| 638 | Heraclius issues Ecthesis, proclaiming Monothelete ("one will") doctrine |
| 639–642 | Arab armies overrun the Sassanid (Persian) Empire |
| 641 | Succession crisis at Constantinople; accession of Constans II (641–668); Arab conquest of Egypt; beginning of the Byzantine Dark Age (641–867) |
| 649–653 | Clash between Constans II and Pope Martin I |
| c. 650 | Creation of the theme organization in Asia Minor; decline of classical cities in Anatolia, the Balkans, and Italy |
| 656–661 | Civil war in the Arabic Empire between Muawiya and Ali; creation of the Umayyad Caliphate of Sunni Islam at Damascus (661–750); Shi'ites, sectarian Muslims, go into opposition |
| 668 | Accession of Constantine IV (668–685) |
| 674–677 | First Arabic siege of Constantinople |
| 680 | Bulgars (Turkic nomads) settle on the Lower Danube and create a khanate in the Balkans |

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| 681 | Sixth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople; rejection of Monothelete and Monophysite doctrines | 820 | Accession of Michael II (820–829) and establishment of Amorian Dynasty |
| 685 | Accession of Justinian II (685–695, 705–711); military defeat and crisis | 821–824 | Revolt of Thomas the Slav |
| 691–696 | Quinisextum Council raises the issue of icons in worship | 827 | Arab corsairs seize bases in Sicily and Crete; Muslim piracy disrupts trade and communication between Constantinople and the West |
| 696–698 | Arabs conquer Carthage and Byzantine North Africa | 829–842 | Accession of Theophilus; rebuilding of sea walls of Constantinople |
| 711–717 | Fall of Heraclian Dynasty | 838 | Battle of Dazimon and siege of Amorium; last Abbasid campaign against Byzantium |
| 717 | Accession of Leo III (717–741) and establishment of the Isaurian Dynasty | 842 | Accession of Michael III, “the Drunkard” (842–867); beginning of Byzantine political recovery and renaissance in arts and letters |
| 717–718 | Second Arabic siege of Constantinople | 843 | Synod of Constantinople; restoration of icons |
| 726 | Outbreak of First Iconoclastic Controversy (726–787); publication of <i>Ecloga</i> ; administrative and military reorganization | 858 | Patriarch Photius (858–867, 878–880); revival of Platonism and classical letters |
| 741 | Accession of Constantine V (717–775); extreme phase of Iconoclasm | 863 | Cyril and Methodius, “Apostles to the Slavs,” convert the Bohemians |
| 749–751 | Siege and capture of Ravenna by Lombards; end of Byzantine rule in North Italy; civil war in Arabic Empire; creation of Abbasid Caliphate (749–1258) | 866 | Tsar Boris of Bulgaria embraces Orthodox Christianity |
| 754 | Pepin the Short, King of the Franks, defeats Lombards and grants donation to the papacy in Rome; beginning of papal-Frankish cooperation; Council of Hiera; proclamation of Iconoclastic doctrine | 867 | Accession of Basil I (867–886) and establishment of Macedonian Dynasty (867–1056) |
| 787 | Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea; restoration of the worship of icons | 875 | Basil I initiates reconquest of southern Italy (875–915) |
| 797 | Irene (797–802) deposes and blinds her son Constantine VI (780–797) | 886 | Accession of Leo VI (886–912) |
| 800 | Pope III crowns Charlemagne (768–814) Holy Roman Emperor at Rome | 913 | Accession of Constantine VII (913–957); succession crisis; outbreak of war with Tsar Symeon of Bulgaria (913–924) |
| 802 | Accession of Nicephorus I (802–811); end of Isaurian Dynasty; defeats at the hands of Bulgars and Abbasid armies (802–813) | 919 | Romanus I Lecapenus (919–944) seizes power as regent emperor; Constantine VII sponsors revival of arts and letters |
| 813 | Leo V “the Armenian” (813–820) acclaimed emperor by eastern army | 922 | First Novel of Romanus I establishing pre-emption right in land reform |
| 815 | Outbreak of Second Iconoclastic Controversy (815–843) | 923 | Appointment of John Cucuras as Domestic of the East; reconquest of eastern Anatolia initiated (923–944) |

934..... Second Novel of Romanus I; extension of pre-emption right

957..... Visit and conversion of Queen Olga (Helga) of Kiev

963..... Succession crisis; Nicephorus II (963–969) seizes power as regent emperor; Nicephorus begins conquest of northern Syria (963–970)

967–971..... Invasion of Bulgaria by Svitatoslav, Prince of Kiev

969..... Accession of John I (969–976) as regent emperor; establishment of the Fatimid (Shi'ite) Caliphate of Cairo in Egypt

972..... Marriage of Otto II to Princes Theophano; Byzantine-German alliance

974–975..... Syrian campaigns of John I

976..... Accession of Basil II (976–1025); revolt of Bardas Sclerus (976–978)

986–989..... Revolt of Bardas Phocas; Basil II crushes the eastern aristocracy

989..... Prince Vladimir of Kiev embraces Orthodox Christianity

990–1016..... Conquest of Bulgaria by Basil II

990..... First Novel of Basil II; enforcement of land legislation

1001..... Basil II negotiates treaty with Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim; rising numbers of western pilgrims to the Holy Land; promulgation of Second Novel of Basil II

1014..... Battle of Cleidon Pass; decisive victory of Tsar Samuel of Bulgaria

1025..... Accession of Constantine VIII (1025–1028); succession crisis

1028..... Accession of Zoe and her husband, Romanus III (1028–1034); corruption of administration and court; rise of John the Many-eyed; end of expansion on frontiers and imperial land legislation

1034..... Accession of Michael IV, second husband of Zoe (1034–1041); rising resentment and rebellion in the provinces

1042..... Accession of Constantine IX (1042–1055), third husband of Zoe; debasement of currency and fiscal crisis

1043–1044..... Revolt of George Maniaces; collapse of Byzantine Italy; Normans, under Robert Guiscard, conquer southern Italy (1046–1071)

1045..... Refounding of the University at Constantinople

1053..... Battle of Civitate; Robert Guiscard wins decisive victory over Pope Leo IX

1054..... The Great Schism between the Orthodox and Catholic churches

1055..... Sultan Tughril Bey of the Seljuk Turks enters Baghdad; restoration of Abbasid power in the Near East

1056..... Death of Theodora, last Macedonian ruler (1055–1056); rivalry between court and military aristocracy; Seljuk Turks begin raiding Armenia and Anatolia

1057–1059..... Reign of Isaac I, candidate of eastern army; abortive reform

1059..... Accession of Constantine X (1059–1067); crisis on the imperial frontiers

1068..... Accession of Romanus IV Diogenes (1068–1072)

1071..... Battle of Manzikert; defeat and capture of Romanus IV by Sultan Alp Arslan; migration of Seljuk Turks into Asia Minor (1071–1078); disruption of pilgrimage routes to Holy Land; Normans capture Bari, last Byzantine stronghold in Italy

1081..... Accession of Alexius I (1081–1118) and establishment of Comnenian Dynasty (1081–1185); Norman invasion of Greece (1081–1085)

1082..... Alexius issues chrysobull (confirming commercial rights) to Venice

1092..... Fiscal and monetary reform; beginning of Comnenian recovery

1095..... Pope Urban II (1088–1099) calls for First Crusade (1095–1099)

1096–1097..... Arrival of First Crusade at Constantinople

1098.....Crusaders capture Antioch; Bohemond establishes Principality of Antioch; Baldwin establishes the County of Edessa

1099.....Capture of Jerusalem; Godfrey proclaimed *advocatus* of the Holy Sepulcher

1100.....Accession of Baldwin I as first King of Jerusalem (1100–1118)

1101.....Crusade of 1101; worsening relations between Byzantines and Crusaders

1105–1107.....War (“Crusade”) of Bohemond against Byzantium

1109.....Creation of fourth Crusader state, County of Tripoli

1118.....Accession of John II (1118–1143); efforts to impose authority over Antioch; Accession of King Baldwin II; expansion of the Jerusalem kingdom

1143.....Accession of Manuel I (1143–1180); zenith of Comnenian power

1144.....Fall of Edessa to Zengi; summons for new Crusades

1146–1148.....The Second Crusade; failure of King Louis VII to capture Damascus; Nur-ad-Din (1146–1174) unifies Muslim Syria

1171.....Saladin restores Sunni (Orthodox Muslim) rule in Egypt

1174.....Saladin (1174–1193) unites Muslim Egypt and Syria; accession of Baldwin IV, “the Leper King” (1174–1185); crisis in the Crusader states over succession

1176.....Battle of Myriocephalon; Seljuk Turks defeat Manuel I; Byzantine withdrawal from central Anatolia; emergence of a Turkish, Muslim civilization in Anatolia (1180–1300)

1185.....Accession of Isaac II (1185–1195) and creation of Angelan Dynasty; disintegration of the Comnenian Empire

1186.....Accession of King Guy of Jerusalem (1186–1192); Bulgarians revolt from Byzantine rule

1187.....Battle of Hattin; Saladin overruns the Holy Land

1188–1192.....The Third Crusade fails to recapture Jerusalem

1198.....Preaching of the Fourth Crusade (1198–1204)

1204.....Crusaders capture and sack Constantinople; Baldwin I proclaimed first “Latin” emperor (1204–1205); Crusaders carve out feudal principalities in Greece; creation of Greek splinter empires in Epirus and at Nicaea and Trebizond

1258.....Michael VIII usurps throne at Nicaea and establishes Palaeologan Dynasty (1258–1453), the last dynasty of Byzantium

1261.....Michael VIII (1258–1282) enters Constantinople; restoration of Byzantine Empire

1274.....Council of Lyons; Michael VIII unifies Orthodox church under Rome

1282.....Accession of Andronicus II (1282–1328); collapse of revived Byzantine power

1303–1311.....Campaigns and revolt of the Catalan Company; disruption of Byzantine and Frankish Greece; rise of Ottomans in northwestern Turkey

1315–1321.....Rebuilding and decoration of the Church of the Savior in Chora (Kariye Camii)

1331.....Accession of Stefan Dushan (1331–1355); zenith of Serbia

1326.....Accession of Sultan Orhan (1326–1362)

1347–1351.....The Black Death ravages the Near East and Europe

1354–1356.....Ottoman Turks enter Europe and establish Edirne (Adrianople) as capital; grants of *timars* in European Turkey (Rumelia)

1389.....Accession of Sultan Bayezit the Thunderbolt; Battle of Kosovo; Ottomans smash the Serbian kingdom

1391.....Accession of Manuel II (1391–1425); Byzantine appeals for western aid

1396.....Battle of Nicopolis; Bayezit defeats western crusaders; Ottoman annexation of Bulgaria and Serbia

1399–1402.....First Ottoman siege of Constantinople

1402.....Battle of Angora; Tamerlane and Mongols temporarily shatter Ottoman power

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| 1422 | Second Ottoman siege of Constantinople |
| 1430–1460 | Flowering of Byzantine arts and Platonism at Mistra (Sparta) in Greece; migration of Byzantine scholars and artists to western Europe |
| 1439 | Council of Florence: John VIII unites Orthodox church under Rome |
| 1444 | Battle of Varna; Sultan Murad II defeats western crusaders; Ottoman power confirmed in the Balkans |
| 1448 | Accession of Constantine XI (1448–1453), last Palaeologan emperor |
| 1453 | Siege and capture of Constantinople by Mehmet II (1451–1481); end of the Byzantine Empire |

Glossary

Acacian Schism (484–519): The first religious split between Orthodox and Catholic churches arising from the mutual excommunication of Patriarch Acacius (471–489) and Pope Felix III (483–492); see also **schism**.

Adrianople (378): Decisive battle in Thrace, where the Goths defeated and slew the emperor Valens.

adventus (“arrival”): The ceremony of welcome offered by a city on the arrival of a late Roman emperor.

akritai (“borderers”): The semi-independent warlords and soldiers who patrolled the borderlands of the Middle Byzantine state.

Alammani: A confederation of western Germanic tribes east of the Upper Rhine and north of the Upper Danube, who pressed into Roman Gaul from the 230s on.

allelengyon: The obligation of taxpayers to meet the fiscal responsibilities for abandoned land adjacent to their own properties. In the Novel of 1001–1002, Basil II assigned this responsibility to the nobility.

anchorite: “He who has withdrawn”; a solitary ascetic living in wastelands in imitation of Christ.

Anglo-Saxons: The Germanic tribes (Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Frisians) who crossed the North Sea and settled Britain, which they turned into England between the mid-fifth and early seventh centuries.

antoninianus (“double denarius; 5.40 g): A coin of base silver introduced in 215 that drove the denarius out of circulation, then was debased to a silver-coated coin of 2.5% fine by 270. These debasements fueled inflation and fiscal crisis in the third century; see also **denarius**.

Apologists (“defenders”): Christian authors who wrote a defense (*apologia*) of their faith against pagan critics.

ascetic: “He who exercises”; solitary Christian holy man or woman.

Avars: Turkish-speaking nomadic tribes who dominated the steppes of eastern Europe and threatened the Byzantine Empire from the mid-sixth through mid-eighth centuries.

basilica: Roman public building with apses at each end and a central hall, or narthex. The design was applied to a Christian church in the fourth century. A basilican church, entered from the west, has a courtyard (*aula*), narthex (entrance hall), and main hall or nave, flanked by two aisles and terminating at the east end in an apse where the altar is located. The longitudinal axis of the basilica was distinct from the centrally planned church in the form of a square and with a

dome at the intersection—the design favored in the Middle and Late Byzantine ages.

bucellarii (“eaters of iron rations”): Armed, personal retainers of late Roman landlords; Byzantine generals, such as Belisarius, maintained units of *bucellarii*, numbering between 500 and 2,000 heavy cavalry.

Busta Gallorum (552): Decisive battle in which Narses, eunuch general of Justinian, defeated the Ostrogothic King Totila.

Byzantium, Byzantine: Byzantium was the name of the Greek colony founded on the site of modern Istanbul in 668 B.C. In 330, Constantine refounded the city as Constantinople, or New Rome. Byzantium is applied to the East Roman state of the fourth through fifteenth centuries to distinguish it from the parent state of Rome. Byzantine refers to East Roman civilization.

caliph (“successor”): The religious and political heir of the prophet Muhammad. The first four orthodox caliphs (632–661) were followers of Muhammad. The Umayyad caliphs ruled as hereditary monarchs from Damascus (661–759); the Abbasid caliphs succeeded and ruled from Baghdad (749–1258). A Shi’ite or sectarian Fatimid Caliphate ruled from Cairo in Egypt (969–1171).

caput (plural *capita*): The Tetrarchic tax assessment unit for people and livestock, calculated to account for productivity; it was equated with the *iugum*.

cataphracti: The shock-heavy cavalry, armed with composite bow, lance, and lamellar armor, of late Roman and Middle Byzantine armies.

Catholic (“universal”): The term used to designate the Western medieval Latin-speaking church that accepted the doctrines of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451) and the primacy of the pope at Rome. See also **Orthodox**.

cenobium (“living together”): The Greek term applied to the first monasteries founded in Egypt during the fourth and fifth centuries.

Châlons (451): Battle in eastern Gaul in which Aetius and his Gothic allies won a strategic victory over King Attila of the Huns, who was compelled to withdraw.

Christogram: A monogram of the Greek letters *chi* and *rho*, the first two letters of Christ’s name, adopted as the Christian symbol by Constantine, who placed the symbol on the banner, or **labarum**.

Cleidon Pass (1014): Decisive battle in which Basil II defeated and captured the Bulgarian army of Tsar Samuel I.

Clermont: French city and site of the council in 1095 where Pope Urban II preached the First Crusade.

comes (count): Commanded a small regional field army, such as the count of the Saxon shore, who defended the eastern coast of Britain.

comitatenses (field army): Elite cavalry and infantry units of the palatine armies that served directly under the emperor. See **limitanei**.

Corpus Iuris Civilis (“Body of Civil Law”): The code of Justinian (533–537) in four parts: Code, Digest, Institutes, and Novels.

Crusader states (or **Outremer**, “Overseas”): The four feudal kingdoms established in the Levant as a result of the First Crusade: the Kingdom of Jerusalem, County of Tripoli, Principality of Antioch, and County of Edessa.

Daras (530): Roman fortress in Mesopotomia where Belisarius won a brilliant victory over the Persians, enabling Justinian to negotiate the Perpetual Peace.

Dazimon (838): Battle in which the emperor Theophilus gained a tactical victory but was forced to withdraw strategically in the face of the last Abbasid invasion of the Byzantine Empire.

decurions: The landed civic elites, defined as capable of holding municipal office with wealth assessed in excess of 25,000 denarii or one-tenth the property qualification of a Roman senator.

denarius (3.83 g): The prime silver coin struck to meet fiscal obligations in the Principate. The base pay of a Roman legionary was 225 denarii in the early first century, rising to 600 denarii by 215. The denarius was exchanged at 25 to the gold aureus, and its prime fractions were the brass sestertius (one-fourth) and as (one-sixteenth).

Digenes Akrites: The epic celebrating the legendary warlord on the Cappadocian frontier during the Byzantine Dark Age.

diocesis (plural *dioceses*): The second tier of the late Roman state’s provincial organization. The diocesis was administered by a vicar, who supervised a number of provinces. Dioceses, totaling between thirteen and fifteen, were grouped into four Prefectures. The Christian church adopted the terminology and organization. See **Prefecture**.

Domestic: Senior commander of the elite household cavalry known as the Schools (*Scholae*), stationed in Constantinople from the mid-fifth century. In the Macedonian age, the Domestic commanded the major field armies so that the position was divided into two senior commands, Domestic of the East and Domestic of the West.

Dominate: The Late Roman Empire (284–476) in which the emperor ruled as an autocrat or lord (*dominus*). The designation is used in contrast to the Principate (27 B.C.–284 A.D.), when emperors ruled as if the magistrate of a Roman Republic. See **Principate**.

dromon (“runner”): The principal Byzantine warship fitted with lateen sails; from the late seventh century, these ships were equipped with the incendiary known as Greek fire.

dux (duke): Commander of garrison frontier forces in the late Roman army; see *limitanei*.

dynatoi ("powerful ones"): The term used in Macedonian legislation to designate the nobility; they were defined in the Second Novel of Romanus I as civil aristocrats, the landed nobility, and the prelates of the Orthodox church.

Ecloga (726): The revised code of Justinian published in Greek by Leo III.

Ecthesis ("Exposition"): The imperial edict issued by Heraclius (638), offering the Monothelete ("one will") doctrine to reconcile the Monophysites.

Ecumenical Councils: The first seven councils were conferences representing the entire Christian world summoned by the Roman emperor to determine doctrine. The First Ecumenical Council, Nicaea (325), and Second Ecumenical Council, Constantinople (381), ruled in favor of the Trinity against the Arian doctrine. The Third Ecumenical Council, Ephesus (431), condemned the position of Nestorius and upheld Mary as Theotokos ("Mother of God"). The Fourth Ecumenical Council, Chalcedon (451), ruled in favor of the two natures of Christ and against the single nature, or Monophysite, doctrine. The Fifth Ecumenical Council, Constantinople (553), condemned the "Three Chapters" (Nestorian writings). The Sixth Ecumenical Council, Constantinople (681), condemned the Monophysite and Monothelete doctrines. The Seventh Ecumenical Council, Nicaea (787), restored the veneration of icons. Two "rogue" councils were also held, the Latrocinium, or "Robber Council," Ephesus (449), upholding the Monophysite doctrines, and the Iconoclastic Council of Hieria (754).

Edict of Milan: An imperial rescript (letter) issued by Constantine I and Licinius I ending persecution of Christians and proclaiming religious toleration (313).

Encratites: Ascetic Christian sectarians who lived in communities between the second and sixth centuries.

equestrian order: The landed property class of Roman citizens (assessed at 100,000 denarii) who stood below the senatorial order in the Principate. They provided the jurists, officials, and army officers of the imperial government.

exarch: The civil military governor of either the exarchate of Italy (based at Ravenna) or Africa (based at Carthage) from 580. These governorships were created to meet emergencies in the recovered western provinces.

Florence (1439): site of the council where the Palaeologan emperors accepted the union of the Orthodox church under the papacy in return for military aid.

Formula of Reunion (433): A compromise in wording of the creed accepted at Ephesus (431) to accommodate Nestorians rejoicing the imperial church.

Franks: A coalition of Germanic tribes in northwestern Germany who threatened the Rhine frontier from the mid-third century; they were destined to unite the former Roman West and to give their name to France.

ghazi: The nomadic Turkmen warrior, who was recast as the defender of Islam in the eleventh century.

Goths: East Germanic peoples who originated from Scandinavia and attacked the Roman Danubian frontier from the 240s. In the fourth century, the Goths were converted to Arian Christianity. From 395, they were split into two nations: the Visigoths, who eventually settled in southern Gaul and Spain, and the Ostrogoths, who settled in Italy.

Great Schism (July 16, 1054): The mutual excommunication of the Catholic Western and Greek Orthodox churches resulting from the clash of the legates of Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael I. Pope John XXIII raised the papal bull of excommunication in 1969; see **schism**.

Hagia Sophia ("Holy Wisdom"): The church that now exists in Constantinople is the third on the site; it is a centrally planned church of Justinian that was completed in 532–537, and its great dome was dedicated in 548.

Hattin (1187): Decisive victory of Sultan Saladin over the army of King Guy of Jerusalem. The defeat led directly to the preaching of the Third Crusade.

henotheism: The religious outlook regarding the traditional pagan gods as aspects of a single transcendent godhead. This was the religious vision of the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus and the emperor Julian II.

Henoticon (482): Imperial edict of Zeno issued to end debate on the Christology as a first step to reconcile the Monophysites; see **Acacian schism**.

heresy ("choice"): A doctrine condemned by formal council as outside the accepted Christian theology and teachings.

Hodegetria: Any icon of Mary Theotokos (Mary with child), but it referred to the icon reputedly painted by Saint Luke that was paraded around the walls of Constantinople during the Avar siege of 626.

homoousia vs. **homoioousia**: Terms proposed by Constantine to distinguish the "same substance" and "similar substance" with regard to the relationship of God the Father and Christ. The former was accepted as Orthodox; the latter as heretical at the Council of Nicaea (325).

honestiores vs. **humiliores**: A legal distinction between the privileged upper classes and humble classes subject to harsh penalties in criminal proceedings. This distinction characterized a shift of definition of status from citizenship in the Principate to class in the Dominate.

icon or image: The depiction of Christ, Mary Theotokos, or a saint on perishable material, to which a believer prays for intercession before God.

iconoclast (“destroyer of icons”): Those who argued that icons were idols and should be removed from Christian worship in 726–843.

iconodule (“servant of icons”): Those who favored the use of icons as inspirations of belief and prayers of intercession.

Indiction: The mandatory fifteen-year cycle for the fiscal assessment established by Diocletian.

iugum (plural *iugera*): The Tetrarchic tax assessment of the unit of lands based on quality and crops; it was equated as equal to a *caput*.

Khazars: Turkish-speaking nomad peoples dwelling on the steppes of the Lower Volga whose *kagans* united the tribes of eastern Europe. Allied to the Byzantine Empire, they opposed the Muslims from the seventh through ninth centuries. The nobility converted to Judaism c. 860. Khazar power was broken by Prince Sivatoslav of Kiev (964–972).

Kosovo (1389): Decisive battle in which Sultan Bayez• t the Thunderbolt crushed the Serbian army and ensured Ottoman domination of the Balkans.

labarum: See *Christogram*.

Latin Empire: The feudal state carved out of the European possessions of the Byzantine Empire by members of the Fourth Crusade (1204–1261).

legion: The main formation of the Roman army of the Republic and Principate. Each legion (of 5,400 men) comprised professional swordsmen and specialists with Roman citizenship. The auxiliaries (*auxilia*) were provincial units providing cavalry, archers, and light-armed infantry.

lines (plural *limites*): Originally the military highway running along the imperial boundary, the term came to designate the Roman frontier as a political and cultural boundary by the fourth century A.D.

limitanei (frontier forces): The frontier militia units defending fortified positions in the Dominate against barbarian invaders, who were to be intercepted and destroyed by the mobile armies.

logothetes (plural *logothetai*; “account”): Senior treasury officials of the Middle Byzantine state.

Lombards: Germanic tribe that migrated into Italy in 568, shattering Byzantine rule, and giving their name to northern Italy, Lombardy.

Lyons, France: The site of the Council of 1274, when emperor Michael VIII embraced Catholicism in return for western military aid.

magister militum (“master of the soldiers”): The supreme generalship of field armies in the later Roman Empire held by Stilicho (395–498) and Aetius (425–454).

Mandylion: A napkin with the impression of Christ’s head that was the relic of the city of Edessa. The icon was taken to Constantinople (944); it is not the shroud of Turin.

Manzikert (1071): Town in Armenia (today, eastern Turkey) where Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan decisively defeated Emperor Romanus IV.

martyr (“witness”): A Christian who refused to sacrifice to the gods and renounce Christianity in a Roman legal proceeding. The martyr was consigned to the arena.

metropolitan: The equivalent of an archbishop in the Orthodox Church.

Milvian Bridge: The historic bridge over the Tiber, north of Rome, where Constantine defeated his rival Maxentius (312) after beholding a vision sent by the Christian God.

Mistra (Sparta): The capital of the Byzantine appanage in the Peloponnesus (1430–1460) that was home to the final flowering of Byzantine arts and letters.

monophysite (“single nature,” **Monophysite**): The doctrine implied in the doctrines of Cyril and articulated by Patriarch Dioscorus at the Latrocinium, Ephesus (449), stressing the single, divine nature of Christ. This became the doctrine of the Egyptian, Armenian, Syrian, and Ethiopian churches.

monothelete (“single will”): The doctrine devised by Heraclius (638) to find a common wording between the followers of Chalcedon and the Monophysites. It was abandoned and condemned at the Sixth Ecumenical Council (681).

Myricephalon (1176): A town west of Konya (Iconium), where Manuel I suffered a major defeat at the hands of the Seljuk Turks that led to the Byzantine withdrawal from central Anatolia.

mystery cults (“initiation cults”): In the older scholarship viewed as ecstatic, irrational cults that displaced traditional pagan worship in anticipation of Christianity. Mystery cults were those with initiation rites and conformed to general pagan expectations of piety.

Nicopolis (1396): Decisive victory of Ottoman Sultan Bayez• t I over the western Crusaders sent to aid Constantinople. The victory confirmed Ottoman rule in the Balkans.

Nike Revolt (532): Uprising of the circus factions, Greens and Blues, against Justinian and Theodora in Constantinople.

Normans: The Vikings who settled in Normandy as vassals of the French king (911). Norman adventurers arrived in Byzantine Italy in the early eleventh century. Under Robert Guiscard, the Normans ousted the Byzantines from southern Italy.

Novel (“new law”): Specifically, land laws issued by Macedonian emperors between the reigns of Romanus I (919–944) and Basil II (976–1025) upholding the interests of peasants and holders of military tenures.

nummus: A silver-clad coin of 5% fine (10.75 g) introduced by Diocletian in 293 as a fiduciary, or proxy, silver coin (tariffed at 5 denarii communes) in an effort to end inflation. The nummus was debased after 306, setting off a new round of inflation; see **denarius**.

Orthodox (“correct”): The term used to designate the primarily Greek-speaking church of the Byzantine Empire that accepted the doctrines of the Council of Chalcedon (451). It was extended to include those Slavic and other churches that acknowledged the spiritual authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Ostrogoths: See **Goths**.

Outremer: See **Crusader states**.

Patriarch (“paternal ruler”): The Greek equivalent of the Latin pope (*papa*, “father”). The Patriarch of Constantinople is the head of the Orthodox church.

Pechenegs: The dreaded Turkish nomadic tribes that succeeded the Khazars on the south Russian steppes from the ninth through twelfth centuries.

Petrine Sees: The five great Apostolic sees founded by Peter or his disciples. The order was fixed at the Fourth Ecumenical Council as Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Rome claimed primacy and Constantinople claimed equality with Rome.

pre-emption right: The right for peasants and holders of military tenures to buy back at the original price land sold at less than half its assessed tax value. This right was established and extended by Macedonian emperors to protect the lower classes from the nobles. See also **dynatoi** and **Novel**.

Prefecture: The four great administrative regions of Gaul, Italy, Illyricum, and the East during the later Roman Empire. Each was administered by a **prefect**. See **diocesis**.

Price Edict or Edict of Maximum Prices (301): Issued by Diocletian, fixed prices and wages in the Roman Empire, but the edict failed to check inflation and was rescinded.

Principate: Designates the Early Roman Empire (27 B.C.–284 A.D.), when the emperor, styled as a *princeps*, “prince,” ruled as the first citizen of a republic. See **Dominate**.

pronoia (“forethought”): Middle and Late Byzantine imperial land grant, comparable to the later Ottoman *timar*. The grant was held at the will of the emperor in return for military services. The western Europeans after 1204 turned the tenure into a fief.

Quinisextum Council (691–696): The council of Justinian II dealing with the unresolved issues of church discipline and organization of the Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils.

Rus: A name applied to the Scandinavians who imposed their authority over the East Slavs and gave their name to Russia. See **Varangians**.

Sassanids: The dynasty of shahs who ruled the New Persian Empire (227–642).

Saxons: A West Germanic tribe dwelling between the North Sea and Elbe that posed a naval threat to the late Roman world. They settled in southern England; see **Anglo-Saxons**.

schism (“cutting”): A dispute resulting in mutual excommunication that arose over matters of church discipline or organization, rather than theology. See **heresy**.

senator: The senatorial order were those aristocratic families of Rome of the highest property qualification (250,000 denarii) who sat in the Senate and served the high offices and generalships of the Principate.

Shi’ite (“sectarians”) and **Sunni** (“orthodox”): The two main religious divisions of the Muslim world resulting from the civil war between Ali (656–661) and Muawiya (661–680).

solidus (4.54 g): The prime gold coin used in late Roman and Byzantine fiscal obligations; it was often called by the Greek name *nomisma* (plural, *nomimata*). The coin was debased in the eleventh century and replaced by the hyperpyron in 1092. The annual wage of a cavalryman in the age of Justinian was 9 solidi; of an infantryman, 5 solidi.

Splinter Empires: The Byzantine successor states founded after the capture of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade: the empire of Trebizond, empire of Nicaea, and despotate of Epirus. Michael VIII of the Nicene Empire recaptured Constantinople (1261).

strategos (“general,” plural *strategoi*): Military governor of a theme, who superseded the civil provincial officials from the mid-seventh century. See **theme**.

Sueves: A coalition of West Germanic peoples who crossed the Rhine in 406 and eventually settled in northwestern Spain.

sultan (“guardian”): The Turkish commander defending the caliph, who was henceforth regarded as the religious leader of Islam. Tughril Bey was proclaimed the first sultan in 1055 when he occupied Baghdad. The Seljuk Turks settling in Anatolia carved out a Sultanate of Rum (“Rome”) based at Konya (Iconium) in 1072–1078. See **caliph**.

syncretism (“mixing with”): The identification of one’s national gods with their counterparts of other peoples; Roman Jupiter was equated with Greek Zeus,

Syrian Baal, and Egyptian Amon. Such an outlook encouraged diversity in pagan worship rather than an incipient monotheism.

tagma (plural, *tagmata*): The professional regiments stationed in and around Constantinople that were the core of the imperial field army from the seventh through tenth centuries.

Tetrarchy ("rule of four"): The arrangement of collective imperial rule established by Dicoletian in 285–306 with two senior *Augusti* and two junior *Caesars*.

theme: Originally a military unit, it came to designate a province in the Middle Byzantine state. Constans II evacuated and settled the eastern armies in Anatolia. These cantonments, known by the names of the elite units **Armeniakon** ("Armenians"), **Anatolikon** ("Easterners"), and **Opsikion** ("Loyalists"), became provinces by the reign of Leo III. Isaurian emperors created new themes in Asia Minor by dividing the existing ones and named them after cavalry units, notably **Thracession** ("Thracians"), **Bucellarion** ("Retainers"), and **Optimation** ("Best"). In the ninth century, the theme organization was extended to the Balkans and Italy. The themes were the basis for the recruitment and training of the imperial army from the seventh through the tenth centuries.

Theopaschite theology: The doctrine of Justinian stressing that "one in the Trinity had suffered" as a means to reconcile the Monophysites.

Theotokos ("Mother of God"): Title designating Mary as the mother of the human and divine natures of Christ accepted at the Third Ecumenical Council (431). The Nestorian view accords Mary the title **Christotokos**, mother of the human nature only.

theurgy: The doctrine of pagan Neoplatonists that traditional rites of the gods had higher, symbolic meaning that put the worshiper in touch with the transcendent godhead. It is sometimes compared to the Christian doctrine of grace.

timar: A land grant by the Ottoman sultan to timariots (holders of land grants) who acted as the provincial elite and military caste.

Tome (449): The letter penned by Pope Leo I in support of the two natures of Christ and accepted as canonical at the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451).

Typus (645): The edict of Constans II upholding the Monothelete doctrine that led to a clash with Pope Martin I.

Vandals: East Germanic people from Scandinavia who converted to Arian Christianity and eventually settled in Roman North Africa in 429–442.

Varangians: Scandinavian warriors and merchants who settled in Russia from the ninth through eleventh centuries. Six thousand of these famed ax-wielding warriors were enrolled by Basil II as the Varangian Guard (989). See **Rus**.

Varna (1447), Bulgaria: Decisive victory of the Ottoman Sultan Murad II over the last western Crusade sent to aid the Byzantine Empire.

Visigoths: See **Goths**.

Zoroastrianism: The dualist state religion of Sassanid Persia based on the teachings of the Iranian prophet Zoroaster, who perhaps had lived in the sixth century B.C. The writings were codified as the *Avesta*, composed in the Middle Persian language.

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