

EARLY CHRISTIAN AND BYZANTINE ART

I. THE FALL OF ROME

A. Barbarian Invasions

- 1. The Visigoths, 410 CE**
- 2. The Huns, 452 CE**
- 3. The Vandals, 454 CE**

B. Rome falls, 476 CE

C. But Constantinople stands!

II. COMING ATTRACTIONS

A. Early Christian Art

- 1. Learn about the life and ministry of Jesus**
- 2. Know the difference between a gospel and an epistle**
- 3. Visit the catacombs beneath Saint Peter's**
- 4. Learn about the unique shape and purposes of early Christian churches**

B. Byzantine Art

- 1. Visit the cosmopolitan city of Constantinople**
- 2. Tour the incredible Hagia Sophia**
- 3. Learn the origin of the SAT word iconoclast**
- 4. Study the extraordinary mosaics at Ravenna**

III. THE LIFE OF JESUS IN ART (See Gardner's 308 – 309)

A. Incarnation and Childhood

- 1. Annunciation to Mary – When Gabriel tells Mary that she will become pregnant with the son of God, the savior of humankind, the Messiah.**
- 2. Visitation – When Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth, a woman who was once barren but was bearing John the Baptist, who was one of the holiest men who would ever live and Jesus' cousin.**
- 3. Nativity – When Jesus is born in a manger (a barn) in Bethlehem. He is shown surrounded by Mary, Joseph (earthly adoptive father), farm animals, and shepherds, who had come from the fields after being informed by an angel of the event.**

4. **Adoration of the Magi** – The Magi were three kings aka wise men from the East. They brought baby Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
5. **Presentation in the Temple** – Mary and Joseph, adhering to Jewish law, present Jesus unto God at the temple
6. **Massacre of the Innocents** – King Herod orders the death of all boys two years and under in order to counter the possible birth of the Messiah
7. **Dispute in the Temple** – Twelve year old Jesus stayed in the temple in Jerusalem expounding on the Jewish scriptures and astounding the adults. His parents had to come and get him so that they could rejoin their caravan and return to Nazareth.

B. Public Ministry

1. **Baptism** – When Jesus is water baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. A dove descends upon Jesus and God's voice says: This is My son with whom I am well pleased.
2. **Calling of the apostles** – Jesus recruits ordinary men such as fishermen, a tax collector, a zealot, and others to be his closest followers
3. **Miracles** – Jesus turned water to wine when a wedding party ran out, which would have really embarrassed the married couple's families. Jesus healed lepers, the blind, deaf and mute, crippled, walked on water, raised the dead, and fed large multitudes more than once with barely any food.
4. **Delivery of the Keys to Peter** – Peter (originally known as Simon) was the first Apostle to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus says that from now on he will be called Peter (Latin – Petrus or rock), because he will be the rock on which Christ builds his church. Christ also promises to give him the keys to the kingdom of Heaven.
5. **Transfiguration** – Jesus takes Peter, James, and John to the top of a mountain. Jesus' form is transfigured, he radiates light, the three apostles are frightened, and Moses and Elijah, famous leaders of the Jews from the Old Testament flank Jesus' sides. God's voice calls out that Jesus is His son and for the apostles to listen to him. Jesus then returns to normal and orders Peter, James, and John not to reveal this event.
6. **Cleansing of the Temple** – After Jesus returned to Jerusalem (most of his ministry occurred in Galilee in the northern part of Judea), he found money changers and crooked business transactions occurring in the temple complex. Jesus angrily knocks over tables and chases out the business people proclaiming: My Father's house is supposed to be a house of

prayer, but you had turned it into a den of thieves. This act was a serious offense that upset the Jewish leaders.

C. Passion

1. **Entry into Jerusalem** – Jesus enters Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. Crowds praise him and throw palm branches on the road before him.
2. **Last Supper** – Celebrating Passover, Jesus has a last supper with his Apostles. Establishes the ritual of communion (this is my body...this is my blood) and reveals that one of them (Judas Iscariot) will betray him
3. **Agony of the Garden** – Jesus asking God the Father (his father) if there is another way to redeem humankind while Jesus and the Apostles are in the Garden of Gethsemane.
4. **Betrayal and Arrest** – Judas leads an angry mob to arrest Jesus while he is in the garden. Judas greets Jesus with a kiss. The mob arrests Jesus, Peter defends Jesus until Jesus stops him, and the apostles scatter. The angry group begins to beat Jesus as they escort him to an impromptu trial.
5. **Trials of Jesus** – Jesus had hearings before the Jewish priestly court known as the Sanhedrin, King Herod, and Pontius Pilate, Roman governor of the region
6. **Flagellation and mocking** – Prior to Jesus' crucifixion, Pilate ordered Jesus to be whipped. He was tied to a pillar and whipped brutally. The Roman soldiers put a purple robe on Jesus, made a crown of thorns, and called him "King of the Jews."
7. **Carrying of the Cross** – Jesus carrying the cross to the site of Calvary; at a certain point a man on the road is ordered to help Jesus because he is so exhausted
8. **Raising of the Cross**
9. **Crucifixion** – Jesus was crucified with two criminals. Nails were put into his hands and feet. Roman soldiers and the crowd mocked him. The soldiers put a sign above him: King of the Jews (in Latin – Iesus Nazareth Rex Iudaorum or INRI). The sky turned dark for several hours. Jesus asks God why He has forsaken him. Then, he cries out in a loud voice: Father, into your hands I commend my life. It is finished! A Roman soldier in disbelief that Jesus could die so soon stabs Jesus on his right side and realizes that he is dead. The soldier becomes a believer.
10. **Deposition** – The taking of Jesus' body down from the cross
11. **Lamentation** – When Jesus' followers cry around his lifeless body
12. **Entombment** – Jesus' body was put into a rock cut tomb donated by one of his followers Joseph of Arimathea

13. Descent into Limbo – between Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection, it's believed he descended into hell to free souls
14. Resurrection – when Christ rose on the third day
15. Noli Me Tangere – Mary Magdalene, a close female follower, visits Jesus tomb and sees that he has come back to life. When she attempts to touch him, Jesus says that she cannot (nolo me tangere) because of the physical state he is in.
16. Supper at Emmaus – Jesus was unrecognizable to two depressed followers on their way to the town of Emmaus. He appeared as a stranger and had a discussion of Jewish history and Jesus' ministry. At dinner, these follower recognized it was really Jesus all along and Jesus disappears. They go out spreading the news of the resurrection.
17. Doubting of Thomas – Jesus appeared to the Apostles. Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not there at first. Jesus visited them again. This time Thomas was there and did not believe it was Jesus. Jesus instructed Thomas to touch his wounds (still visible), and Thomas believed.
18. Ascension – After a few weeks, Jesus ascended toward heaven in the clouds instructing the Apostles to go into all the world preaching the gospel (good news) and baptizing people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

IV. CHRISTIANITY AND THE SCRIPTURES

A. Scriptures – “what has been written”

1. Bible – derived from the Greek *biblos*, meaning “book”
 - a. Old Testament (used to prefigure the coming of Jesus Christ, Jewish history and laws for living – Ten Commandments, etc., books of poetry and prophecy)
 - b. New Testament

B. New Testament – established by the fourth century CE

1. Gospels – 4 biographies of Christ, authors are called the four Evangelists, meaning “bearer of good news.”
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
2. Acts – refers to the actions of the apostles after the ascension of Christ, how they spread his teachings

3. Epistles or Letters

- a. Most of the epistles were written by _____ and contain further doctrine and advice on how to live as a Christian

4. Revelation – book of the apocalypse, describes the end of the world and Christ’s Second Coming as the final Judge

C. Key Figures in Christian Art

1. Holy Family

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

2. Saints – any holy person canonized by the Church

3. Martyr – one who dies for a belief

- a. In Christian art, saints, martyrs, and members of the Holy Family are usually depicted with a _____

D. Saint Peter

1. Christ’s first apostle

2. In Matthew 16:13-20, Christ gives Peter the keys to heaven with the words, “On this rock will I build my Church.”

3. Interesting to note, the name Peter comes from the Greek word Petros meaning “rock.” Rock is a metaphor for something strong and lasting as in “solid as a rock.”

4. Saint Peter was the first bishop of Rome. Since that office later became the papacy, he is considered to have become the first pope.

V. THE CATACOMBS

A. The word

1. Catacomb – underground burial complex used by the early Christians
2. Originally known by the Greek word coemeteria which means “place of rest” and from which we derive the word _____

B. The place

1. **Narrow labyrinthine passages cut from soft rock**
2. **The catacombs in Rome comprised galleries estimated to run for 60 – 90 miles**

C. Functions

1. **Place for burial rites**
2. **In some cases, secret worship site**

D. Art

1. **Compares unfavorably with Roman frescoes**
2. **Why?**

E. An example of catacomb art – The Good Shepherd

1. **John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.”**
2. **The sheep on Christ’s shoulders is one of the lost sheep he has retrieved, symbolizing a sinner who has strayed and been rescued.**

VI. Early Christian architecture

A. The term BASILICA

1. **In ancient Rome, a basilica was a large building used for public administration.**
2. **In Christian times, a basilica was a specific type of structure with a:**
 - a. **nave**
 - b. **clerestory**
 - c. **apse**
3. **Emperor Constantine, the first Roman emperor to legalize and protect Christianity, recommended the use of basilica-style buildings for Christian worship. Basilicas have a lot of space to gather for special holidays such as Easter.**
4. **Constantine commissioned the construction of a basilica in Rome to honor Saint Peter, Rome’s first Christian bishop (recognized by Catholic Christians as the first pope). Peter was martyred during the reign of Emperor Nero. Legend has it that he was crucified upside down in the Circus of Nero. Nero’s Circus was demolished by the time of Constantine. Constantine wanted to build the basilica near the site of**

Peter's crucifixion and where he was believed to be buried. The basilica becomes known to history as OLD SAINT PETER'S BASILICA, because Pope Julius II has it torn down to build a new basilica around 1500 (High Renaissance).

- 5. Christians need to worship together singing songs etc. Unlike the Greeks and Romans, who sacrificed animals and said prayers outside their temples, Christians gathered indoors. Prior to official recognition of their religion, Christians met secretly in people's homes and sometimes in the catacombs.**

B. Function

1. Christian basilicas

- a. seen and experienced from both the inside and outside**
- b. place where the congregation (greg meaning group or flock) gathered to worship**
- c. different from Greek and Roman temples which housed the god's statue**

C. Cruciform shape – cross-like

- 1. NARTHEX – enclosed entrance area also called a vestibule**
- 2. NAVE – large central hall**
- 3. APSE - a projecting part of a basilica, usually semicircular and topped by a half-dome**
- 4. CLERESTORY – windows in the upper part of the wall. Admits light.**
- 5. TRANSEPT – a cross arm in the Christian basilica placed at a right angle to the NAVE**
- 6. East and West**
 - a. The altar was placed in the east in the direction of _____.**
 - b. According to Christian tradition, Christ was crucified facing _____, and therefore the cross on the altar faces the main western entrance of the church building.**

- c. This arrangement means that the congregation faces east during the service and leaves facing west.
- d. West is associated with the setting sun and thus the end of life. The scene of the Last Judgment often decorated the western end to remind the congregation of the Last Judgment when Christ determines the eternal fate of each human soul.

VII. SCULPTURE AND SARCOPHAGUS

A. From Cremation to Burial

- 1. Etruscans and Romans favored cremation over burial
- 2. By the 2nd century CE Romans favored burial over cremation
 - a. May reflect the influence of Christianity whose adherents believed in an afterlife for the human body
 - b. As more and more Romans opted for burial they switched from urns to a large stone coffin called a sarcophagus

B. Roman Sarcophagi

- 1. Example 1 (Gardner's 287)
 - a. Lid is a portrait of the deceased reclining on a bed
 - b. Side is decorated with statuesque images of Greek gods
- 2. Example 2 (Gardner's 292): Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus
 - a. Shows a battle between the Romans and the Goths
 - b. Victorious Romans are in the upper part
 - c. Combatants in the center
 - d. Vanquished in the lower part
 - e. Central horseman stands out. He is Hostilian, the son of Emperor Decius. He wears no helmet and thrusts his right hand in a gesture similar to the one used in the Equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius.
 - f. Hostilian bears the mark of the god Mithras.

C. Roman- Christian Sarcophagus – Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (Gardner's 306)

- 1. Junius Bassus (317-359 CE)**
 - a. Political leader in Rome**
 - b. Converted to Christianity just before his death in 359**
- 2. What is portrayed?**
 - a. Ten niches with stories from the Old and New Testaments**
 - b. Upper Register –**
 - 1. Sacrifice of Isaac – prefigures God’s sacrifice of his son Jesus**
 - 2. Saint Peter taken prisoner**
 - 3. Christ enthroned in heaven between Peter and Paul**
 - 4. Christ before Pontius Pilate (two niches)**
 - c. Lower Register**
 - 1. Misery of Job**
 - 2. Fall of Adam and Eve – their fall from grace will be redeemed by Christ**
 - 3. Christ’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem**
 - 4. Daniel in the Lion’s Den – prefigures Christ’s resurrection**
 - 5. Saint Paul led to his martyrdom**
- 3. Portrayal of Christ**
 - a. Enthroned as a Teacher-Philosopher. Christ rests his feet on the head of Aeolus the god of the sky. So Christ sits in heaven where is giving Christian law to his disciples**
 - b. Below Christ enters Jerusalem as a Conquering Savior**
- 4. Portrayal of Adam and Eve – nude and covering themselves**
 - a. In Early Christian art through the Middle Ages, the nude human body is not portrayed except as a reference to sinful behavior.**

VIII. A SECOND CHURCH DESIGN – THE CENTRAL PLAN

A. Two designs

1. Rectangular Basilica Design – Long the favorite of the Western Church. For example, Old Saint Peter's was a basilica.

2. Central Plan

a. SHAPE

- 1. Round or polygonal dome structures**
- 2. Building parts are of equal or almost equal dimensions around the center.**

b. PURPOSE

- 1. Adjacent to the main basilica and used as MAUSOLEUMS (See Gardner 312) and BAPTISTERIES**

B. An Example: Santa Constanza (Gardner 312)

1. Central Plan – See diagram in Gardner's on p. 312
2. Purpose – probably served as the MAUSOLEUM for Constantina, emperor Constantine's daughter

IX. EARLY CHRISTIAN MOSAICS

A. Introduction

1. When Christianity became a public and official religion, decorative programs were needed for the new churches. Early Christian churches often used mosaics to decorate church walls and to instruct the congregation in the Christian faith.

B. Three Examples of Early Christian Mosaics

1. Vault Mosaic – GARDNER'S 313 a rich vine scroll
 - a. Wine as a symbol of Bacchus (Dionysus) in Greco-Roman religion
 - b. Wine as part of the Eucharist or Communion ceremony in Christianity
2. Christ as Helios
 - a. Christ in the guise of Helios, the Invincible Sun, driving his sun chariot through the golden heavens
 - b. But also note – the vines and the halo!
3. The Parting of Lot and Abraham (Gardner's 314)
 - a. Note that the characters are still portrayed in the Classical Style. That is, the figures have a natural look and there is a background that gives the illusion of depth.
 - b. As you will soon see, in another century Christian mosaicists will portray figures entirely as flat images.

X. THE FALL OF ROME AND THE RISE OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

A. The Fall of Rome in the West

1. Visigoths sack Rome in 410 CE
2. Vandals sack Rome in 455 CE
3. Rome falls in 476 CE

B. But the Eastern Roman Empire still stood

C. Justinian, 527 – 565 CE

1. The man

- a. Official biography by Procopius – conscientious, hard working, devout**
- b. Unofficial biography by Procopius – “deceitful, devious, false, hypocritical, two-faced, cruel, skilled in dissembling his thought, never moved to tears by either joy or pain... a liar always.”**

2. The Empire strikes back!

3. Justinian’s Code of Laws

4. Massive building program

XI. THE WONDERS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

A. Geographic setting: The Crossroads of Trade

B. The Triple Walls

- 1. A moat – 60 feet wide and 22 feet deep**
- 2. Low wall to shield a line of archers**
- 3. Second wall – 27 feet high which sheltered more troops**
- 4. Third wall – a formidable bulwark 70 feet high housed more archers and missile throwers**

C. “The City”

- 1. Known as “the City”**
- 2. 300,000 population**
- 3. Greek-speaking citizens but had goods and people from all over the world**
 - a. spices from India**
 - b. ivory and gold from Africa**
 - c. honey, timber, and fur from Russia**
 - d. cork from Spain**
 - e. Wine from France**

- f. Tin and iron from England**
- g. Silk from China**

4. The Royal Palace

- a. Gardens with peacocks strutting about with fountains. One fountain had a giant golden pineapple sculpture in the center. Out of the fountain flowed wine which collected in the basin.**
- b. A long gold walkway to the throne room**
- c. Mechanical animals decorated the walkway**
- d. Golden throne big enough for two – the emperor and God**

D. Sacred Relics and Churches

1. Helena's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem (325 CE)

- a. In about 325, Constantine sent his mother, Helena, on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem**
- b. Helena erected two basilicas, one on the Mount of Olives and the other over the grotto at Bethlehem where Christ was born. Both were destined to become places of Christian pilgrimage.**
- c. Legend relates that she also carried out excavations on the site of Calvary (where Christ was crucified), and discovered – with divine aid – the True Cross, the lance that pierced Christ's side, the Crown of Thorns, and numerous other relics**
- d. Helena's remarkable "finds" were sent home, and Constantinople soon gained a reputation unprecedented in the history of Christendom as a guardian city of sacred relics.**

2. Sacred Relics

- a. The linen worn by the infant Jesus**
- b. The blood-covered mantle worn by Christ when he went to the cross**
- c. Stones from Christ's Tomb**
- d. The head of John the Baptist**
- e. Relics of the Apostles, Saint Luke, and Saint Andrew**
- f. A robe, VEIL, and belt worn by the Virgin Mary**
- g. The alabaster box of ointment from which Mary Magdalene anointed Christ's feet**
- h. The adze with which Noah built the ark**

- i. A piece of the rock that Moses struck with his staff to produce water

3. Church of Holy Apostles

- a. 12 symbolic tombs
- b. A 13th tomb for Constantine
- c. Tombs for other Byzantine emperors

E. Hagia Sophia – the Church of Holy Wisdom (Gardner's 329)

1. Construction

- a. Architects were Anthemius and Isidorus
- b. Two teams of 5,000 workers
- c. Completed in just 5 years, 10 months, and 4 days
- d. One of the supreme artistic expressions of the Christian world. A spiritual lighthouse to guide the faithful to the world's first Christian city
- e. "Glory be to God, who has thought me worthy to finish this work. Solomon, I have outdone thee!"

2. Hagia Sophia is huge

- a. 270 feet long and 240 feet wide
- b. The dome rises 180 feet above the ground
- c. The dome is 108 feet in diameter

3. Questions

- a. What about the 4 towering minarets?
- b. What artistic wonders are inside?

4. Artistic and architectural wonders

- a. A dome resting on a halo of light (Gardner 330)
- b. A soaring canopy like dome that dominates the inside as well as the outside of the church seems to rest on a halo of light from the 40 windows in the dome's base. Visitors to Hagia Sophia from Justinian's time to today have been struck by the light within the church and its effect on the human spirit.

c. How was the illusion of a floating dome created?

- In Roman buildings, domes were placed on drums.
- But in Byzantine buildings, domes rest on PENDENTIVES. These are four triangular segments with concave sides that transfer the weight of the dome into four corner piers. Their appearance of suspension or hanging gives them their name (from the Latin pendere, meaning “to hang.”)
- The use of PENDENTIVES that connect to the corner piers creates a vast interior space. This space is important to convey spirituality in the Byzantine church.

d. Four acres of mosaics

- The Byzantine mosaics were not destroyed, but were plastered over in the 16th century at the behest of Suleyman the Magnificent, in accordance with the Islamic proscription against the portrayal of the human figure in a place of worship.
- During the 20th century, many of the mosaics have been restored. Let’s take a look.

e. Marble columns

- 104 marble columns
- A dazzling variety of colors – green, white, deep red, pale yellow
- Sacred column – according to legend this column “weeps water” that can work miracles. It is so popular that over the centuries believers have worn a hole through the column with their constant caresses. To this day, visitors stick their fingers in the hole and make a wish.

f. The Omphalos or “navel”

- **Located in the exact center of the nave**
- **A decorated piece of pavement representing the center of the church and the “navel” of the world**

g. The Holy Table

- **“Who can see the Holy Table without being astonished?”**
- **Many glittering surfaces. “So that at one time it all appears of gold; from another place all of silver, and in another of glittering sapphire.”**
- **What happened to the Holy Table?**

XII. MOSAIC MASTERPIECES OF RAVENNA

A. Introduction

1. **Ravenna is situated on the Adriatic coast of Italy (See Gardner 326)**
2. **During Justinian’s reign, Ravenna became the Italian center of Justinian’s empire.**
3. **Justinian supported the construction of churches which still survive.**
4. **These churches contain some of the finest surviving Byzantine mosaics.**

B. Galla Placidia

1. **Christ as the Good Shepherd (Gardner 316)**
 - **Christ is surrounded by 6 sheep, one of which he caresses lightly under the chin**
 - **His shepherd’s crook has been replaced by the martyr’s cruciform staff which alludes to his own death by crucifixion**

- Christ's robe of purple and gold is a sign of his future as the King of Heaven
- He sits on a rock which is divided into 3 steps which evokes the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)
- Still retains classical interest in naturalism

2. Ceiling of Galla Placidia

- Filled with stars to represent the heavens
- Interesting to compare Galla Placidia with the sky in Van Gogh's Starry Night

C. San Vitale

1. Introduction

- Take a look at the picture of San Vitale on 332 in Gardner. Is the church **BASILICAN** or **CENTRALLY** planned?
- The rectangular basilican church was long the favorite in western Europe
- But Early Christian architects also adopted another building type: **THE CENTRAL PLAN** building
- This type is so named because the building parts are of equal or almost equal dimensions around the center
- In Western Europe, **CENTRAL PLAN** structures were typically used by Christians as tombs, baptisteries, and shrines to martyrs.
- In the **CENTRAL PLAN**, the **DOME** is the natural focus of the church. The **DOME** functions symbolically as the "vault of heaven."

2. The Church of San Vitale is named for Saint Vitalis. Vitalis was a Roman slave and early Christian who was martyred in Ravenna.

The church contains some of the best preserved and most famous mosaics created by Byzantine artists.

3. Ceiling of the choir (Gardner 334)

- A haloed lamb symbolizes _____.
- Four angels dressed in white stand on blue spheres and hold up the ring encircling the Lamb.

4. Second Coming of Christ (Gardner 334)

- Christ sits on an orb representing the world.
- Christ's halo contains an image of the cross and he wears a purple robe
- The four rivers of Paradise flow beneath him.
- Rainbow hued clouds float above him.
- Christ holds a scroll with 7 seals (Revelation 5:1)
- Christ hands a jeweled crown to Saint Vitalis, the patron saint of the Church. Vitalis is introduced to Christ by an angel.
- At Christ's left (our right) another angel introduces Bishop Ecclesius, in whose time the church foundations were laid. Ecclesius offers a model of San Vitale to Christ.

5. Justinian Mosaic (Gardner 335)

- Justinian is the central figure. He wears the same purple robe as Christ. Note the halo above Justinian's head. It is an indication of his holy and godlike status.
- Justinian is carrying a large golden bowl called a paten that contains the bread used in the Mass or Eucharist.
- Note the man standing to Justinian's left and holding and jeweled cross. He is Bishop Maximianus, the man responsible for San Vitale's completion.
- Now note the man standing between Justinian and Maximianus. He is Julius Argentarius aka Julius the Banker. He provided the enormous sum of 26,000 gold solidi (weighing in excess of 350 pounds) required to finish the church.
- The two remaining clergymen are holding the book and censer.
- The man to Justinian's immediate right is General Belisarius, the commander of Justinian's army.

- Now note the four soldiers. They are holding a shield with the Chi-Rho monogram of Christ.
- The letters XP, known as the Chi Rho were the first two letters of the word Christos.
- The mosaic shows Justinian as Christ's representative on earth and as a worthy successor to Constantine.

6. Theodora Mosaic

- Theodora's father was "keeper of the bears" in the Hippodrome
- Name "Theodora" means "gift of God."
- After the death of her father, the young Theodora became an actress.
- "Fair of countenance, and graceful of form," she could neither dance nor sing, but nonetheless scored immense success with her comic striptease number
- Justinian met Theodora when he was 40 and she was 25
- Ignoring all social norms they were married
- Theodora proved to be a trusted and brave advisor
- Like Justinian, Theodora wears a royal purple robe and her head is framed by a halo.
- Theodora carries a golden chalice filled with wine.
- Note the three figures in the embroidery of her robe. Can you guess who they are?
- The man to Theodora's right is Narses, her closest confidant. Narses is seen in the modest attitude prescribed by etiquette, both arms concealed beneath his cloak; for it was forbidden to approach the divine rulers with "impure hands."
- The women to Theodora's left are most likely Antonina, the wife of the famous general Belisarius, and her daughter Johannina.
- Theodora's prominent role in the mosaic program is proof of the power she wielded at Constantinople.
- Guess how many pieces are in the two imperial mosaics.
--- THE ANSWER IS 322,560!!!

7. The New Byzantine AESTHETIC

- Like Egyptian and Greek Art, the Byzantine artists followed a canon

- **First, compare the Justinian and Theodora mosaics with the following images we have studied:**

Procession of the Imperial Family on the Ara Pacis – Gardner 267

The Parting of Lot and Abraham – Gardner 314

Christ as Good Shepherd on Gardner 316

- **Note the following differences**

The Byzantine figures are frontal and flat. They seem to hover above the ground.

The garments fall straight, stiff and thin from narrow shoulders. The body is de-emphasized and the spirituality of the figures is now emphasized.

And note that the blue sky has given way to heavenly gold. As a result, all sense of a natural perspective has disappeared.

8. Looking Ahead

- **Gustav Klimt and The Kiss (Gardner 987)**
- **Andy Warhol and the Gold Marilyn Monroe**

XIII. MONASTERY OF SAINT CATHERINE, MOUNT SINAI

A. The Importance of Mount Sinai

B. Transfiguration of Jesus (Gardner 338)

1. What was the Transfiguration?

- **The Transfiguration took place on top of Mount Tabor.**
- **Jesus ascended the mountain with three apostles: Peter, James, and John**
- **According to Matthew 17:2, Jesus ascended the mountain and was transformed: “his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light.”**
- **Moses and Elijah then appeared and talked with Jesus.**
- **A voice then resounded from Heaven saying: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” (Matthew 17:5)**

2. The figure of Christ

- **Bearded**

- Surrounded by a **MANDORLA** – a radiant light surrounding the head or body of a sacred person.
 - Wears white as a sign of his transfigured state
 - Rays of white light stream down on the apostles. Christ is thus literally represented as “the light of the world.”
3. Compare the eternal composure of the heavenly beings (Jesus, Moses, and Elijah) with the distraught responses of the earthbound apostles.
 4. A depthless field of gold
 - The figures cast no shadows even though supernatural light streams over them.
 - This is a world of mystical vision, where the artist has subtracted all substance that might suggest the passage of time or motion through physical space.
 - As a result, the devout can contemplate the eternal and motionless world of religious truth.

XIV. ICONS AND ICONOCLASM

A. Icons

1. Definition

- An **ICON** is a sacred image representing Christ, the Virgin Mary, or some other holy person.

2. Purpose

- Icons functioned as living images to instruct and inspire the worshipper. Because the actual figure – be it Christ, Mary, a saint, or an angel – was thought to reside in the image, icons were believed to work miracles and to intercede on behalf of the faithful.

3. An Example – The Virgin and Child (Gardner 340)

- Virgin (theotokos or bearer of God) and Child – this is the earliest representation we have of the Virgin and Child (late 500's CE)
- Mary is flanked by two warrior saints (Theodore and George) who recall the stiff figures that accompany Justinian in the San Vitale mosaics
- Behind them are two angels

- The painting is an **ENCAUSTIC** – a painting technique in which pigment is mixed with wax and applied to the surface while hot

B. ICONOCLASM (726 – 843)

1. Background

- It is one thing to **VENERATE** (or hold in high esteem) the image of a person. It is quite another to worship the image.
- Remember, the worship of images is forbidden as idolatry in the Ten Commandments.

2. Iconoclasm

- In 726, Emperor Leo III prohibited religious images.
- The Byzantine Empire was beginning to lose its territory in the Holy Land to the Muslims. Emperor Leo III thought God was punishing the Byzantine Empire because its inhabitants were worshipping icons.
- The Iconoclasts (image destroyers) insisted on a literal interpretation of the biblical ban against graven images. They wanted to restrict religious art to abstract symbols and plant or animal forms.
- **ICONOCLASM** may be defined as the movement within Christianity that banned and destroyed images or icons.

3. Impact

- Much art was destroyed especially in Constantinople.
- The controversy also caused an irreparable break between Catholicism in the West and the Greek Orthodox faith in the East.

XV. MISCELLANEOUS MASTERPIECES

A. Introduction

1. A second Byzantine golden age (867 – 1204)
2. Artists produced small luxury items for members of the royal court as well as for the Church

3. Many of these items were commissioned by rulers and high secular officials and church officials as gifts.

B. Artistry in Ivory: The Harbaville Triptych (Gardner 348)

1. What is a TRIPTYCH? A triptych is a three-paneled work of art
2. The Harbaville Triptych is a portable shrine used for private devotion
3. The wings or side panels depict warrior saints and other holy figures
4. The central panel contains a scene called a DEESIS. In a DEESIS, Saint John the Baptist and Mary appear as intercessors praying on behalf of the viewer to the enthroned Savior.
5. Below is John the Baptist flanked by four apostles