



Medieval Art:

The Age of Faith

# Medieval Art: The Age of Faith

∞ 400a.d. to 1400. a.d.

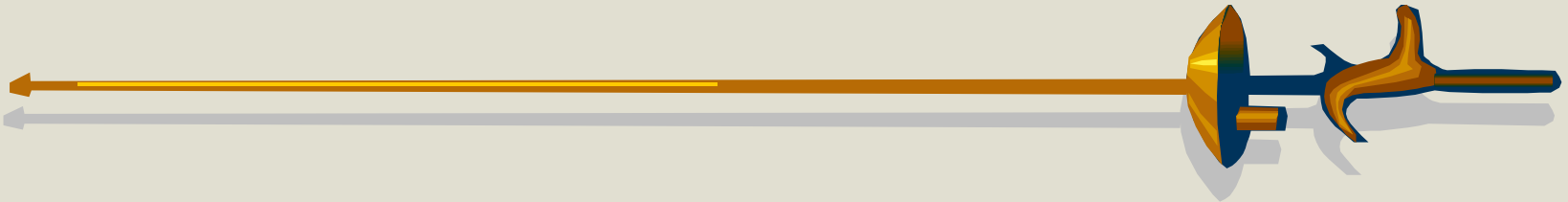
∞ Rome falls and the Church gains power



[MEDIEVAL & BYZANTINE INTRODUCTION 5:07](#)

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=UPGSOUONXOU&LIST=PLWFGC2CM2FVRTSTCXEU6FUV6LSXLTORGR&INDEX=5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPGSOUONXOU&list=PLWFGC2CM2FVRTSTCXEU6FUV6LSXLTORGR&index=5)

### 3 Major shifts occurred that had far-reaching effects on Western civilization:



- ∞ Cultural leadership moved north from the Mediterranean to France, Germany, and the British Isles.
- ∞ Christianity triumphed over paganism and barbarism.
- ∞ Emphasis shifted from the here- and now- to the hereafter, and with it from the body as beautiful to the body as corrupt.

- Since the Christian focus was on salvation for a glorious afterlife, interest in realistically representing objects of the world disappeared.
- Nudes were forbidden, and even images of clothed bodies showed ignorance of anatomy.
- The Greco-Roman ideals of harmonious proportions and balance between the body and mind ceased to exist.

- ❧ Instead, medieval artisans were interested exclusively in the soul, especially in instructing new believers in church dogma.
- ❧ Art became the servant of the church.
- ❧ Theologians believed church members would come to appreciate divine beauty through material beauty, and lavish mosaics, paintings, and sculpture were the result.

# Overview

## Of the Middle Ages

- begins with the fall of Rome and extends to the Renaissance
- Rome diminishes and the Church gains power
- Society ( life and death) are centered on the church
- The Church is the major purchaser of Art

## Overview Of the Middle Ages

- Constantine is the first Christian emperor he moves the capitol from Rome to Constantinople; therefore, there is an Oriental influence in Art.
- Most people are illiterate.
- The knowledge from Antiquity is preserved and copied in monasteries.
- The book making industry is born.
- Emphasis on life after death.

# Art

## Distinguishing Characteristics

∞ **Flat, lack of environmental clues due to Oriental influence as well as determination to avoid any resemblance to earlier pagan work.**



# Art

## Distinguishing Characteristics

∞ **Symbolic not realistic**

∞ **Figures are meant to elevate a person's thoughts away from the earthly realm and toward the spiritual.**

∞ **Collaborative efforts on Cathedrals, mosaics, etc.**

# Three Periods of the MEDIEVAL ART

➤ Byzantine

➤ Romanesque

➤ Gothic

# Byzantine Art 330-1453



- ✧ Constantinople was close to Asia and Greece
- ✧ Because of this proximity the Grecian, Roman, and Asian arts and cultures all influenced Byzantine artists.
- ✧ *Byzantine art* featured very rich colors and heavily outlined figures that appeared flat and stiff.
- ✧ Color choice was symbolic (Gold or purple sky symbolized the kingdom of God)

❧ Mosaics were intended to publicize the now official Christian creed, so their subject was generally religion with Christ shown as teacher and all powerful ruler.

❧ Characteristics of these works:

- ❧ Sumptuous grandeur
- ❧ halos spotlighting sacred figures
- ❧ shimmering gold backgrounds





- ❧ Human figures were flat, stiff, and symmetrically placed, seeming to float as if hung from pegs.
- ❧ Artisans had no interest in suggesting perspective or volume.
- ❧ Tall, slim human figures with almond-shaped faces, huge eyes, and solemn expressions gazed straight ahead, without the least hint of movement.

<b>ROMAN Mosaics</b>	<b>BYZANTINE Mosaics</b>
<b>Used opaque marble cubes</b>	<b>Used reflective glass cubes</b>
<b>Pieces had smooth flat finish</b>	<b>Surfaces left uneven so work sparkled</b>
<b>Colors limited due to use of natural stones</b>	<b>Glowing glass in wide range of colors</b>
<b>Typically found on floor of private homes</b>	<b>Found on walls and ceilings- especially church dome and apse</b>
<b>Subjects were secular, like battles, games, or animals</b>	<b>Subjects were sacred, like Christ as shepherd</b>
<b>Used minute pieces for realistic detail</b>	<b>Used large cubes in stylized designs</b>
<b>Background represented landscape</b>	<b>Background was abstract, sky-blue, then gold</b>

# Review

Byzantine



Roman



Roman



Byzantine



# Hagia Sophia

(pronounced HAH zhee ah soh FEE ah; the name means “holy wisdom”)

Commissioned by Emperor Justinian and designed by 2 mathematicians, Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus, the Hagia Sophia is a completely innovative structure, recognized as the climax of Byzantine architectural style.

**3 football fields long the Hagia Sophia merged the vast scale of Roman buildings with an Eastern mystical atmosphere. A Byzantine contribution to engineering: pendentives ( 4 arches forming a square) supported a dome. This structural revolution accounted for the lofty, unobstructed interior with its soaring dome.**

**40 arched windows encircle the base of the dome, creating the illusion that it rests on a halo of light.**







# The Romanesque Period

1050-1200

✧ With the Roman Catholic faith firmly established, a wave of church construction began throughout feudal Europe.

✧ Builders borrowed elements from Roman architecture, such as rounded arches and columns.





# The Romanesque Period

1050-1200

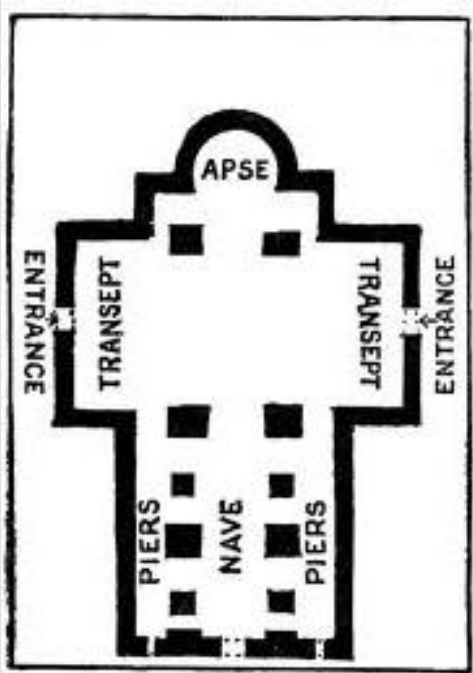
☞ Due to wooden roofs being prone to fire medieval artisans began to roof churches with stone vaulting,

☞ barrel or groin vaults resting on piers could span large opening with few internal supports or obstructions.



∞ Interiors were dark and somber

∞ due to the weight of the heavy stone roofs not many windows could be added.



✧ Exteriors were plain except for sculptural relief around the main portal.

✧ Most church-goers were illiterate, so sculpture taught doctrine by telling stories in stone.



St. Sernin facade



# Gothic Art/ Height and Light 1200-1500

## ∞ *The Gothic Cathedral*

∞ Medieval  
architecture's greatest  
triumph



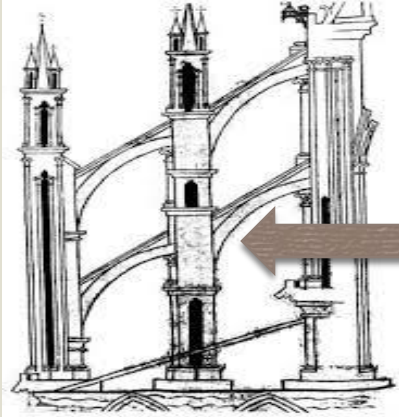
The solid, heavy Romanesque structures were replaced with structures of lightness and grace

# Gothic Style

- ❧ In twelfth century Europe many people moved into towns.
- ❧ Workers (stone carvers, carpenters, etc.), organized into guilds (unions) , where apprentices were taught by masters.
- ❧ A wealthy merchant class, with pride in their growing cities, and religious faith led to the building of huge cathedrals.

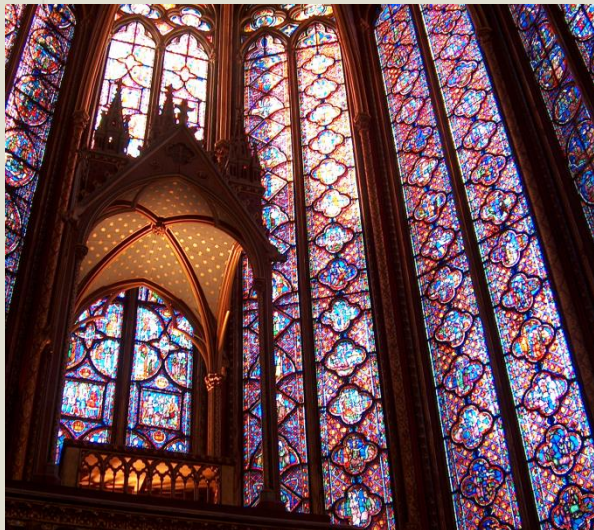


## ☞ TWO DEVELOPMENTS IN ARCHITECTURE



THE POINTED ARCH

THE FLYING BUTTRESS



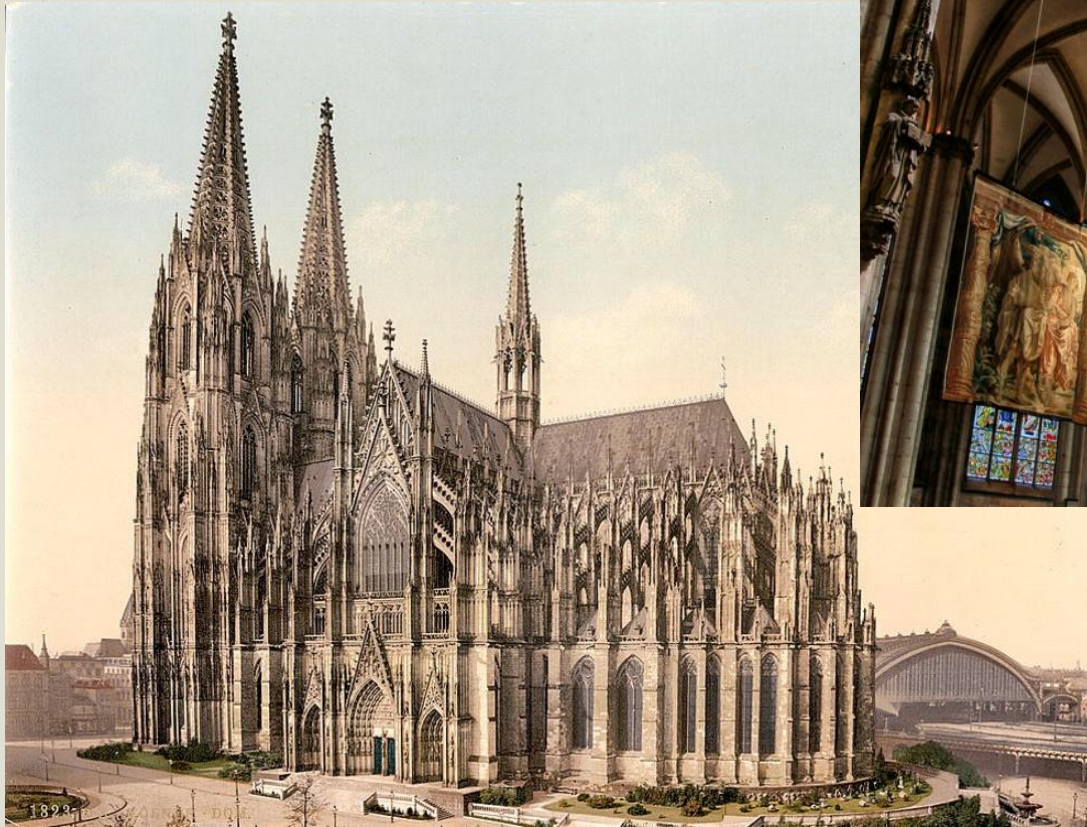
☞ These developments along with the use of the vault allowed them to make taller buildings whose walls were perforated with stain glass windows that changed the light to a rich, glowing color and educated the illiterate with Biblical Stories being revealed in glass.

∞ Gothic cathedrals were such a symbol of civic pride that an invader's worst insult was to pull down the tower of a conquered town's cathedral.

∞ Communal devotion was so intense that lords and ladies worked beside butchers and masons, dragging carts loaded with stone from quarries.



☞ Buildings were so elaborate that construction literally took ages—6 centuries for Cologne Cathedral.



# Stain glass windows



Stain glass windows replaced frescos to instruct illiterate masses

# Art of the Middle Ages Review

Throughout the middle Ages, in a succession of 3 styles, art was concerned with religion. The main forms of art and architecture associated with each style were:

	<b>Byzantine</b>	<b>Romanesque</b>	<b>Gothic</b>
Art	Mosaics, icons	Frescoes, stylized sculpture	Stained glass, more natural sculpture
Architecture	Central-dome church	Rounded-arch cathedral	Pointed-arch cathedral
Date	330-1453	1050-1200	1200-1500
Example	Hagia Sophia	St. Sernin	Chartres
Place	Constantinople, Turkey	Toulouse, France	Chartres, France

# Romanesque vs. Gothic

	<b>Romanesque</b>	<b>Gothic</b>
<b>Emphasis</b>	Horizontal	Vertical
<b>Elevation</b>	Modest height	soaring
<b>Layout</b>	Multiple units	Unified, unbroken space
<b>Main trait</b>	Rounded arch	Pointed arch
<b>Support system</b>	Piers, walls	Exterior buttresses
<b>Engineering</b>	Barrel and groin vaults	Ribbed groin vaults
<b>Ambiance</b>	Dark, solemn	Airy, bright
<b>Exterior</b>	simple, severe	Richly decorated with sculpture

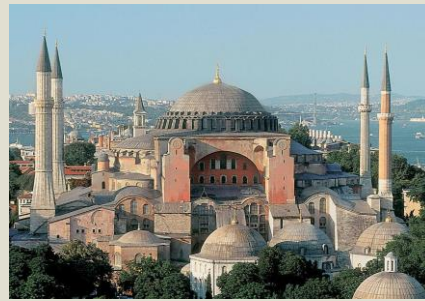
# Questions

1. What distinguishes medieval art from the art of other historical periods?
2. What was the main focus of life for the average citizen during the medieval period?
3. What institution took the place of Rome (after its fall) in power and influence?
4. How was the knowledge of antiquity preserved during the medieval period?
5. How are Roman mosaics different from Byzantine Mosaics?
6. How do Romanesque and Gothic Cathedrals differ?

# Distinguishing Cathedrals

Use the chart on p. 9 to aid in labeling the following cathedrals: **Hagia Sophia, St. Sernin, and Chartres**

Exterior



Interior



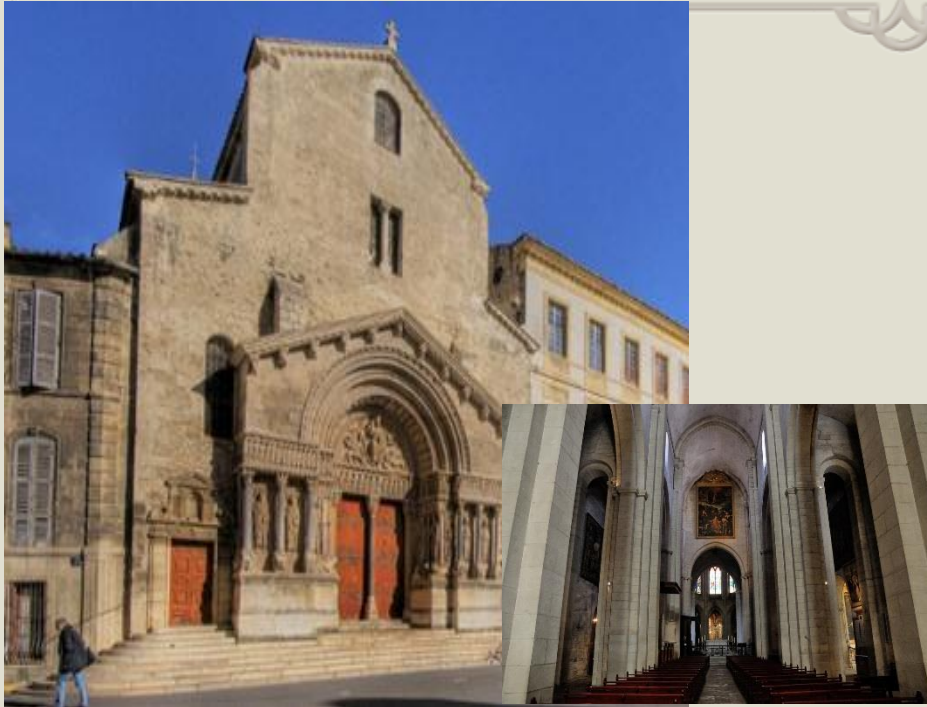
1. CHARTES

2. HAGIA SOPHIA

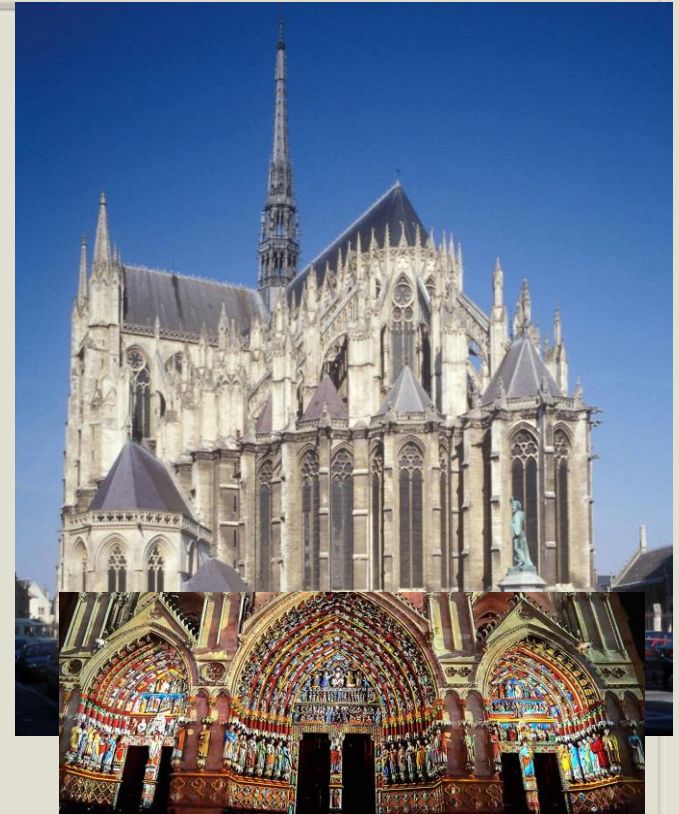
3. ST. SERNIN

# Distinguishing Cathedrals

Use chart on p. 9 for evidence of cathedral features.



ROMANESQUE



GOTHIC

# Cathedral Identification

Romanesque or Gothic?





# Cathedral Identification

Romanesque or Gothic?

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# Cathedral Identification

Romanesque or Gothic?

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# Cathedral Identification

Romanesque or Gothic?



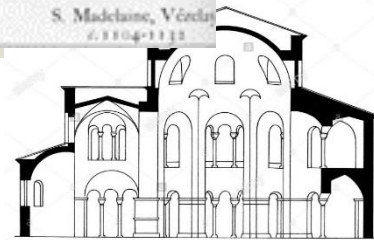
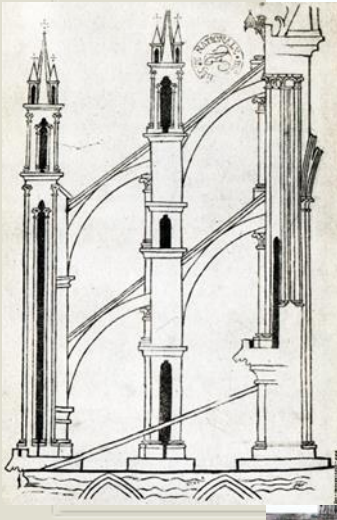
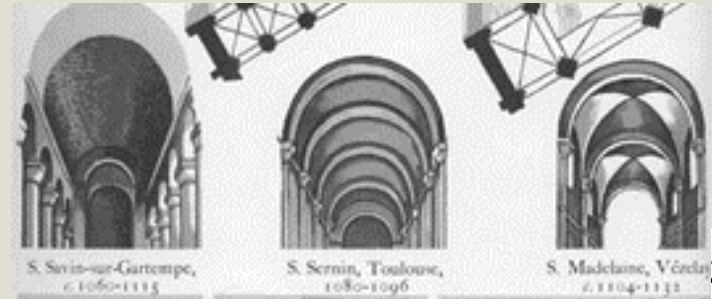
# Cathedral Identification

Romanesque or Gothic?



# Cathedral Identification

build a church activity p. 10



# Byzantine Review

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Which of the words do NOT describe the conventions of two-dimensional Byzantine art?

- Flat
- Decorative
- Lifelike
- Stylized
- Glittering
- Heavenly
- Dull
- Proportional
- Reverent
- Plain
- Stiff

# Byzantine Review

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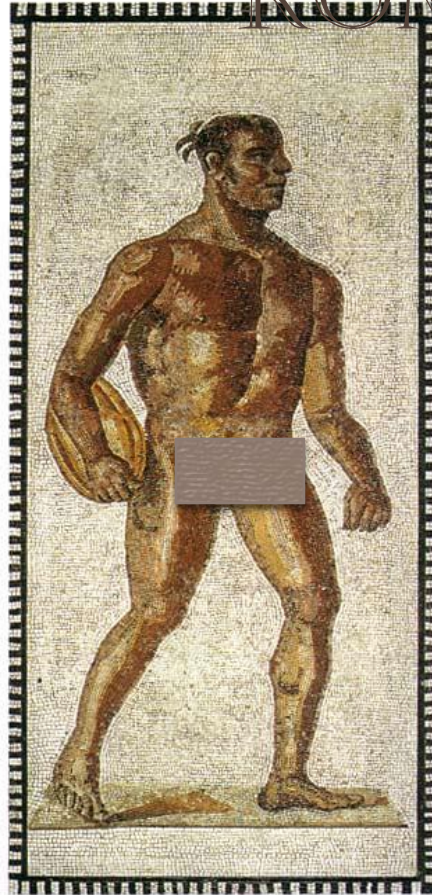
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# Mosaic Identification

BYZANTINE

GRECO-  
ROMAN





# Mosaic Identification

BYZANTINE

GRECO-



# Mosaic Identification

BYZANTINE

GRECO-  
ROMAN



# Mosaic Identification

BYZANTINE

GRECO-  
ROMAN

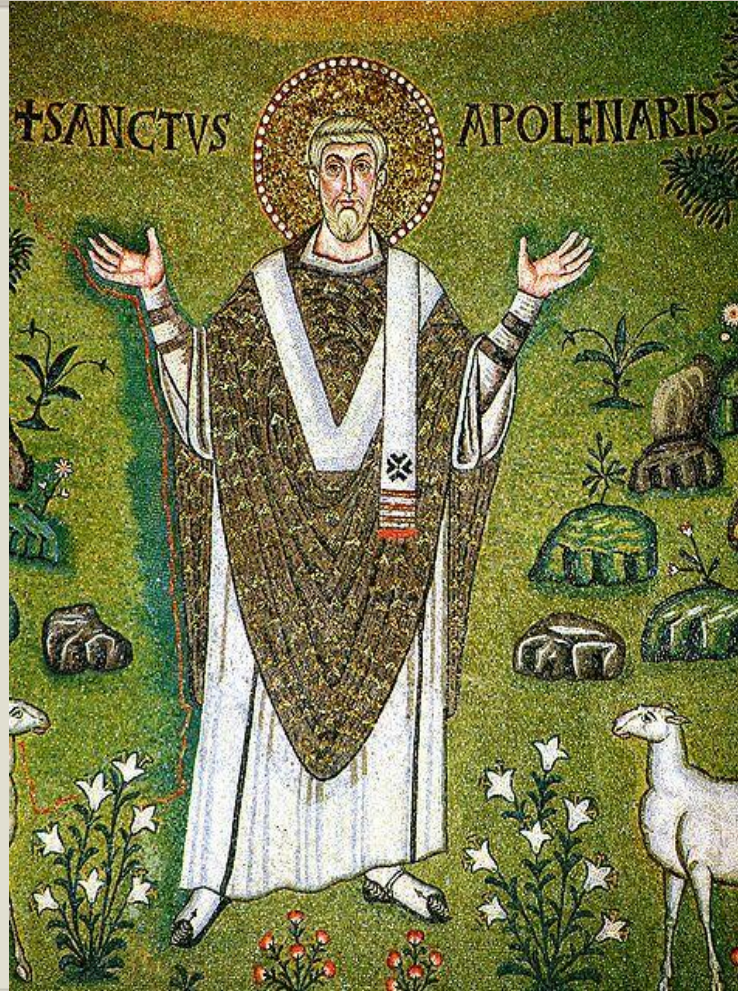


# Mosaic Identification

BYZANTINE

GRECO-

ROMAN



# Mosaic Identification

BYZANTINE

GRECO-



