

**Early Christian Architecture:** from the collapse of the Roman Empire to the rise of the great monasteries and Gothic cathedrals

**Middle Ages** 500 – 1420 AD

Dark Ages were 500-800 AD –many invasions and warfare

313 AD Emperor of Constantine adopted Christianity

330 AD moved Capital to Constantinople (=Istanbul)

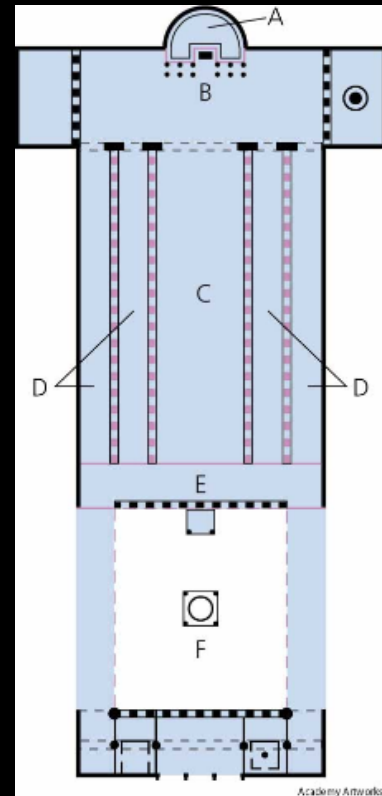


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Church Building began. There were two types:

I. Basilica: A Christian church building having central nave with a semicircular apse at one or both ends and two side aisles formed by rows of columns, a narthex, and a clerestory.

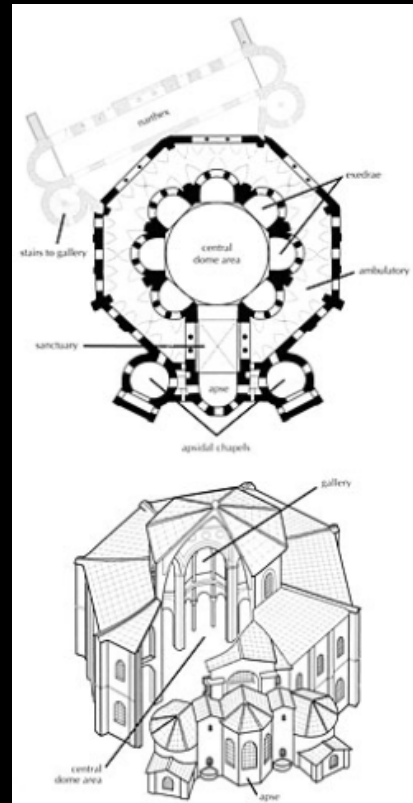
- A. Apse – semicircular termination
- B. Transept – projecting arm
- C. Nave – central space
- D. Aisles
- E. Narthex - vestibule
- F. Atrium - courtyard



Church Building began. There were two types:

II. Circular or Octagonal: A center space covered by a dome, surrounded by an ambulatory with clerestory lighting.

Ambulatory- continuous aisle



# Church Buildings

East preferred the Circular or Octagonal: more mystical with a pure form – the circle and dome; also see the Greek cross plan with four equal arms, which could be inscribed in a square.

West preferred the Basilica, as they focused more on congregational worship, cruciform shape symbolizing the cross, with a longer central axis.

## Byzantine 330 – 1453 AD

Mostly Churches

Plan – Cross in a Square capped with domes

Support - Pendentives and piers

Décor – Lavish inside (mosaics), plain outside

Effect – Mysterious

Inspiration – Heavens

Goal – arouse emotion and transport

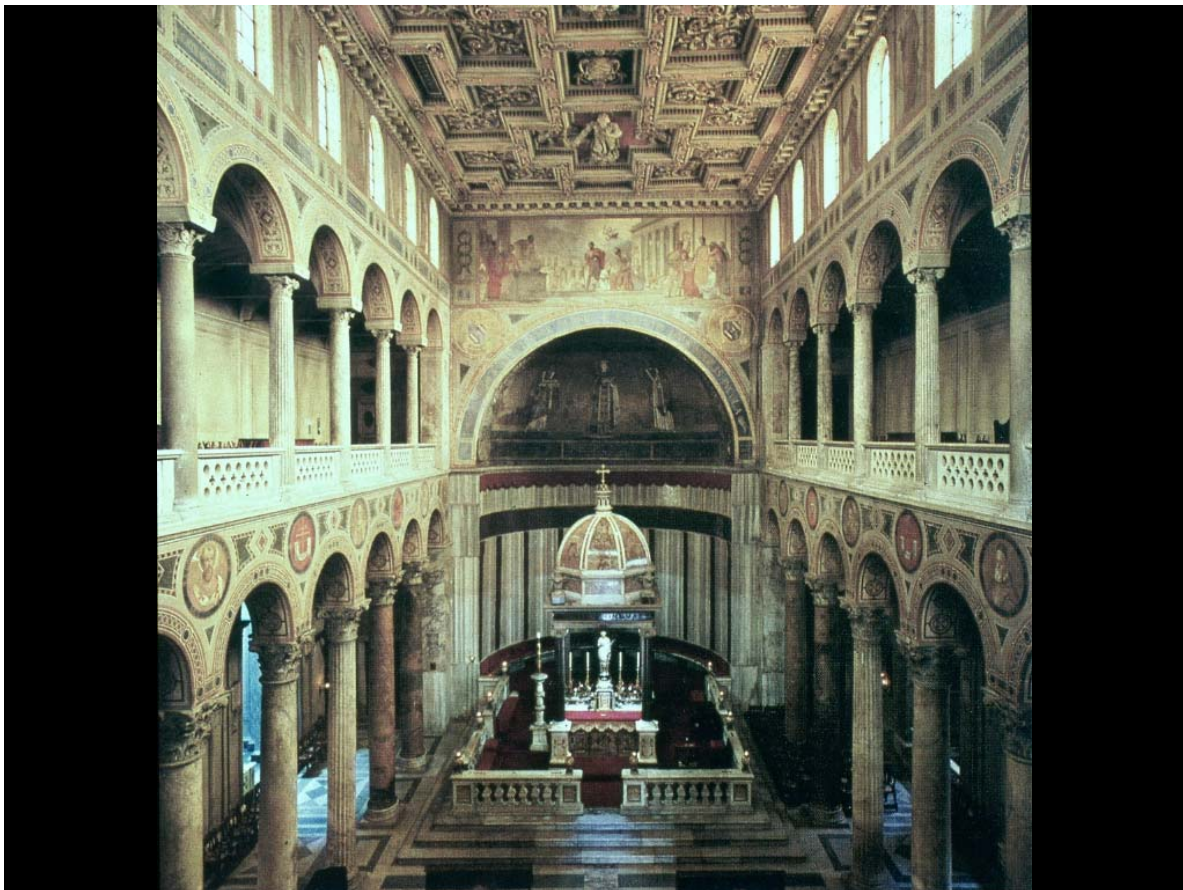


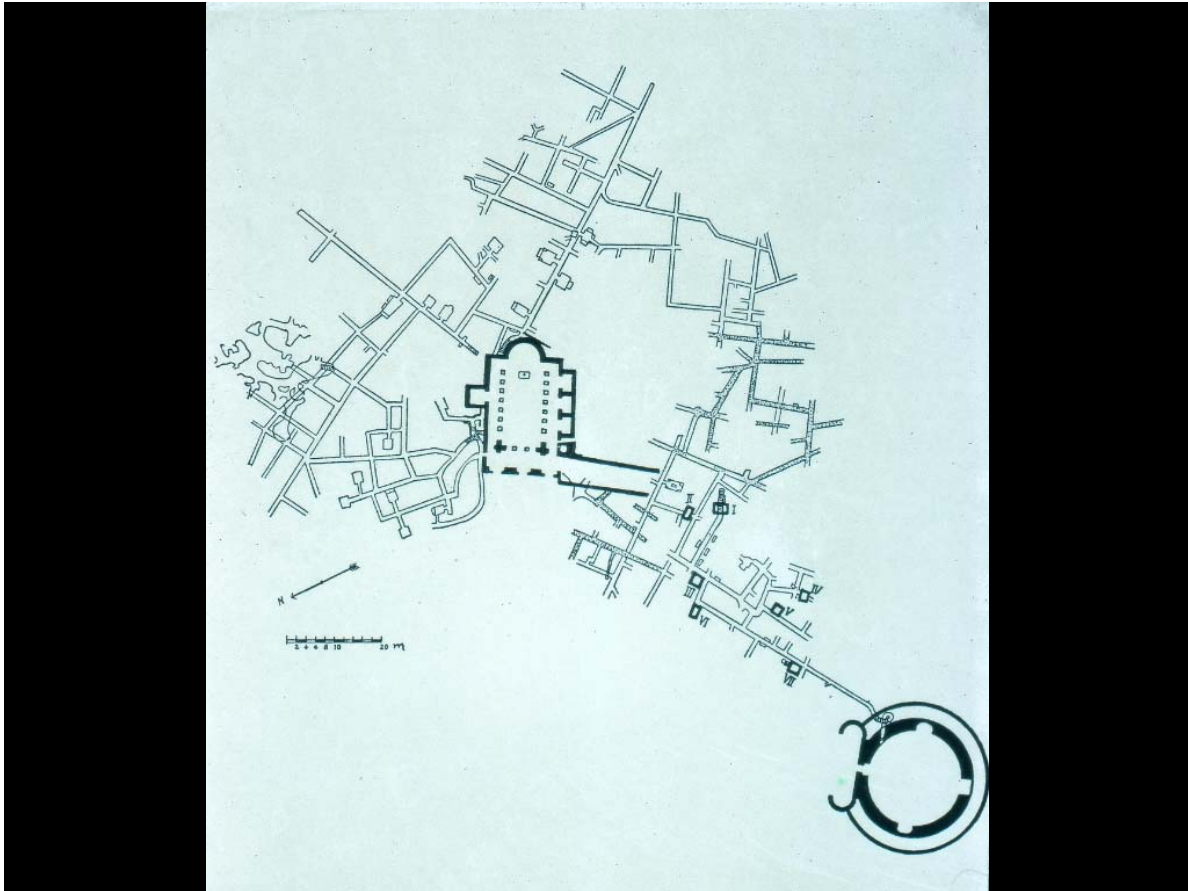
# Rome

Christianity starts early with followers in 1st Century



Sant' Agnese Fuori 630 AD Basilica with columns supporting arches along the aisles





## Rome



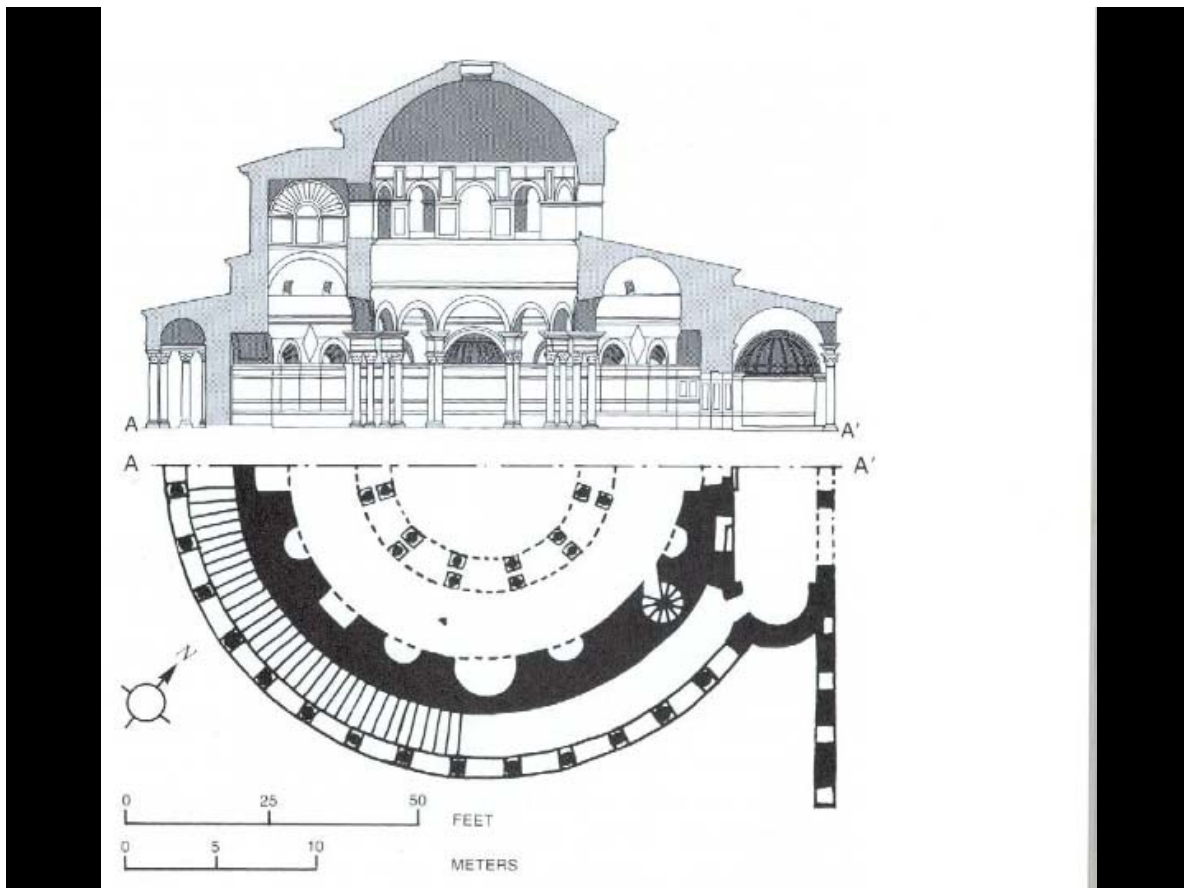
Santo Stefano Rotondo: 468 AD, diameter is 210',  
huge nave encircled by ionic columns, 22 clerestory windows

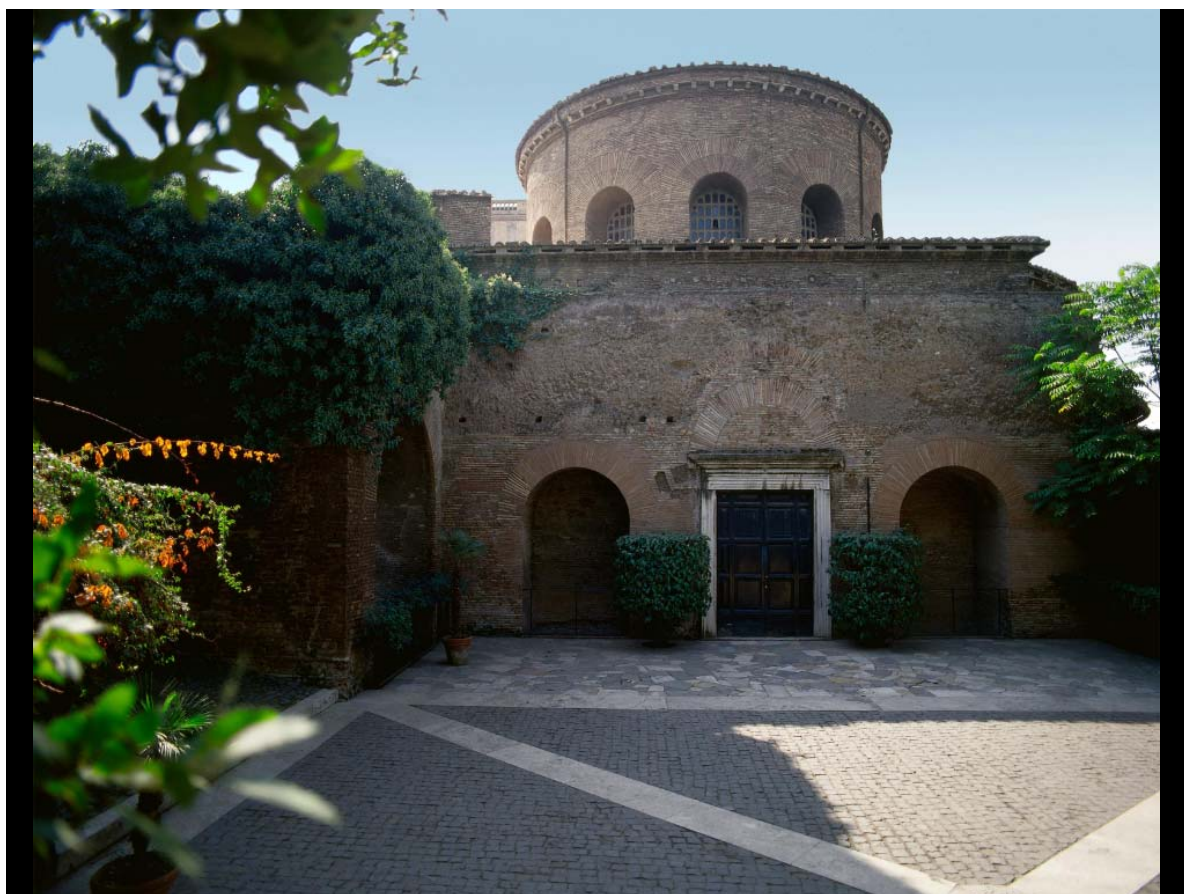


# Rome

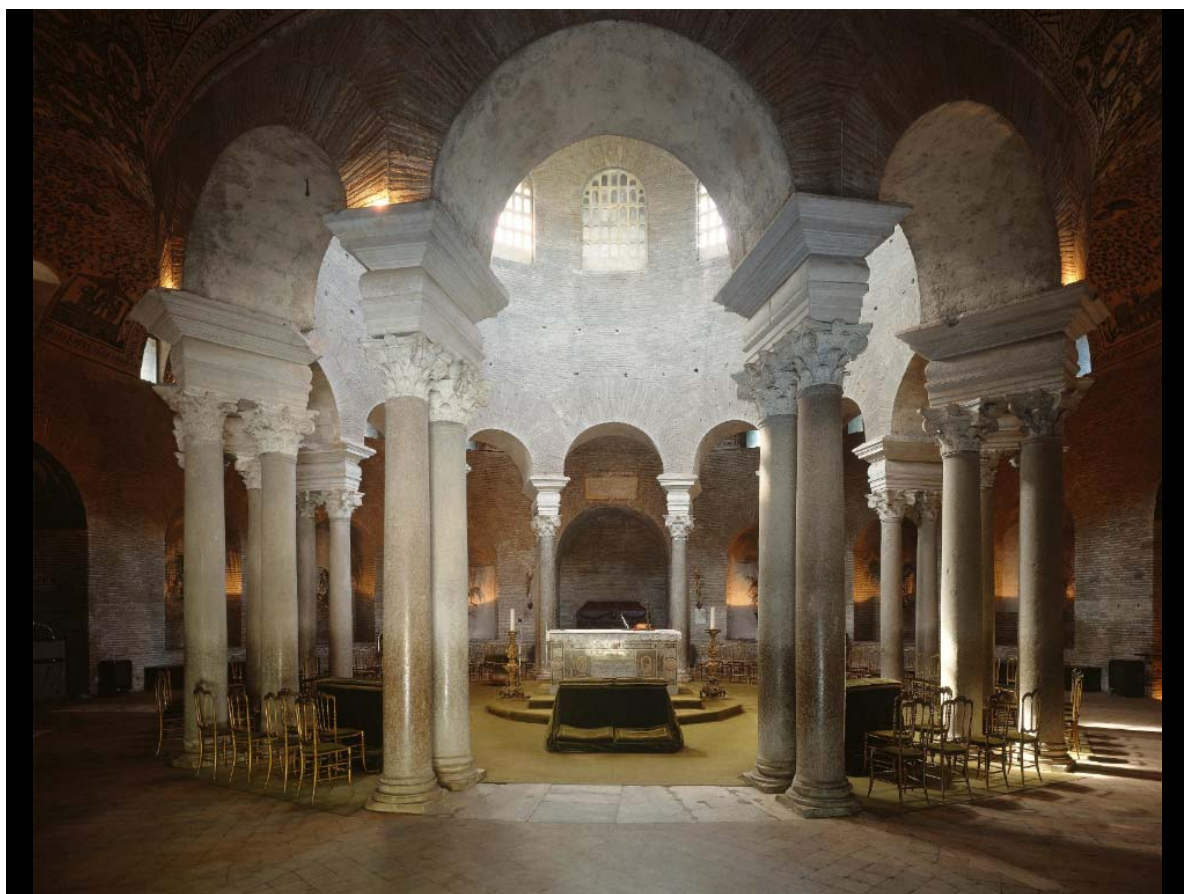
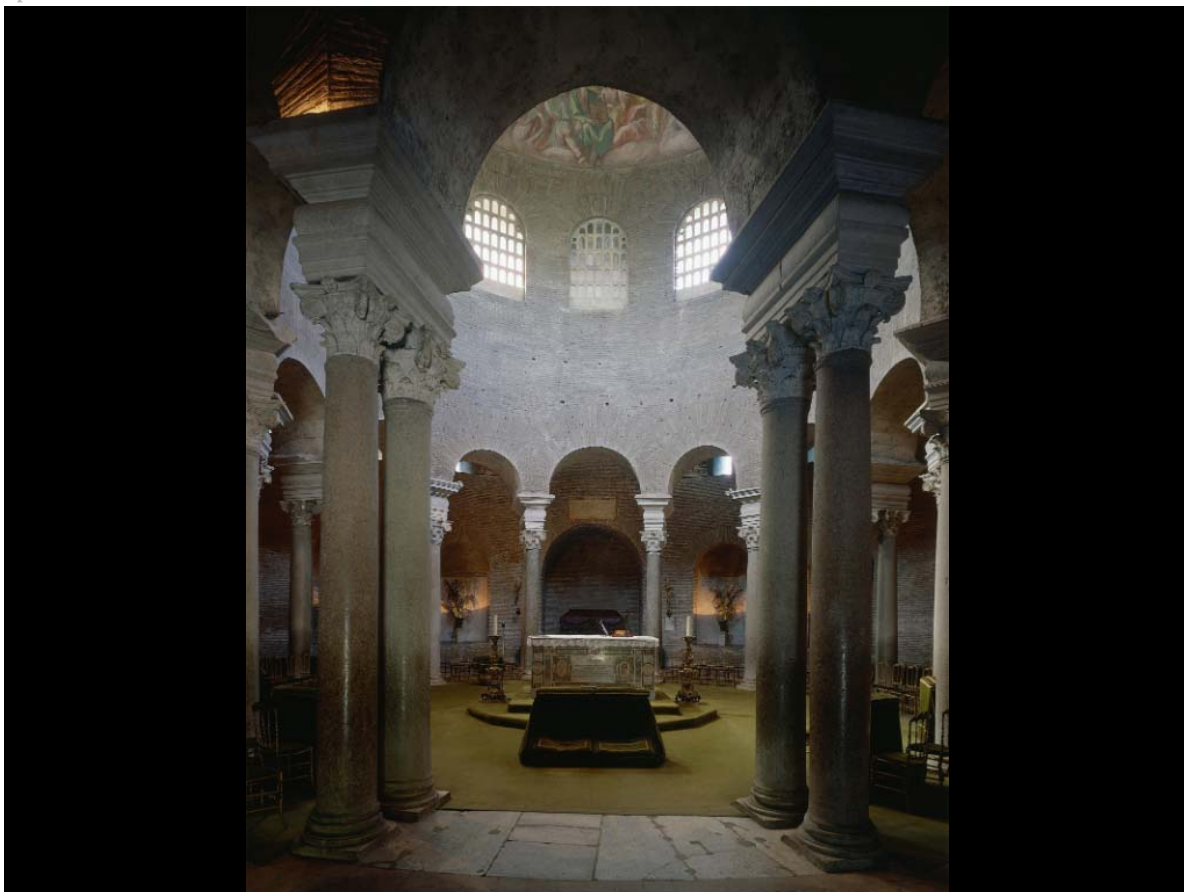


Santa Costanza 330 AD, Circular church, domed brick roof, tomb for Constantine's daughter

















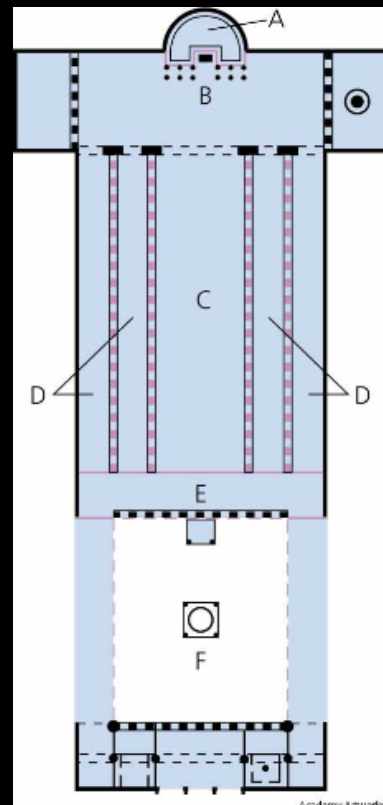




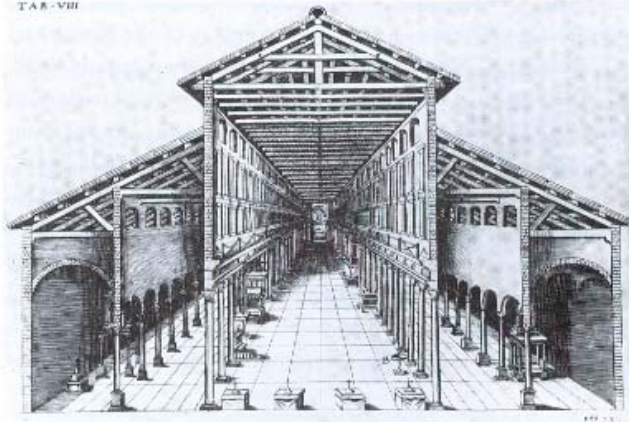
## Rome



Old St. Peters 326 AD – 200' long nave, timber roof, rows of closely spaced columns

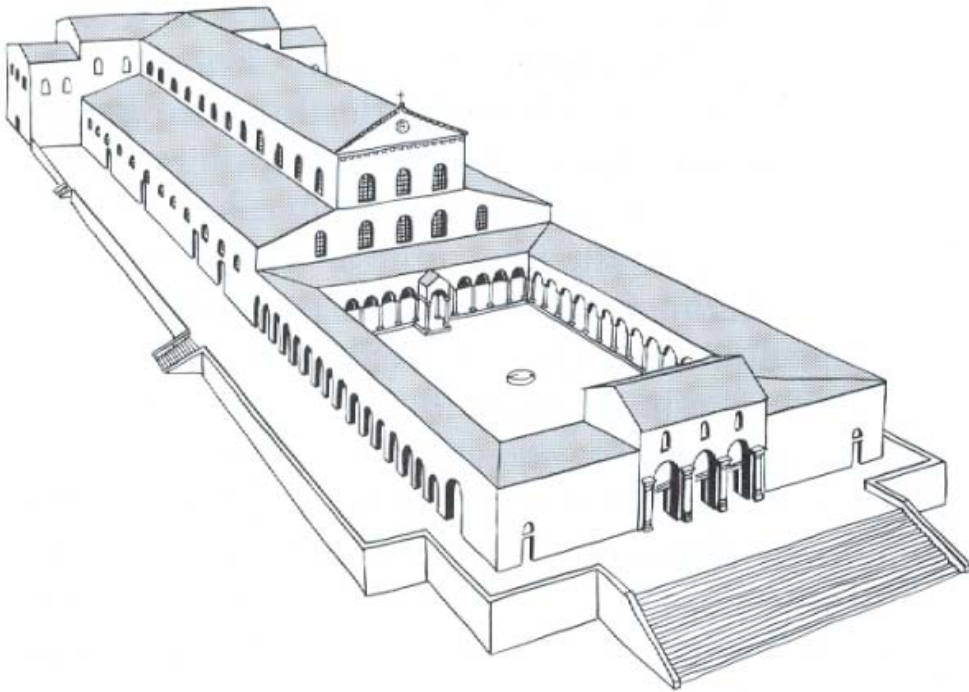
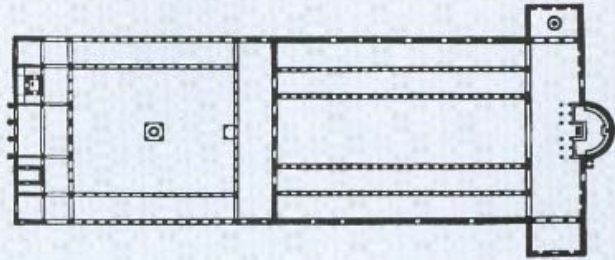


TAB-VIII



225 Old St. Peter's. Rome. Begun c. 333. (Drawing by J. Ciampini, 1693)

226 Plan, Old St. Peter's



7-6 Conjectural reconstruction of Old St. Peter's, Rome.  
(After K. J. Conant.)



## Last years of the Roman Empire

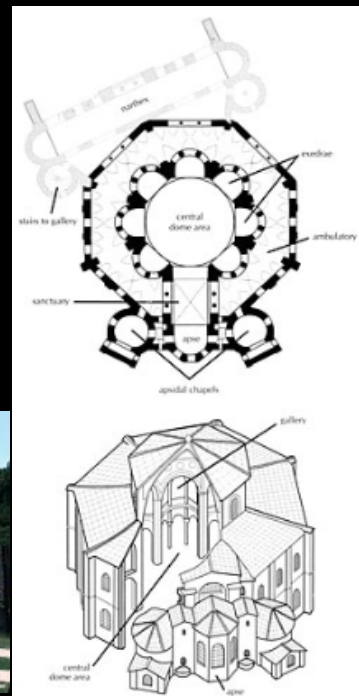
395 AD Roman Empire Divided

East in Constantinople, West in Rome

Rome under attack and malaria

402 AD Moved capital to Ravenna

## Ravenna City of Mosaics



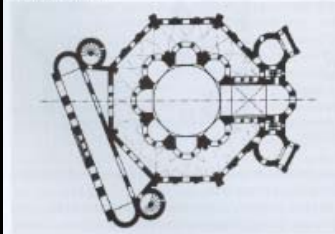
San Vitale 526-547 AD. Two concentric octagons dome made of clay pots fitted into one another, covered with timber roof and tiled





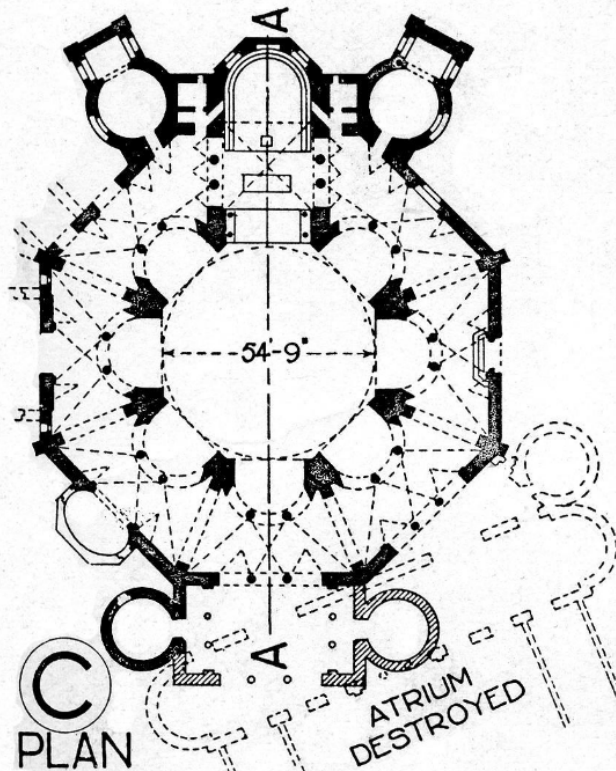
256 S. Vitale, Ravenna. begun c. 526

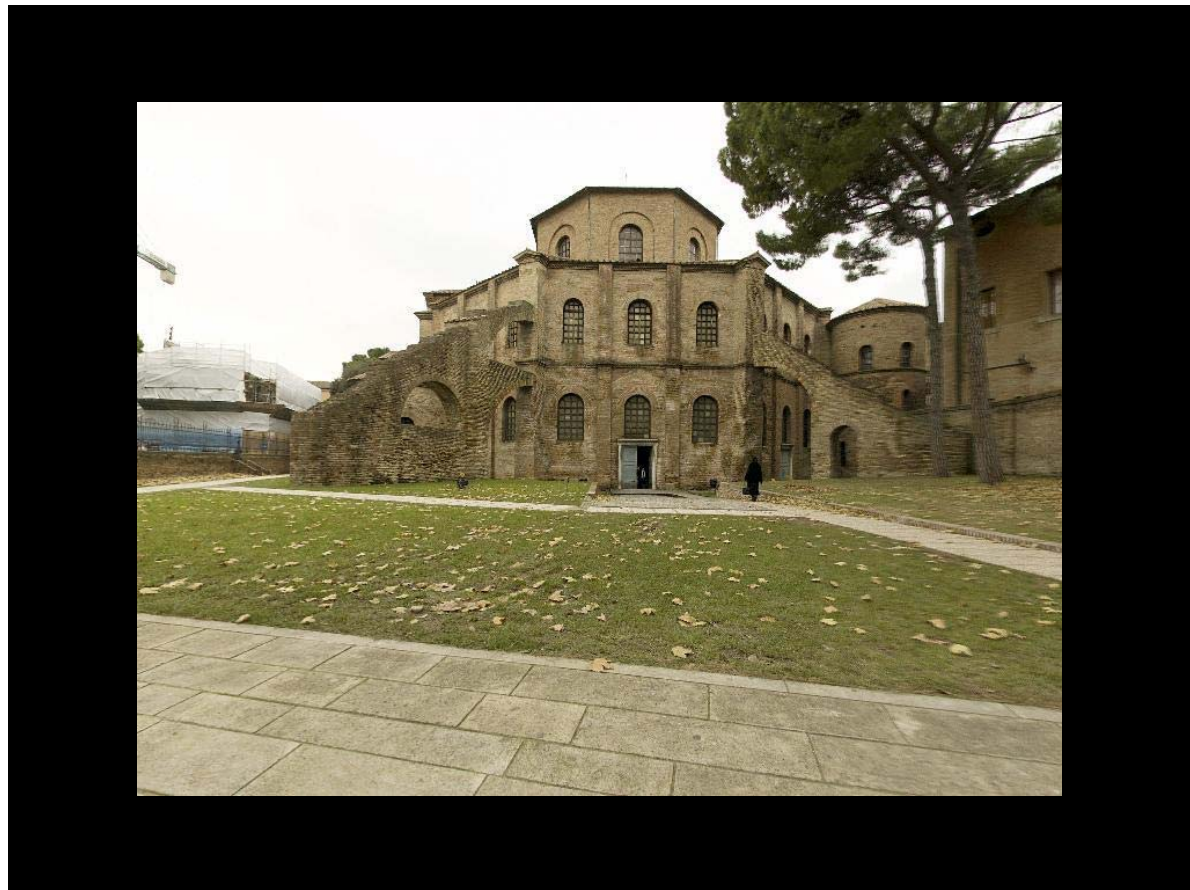
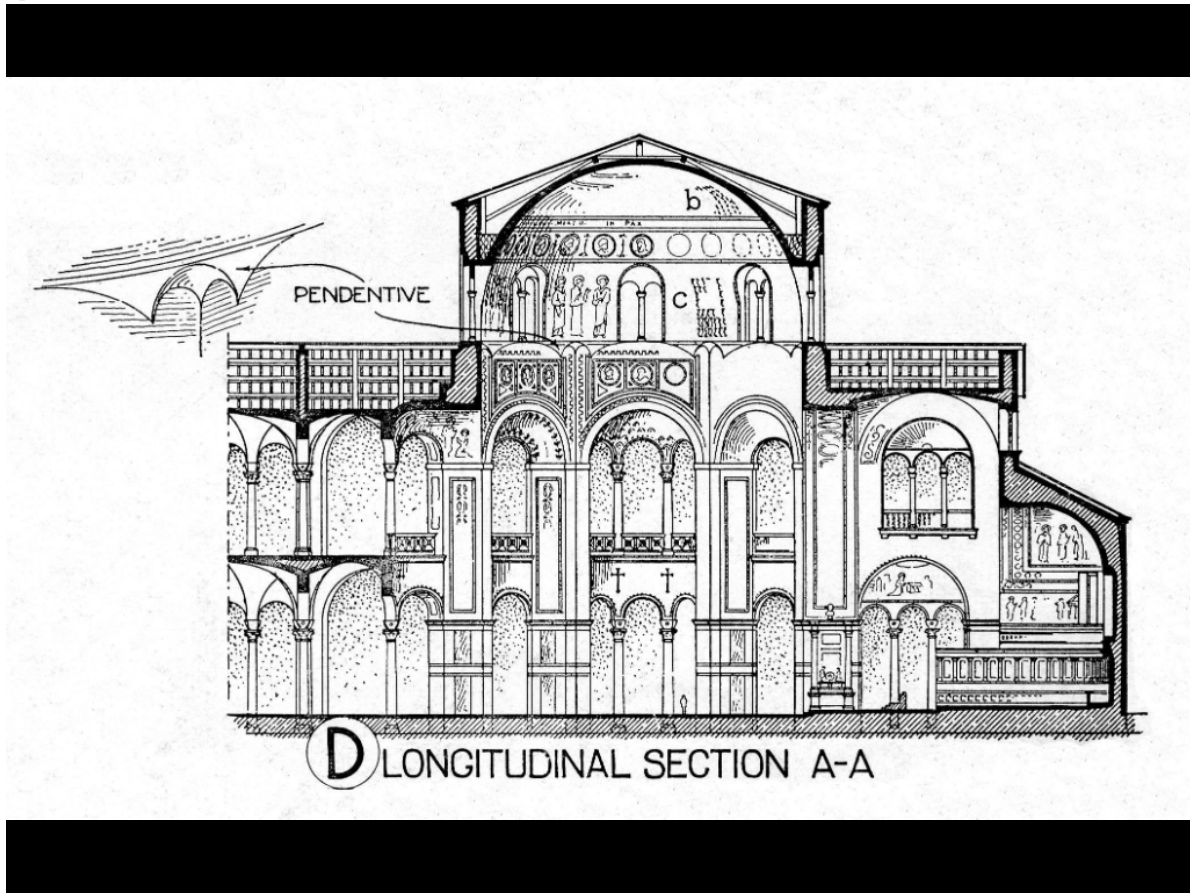
257 Plan, S. Vitale



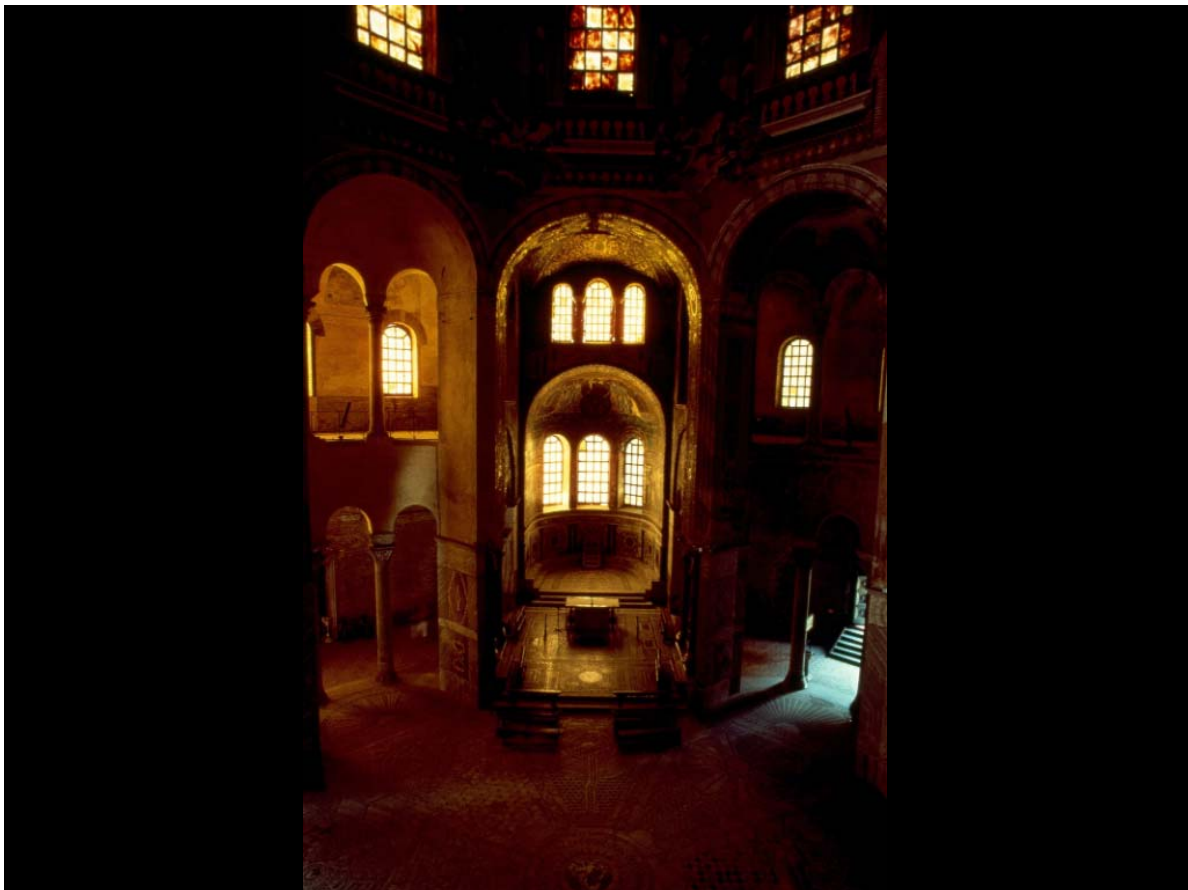
based on two principles: 1. All buildings included at least one unit of the domed-cube module outlined earlier in this chapter, rather than the octagonal form of the examples studied so far (the square core of Hagia Sophia forming part of a more-than-

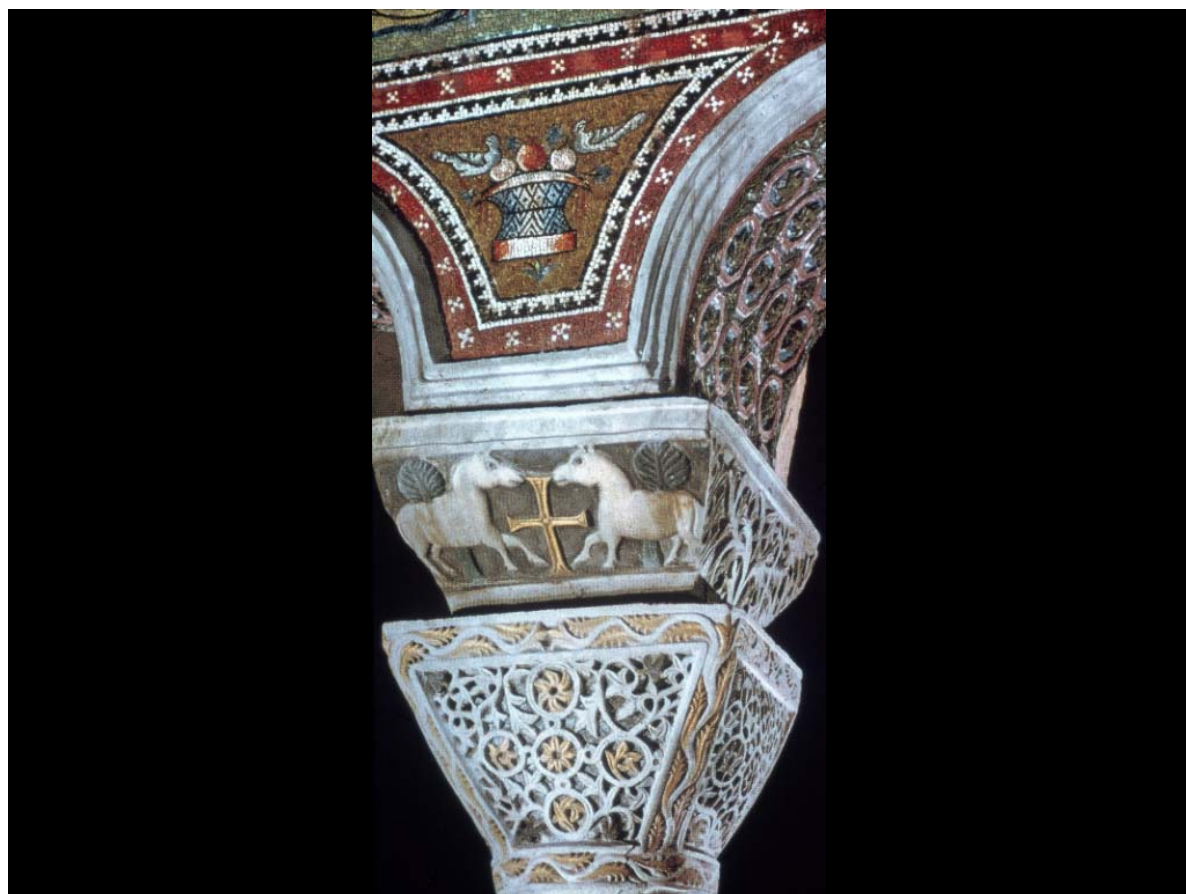
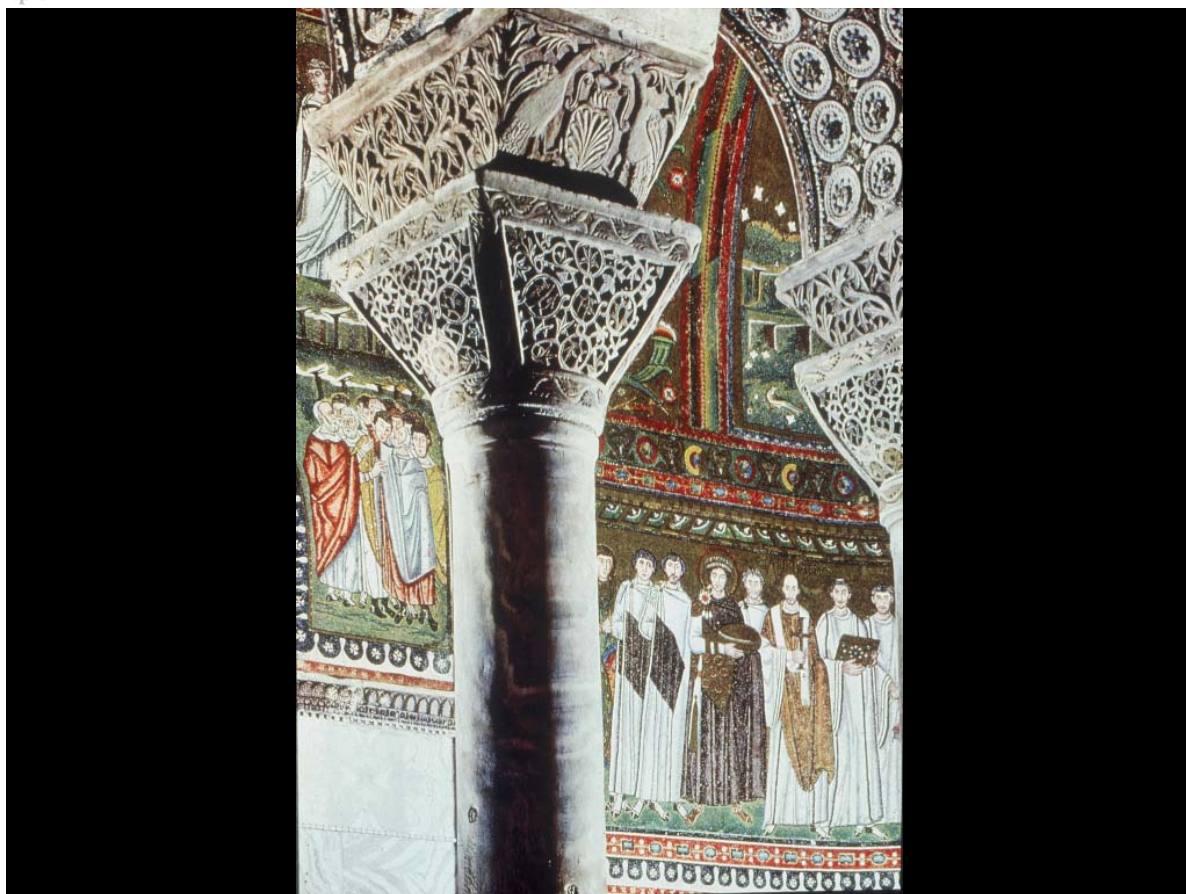
258 Interior from ambulatory, S. Vitale



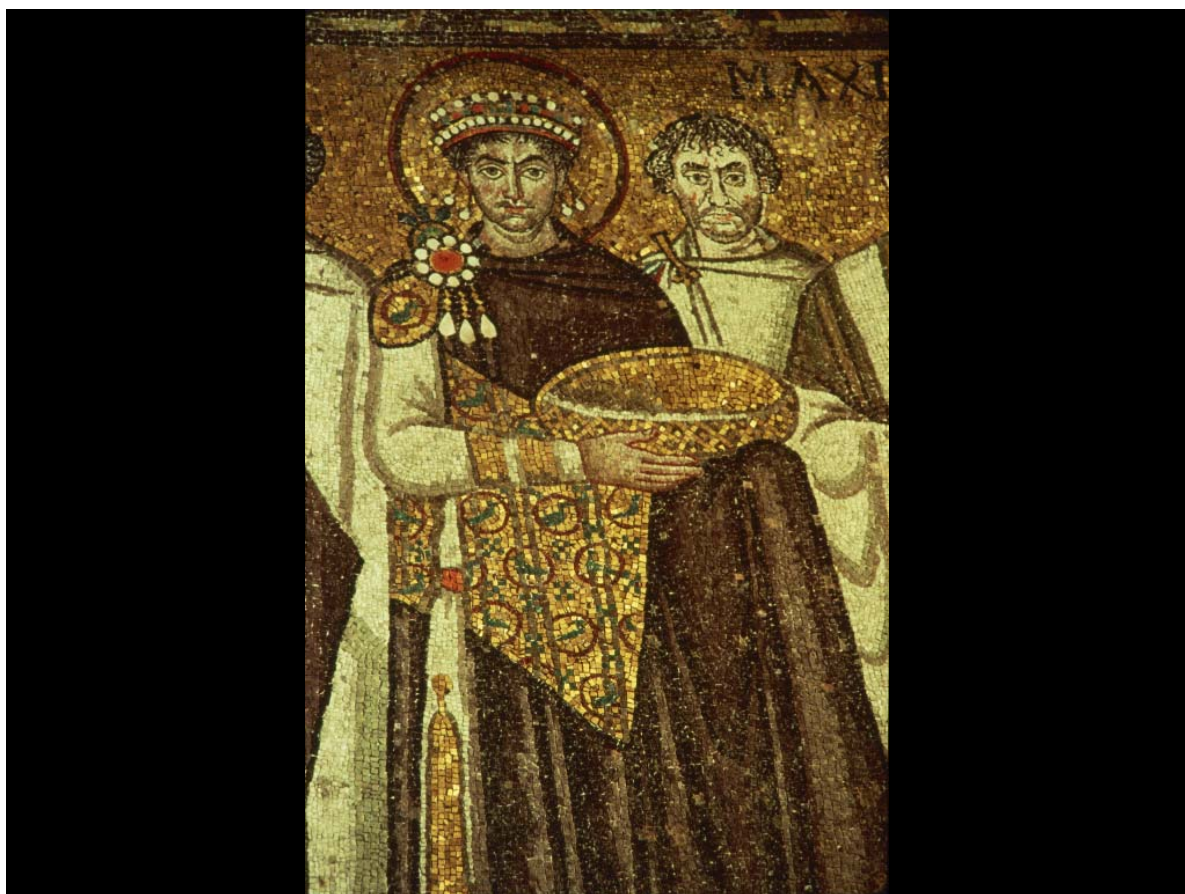




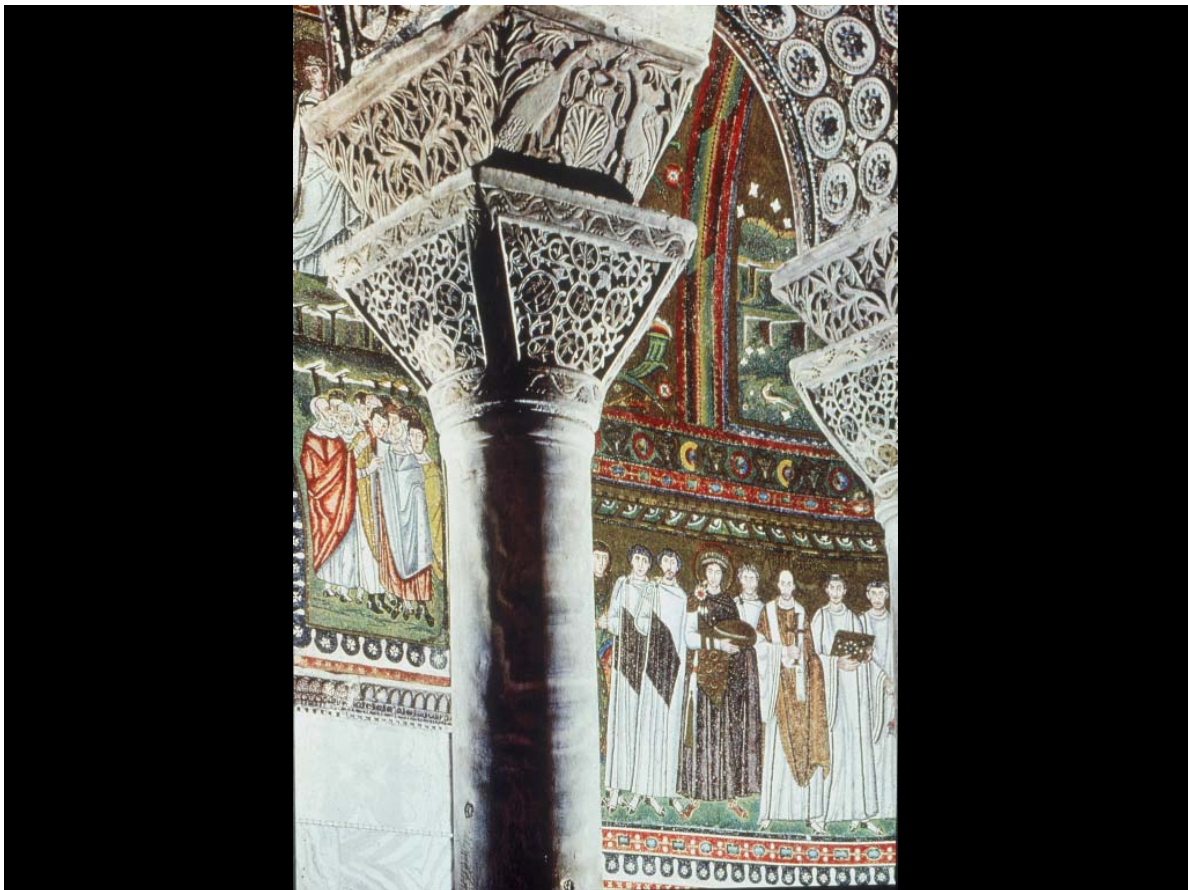
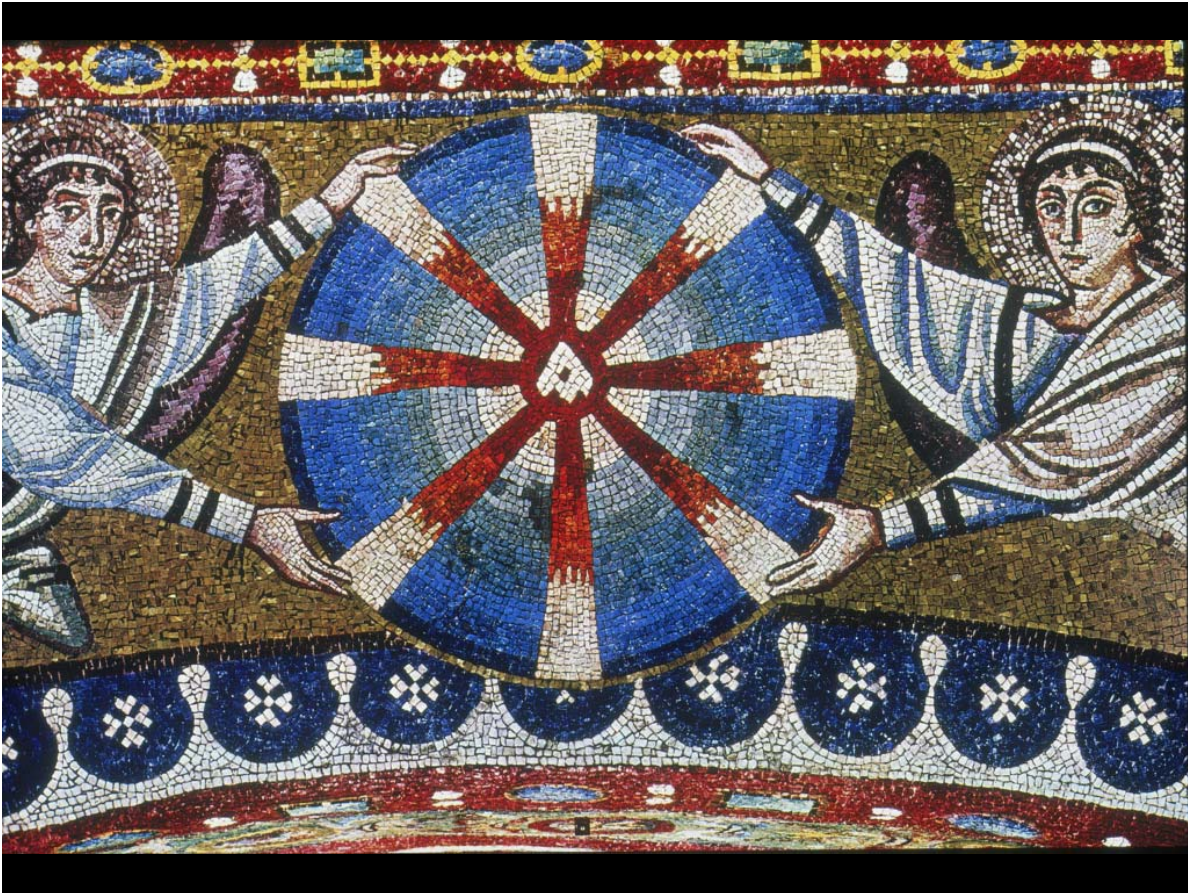












## Hagia Sophia 532-37 AD. Istanbul, Turkey

Architects: Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles

Almost Square – walls broken by aisles

Light breathtaking, enters through a wreath of window around the dome.

Converted to a Mosque in 1453 AD

Soaring height



## Hagia Sophia 532-37 AD, Istanbul, Turkey

Commissioned by the Emperor Justinian, means Divine Wisdom

Shallow dome supported by four pendentive vaults that rise from the four lofty arches that define the space below

Design allowed vast place for congregating, free from walls and columns

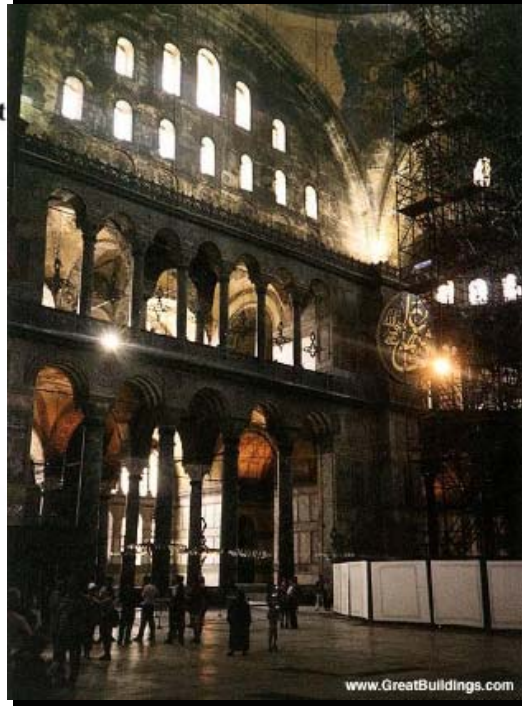
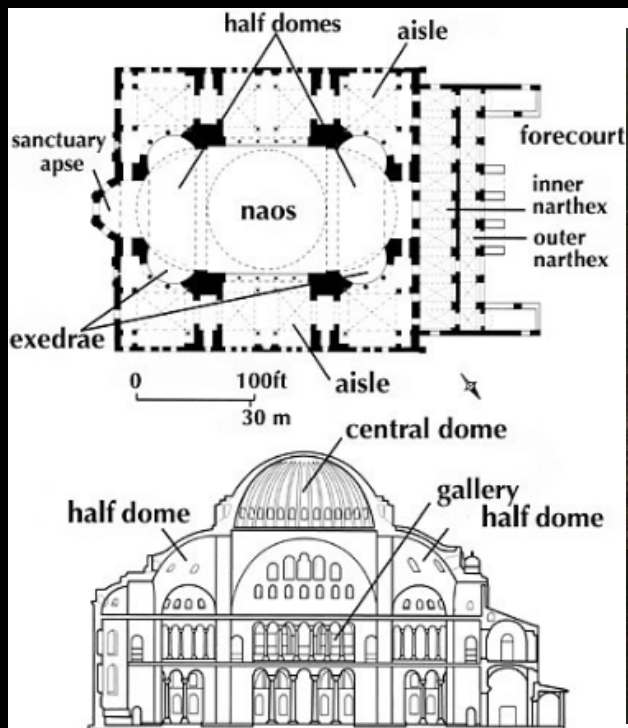
See brake with classicism of Rome: column capitals decorated with serpentine foliage, reflecting the more sensual and organic architecture of the East.

One of the most influential buildings in history, because of the soaring space and stunning play of natural light.



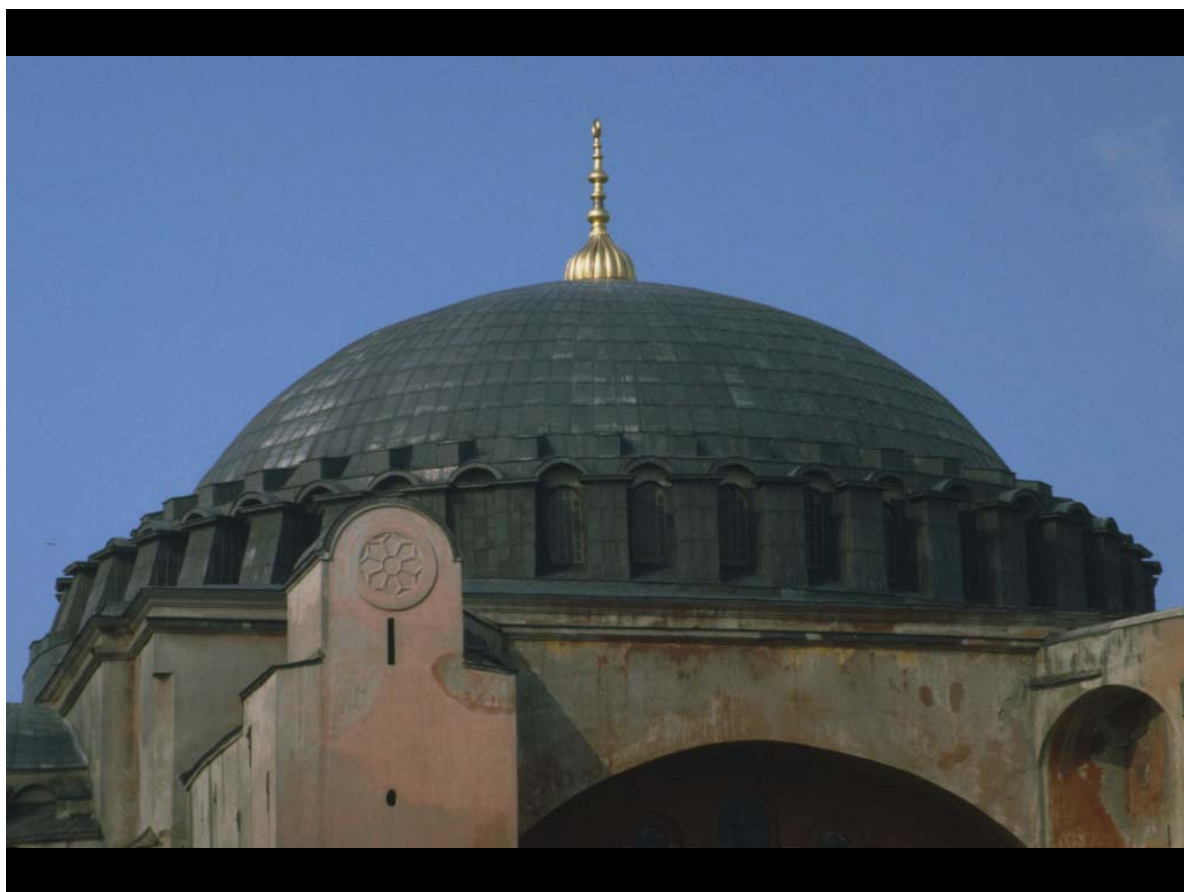
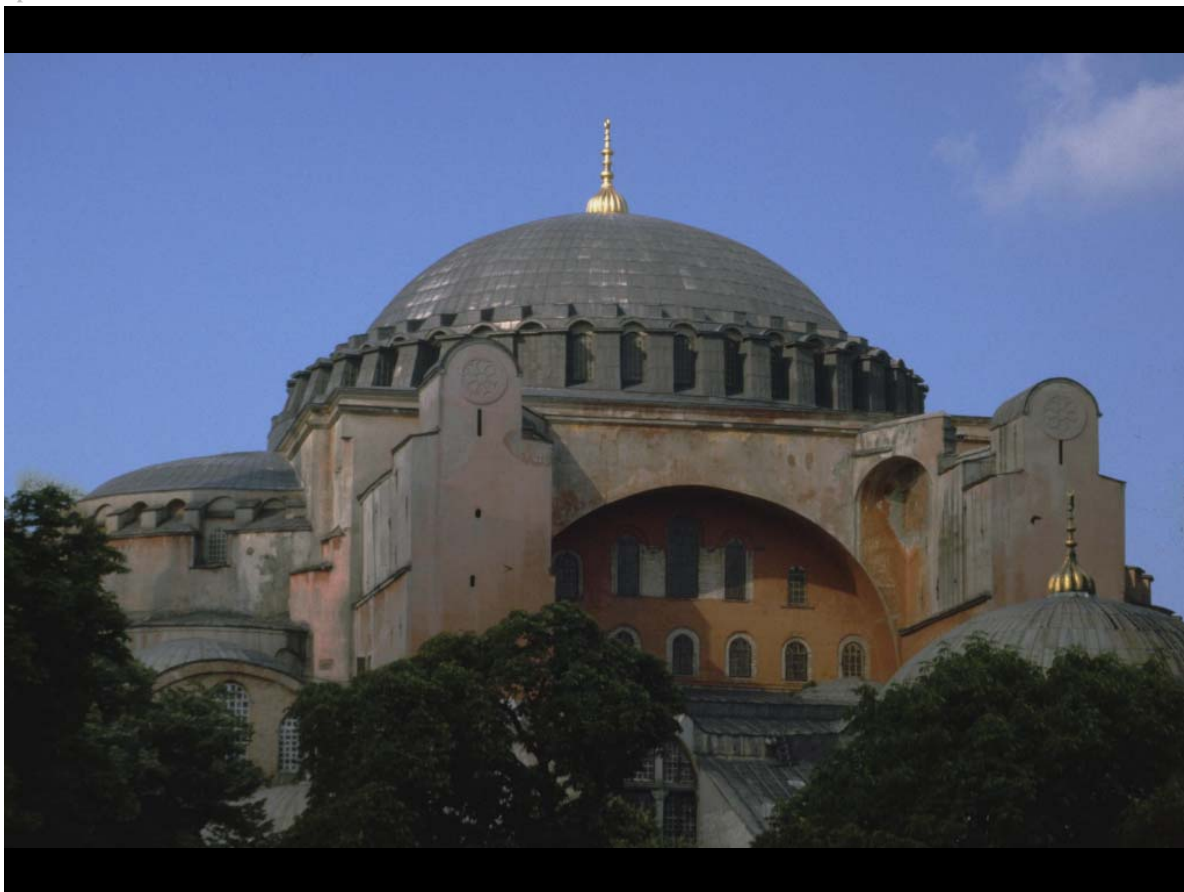


## Hagia Sophia 532-37 AD, Istanbul, Turkey

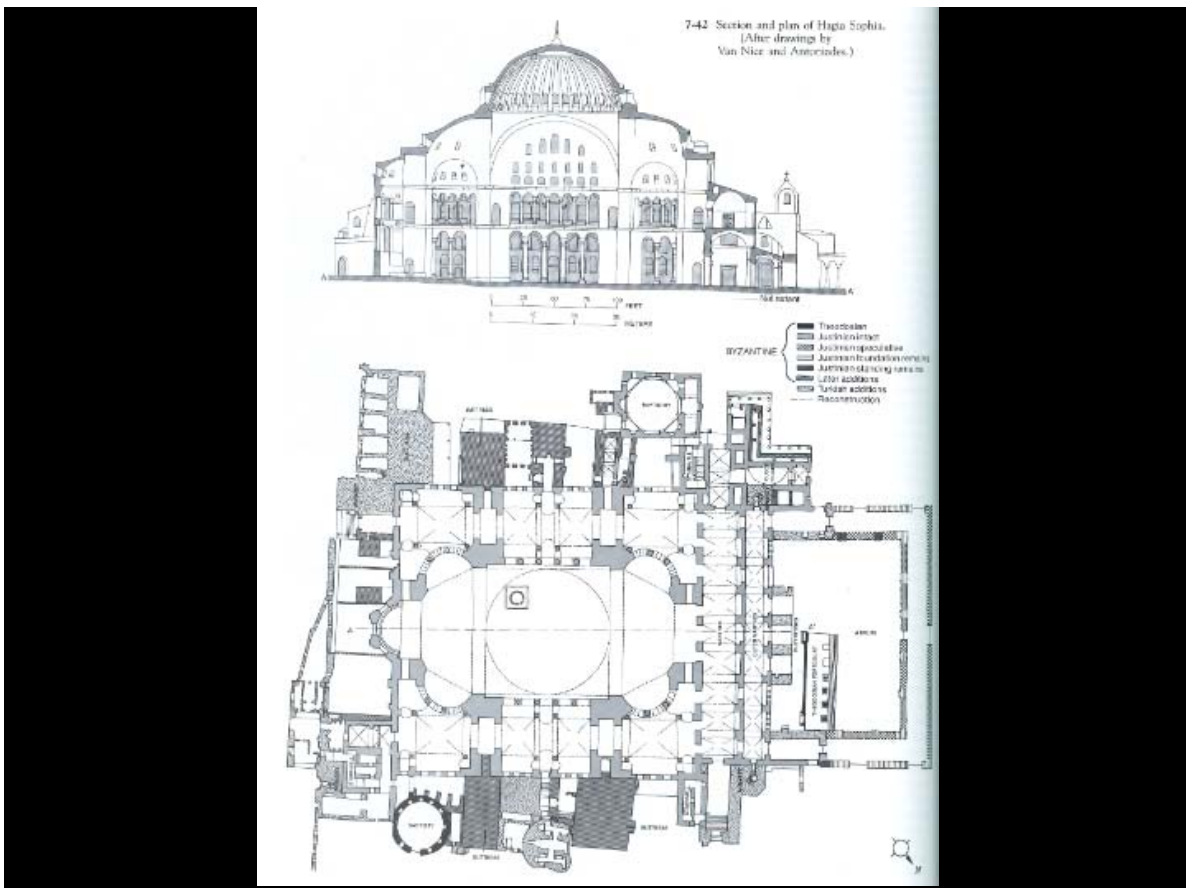
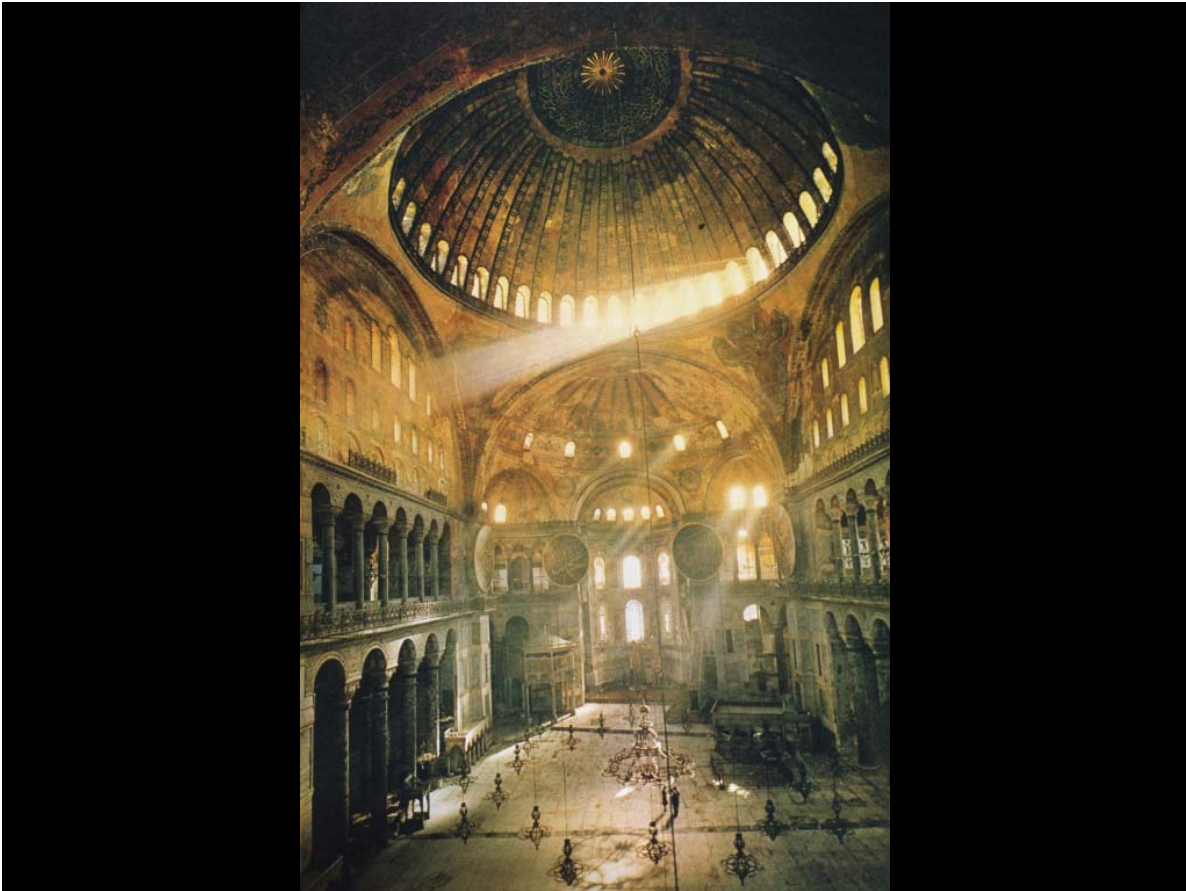












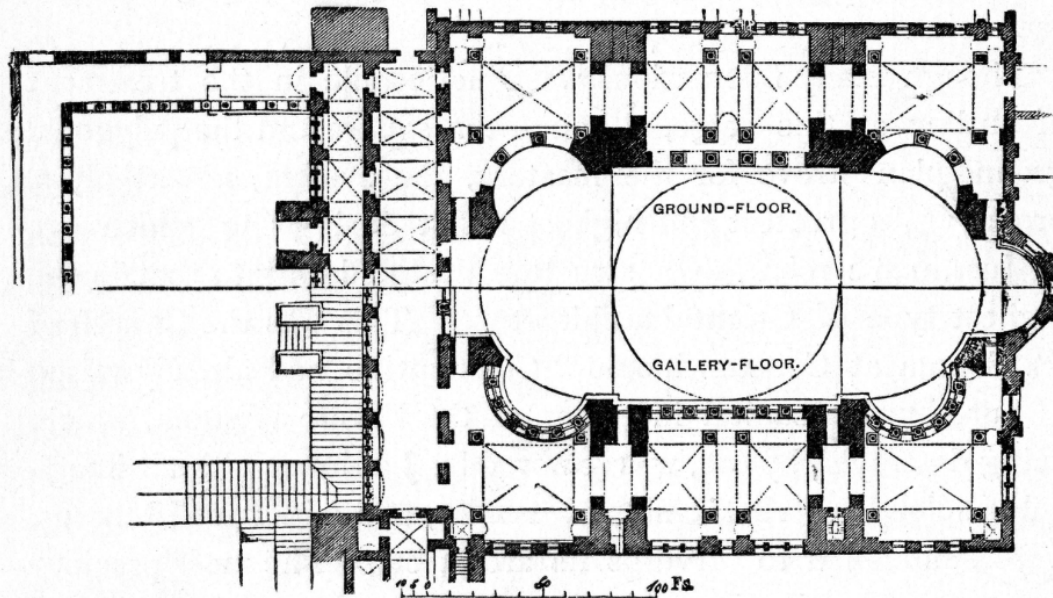
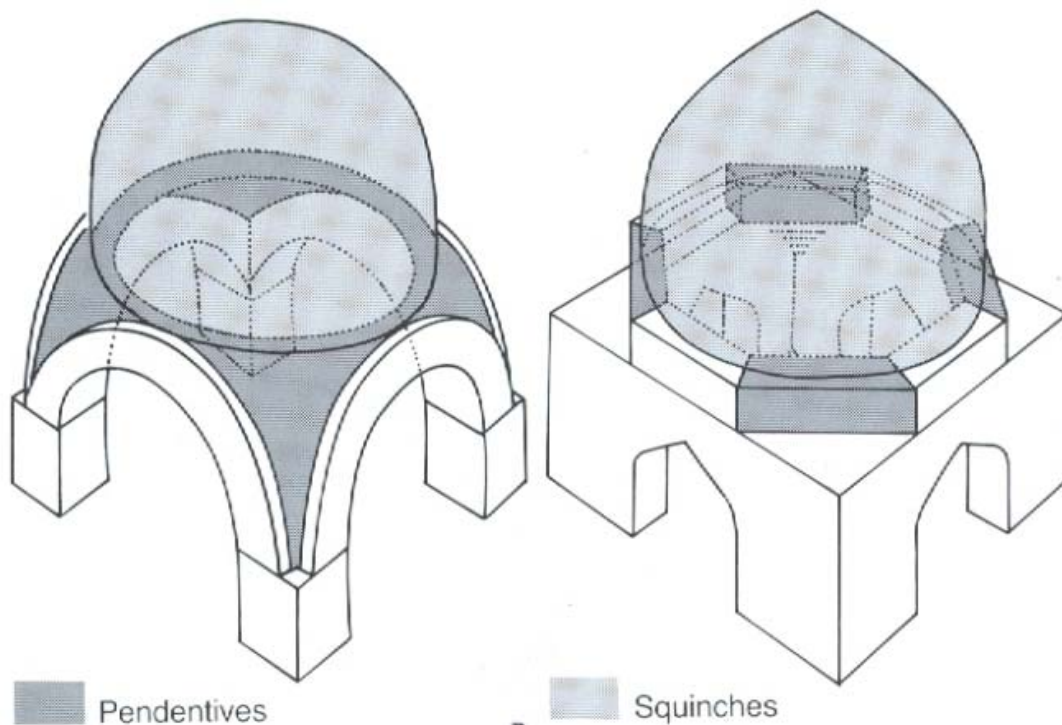


Fig. 188. Ground-Plan of the Church of Santa Sophia.

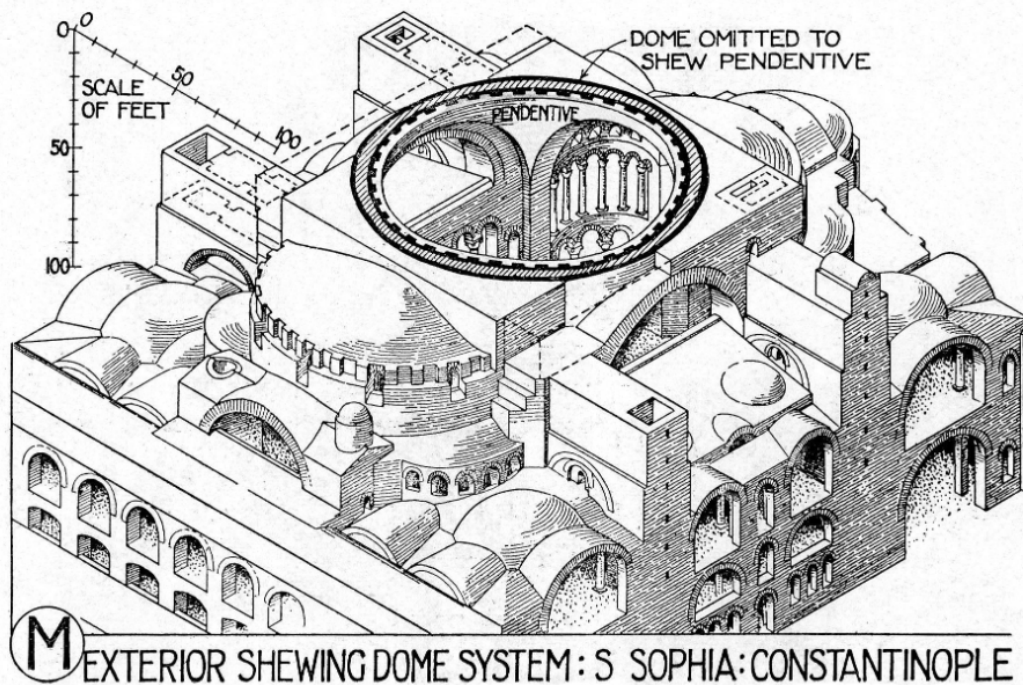
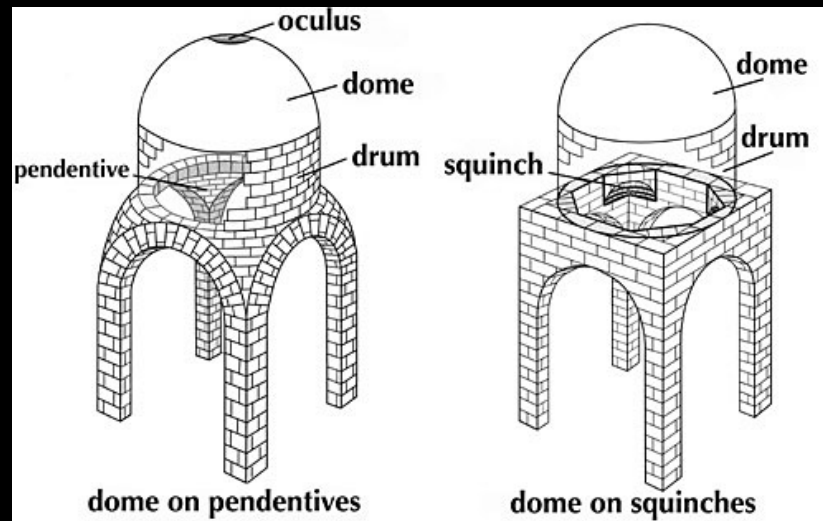


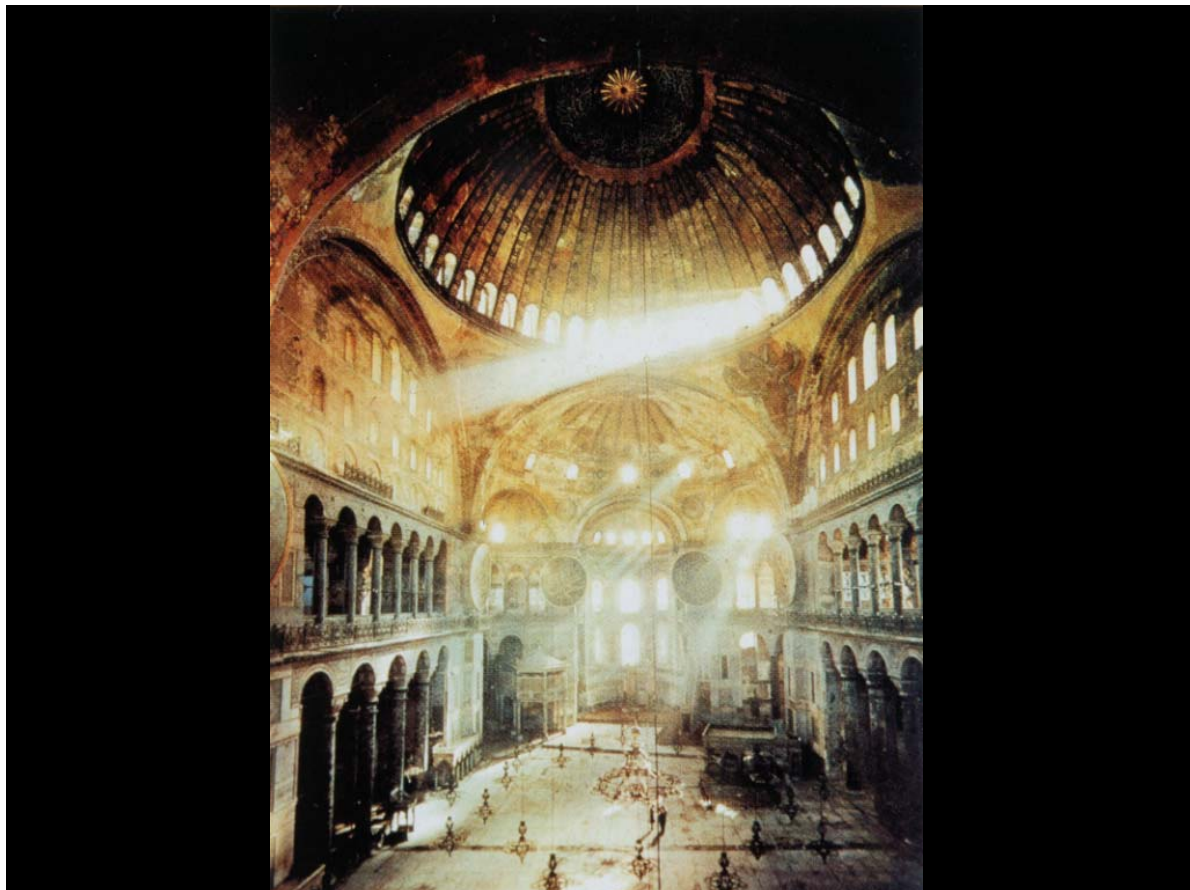
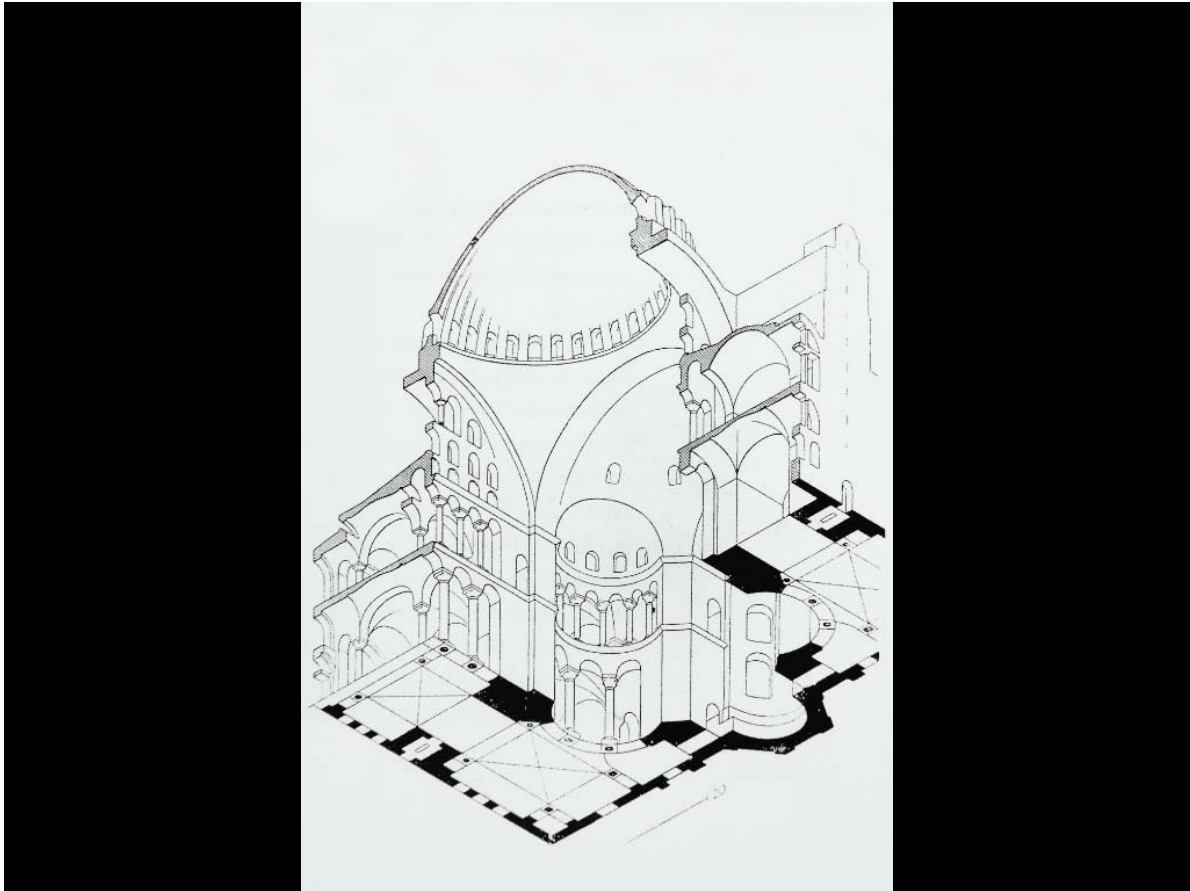
7-45 Domes on pendentives (left) and squinches (right).



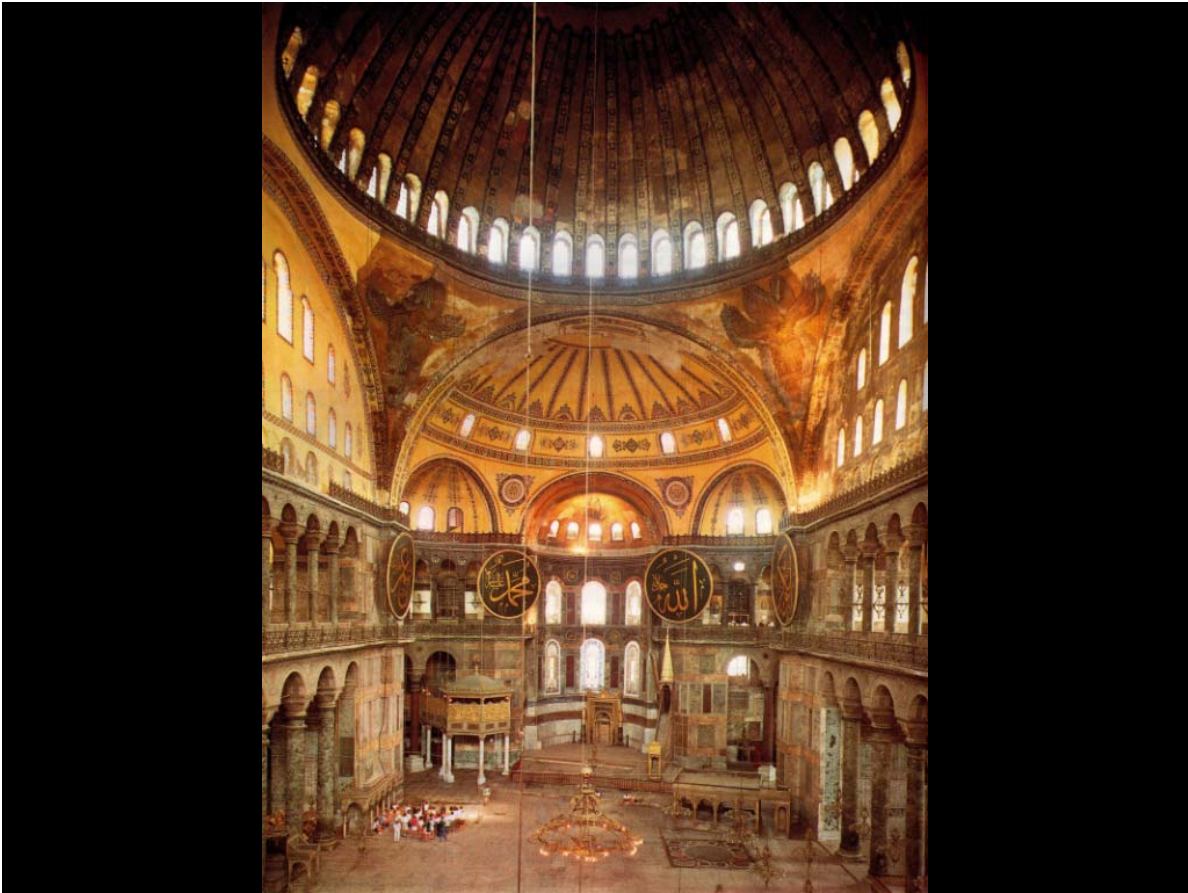
# Pendentives

Solved the problem of placing a dome over a square base – squinches were awkward. Previously domes had rested on circular buildings, i.e. the Pantheon in Rome.

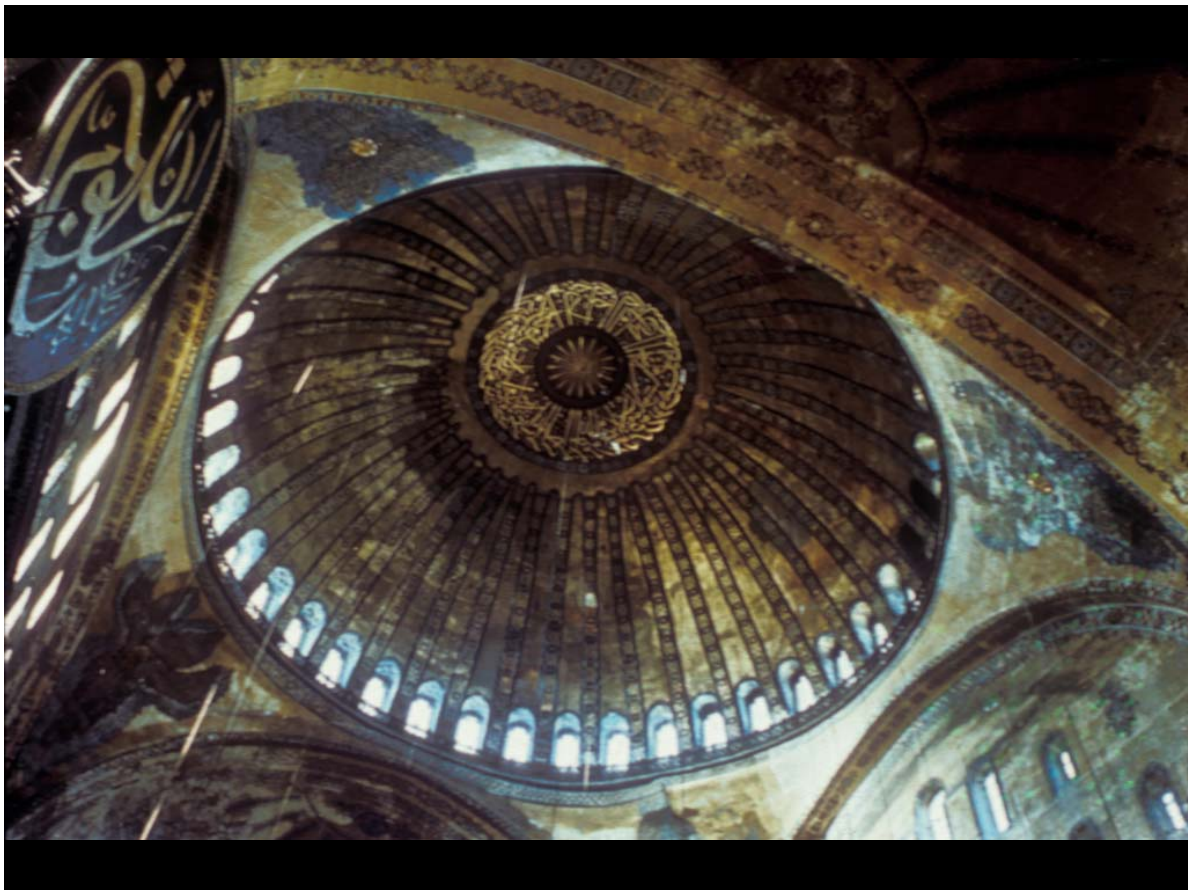
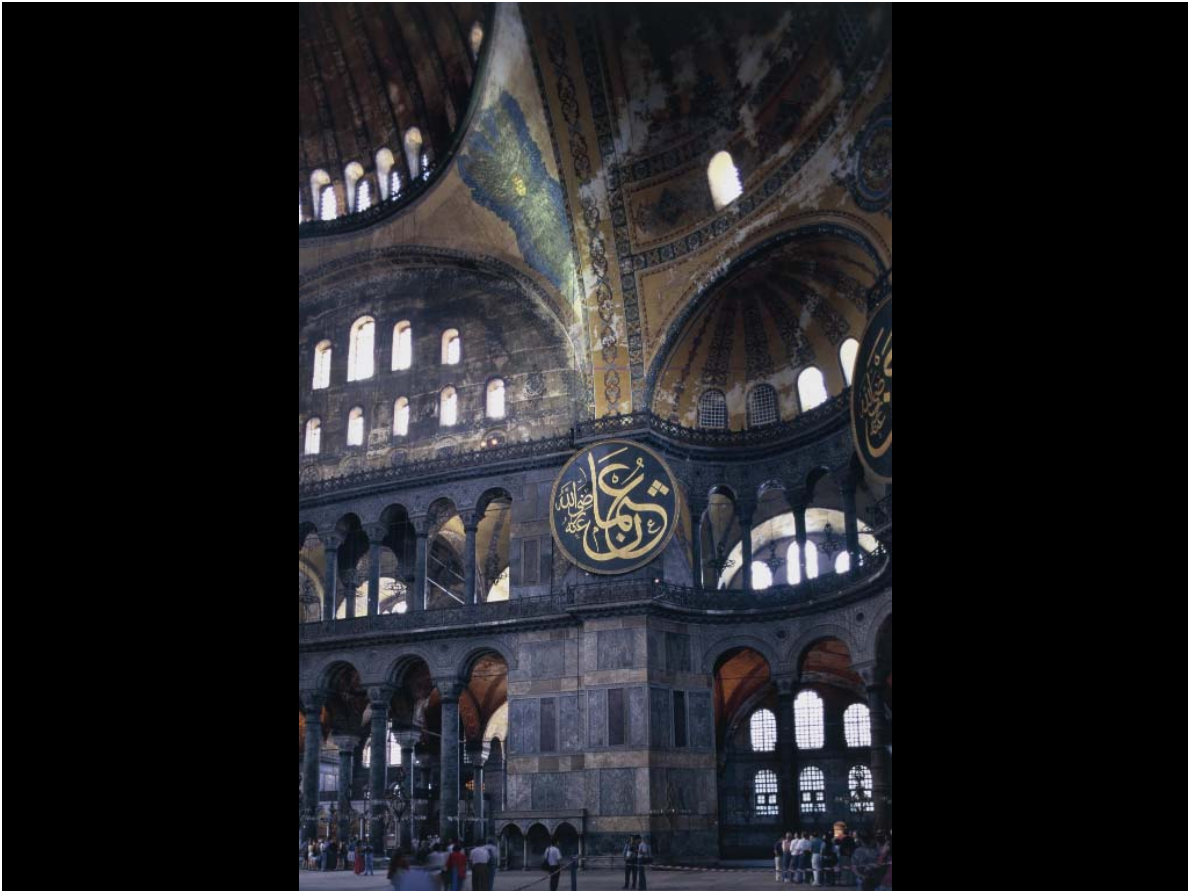
















# Greece

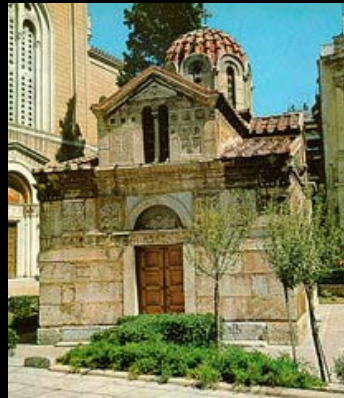
Little Metropolis Church 13th century

Athens Greece

38' x 25'

Smallest Cathedral

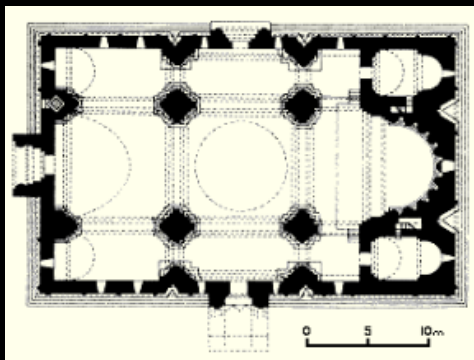
Antique marble reliefs



# Armenia

High Plateau east of Euphrates

1st to adopt Christianity as state religion 301 AD



## Cathedral of Ani 989-1001 AD

Trdat was the Architect – no European Influence

Covered Domes with conical caps

Walls with reliefs, pointed arches, clustered piers

Almost a century before we see this in the West





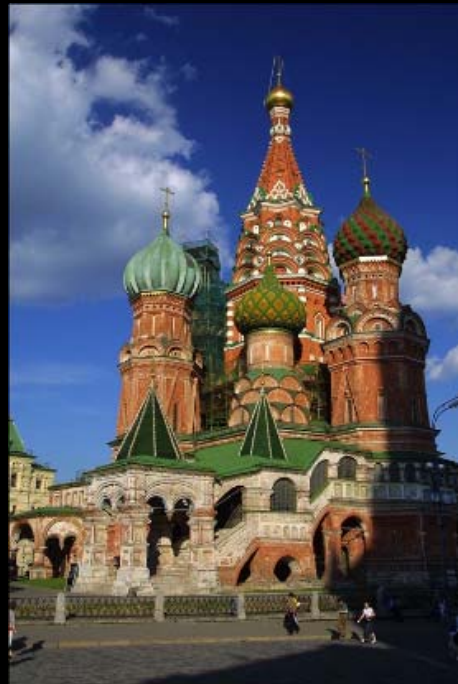
Fig. 224. Cathedral at Ani.

## Russia

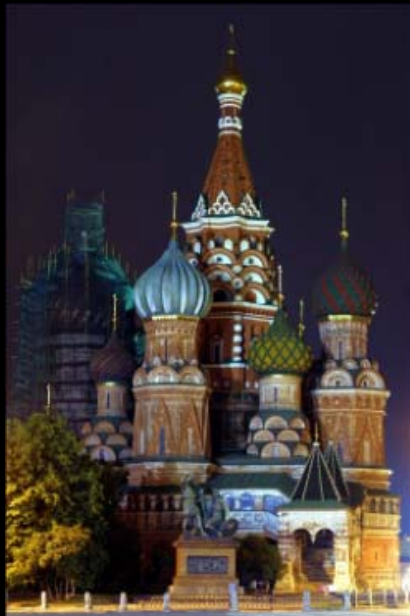
988 AD, Adopted Christianity  
Borrowed arch from Constantinople  
Shallow Dome failed with snow loads  
Thus – the Russian Onion Dome

### St. Basil's Red Square, Moscow

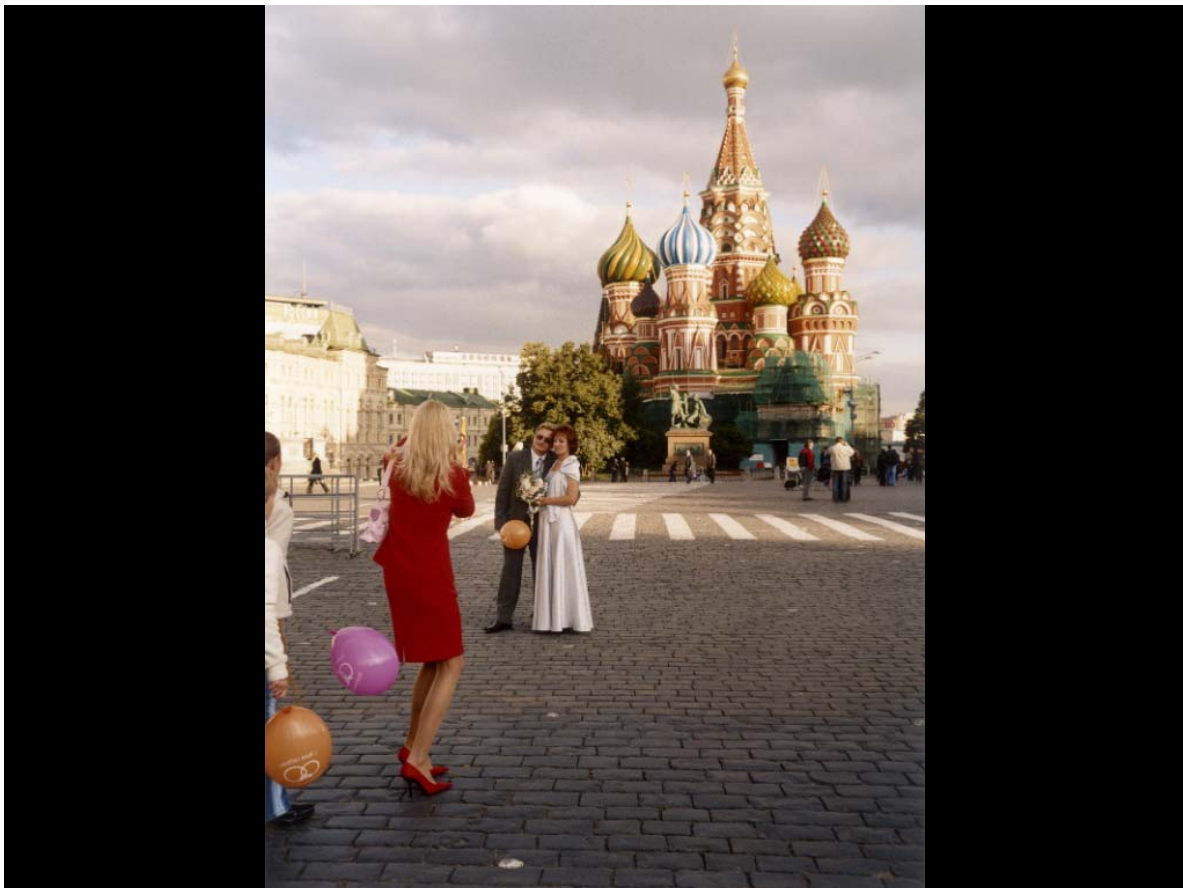
1550-60 AD  
Commissioned by Ivan the Terrible



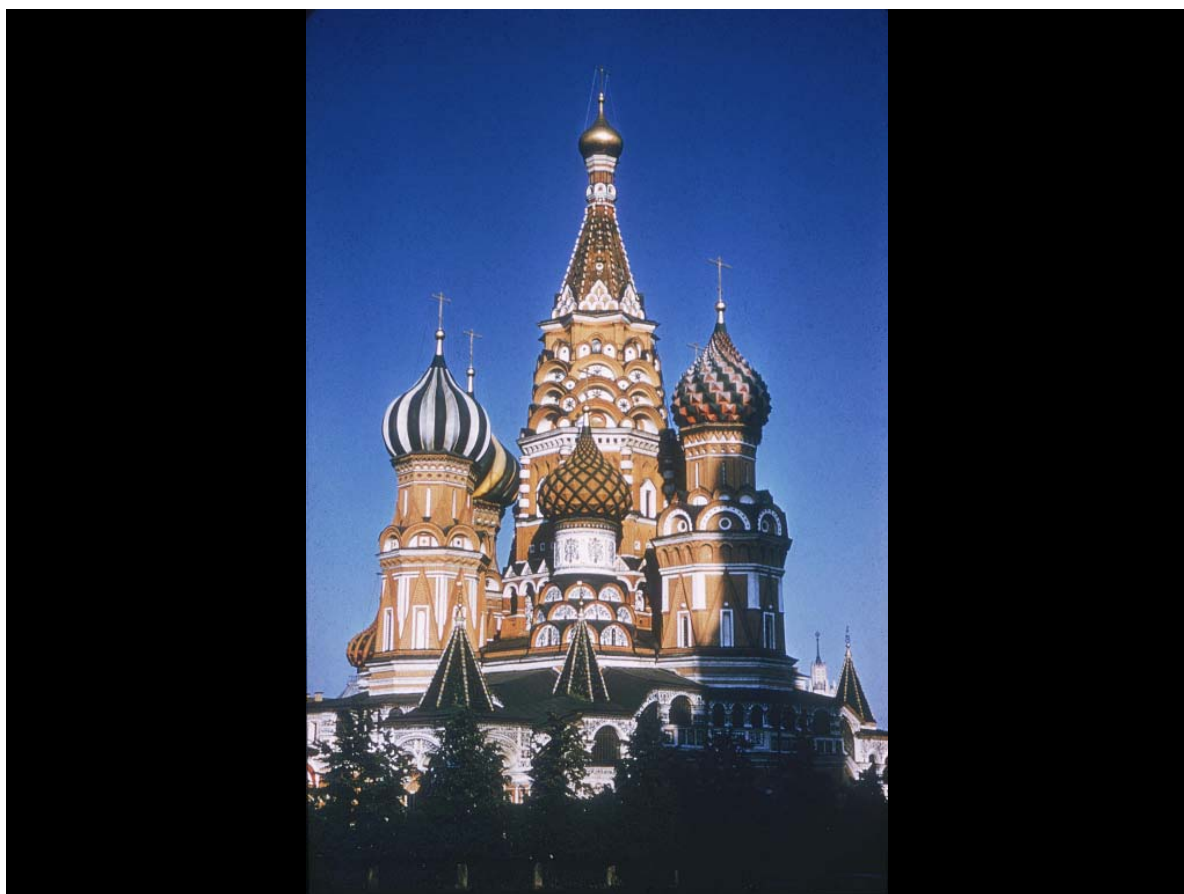
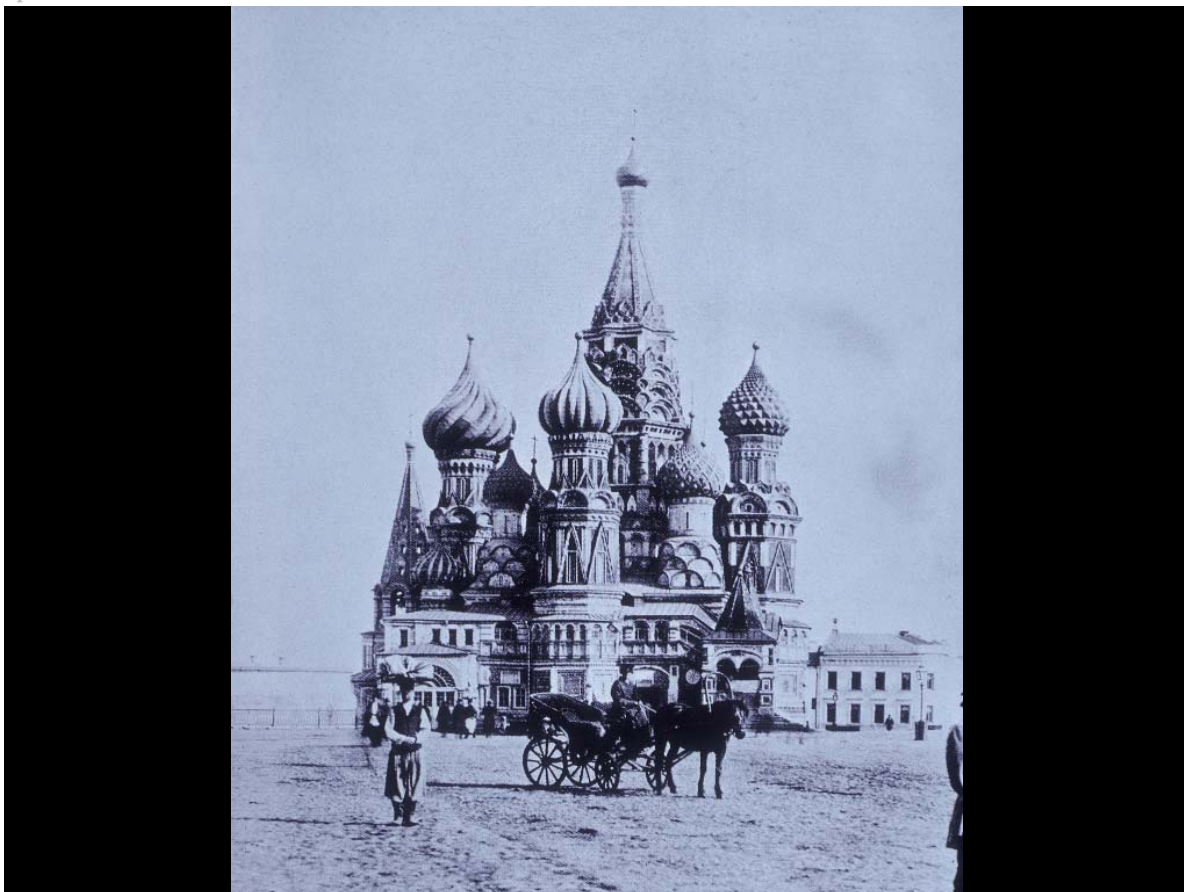
# Russia

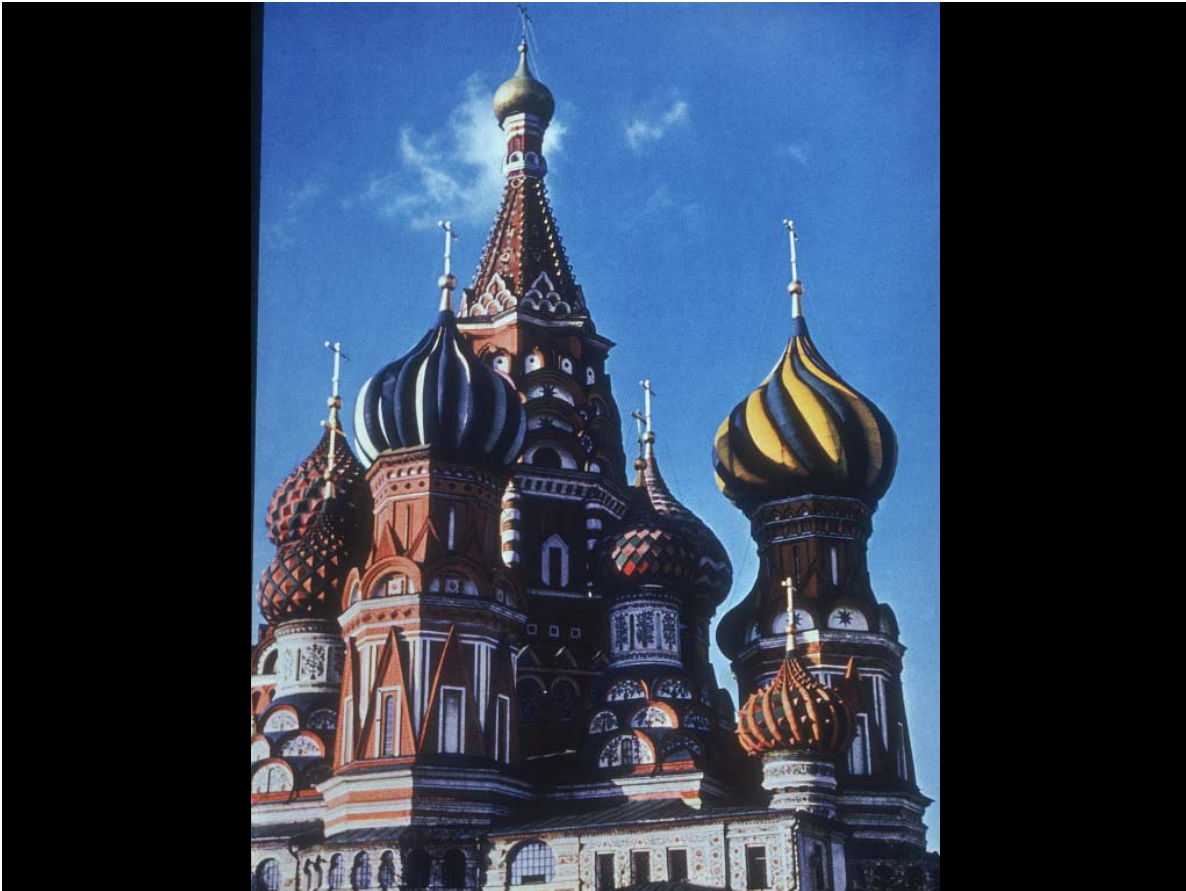


**St. Basil's** Red Square, Moscow 1550-60 AD  
Commissioned by Ivan the Terrible  
8 small churches clustered around one main church  
Originally white, but was painted in the 17th century  
Plan is basically a cruciform









## Venice, Italy

5th Century founded on  
a  
Lagoon cut off from  
Mainland  
Escaping Barbarians



**St. Marks** St. Marks Square Venice, 1063-1073 AD



## Venice, Italy



### St. Marks St. Marks Square Venice 1063-73 AD

Looks East rather than West for influences  
Almost 100' central dome 42' in diameter  
Mosaics from different periods  
5 deep recessed west portals lead into the Narthex

### St. Marks St. Marks Square Venice, 1063-73 AD

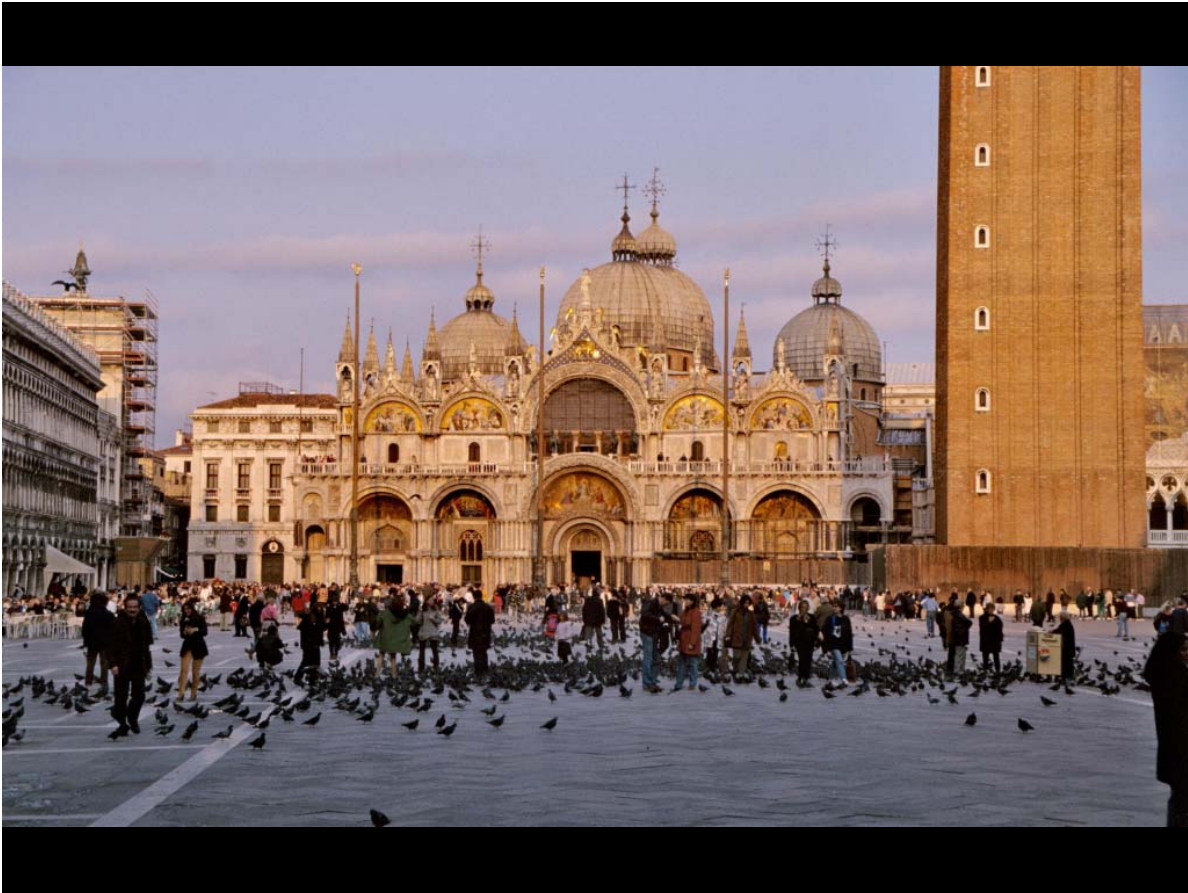
Looks East rather than West for influences, reflecting Venice's extensive trade patterns with the East

Greek cross plan and 5 domes each resting on four piers

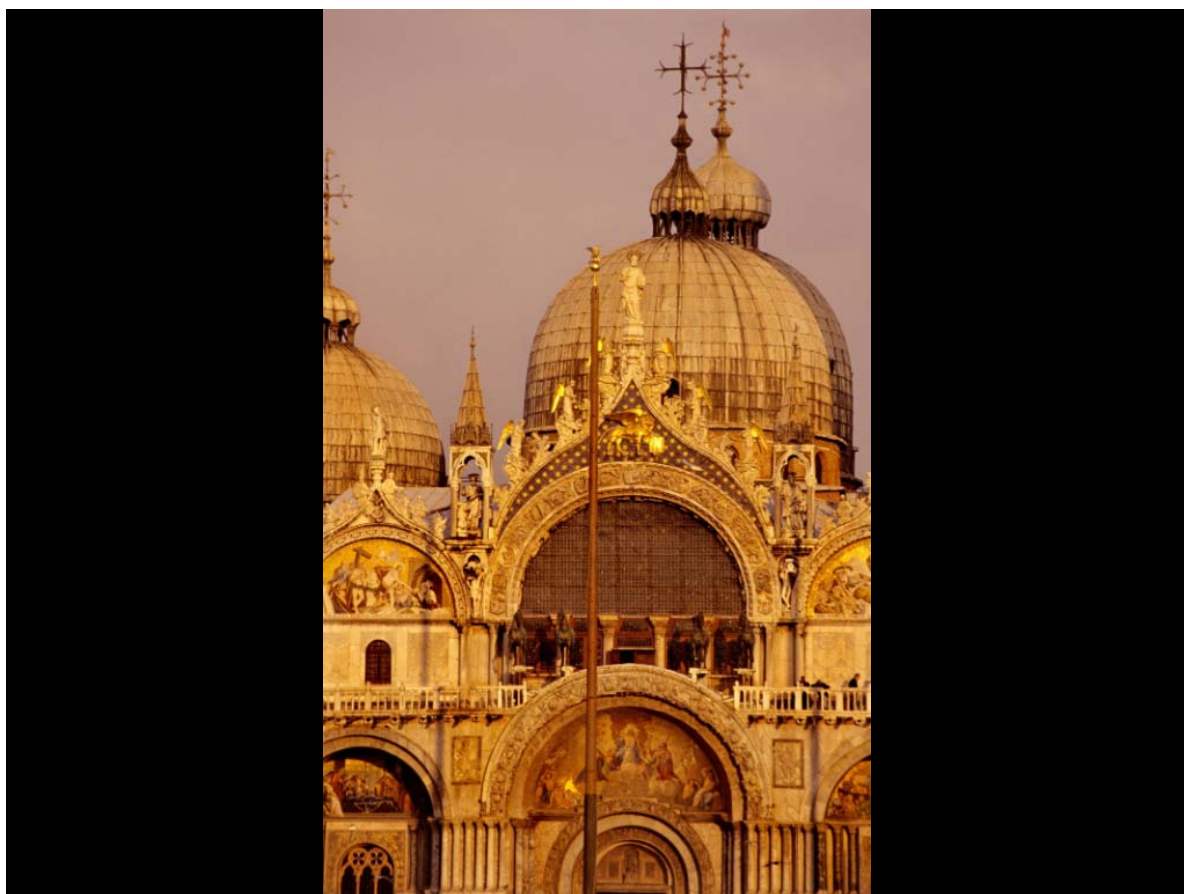
Almost 100' central dome 42' in diameter

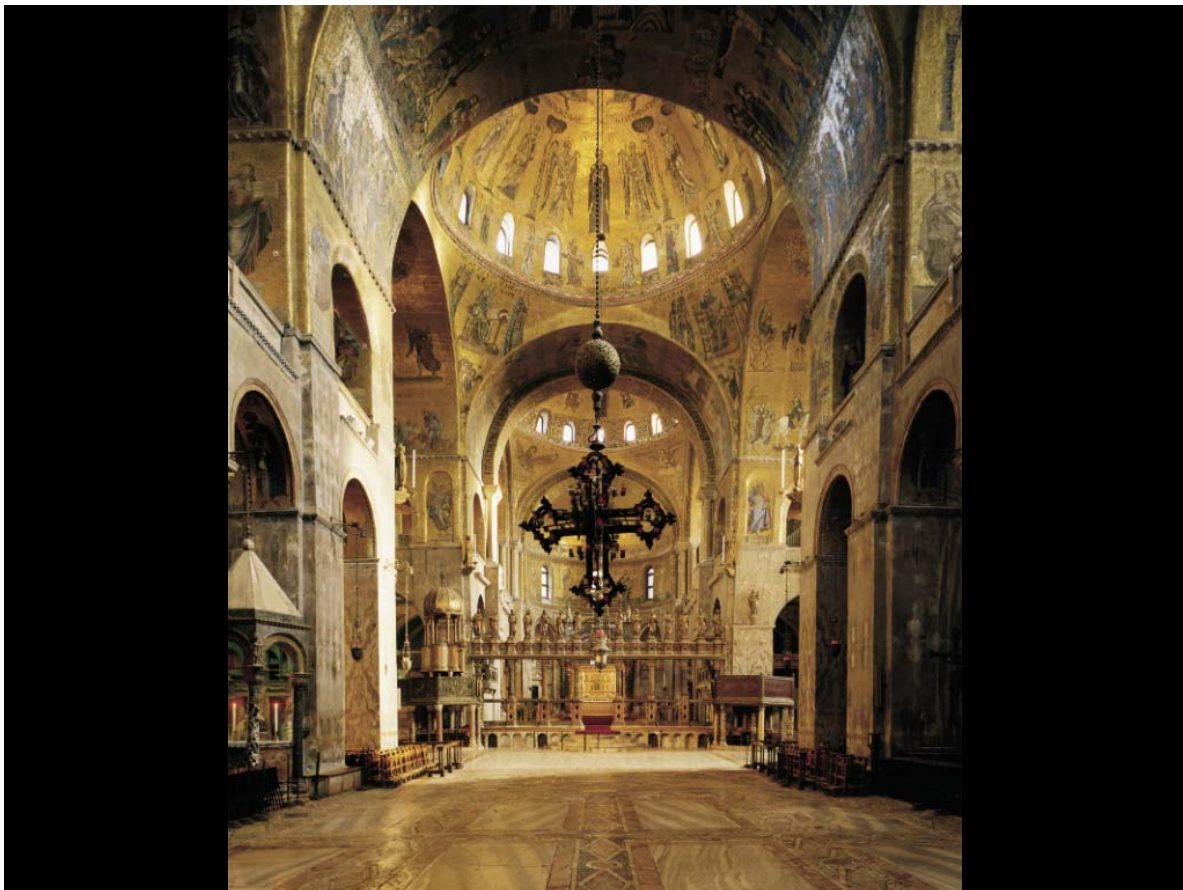
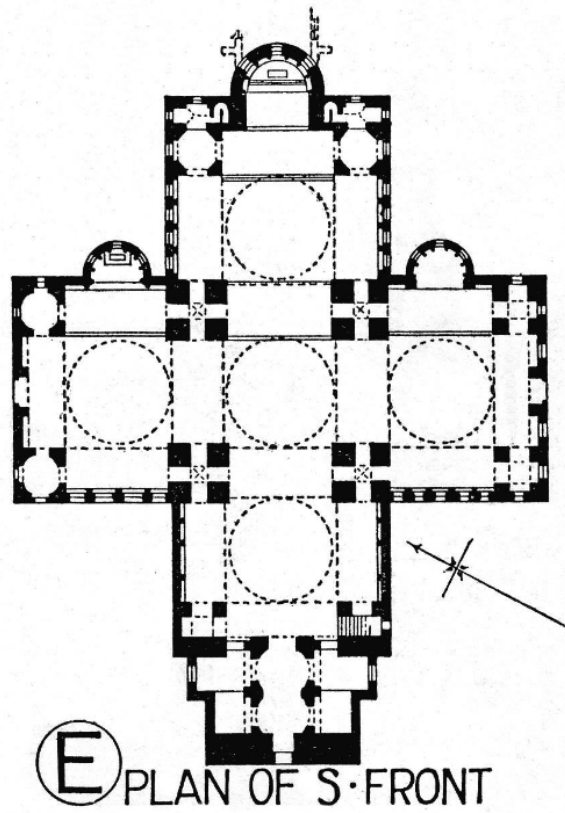
Mosaics from different periods

5 deep recessed west portals lead into the Narthex













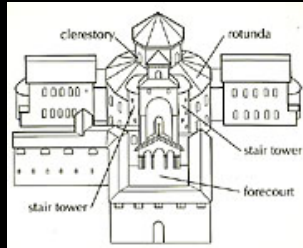




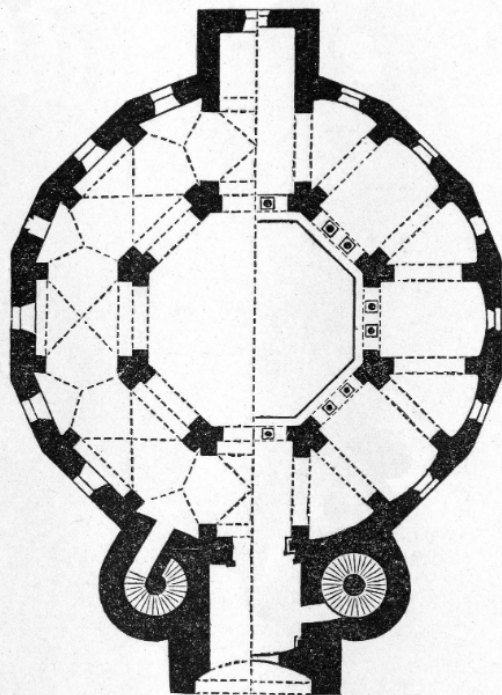
## King Charlemagne Emperor 800-814 AD

Carolingian Architecture continued to the 10th Century  
550 –1050 AD were the doldrums of Western Architecture



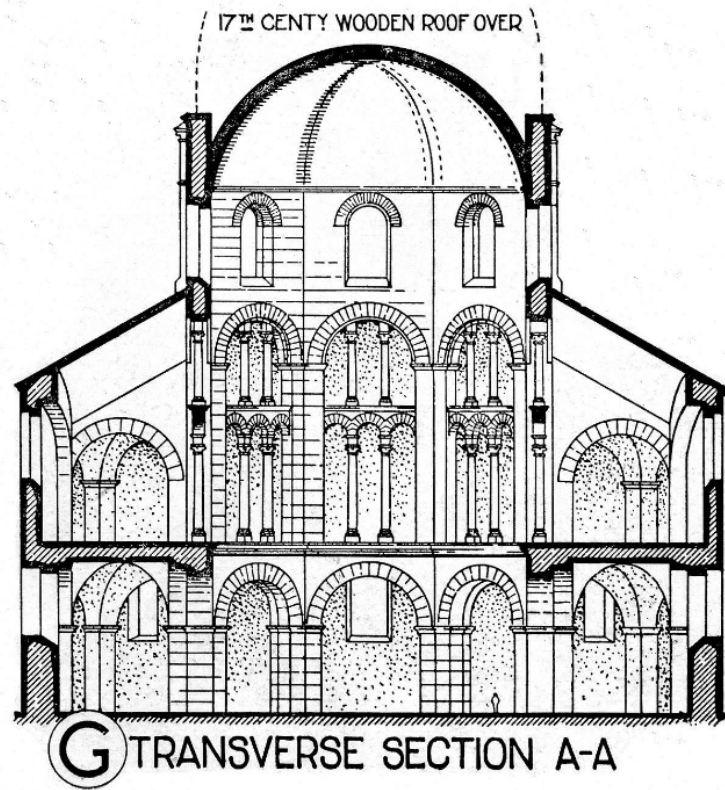


**Royal Chapel** 805 AD, Aachen, Germany  
Roman and Byzantine Influences  
Construction Techniques were Roman  
Designed based on San Vitale, but a very heavy building  
Palace Chapel and mausoleum for Charlemagne

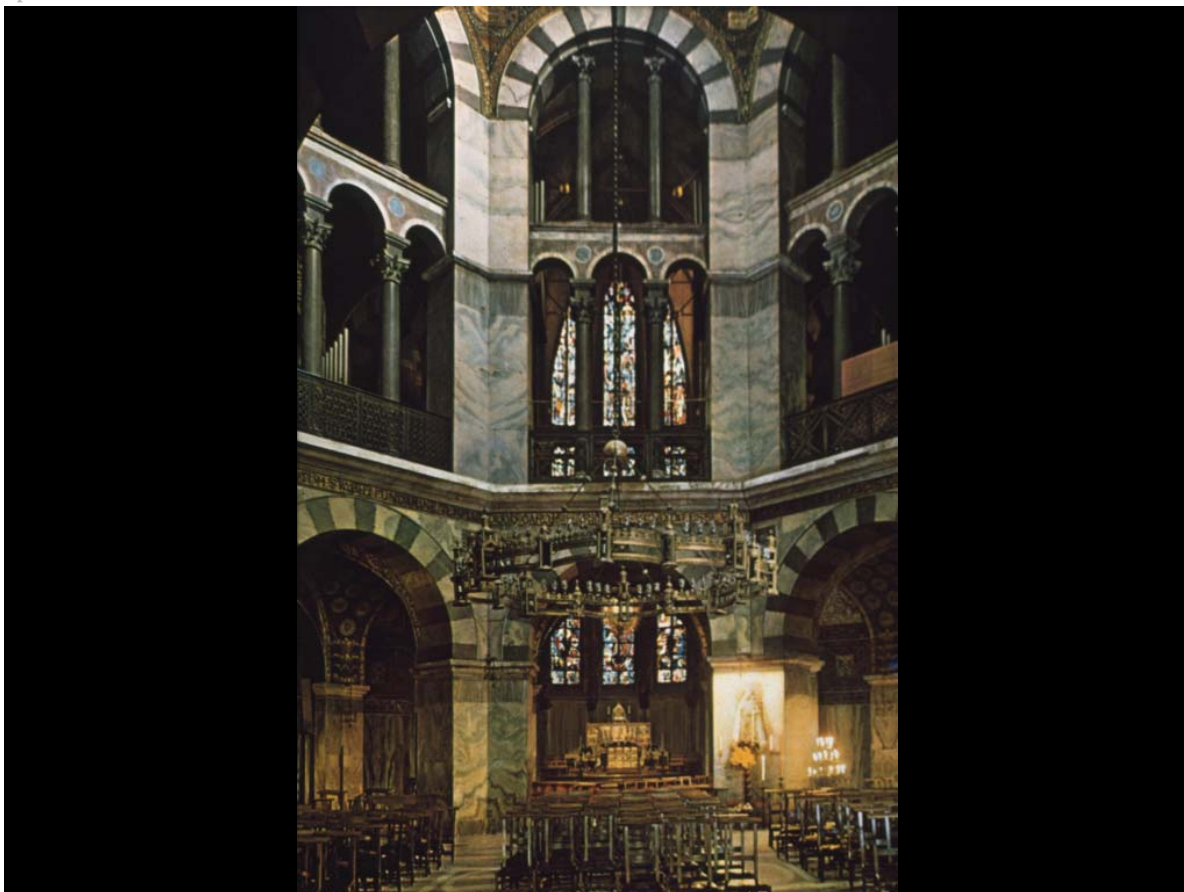


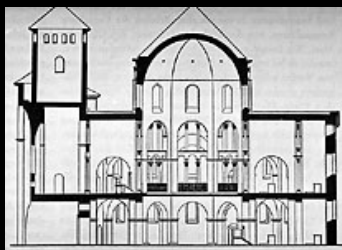
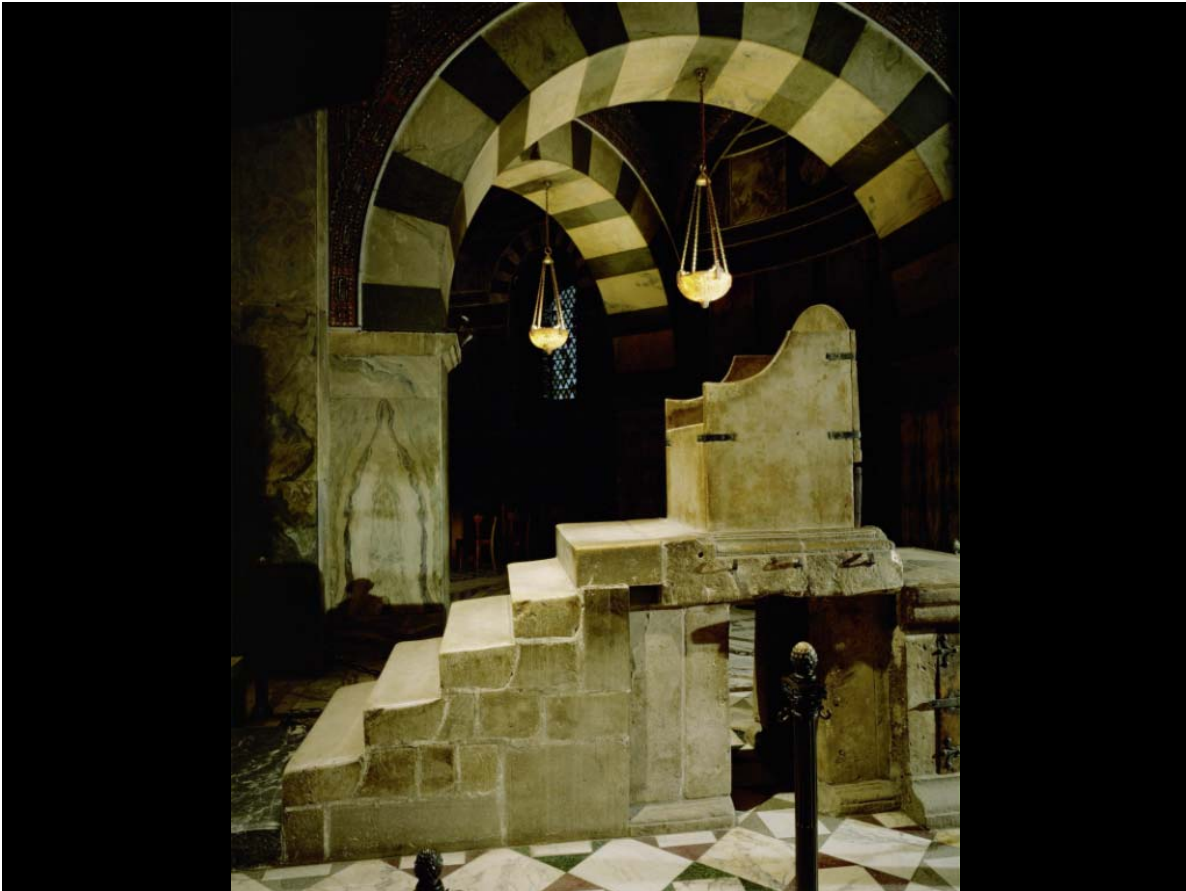
Met.

3. Plan of Charlemagne's Chapel.









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**Royal Chapel** 805 AD, Aachen, Germany