Chapter Guide #9: Byzantium

**CONTEXT:**

When Constantine I founded a “New “Rome in the East in 324, he called it Constantinople, after himself. He became the ruler of a grand united empire but was soon sacked in 410. The division of this Empire became permanent. Art from the Eastern Roman Empire is referred to as Byzantine art, reverting back to its original name before Constantine. It was in present day Turkey.

1. **Constantinople:** Founded in 324 by Constantine and fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453
2. **Theocracy** is dominant (belief that the ruler, as head of state, is also the religious leader
3. Byzantine Emperor is also the vicar of Christ on earth vs. Roman Pope
4. **Justinian** becomes the new Emperor of Byzantine in 550 and invades Ravenna  declares that Christianity is to be the  only lawful religion of his empire.
5. **Mosaics** are the main decorative element with *iconic representation*
6. Light is extremely important  visual manifestation of God.

**ART WORK CARDS: 3D (Yellow) 2D (Red) Architecture (Green)**

Saint Michael the Archangel (3D)

Barberini Ivory (3D)

Hagia Sophia (Architecture)

San Vitale (Architecture)

Saint Apollinaris (Architecture)

Transfiguration of Jesus, Church of the Virgin (2D)

Virgin (Theotokos) and Child (2D)

Christ as Pantokrator, Church of Dormition (2D)

Crucifixion, Church of Dormition (2D)

Saint Mark’s (Architecture)

Lamentation, Saint Pantaleimon (2D)

Paris Psalter (2D)

Vladimir Virgin (2D)

Anastasis, Church of Christ in Chora (2D)

## VOCABULARY:

iconoclast

tesserae

encaustic

aniconic

mandorla

theocracy

Chi-Rho

orthodox

**ARCHITECTURE**

central plan

basilica plan

dome

curtain wall

atrium

crossing

squinch

buttress

conches

pendentives

lunette

narthex

arcade

nave

blind arcade

aisles

colonnade

transept

clerestory

**CONTEXT CARDS: Blue**

Byzantine

## MOSAICS:

**Golden Age of Mosaics –** Byzantine and Early Christian mosaic from Ravenna, Constantinople, Venice and Rome during the 4th – 10th c.

**Definition:** The art or technique of creating picture or designs with ***tesserae*** (Latin for “cubes” or “dice”) set in a ***mastic*** or a plaster ***grout.***

**Technique:** ***tesserae*** pieces can be set into wall, ceilings, floors, portable icons.

***tesserae*** pieces may be small pieces of colored glass, stones, marble pottery or any other hard imperishable material.

**Roman mosaics:** generally opaque marble tesserae used

**Byzantine mosaics:** generally more translucent glass used

**mural mosaics** are commonly made of opaque glass broken into small cubes and are set with their fracture sides exposed to reflect light and give the entire surface a sparkling brilliance.

**History:** earliest examples are from Sumerian art (c. 3000 BCE) (example: **Standard of Ur)**

from Roman art *floor of the House of the Faun:* **Darius and Alexander in Battle**

**Byzantine Mosaics as Iconic Art:** (icon **= image symbolic of an idea)**

-  symbolic representation of a message

-  conceptual experience of work of art – conceptual reality - primary purpose to convey an  idea

-  use of simplification and stylization but at the service of concept and less on appearance or  rich visual experience

-  simplification of presentation of this idea into an easily recognizable form

-  move *toward* realism - but not exact representation of visual reality

-  decorative elements secondary to central image or icon