

Dominate & Christian Roman empire

HIST 110 Lecture 9

Crisis of the Third Century

- Political chaos
 - 60+ “emperors” 235-283
 - Key figures:
 - Decius (249-251)
 - Valerian (253-260) and son Gallienus (253-268)
 - Aurelian (270-275)
- Military disasters
 - War w/ Persia, barbarian invasions
- Inflation, coinage devalued





Tetrarchs.

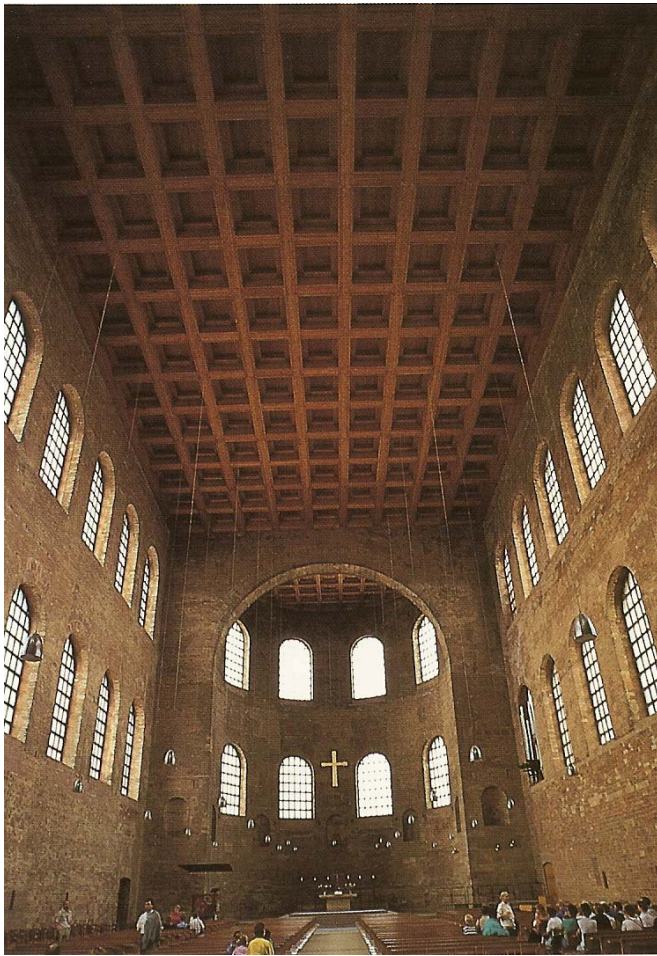
Porphyry fragment, St. Mark's,
Venice.



Political & cultural transformation

- Dominate replaces principate
 - From *dominus*, “lord, master”
 - Replaces *princeps*, “first citizen”
 - Expresses new style of autocratic rule
 - More ceremony, emperor less accessible
 - More active policy-making from the center
 - Rise of state bureaucracy
- Decline of traditional urban elites
 - Flight of the *curiales*: burden of tax collection makes city council duties something to avoid
 - Imperial courts and admin become new paths to power
 - Centralizing impulse makes local power less interesting

Aula Palatina, Trier







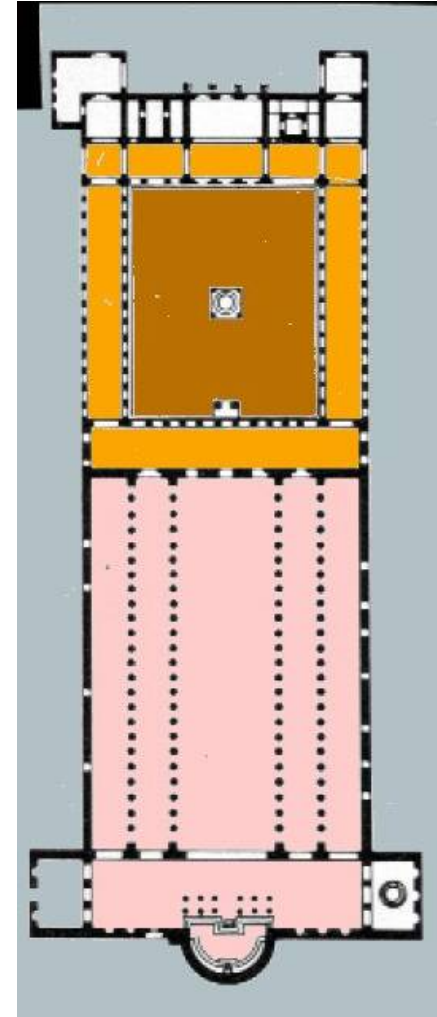
Triumph of Christianity

- Stages: does NOT happen overnight
 - Imperial patronage: Constantine converts, 312
 - Legalization: edict of Milan, 313 (Constantine & Licinius)
 - Constantine's dynasty lasts until 360: imperial patronage of Xnty
 - Julian: last pagan emperor (360-363)
 - Legal triumph under Theodosius I, 380
- Growth of Christian numbers
 - In 300, pop was ~10% Christian
 - By 400, it might have been ~50%
- Expansion of church institutions, buildings
 - Church gets bigger, richer w/ imperial patronage
 - Many huge basilica churches built

An episcopal basilica at Aquileia



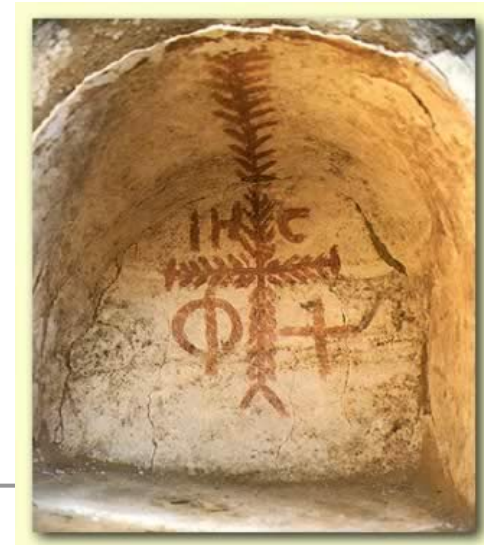
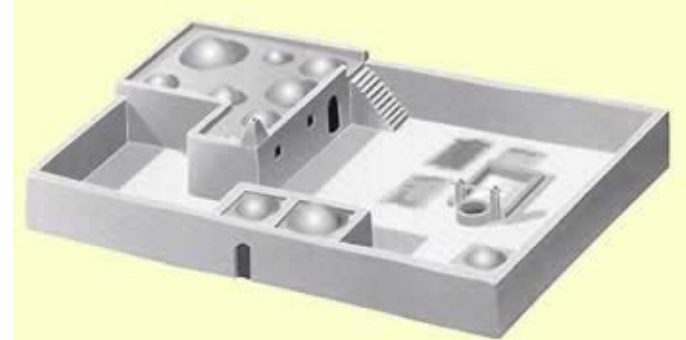
Old Saint Peter's, Rome, begun 313



Bishops as civic leaders

- Imperial legal enactments
 - Right to use imperial post for travel
 - Tribunals of binding arbitration
- Expansion of patronage
 - More Christians → more funds → more patronage
 - From Constantine, churches could inherit property
 - New charitable institutions created for urban poor
- Preaching
 - Bishops take on roles previously held by sophists
 - Popular leadership more important than for sophists
- Urban violence
 - Bishops acquire followings of thuggish monks, hospital orderlies

New Institutions: Monasteries





Map 6.2

The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures: A Concise History, Second Edition

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