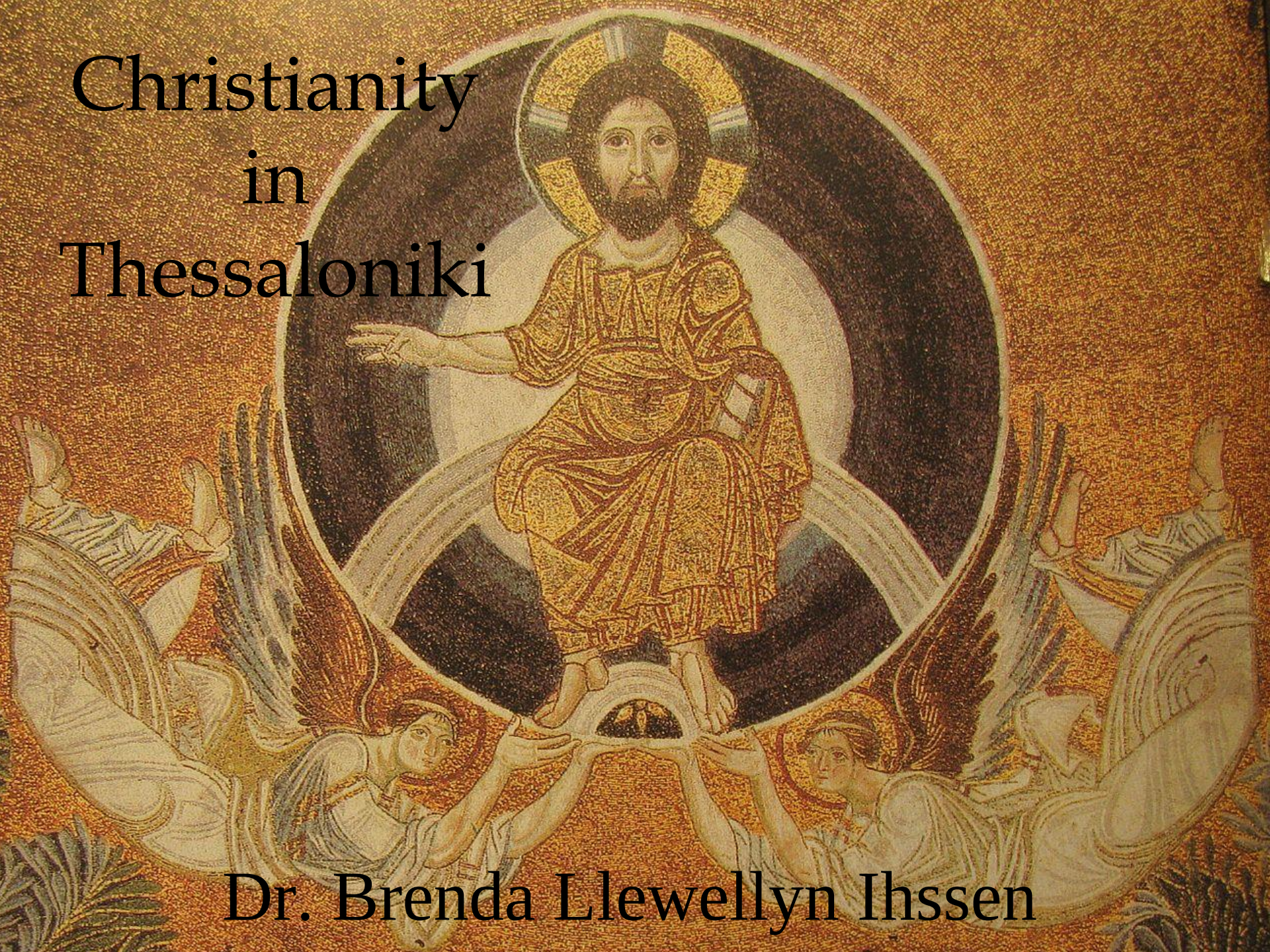


Christianity in Thessaloniki



Dr. Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen



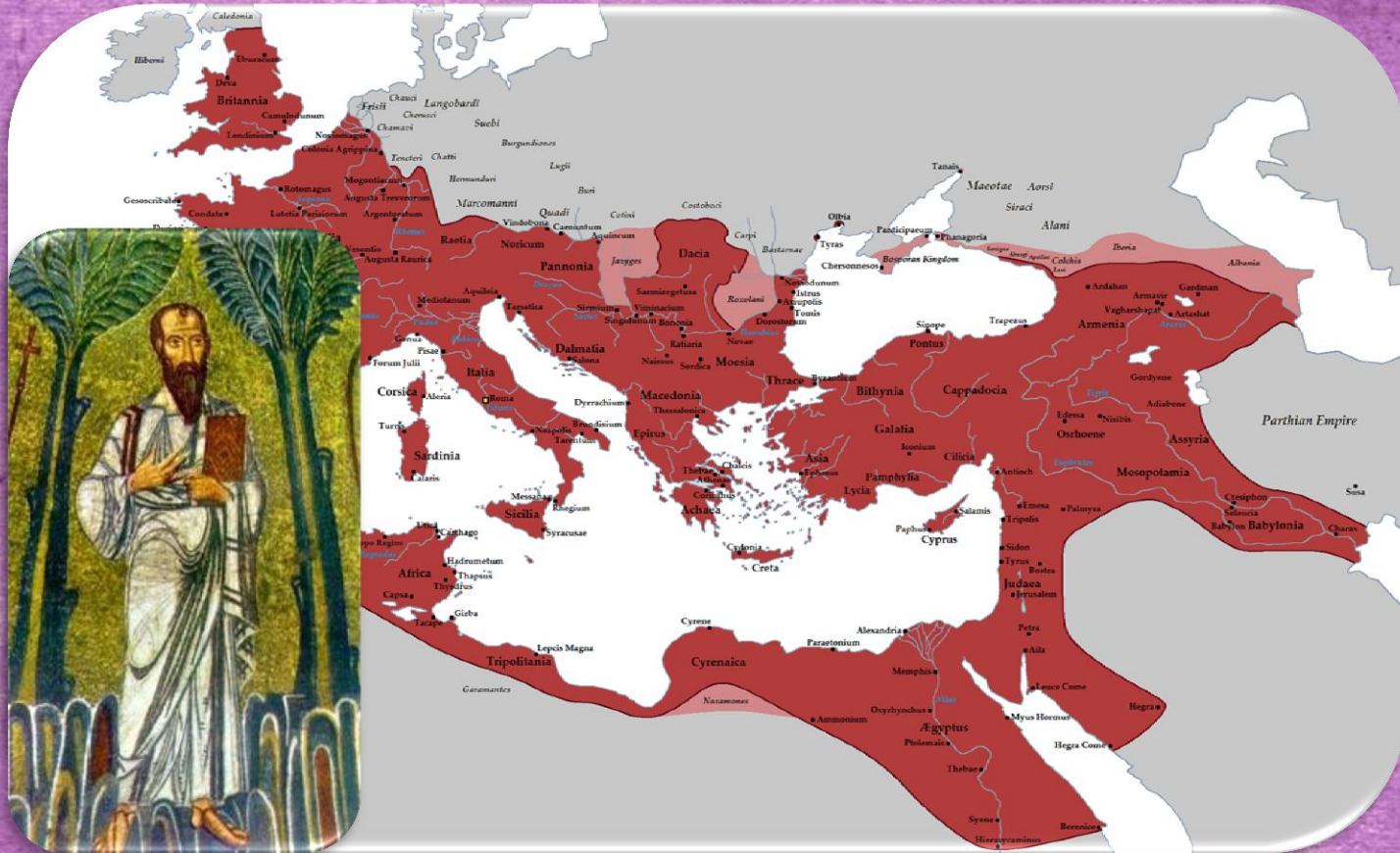
St. Paul



St. Demetrios



Visited, ca. 49 CE; letter ca. 52



The Acts of the Apostles

17 When Paul and his companions...came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from Scriptures,³ explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,” he said.⁴ Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. ⁵ But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and other believers before city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.”

⁸ When they heard this, the crowd and city officials were thrown into turmoil. ⁹ They made Jason and others post bond and let them go. ¹⁰ As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the synagogue. ¹¹ Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica; they received the message with great eagerness and examined Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. ¹² As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. ¹³ But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. ¹⁴ The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. ¹⁵ Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible

Monastery of the Vlatades



The Letter to the Thessalonians

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace.

We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers. For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you suffered the same things from your own compatriots (συμφυλέται) as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out; they displease God and oppose everyone by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. Thus they have constantly been filling up the measure of their sins; but God's wrath has overtaken them at last.

Why does Paul matter?

- Historically: Apostolic link to the city.
- Literary: earliest NT texts.
- Theologically: Christian-Jewish relations & anti-semitic language.





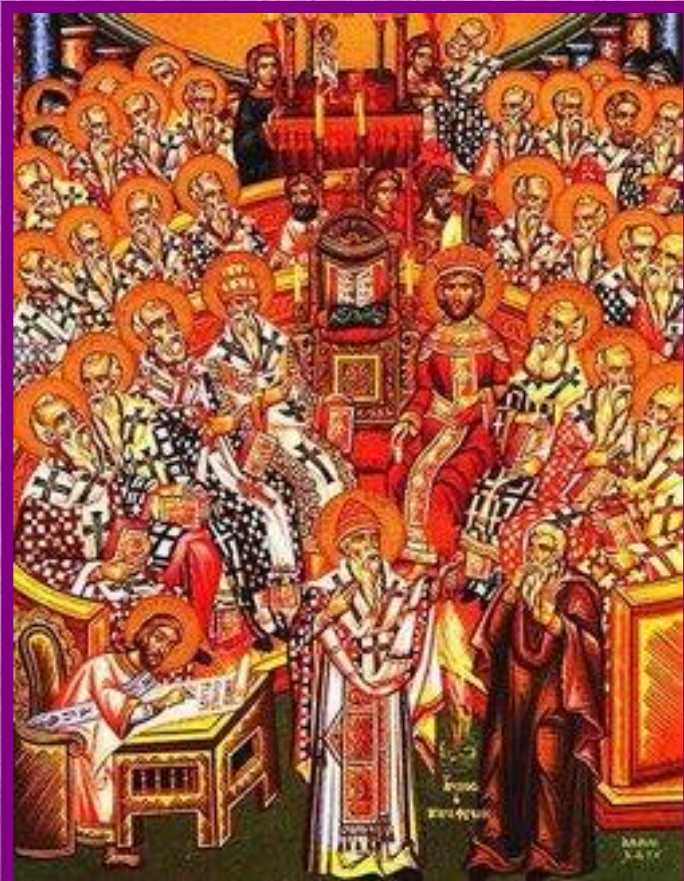
Emperor Constantine I the Great

312-37



“no man should be denied leave of attaching himself to the rites of the Christians, or to whatever other religion his mind directed him, that thus the supreme Divinity, to whose worship we freely devote ourselves, might continue to vouchsafe [God’s] favour and beneficence to us. And accordingly we give you to know that, without regard to any provisos in our former orders to you concerning the Christians, all who choose that religion are to be permitted, freely and absolutely, to remain in it, and not to be disturbed any ways, or molested.” *Edict of Milan*, 313

Piety, Purity & Patronage



Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.17

Chapter 17. Of the massacre of Thessalonica; the boldness of Bishop Ambrosius, and the piety of the Emperor.

THESSALONICA is a large and very populous city, belonging to Macedonia, but the capital of Thessaly and Achaia, as well as of many other provinces which are governed by the prefect of Illyricum. Here arose a great sedition, and several of the magistrates were stoned and violently treated.



The Palace of Galerius

The emperor was fired with anger when he heard the news, and unable to endure the rush of his passion, did not even check its onset by the curb of reason, but allowed his rage to be the minister of his vengeance. When the imperial passion had received its authority, as though itself an independent prince, it broke the bonds and yoke of reason, unsheathed swords of injustice right and left without distinction, and slew innocent and guilty together. No trial preceded the sentence. No condemnation was passed on the perpetrators of the crimes. Multitudes were mowed down like ears of grain in harvest-tide. It is said that seven thousand perished.

Ambrose and Theodosius



0:00 / 1:48



St. Demetrios, 303



“When some mentioned about Demetrius to him, roused to anger, he ordered him immediately to be pierced with lances in the very place where he was being detained. In this way blessed Demetrius completed the martyrdom of a good confession. His body was counted as little by his killers, but some religious men came secretly by night and rescued it from the dirt where it had been thrown, and having gathered as much earth as they were able, they carefully buried it so that it would not receive injury from any fierce and cruel animals. After these events, no-one cared to move the saint's body, but it remained beneath its marker. Furthermore, to say little, no few miracles and healings were worked in the same place for those who called upon him with faith. When the martyr's merit had presently been made common knowledge, Leontius, assuredly beloved of God, a man who adorned the seat of the prefecture of Illyricum, cleaned the building which contained the most holy body of the martyr, and freed it from all harm, since it was very humble, concealed on all sides, and restricted by the porticoes of the public bath and the stadium. He enlarged it by means of further lots of land, and erected there an oratory in honour of the holy martyr Demetrius for the praise of Our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom the Father and the Holy Spirit share glory, honour and power through ages of ages.”

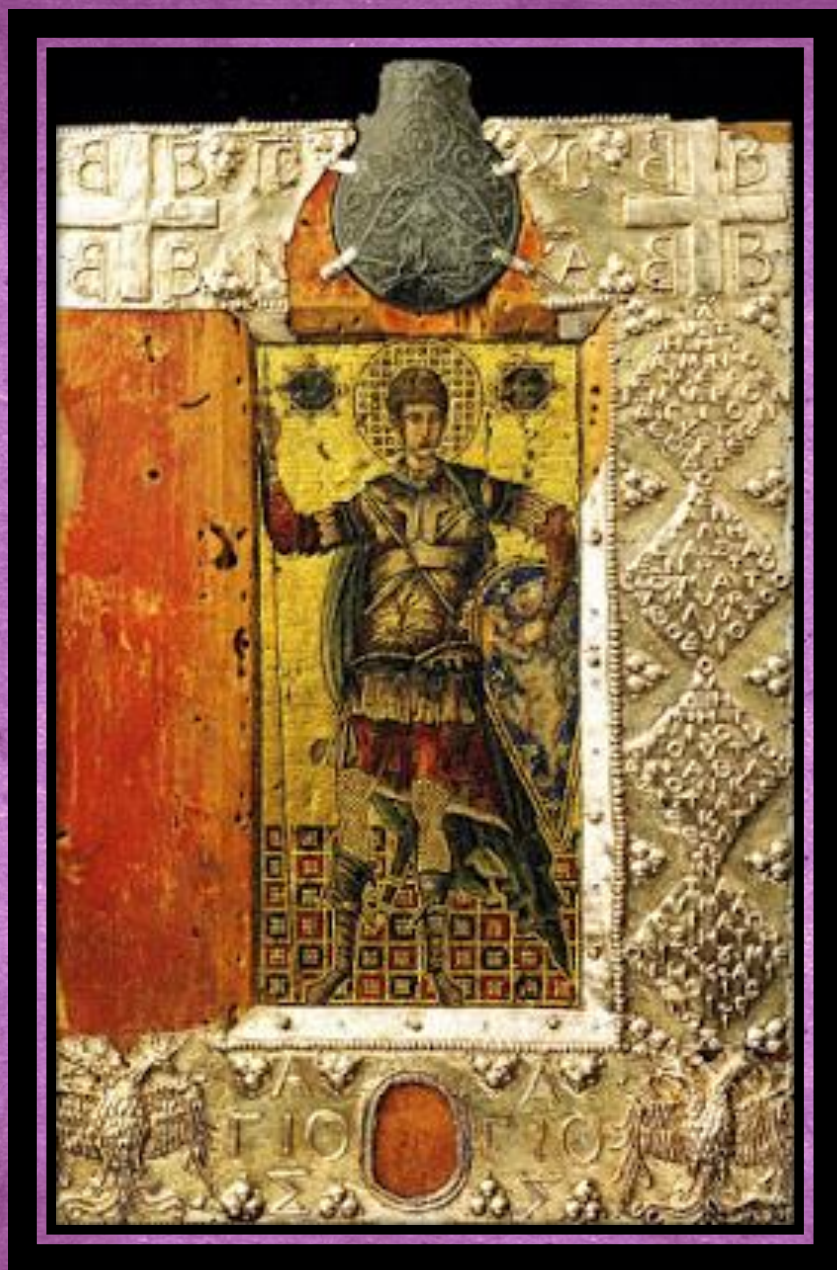
The Passion (*BHL* 2122) and Miracles (*BHL* 2123) of St. Demetrius
by Anastasius the Librarian

Hagios Dimitrios



The Crypt





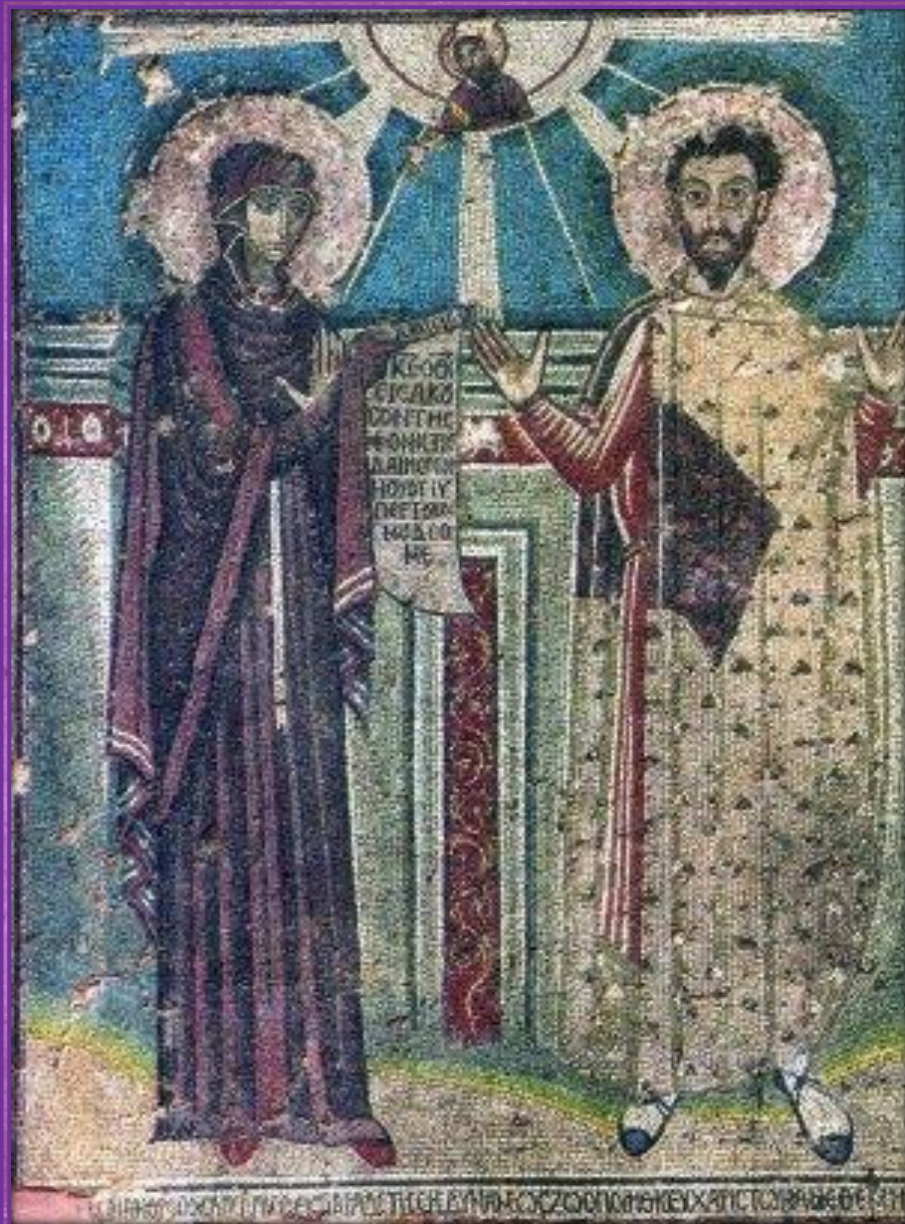
Myrrh-Streaming Tradition

- The post 10th century liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church refers to St. Demetrios as the “*Myrrh-streamer*.”
- Epigraph (1284) in Eski Serai mosque speaks of the Church of St. Demetrios: “*there within is the great Myrrh-streamer*”.
- Konstantinos Akropolites (1321) writes of a miracle of the Saint (healing of eyes), calling him “*Myrrh-streamer*.”
- Archbishops of Thessaloniki Isidoros (1342-1396) and Gabriel (1397-1416) refer to “*Myrrh-flower*” and “*Myrrh-streamer*.”
- Demetrios Chrysoloras (14th-15th): “*myrrh of St. Demetrios is not water, it is more lipid than that; nor does it resemble]dew from the earth, or prepared perfumes; it does not resemble these. It is more wondrous than both natural and prepared perfumes.*”









Why does Demetrios matter?

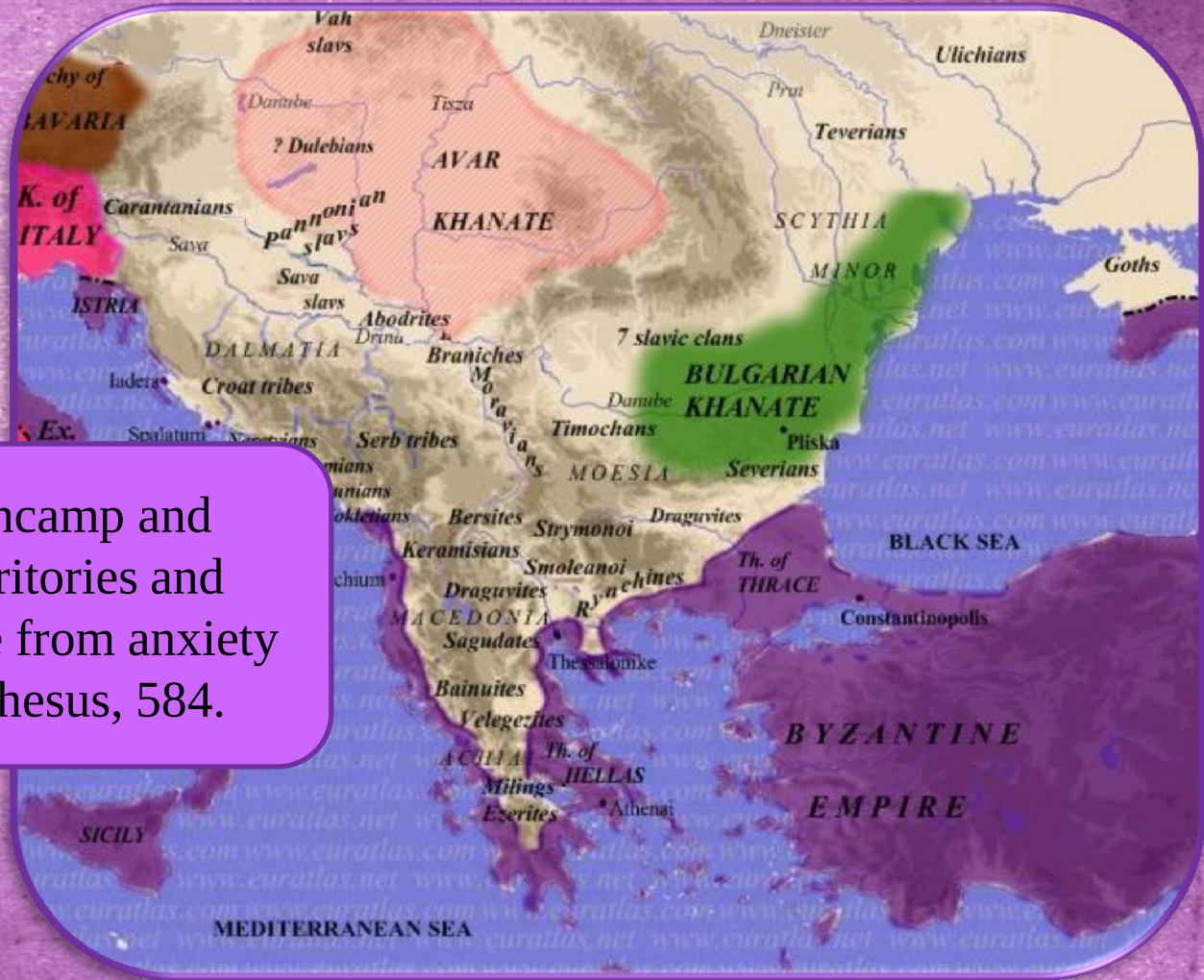
- Solider & martyr.
- Patron saint of the city.
- Significance of mosaics.
- Myrrh streamer, healing saint
 - Pilgrimage, profit & population.
- Grew in popularity in times of civil unrest:



Ostrogoth raids, 5th century



Slavic Settlements, 579-87

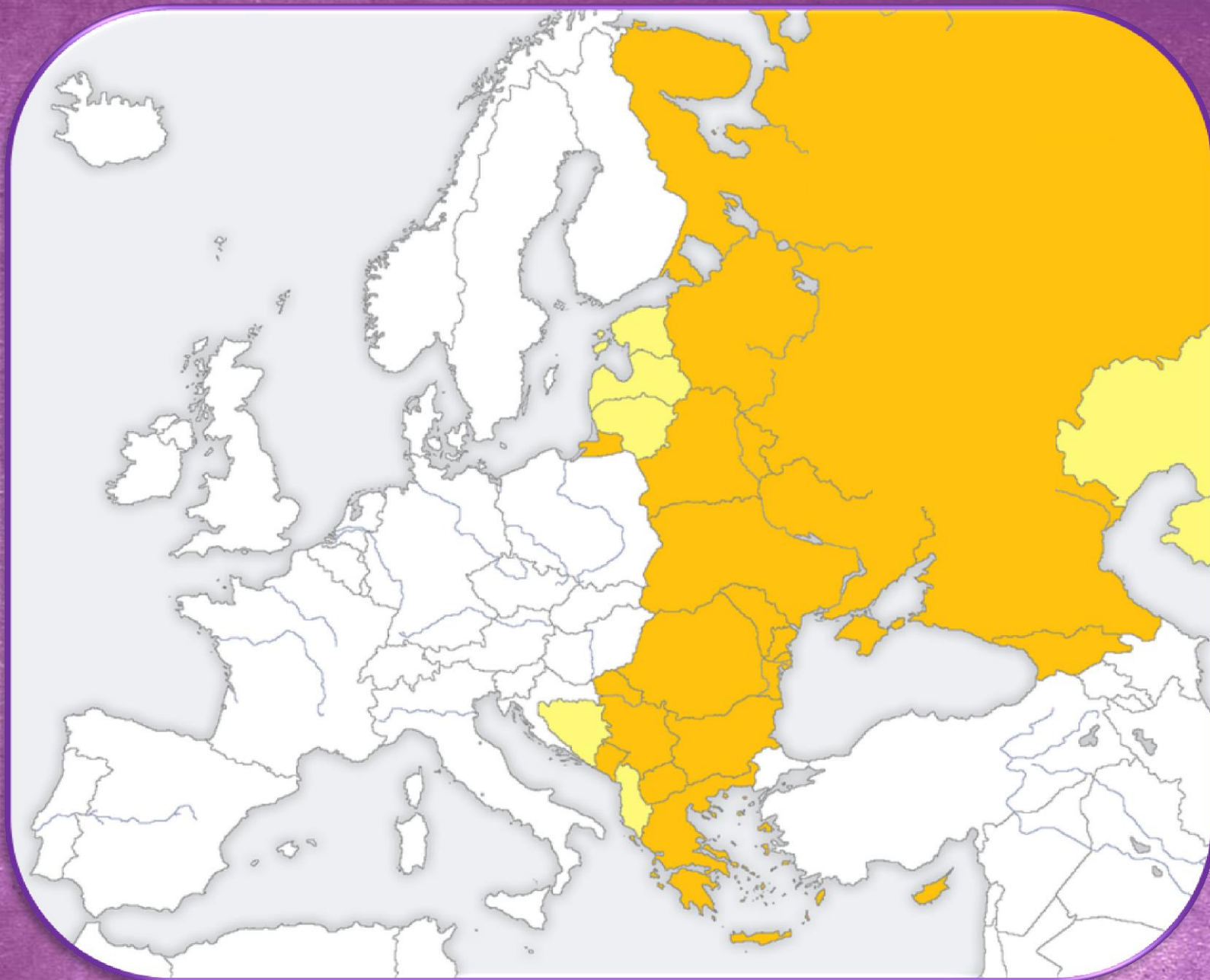


“The Slavonians still encamp and dwell in the Roman territories and live in peace there, free from anxiety and fear.” John of Ephesus, 584.

What does immigration matter?

- Heritage - ethnicity
- St. Cyril and St. Methodios
- Apostles to the Slavs
 - Glagolitic alphabet
 - Crimea
 - Moravia
 - And...





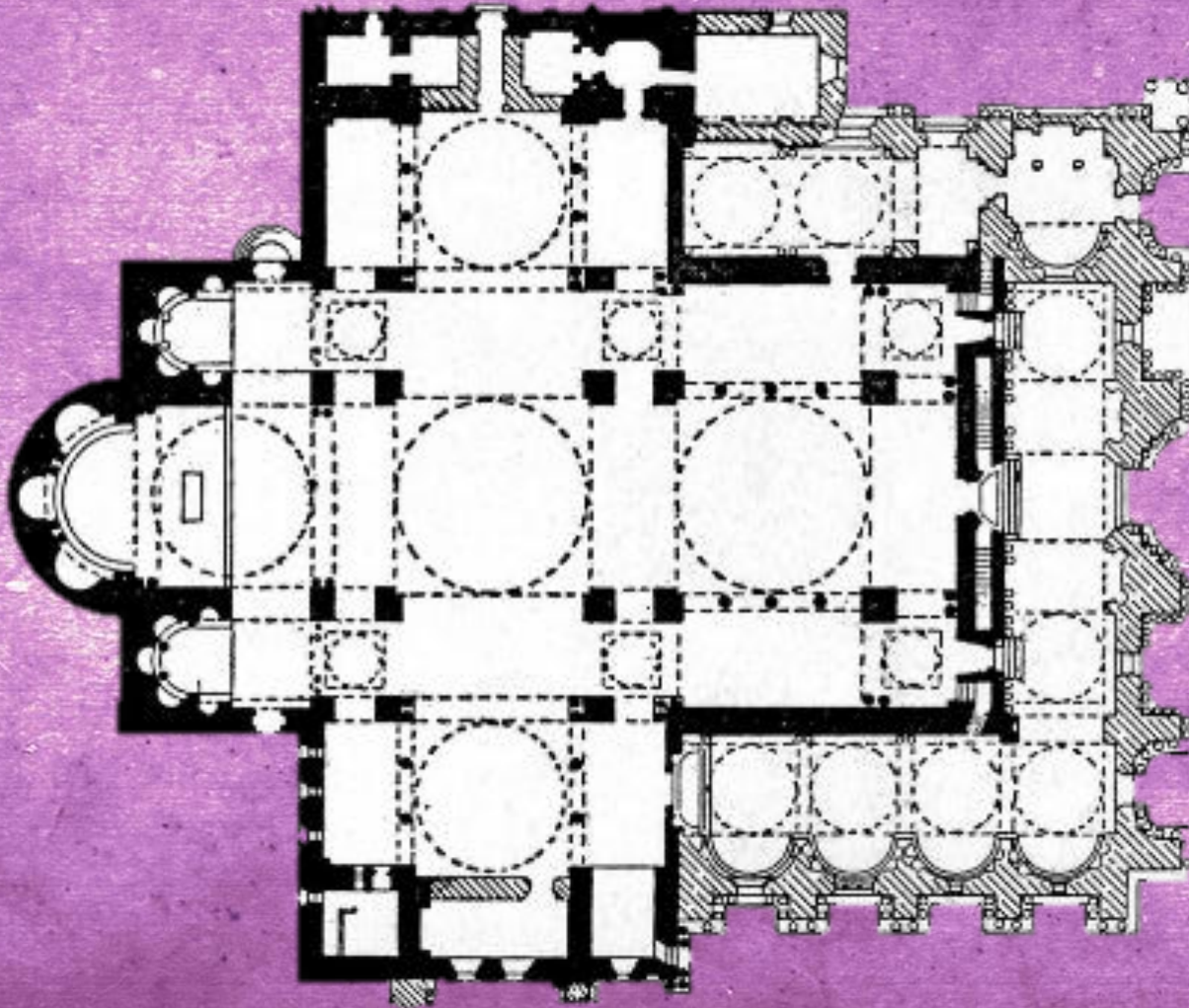


Church of Hagia Sophia, 8th c.



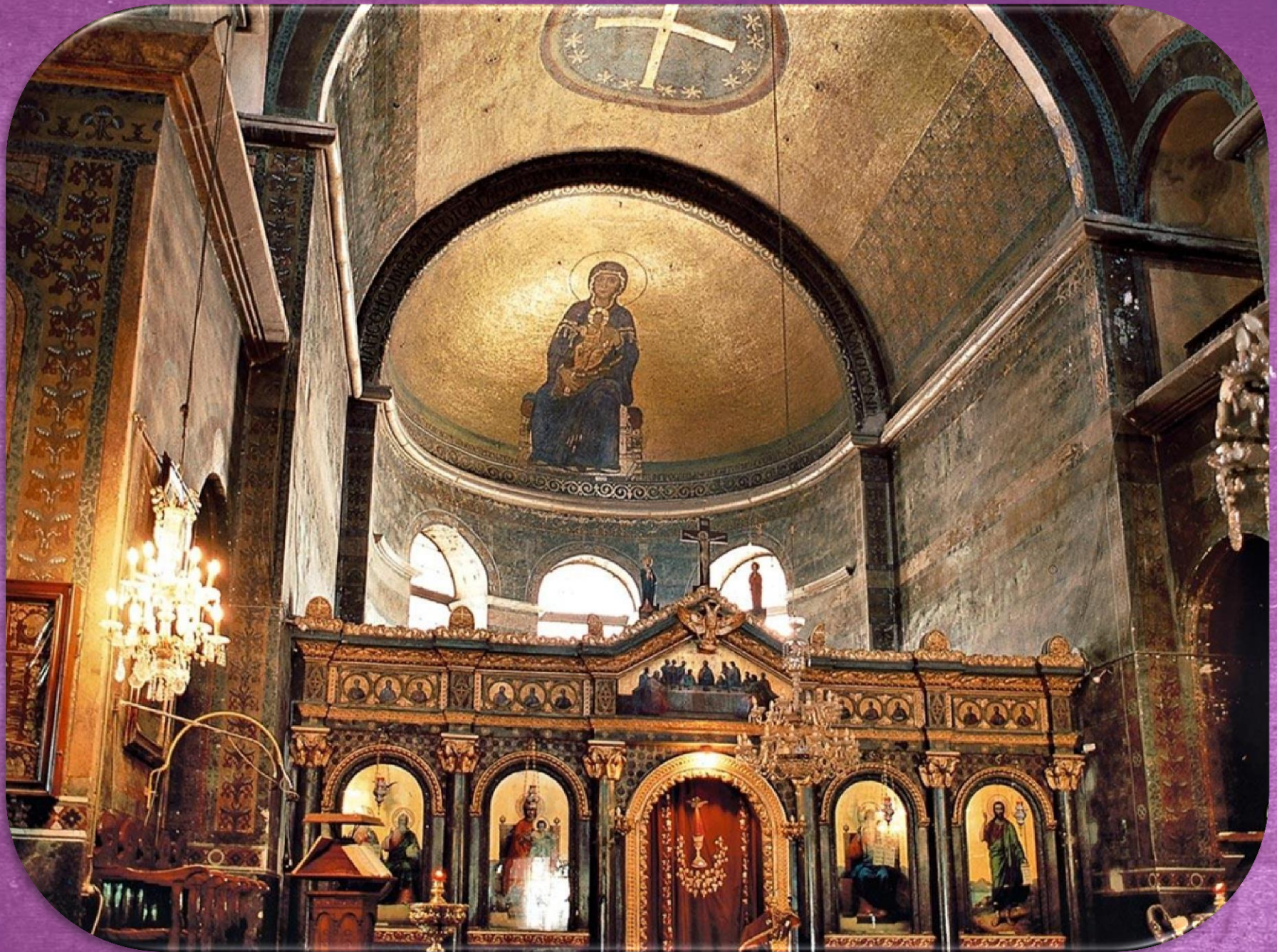
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmtKVS8MM6Q>

Classic, middle Byzantine architecture





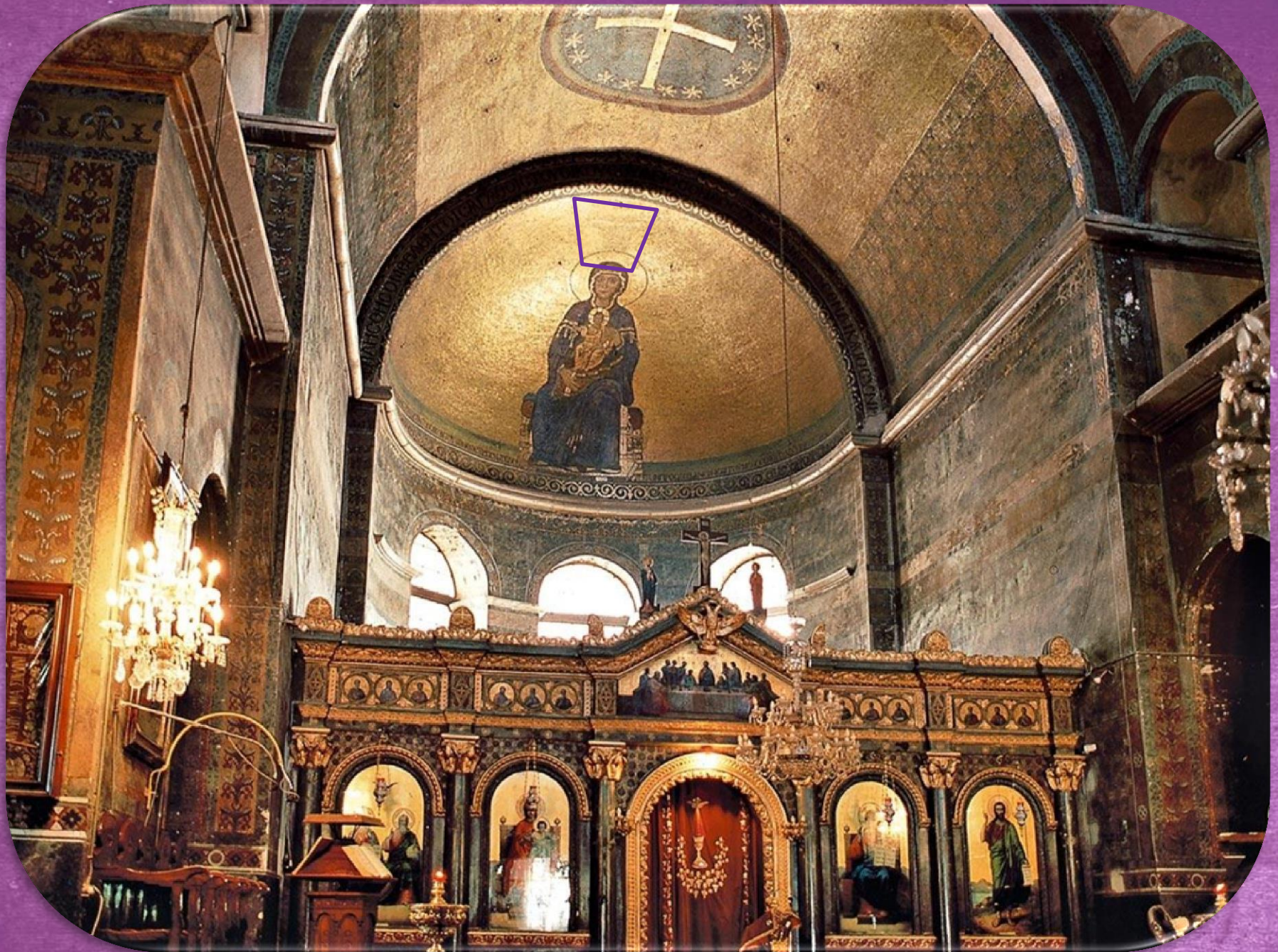
“Men of Galilee, why
do you stand looking
up towards Heaven?
This Jesus, who has
been taking from you
into heaven, will
come in the same
way as you saw him
go into heaven.”
Acts of the Apostles,
1.11



Why does Hagia Sophia matter?

- Archaeology: built on remains of earlier basilica (4th c.)
- Architecturally:
 - Replica of Constantinople *Hagia Sophia*
 - Classic middle Byzantine, domed cross basilica
- Historically: Importance of Iconoclasm
 - Apse gold w/ Cross





Icon of the Crucifixion

with the Mother of God and
St. John at the foot of the Cross

The Mystical Supper

Jesus distributing the Eucharist
to His disciples

Festal Icons

the Major Feasts of the Liturgical Year

Festal Icons

the Major Feasts of the Liturgical Year

Solea
elevated floor in front of
the Iconostas

Patronal Icons

Icons of Saints which are
particularly celebrated in the parish

Patronal Icons

Icons of Saints which are
particularly celebrated in the parish

Deacon's Door

"North" Deacon's Door
An Arch-Angel

Icon of the Mother of God

Ambo

elevated semi-circle in front of
the Royal Doors from which
the Gospel is proclaimed

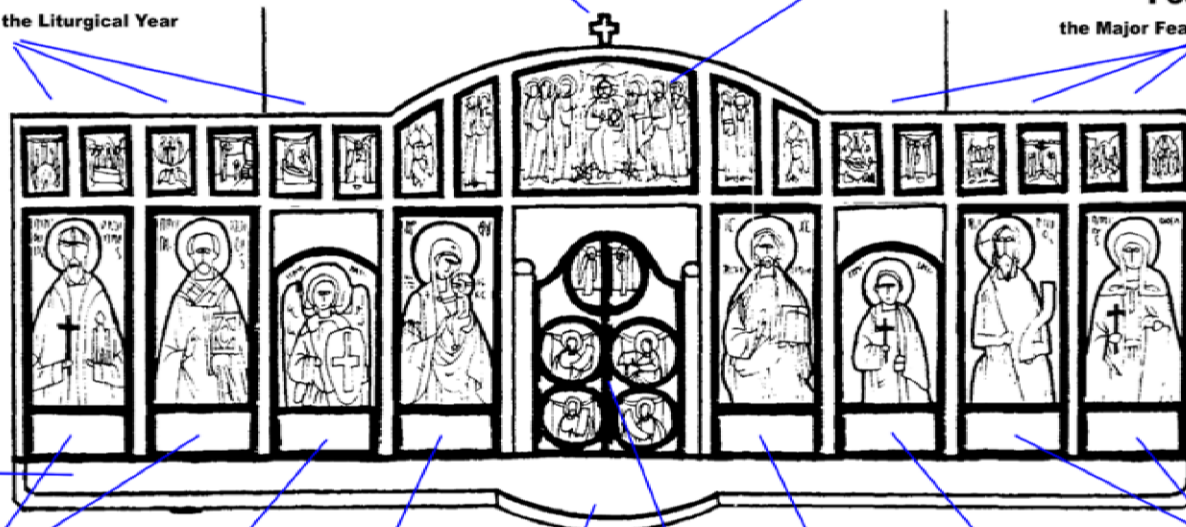
Royal Doors

4 Evangelists &
Annunciation

Icon of Jesus Christ

Deacon's Door

"South" Deacon's Door
An Arch-Angel



Icon: Definition

- Greek: εἰκών, *eikōn*, “image”
- A vision of the spiritual realm
- A reflection of the theology of the Church
 - Affirmation of the value of the flesh (senses)
- A way in which God is revealed to humanity
 - Participation of God’s *energies* (not essence)

The First Iconoclastic Period (730 - 87)

Concern for reform:

1. Superstition
2. Icons as a hindrance to conversion
3. loss of territory



717 C.E.



The Arguments

Iconoclasts:

- divine nature of Jesus denied possibility for representation
- Only proper representative = church, Eucharist

Iconodules:

- human nature of Jesus allowed *for* possibility of representation
- Proper to use icons in any form of worship

4th Ecumenical Council, 451:

Jesus has two complete natures, without confusion, without division, without separation, and they underwent no change.

7th ~ Council of Constantinople, 787



"As the sacred and life-giving cross is everywhere set up as a symbol, so also should images of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, holy angels, as well as saints and other pious and holy men be embodied in the manufacture of sacred vessels, tapestries, vestments, etc., and exhibited on the walls of churches, in the homes, and in all conspicuous places, by the roadside and everywhere, to be revered by all who might see them... Therefore, it is proper to accord to them a fervent and reverent adoration, not, however, the veritable worship which, according to our faith, belongs to the Divine Being alone — for the honor accorded to the image passes over to its prototype, and whoever adores the image adores in it the reality of what is there represented."



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