

# SACRED SPACES (I)

---

## BYZANTINE ART AND ARCHITECTURE

# What is a sacred space?



# TIMELINE OF BYZANTINE ART

Early Byzantine  
(330-750)

Middle Byzantine  
(843-1204)

Late Byzantine  
(1261-1453)

Ottoman empire

330 CE

c. 726-843 CE

1204-1261 CE

1453 CE

Emperor Constantine  
adopts Christianity;  
moves his capital  
from Rome to  
Constantinople

Iconoclastic  
controversy

The Latin Occupation

Ottoman invasion



*Colossus of Constantine*  
white marble, brick, wood, gilded bronze  
c. 312-315 AD  
Musei Capitolini, Rome

7th century BCE: City of Byzantium (present day Istanbul) founded as Greek colony

326: Emperor Constantine selects Byzantium as his Empire's new capital, rebuilds the city over six years

330: Constantine names the city "Constantinople"

337: Constantine dies, proclaiming on his deathbed that Christianity was to become the official religion of the Empire

# THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

“Byzantine art” refers to the art of the Eastern Roman Empire, centred in Constantinople. It is a period characterised architecturally by churches with simple exterior architecture and lavish interior filled with detailed mosaics.



Early Byzantine  
(330-750)



Hagia Sophia  
Istanbul  
532-37

Early Byzantine  
(330-750)



Hagia Sophia  
(interior)

Early Byzantine  
(330-750)



**Mosaic:** patterns or pictures made by embedding small pieces (tesserae) of stone or glass in cement on surfaces such as walls and floors.



Mosaics on the interior of Hagia Sophia

Early Byzantine  
(330-750)



### Key features of Byzantine mosaics:

- Emphasis on richness of colour and decoration
- Abstracted figures as symbolic representations
- Flat compositions- no naturalism or illusion of depth

Interior of the Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy

Early Byzantine  
(330-750)



*Emperor Justinian and His Attendants,*  
Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy  
c. 547

Early Byzantine  
(330-750)

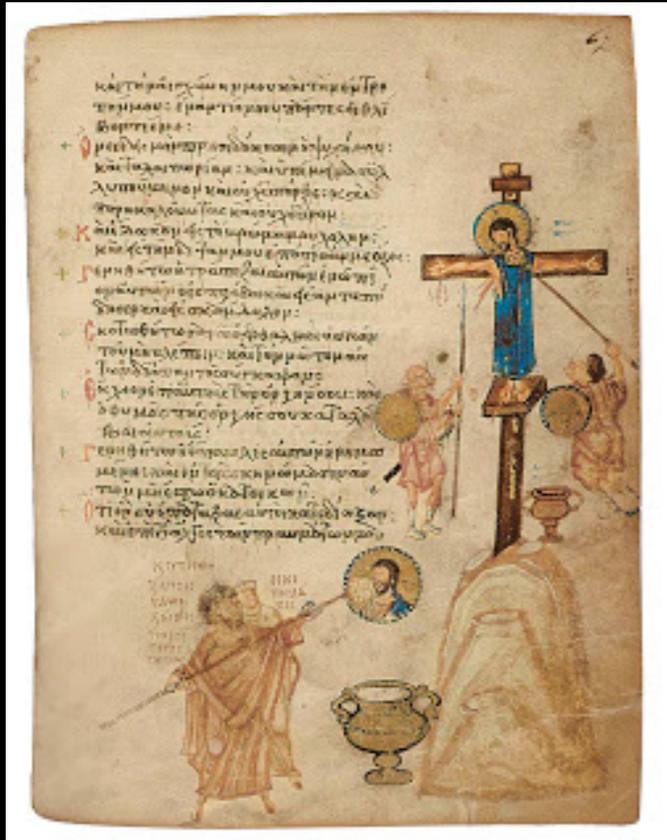


*Ara Pacis Augustae*  
(Altar of Augustan Peace)  
Rome  
9 BC



*Emperor Justinian and His Attendants*,  
Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy  
c. 547 AD

# The Iconoclastic Controversy (726-843)



Page from the Chludov Psalter,  
9th century

**Icon:** Greek for “image” or “painting”; Sacred images representing saints, Christ and the Virgin, as well as narrative scenes such as the Crucifixion.

**Iconoclasm:** literally translates as “image breaking”; a period of the destruction of religious imagery for fear of idolatry.

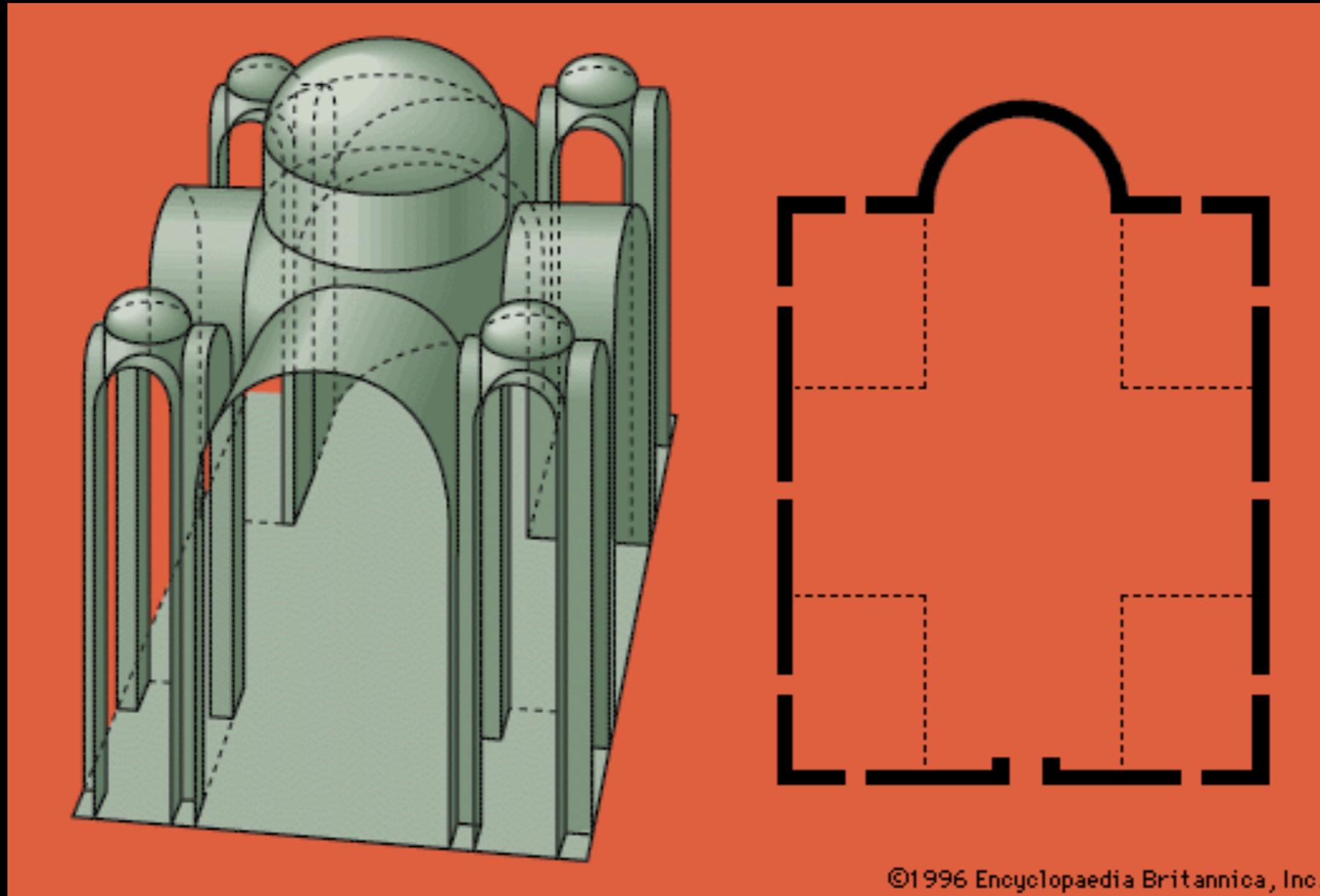
## Theories for Iconoclasm:

- ▶ Restricting the growing wealth and power of the church
- ▶ Fear that the worshippers veneration would be misdirected towards the images, not the holy people
- ▶ The introduction of Islam and the attempt to integrate Muslim and Jewish populations

Middle Byzantine  
(843-1204)



Hosios Loukas, Greece  
early 11th century



(Left) Perspective drawing of a quincunx, or five-domed church  
(Right) plan of the church, showing cross-in-square design.

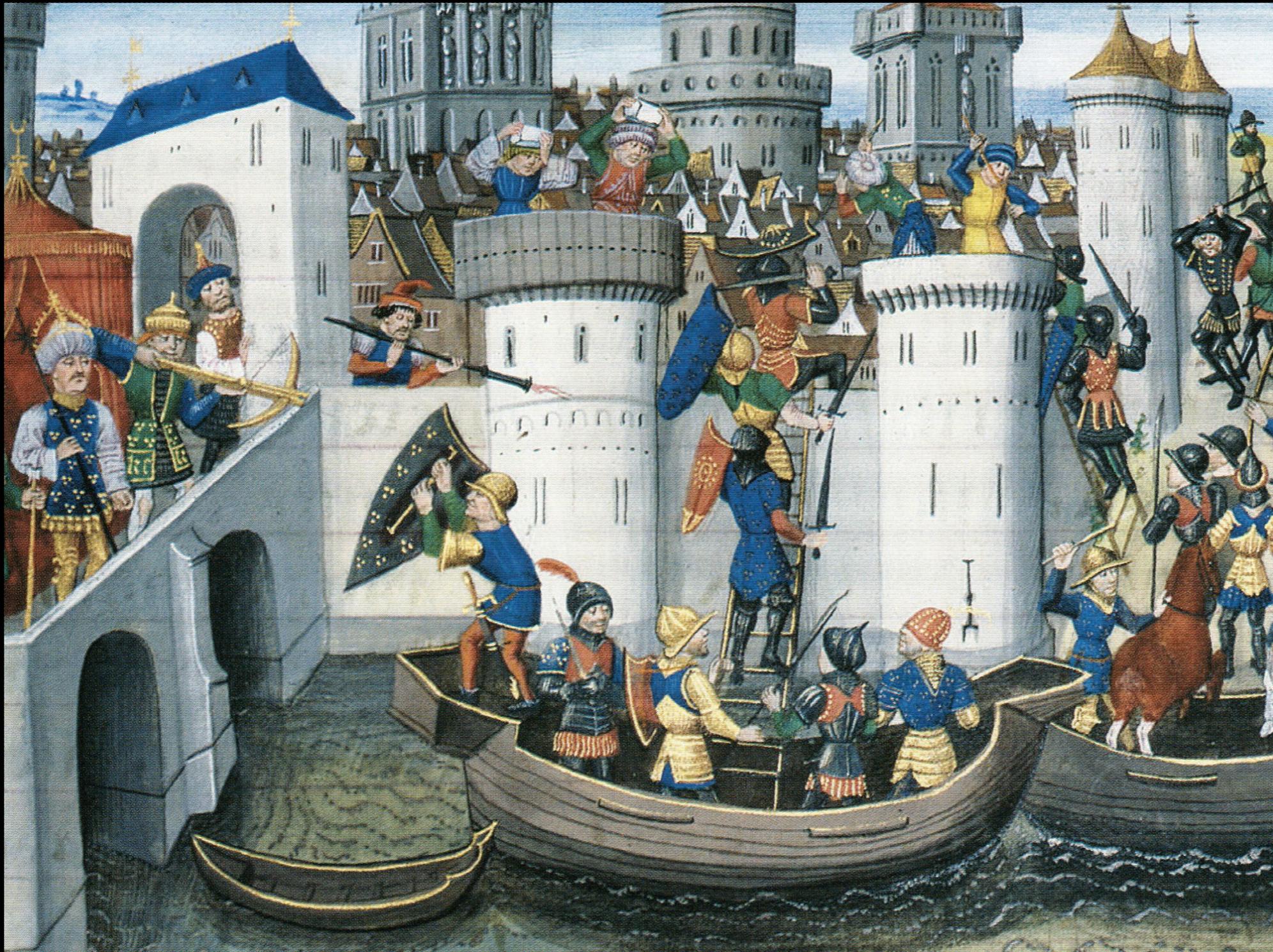
Middle Byzantine  
(843-1204)



Harbaville Triptych  
ivory, traces of polychromy  
Constantinople  
mid 10th century  
Louvre Museum

# THE LATIN OCCUPATION

(1204-1261)



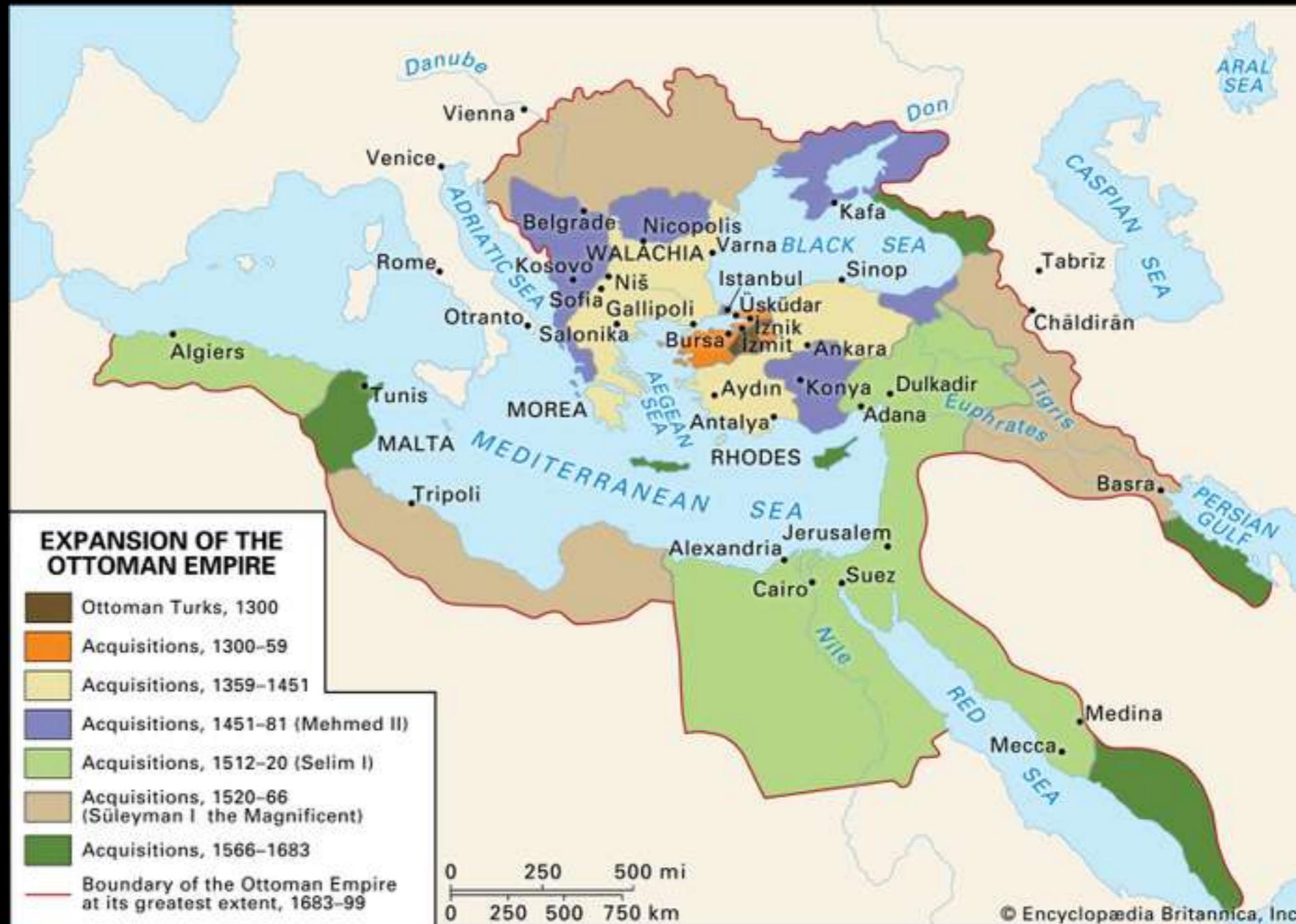
15th century miniature depicting the Fourth Crusade

Late Byzantine  
(1261-1453)



Chora Monastery  
Istanbul, Turkey  
c. 1315-21

# FALL OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE



Map showing the expansion of the Ottoman Empire

## GLOSSARY

---

- ▶ **Mosaic:** patterns or pictures made by embedding small pieces (tesserae) of stone or glass in cement on surfaces such as walls and floors.
- ▶ **Icon:** Greek for "image" or "painting"; Sacred images representing saints, Christ and the Virgin, as well as narrative scenes such as the Crucifixion.
- ▶ **Iconoclasm:** literally translates as "image breaking"; a period of the destruction of religious imagery for fear of idolatry.