

# Early Christian Art

# LATE ANTIQUITY

is a *periodization* used by historians to describe the time of transition from Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages, in both mainland Europe and the Mediterranean world.

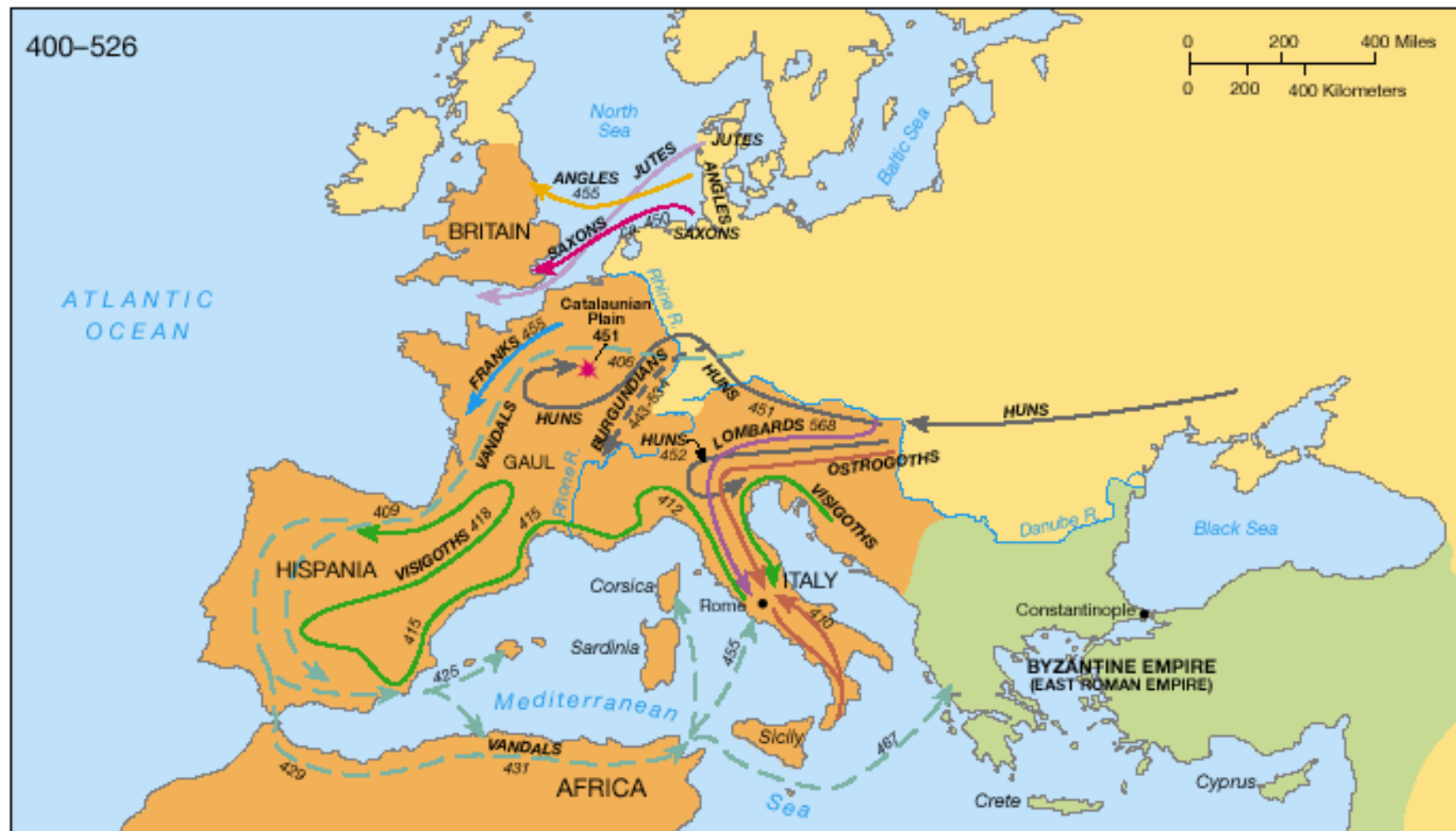
The period of Late Antiquity was defined by the powerful religious crosscurrents of the times.


The Roman Empire underwent considerable **social, cultural and organizational** change starting with reign of Diocletian, who began the custom of splitting the Empire into Eastern and Western halves ruled by multiple emperors.

# LATE ANTIQUITY

- Beginning with Constantine the Great, the Empire was Christianized, and a new capital founded at Constantinople.
- Migrations of Germanic tribes disrupted Roman rule from the late 4th century onwards, culminating in the eventual collapse of the Empire in the West in 476, replaced by the so-called barbarian kingdoms.
- The resultant cultural fusion of Greco-Roman, Germanic and Christian traditions formed the cultural foundations of Western Europe.

400–526



 *Barbarian Migrations and Invasions. The early cross-border raids of neighboring peoples gave way to migrations of starving and terrified barbarian allies looking for safety in the Empire. By the fifth century, large-scale raids by the Huns and Vandals reached throughout the western Empire, resulting in permanent settlements.*

## LATE ANTIQUITY

- The birth of Christian monasticism in the deserts of Egypt in the 3rd century.
- Monasticism was not the only new Christian movement to appear in Late Antiquity, although it had perhaps the greatest influence.


## Fall of Roman Empire (5th century)

### Early Medieval Europe

This period of roughly 1,000 years is further divided into three phases

1. Early Medieval (ending in the 10-11th century)
2. Romanesque (11th-12th century)
3. Gothic (12th-15th century)



 *The Barbarian Kingdoms, ca. 526. By the sixth century, the Western Roman Empire had been replaced by smaller kingdoms ruled by barbarian kings granting only nominal recognition to the Emperor.*

The migrating barbarian tribes brought with them native/indigenous artistic traditions and religions

# Chronology of Early Christianity

Crucifixion of Christ	ca. 29
Crucifixion of St. Peter	ca. 64
Persecution of Christians	
Trajan Decius	249-251
Diocletian	303-305
Edict of Milan	313
Foundation of Constantinople	324
Christianity becomes State Religion	390
Fall of Rome to Alaric the Visigoth	410



# EUROPE AND THE NEAR EAST IN LATE ANTIQUITY





Synagogue  
Dura Europos, Syria  
ca. 245-256



## WALL WITH TORAH NICHE

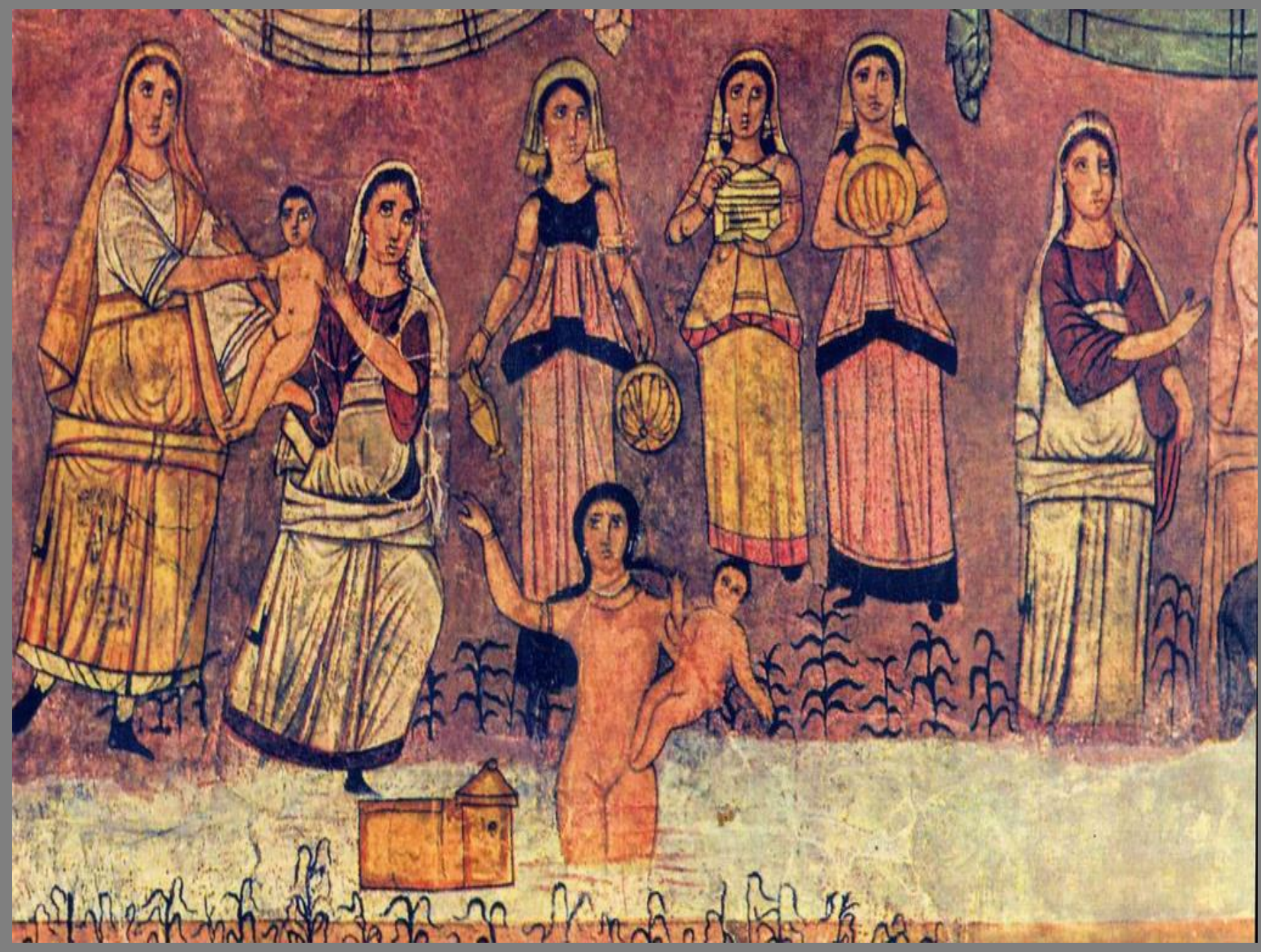
From a house-synagogue, Dura-Europos, Syria. 244-245 CE. Tempera on plaster, section approx. 40\* (12.19 m) long. Reconstructed in the National Museum, Damascus, Syria.



## Synagogue Interior

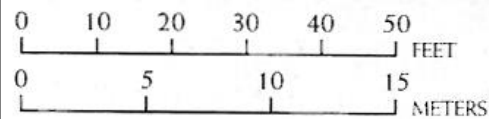
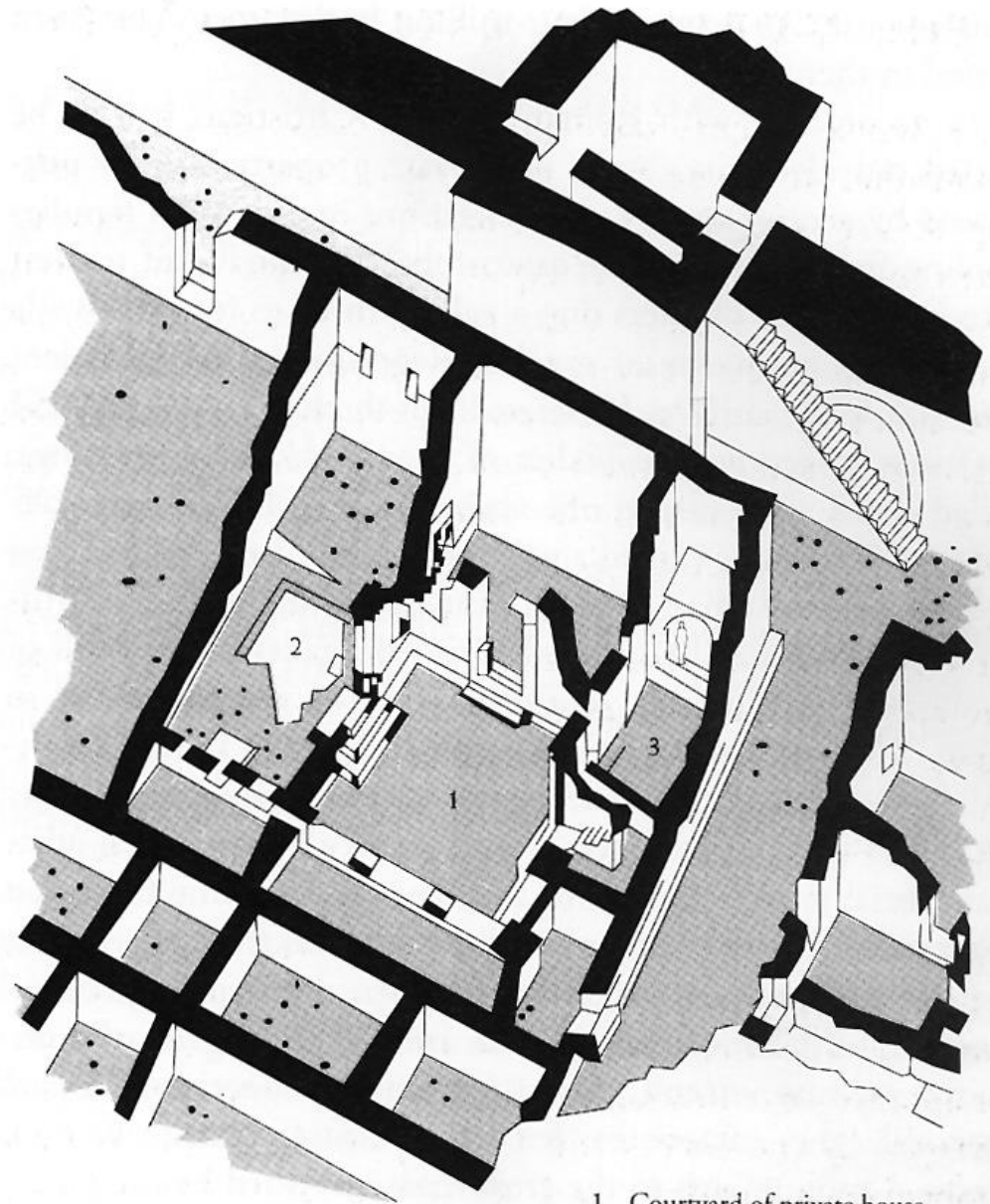
Wall paintings of Old Testament scenes, from Dura Europos, Syria.

ca. 245-256, tempera on plaster

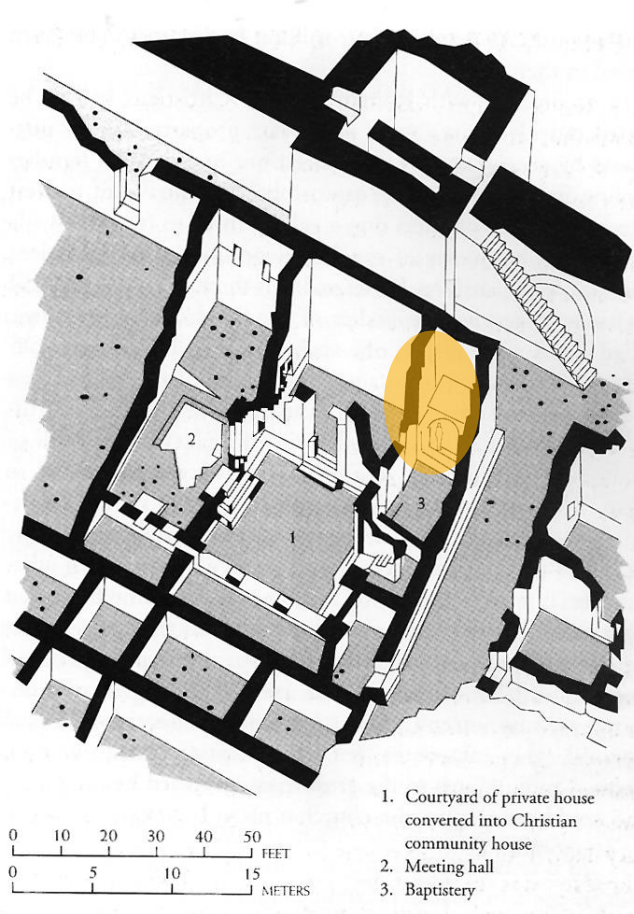




Reconstruction  
Christian Community House  
Dura Europos, Syria  
ca. 240-256



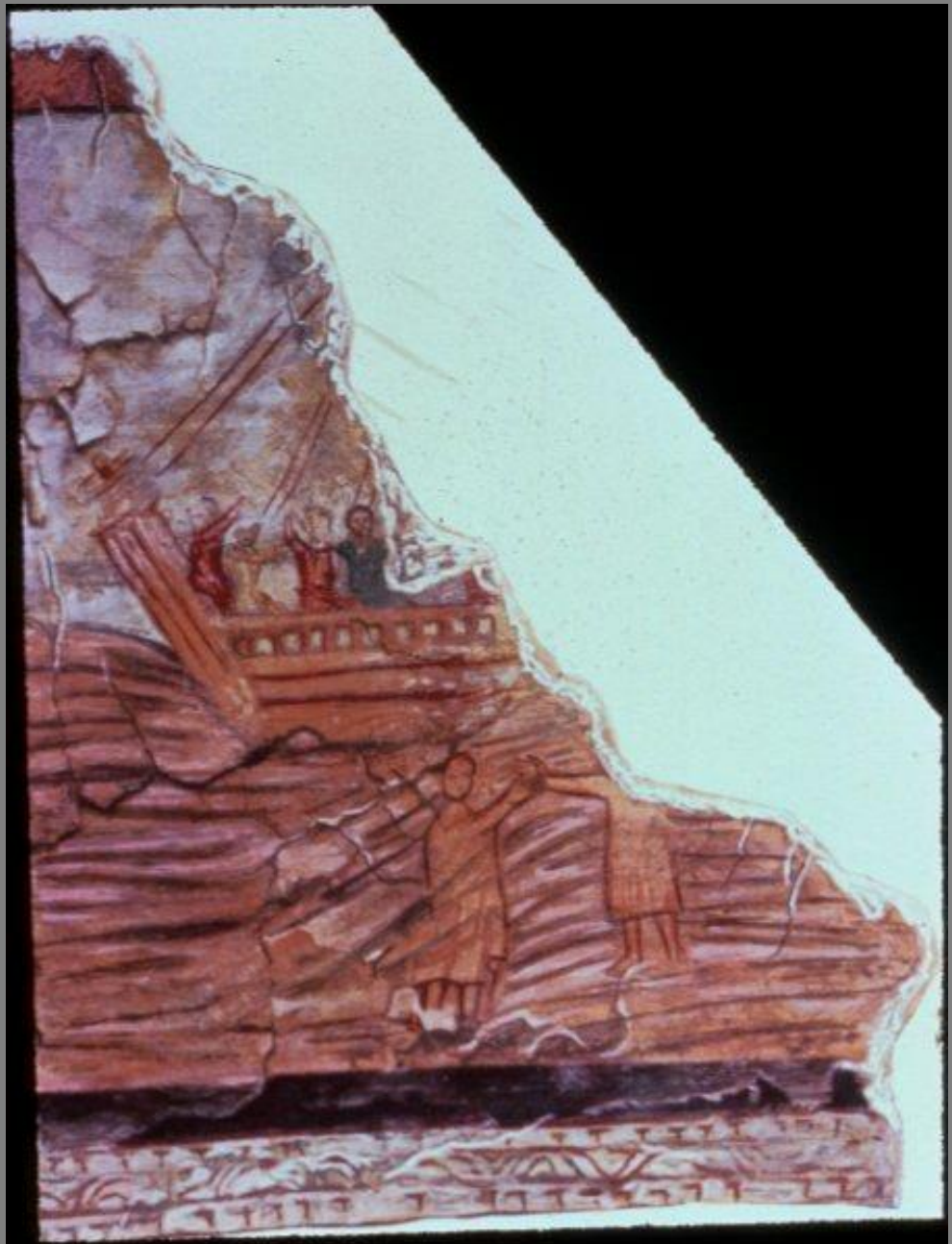
1. Courtyard of private house converted into Christian community house
2. Meeting hall
3. Baptistery



Baptistery  
Christian Community House  
Dura Europos, Syria  
ca. 240-256



Baptistery from Christian  
Community House  
Dura Europos, Syria  
ca. 240-256  
tempera paintings



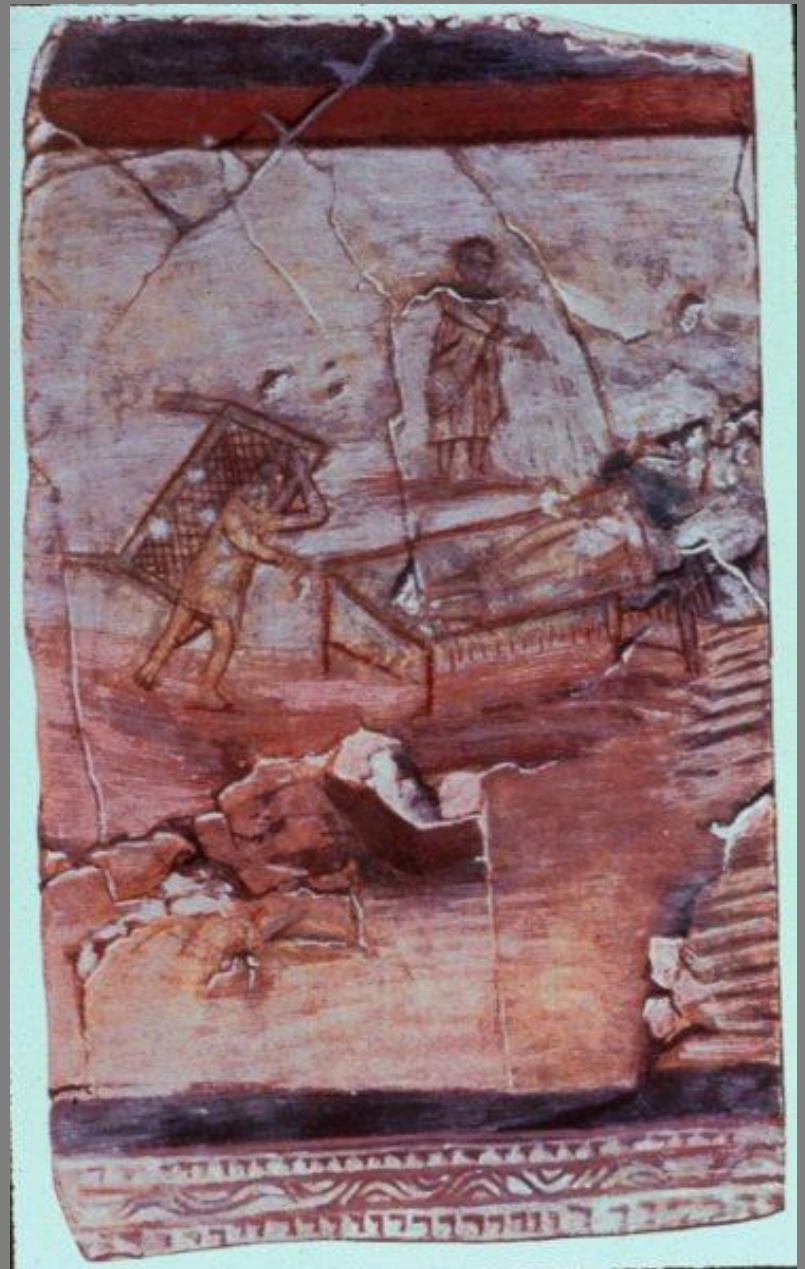
Christ Walks on Water



Baptistery from Christian  
Community House  
Dura Europos, Syria  
ca. 240-256  
tempera paintings

Christ the Good Shepherd

Baptistery from Christian  
Community House  
Dura Europos, Syria  
ca. 240-256  
tempera paintings



Christ Healing the Paralytic

# EUROPE AND THE NEAR EAST IN LATE ANTIQUITY



Christians in Rome buried their dead in subterranean networks of galleries and chambers called catacombs. Openings were cut into the walls to hold the dead.



Catacomb showing loculi  
Rome  
3rd-4th centuries



Good Shepherd, Orants, Story of Jonah  
Catacomb of Pietro and Marcellino, Rome, Italy  
early 4th century | fresco

Good Shepherd  
Catacomb of Pietro and Marcellino,  
Rome, Italy  
early 4th century  
fresco





CUBICULUM OF LEONIS, CATACOMB OF COMMODILLA  
Near Rome. Late 4th century.



Orant figure  
Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome, Italy  
3th century  
fresco





Sarcophagus with Old and New Testament

Scenes

from Rome, Italy

ca. 270

marble

1 ft. 11 1/4 in. x 6 ft. 2 in.



Sarcophagus  
with Old and New Testament Scenes  
from Rome, Italy | ca. 270 | marble | 1 ft.  
11 1/4 in. x 6 ft. 2 in.



Sarcophagus  
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Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus  
from Rome, Italy | ca. 359 | marble | 3 ft.  
10 1/2 in. x 8 ft.



Raising of Lazarus

Fall of Adam and Eve

Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus  
from Rome, Italy | ca. 359 | marble | 3 ft.  
10 1/2 in. x 8 ft.

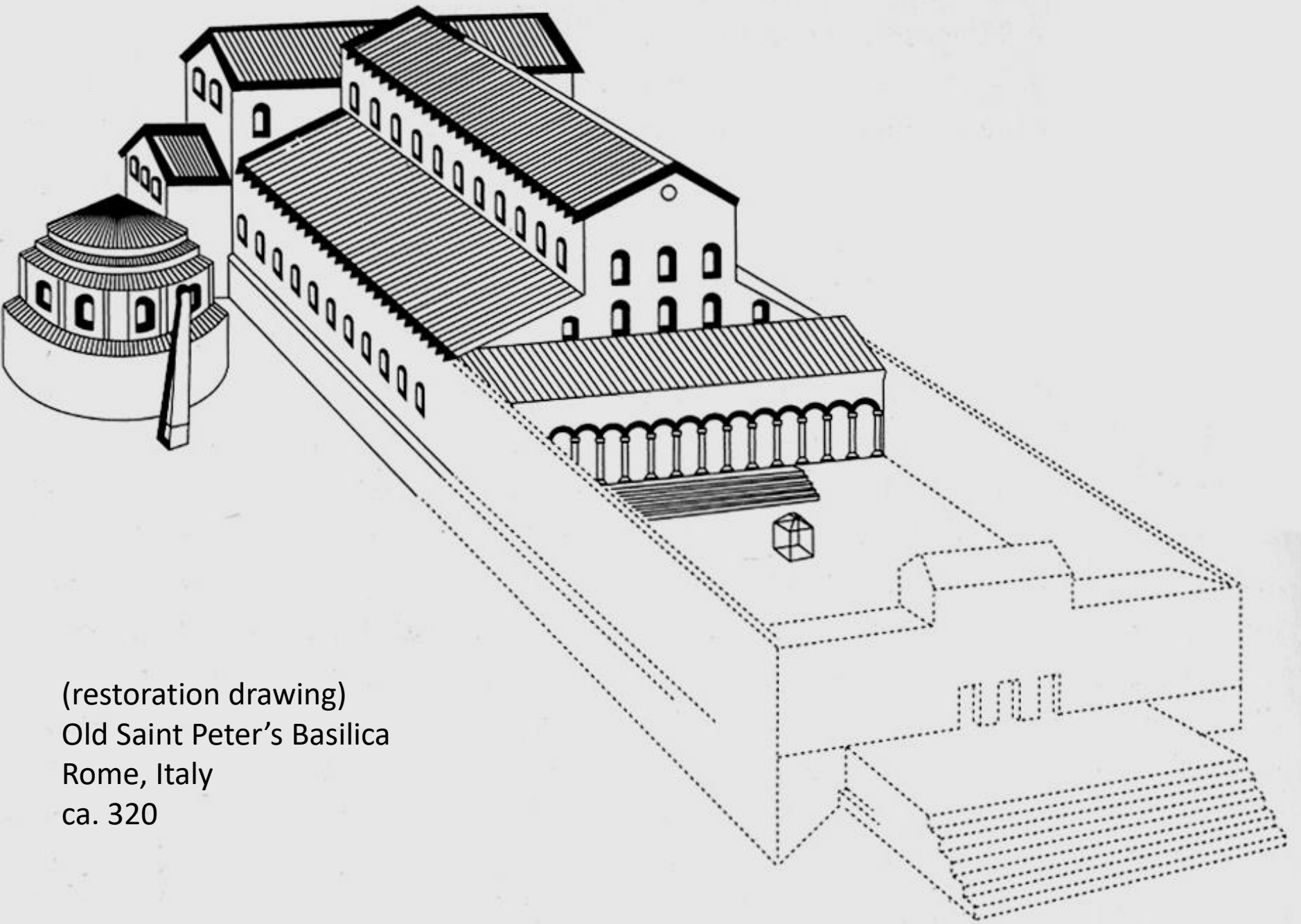


Christ  
Enthroned

Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus  
from Rome, Italy | ca. 359 | marble | 3 ft.  
10 1/2 in. x 8 ft.



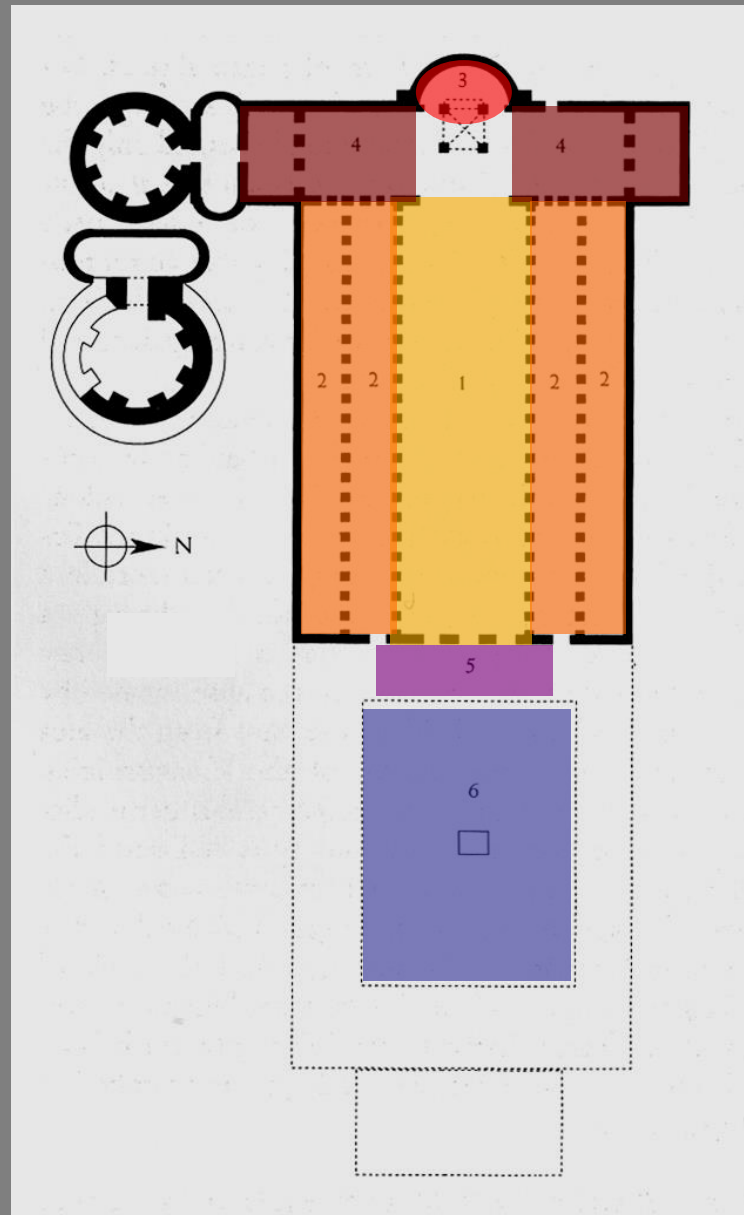
Christ Entering  
Jerusalem



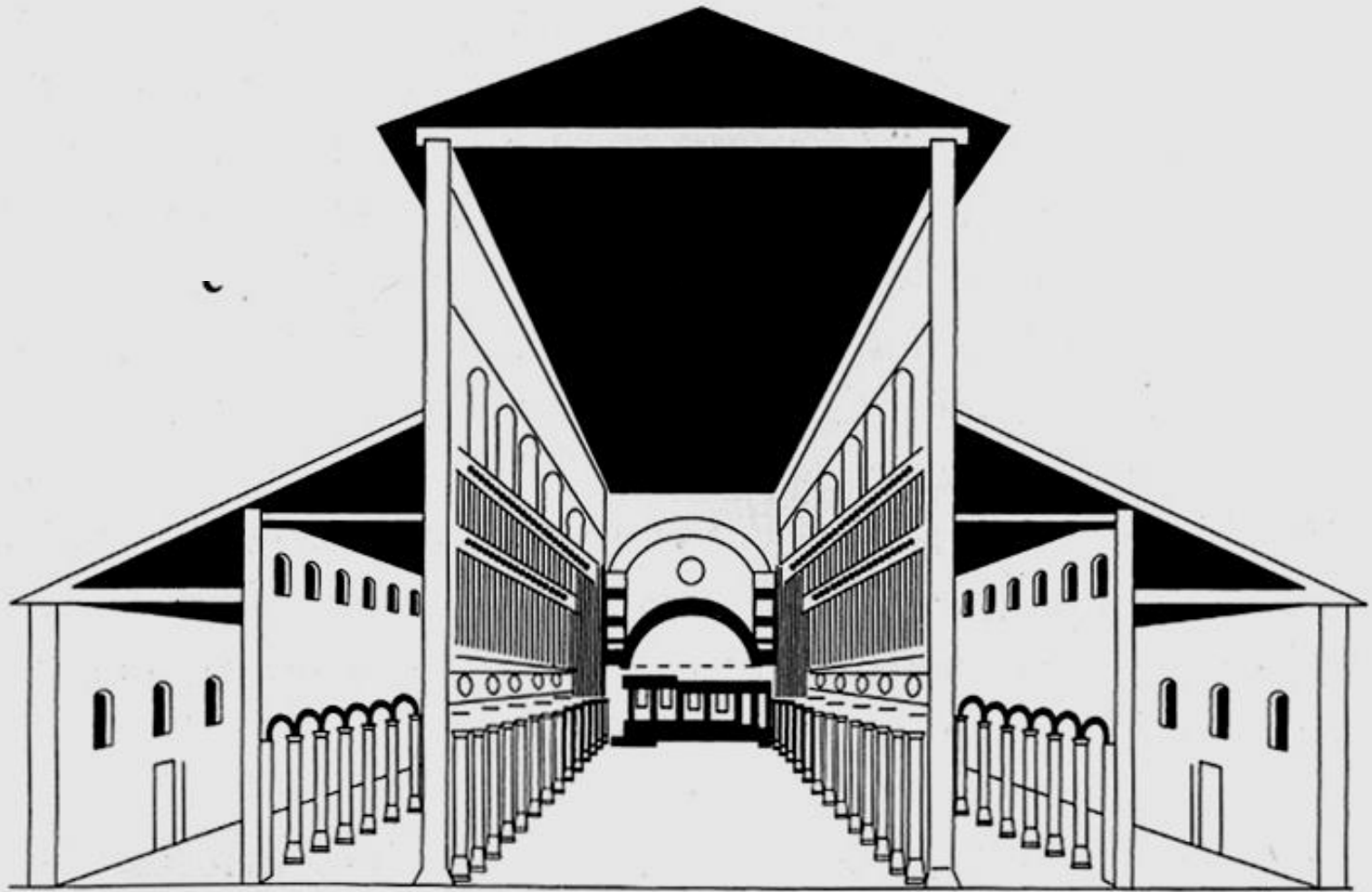
(restoration drawing)  
Old Saint Peter's Basilica  
Rome, Italy  
ca. 320



1. Nave
2. Aisles
3. Apse
4. Transept
5. Narthex
6. Atrium



Old Saint Peter's Basilica (plan)  
Rome, Italy  
ca. 320



Old Saint Peter's Basilica (section)  
Rome, Italy | ca. 320

# EUROPE AND THE NEAR EAST IN LATE ANTIQUITY





Santa Sabina  
Rome, Italy | ca. 422-432



Santa Sabina  
Rome, Italy | ca. 422-432





Depiction of the crucifixion on the wooden door of Santa Sabina



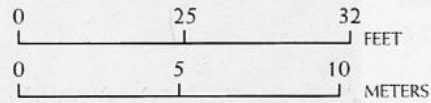
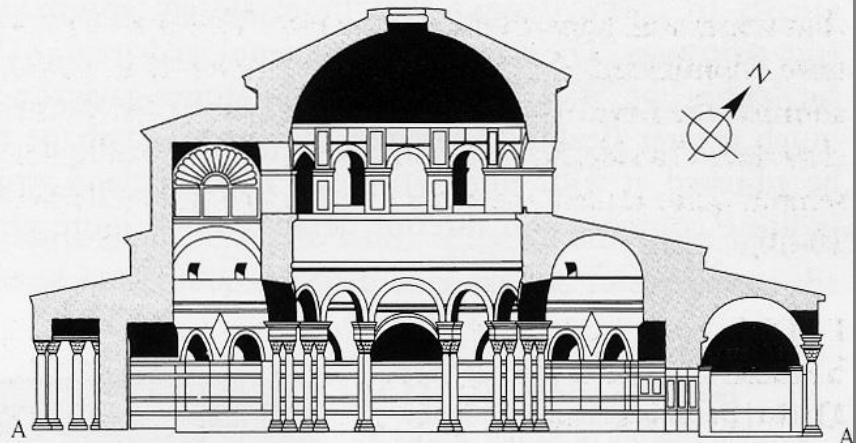
Santa Costanza  
Rome, Italy | ca. 337-351





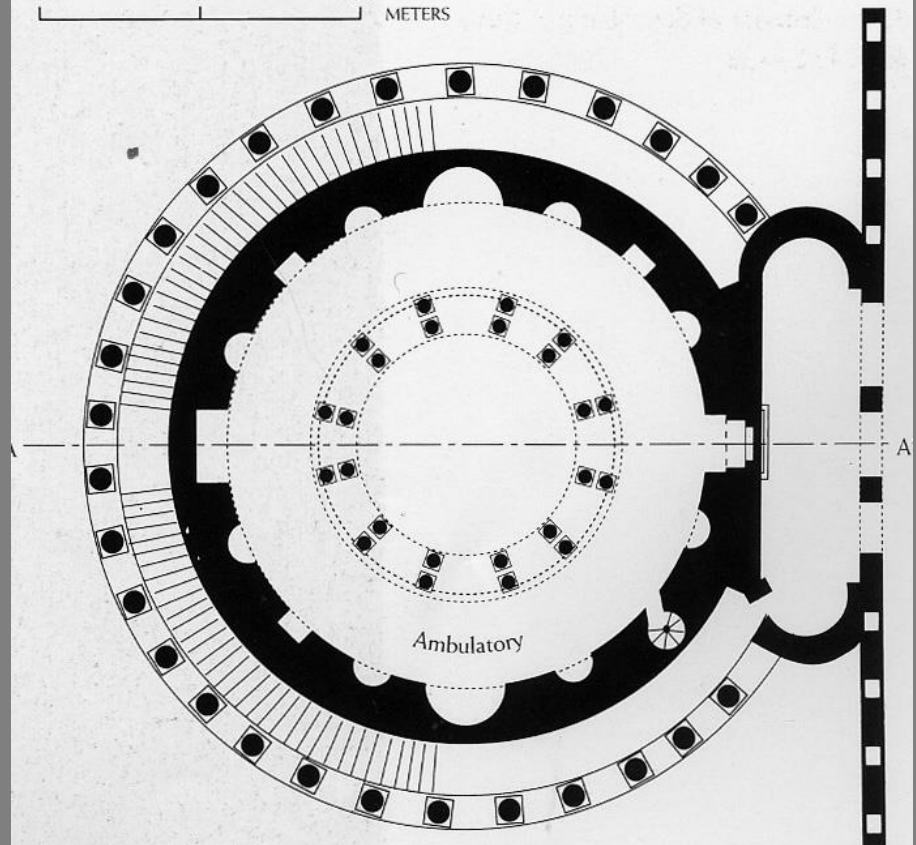
Santa Costanza  
Rome, Italy | ca. 337-351

Longitudinal Section



Santa Costanza  
Rome, Italy | ca. 337-351

Plan



Santa Costanza vault mosaic  
Rome, Italy  
ca. 337-351  
tessera mosaic







Christ as Sol Invictus  
from the Mausoleum of the Julii  
Rome, Italy  
late 3rd century  
tessera mosaic

# Drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea

Santa Maria Maggiore  
Rome, Italy  
432-440  
tessera mosaic



# Hospitality of Abraham



Santa Maria Maggiore

Rome, Italy

432-440

tessera mosaic

# EUROPE AND THE NEAR EAST IN LATE ANTIQUITY







Mausoleum of Galla Placidia  
Ravenna, Italy | ca. 425



Mausoleum of Galla Placidia  
Ravenna, Italy | ca. 425 | tessera mosaics



Christ as the Good Shepherd  
from the entrance wall of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia  
Ravenna, Italy | ca. 425 | tessera mosaic



Dome Mosaic of Heaven  
Mausoleum of Galla Placidia  
Ravenna, Italy | ca. 425 | tessera mosaic

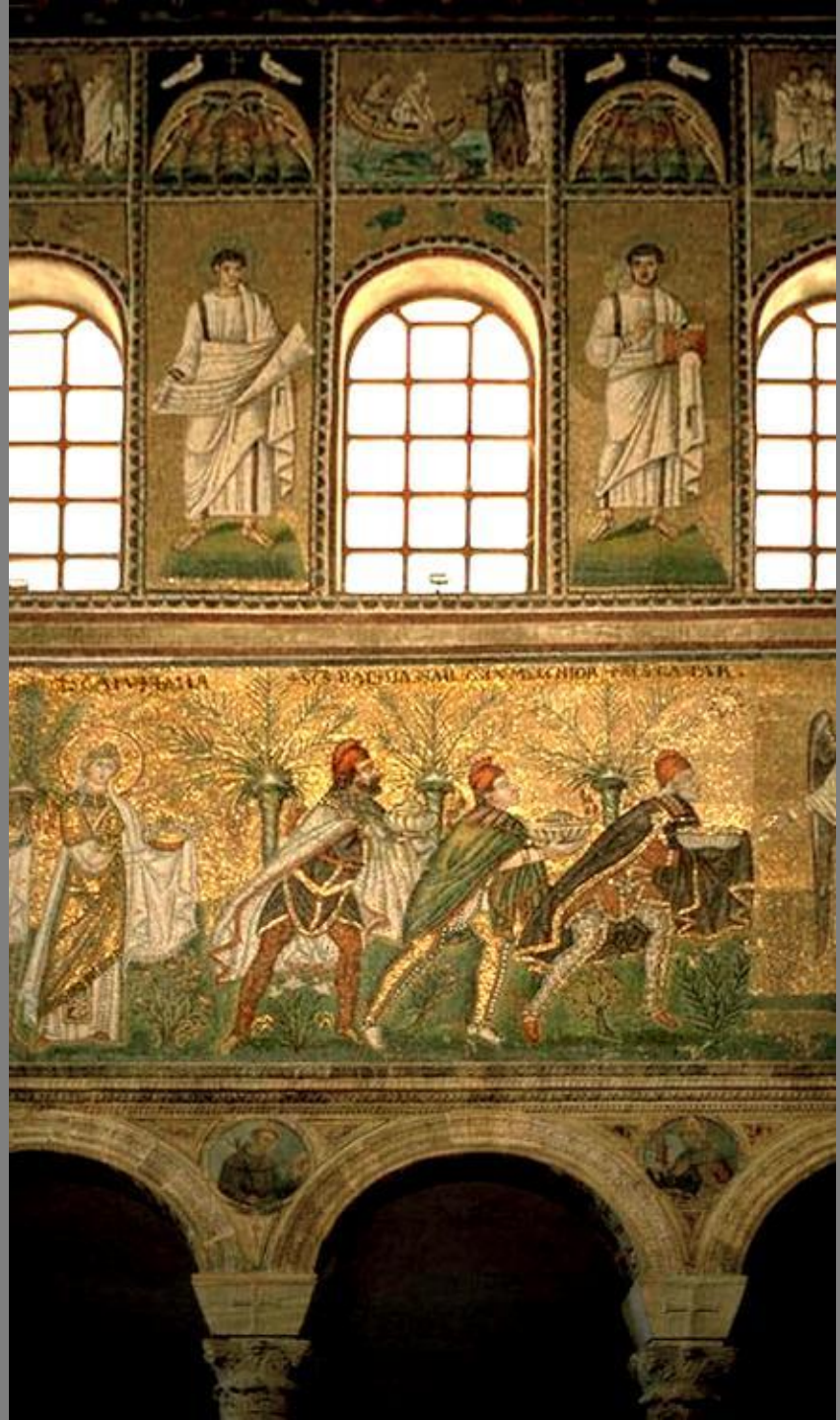
St. Apollinare Nuovo  
Ravenna, Italy  
dedicated 504





St. Apollinare Nuovo  
Ravenna, Italy | dedicated 504

Saint Apollinare Nuovo  
Ravenna, Italy  
dedicated 504





Raising of Lazarus  
Saint Apollinare Nuovo  
Ravenna, Italy  
dedicated 504  
tessera mosaic





Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes  
Saint Apollinare Nuovo  
Ravenna, Italy  
dedicated 504 | tessera mosaic



Christ Foretelling Peter's Denial  
Saint Apollinare Nuovo  
Ravenna, Italy  
dedicated 504 | tessera mosaic



Ascension of Christ  
Saint Apollinare Nuovo  
Ravenna, Italy  
dedicated 504  
tessera mosaic



Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in  
Classe  
Ravenna, Italy  
549 AD





the Eagle (John), the angel (Matthew), the Lion (Mark), the calf (Luke)

The apse mosaic

Vienna Genesis  
Early 6th century  
tempera, gold, silver  
on purple vellum  
12 1/4 x 9 1/4 in.





Vienna Genesis  
Early 6th century  
tempera, gold, silver on purple vellum  
12 1/4 x 9 1/4 in.

Genesis chapter 32  
Jacob travels to meet Esau  
Jacob travels over the Jabbok brook  
Jacob wrestles with the Angel  
Jacob blessed by the Angel  
Jacob's 11 sons





Vienna Genesis  
Early 6th century  
tempera, gold, silver on purple vellum  
12 1/4 x 9 1/4 in.

Genesis chapter 24:15  
Rebecca Leaves Nahor  
Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well



Rossano Gospels  
early 6th century  
tempera on purple vellum  
11 x 10 1/4 in.

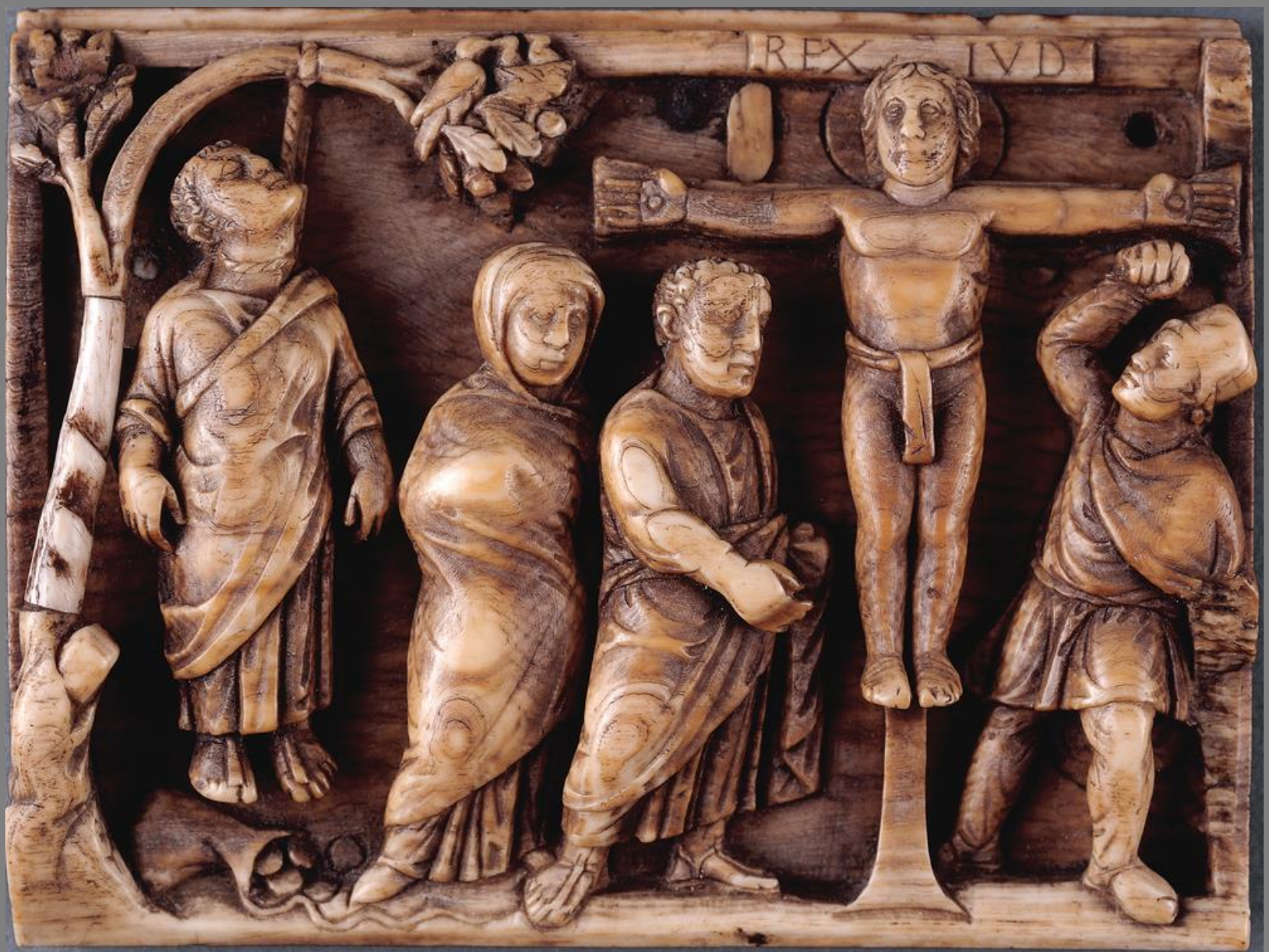


Rossano Gospels  
early 6th century  
tempera on purple vellum  
11 x 10 1/4 in.

Matthew chapter 27  
Christ before Pilate



Pilate Washing his Hands, Christ Carrying the Cross, Denial of Peter  
from a casket  
ca. 420, ivory, 3 x 3 7/8 in.



Suicide of Judas and Crucifixion  
from a casket | ca. 420 | ivory | 3 x 3 7/8 in.