

# JUSTINIAN'S WORLD: THE MEDITERRANEAN BEFORE ISLAM

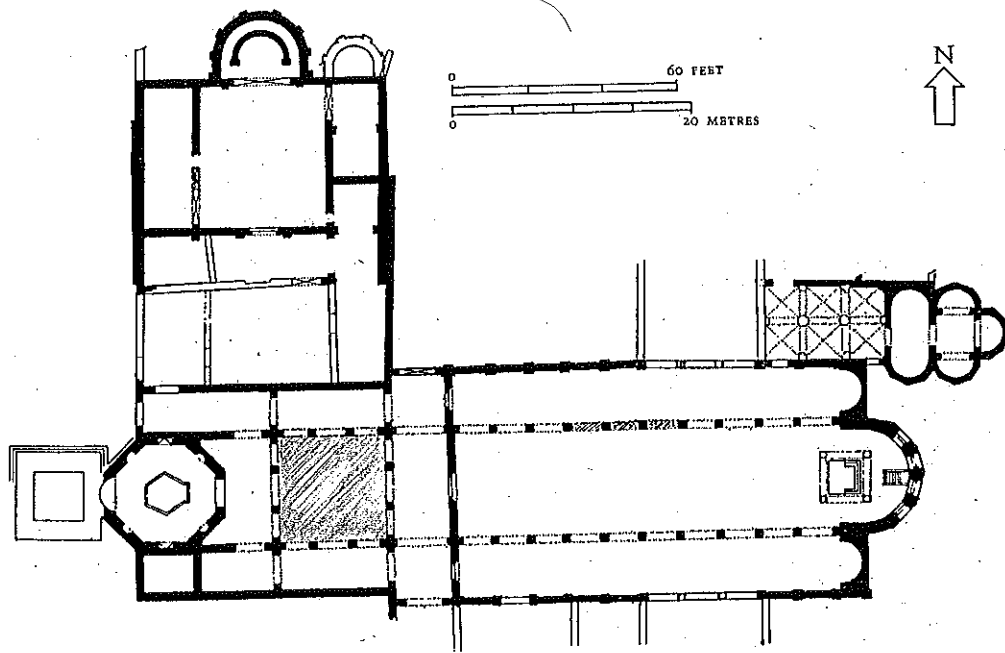
For distribution on February 19

For consideration on February 26

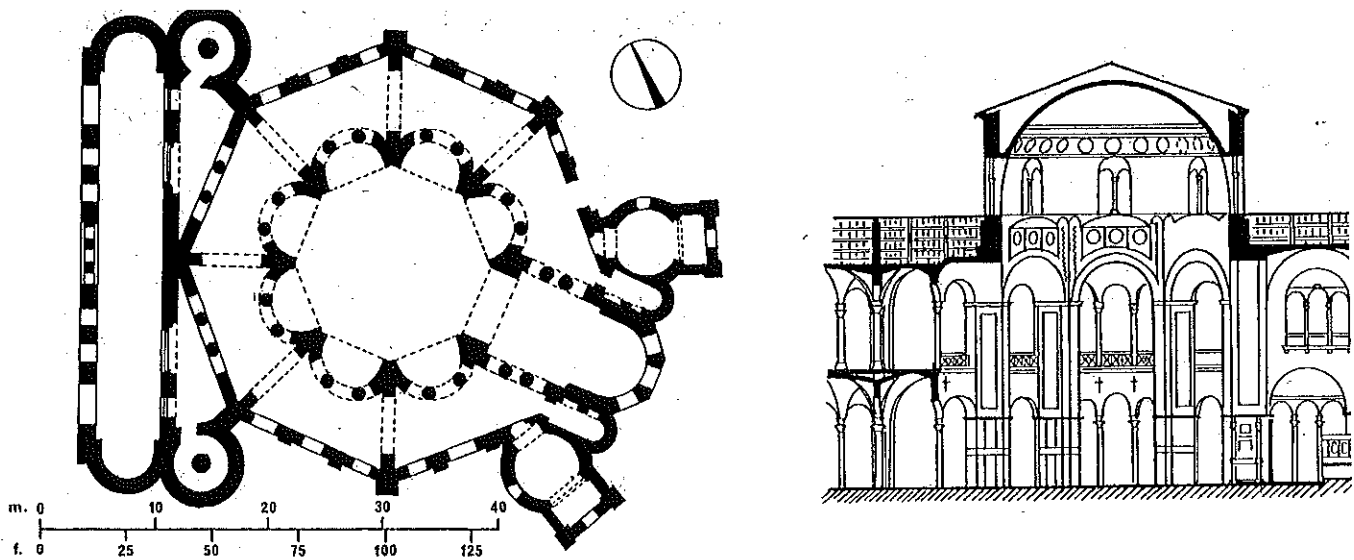
## ARCHITECTURE AND ART

### ARCHITECTURE

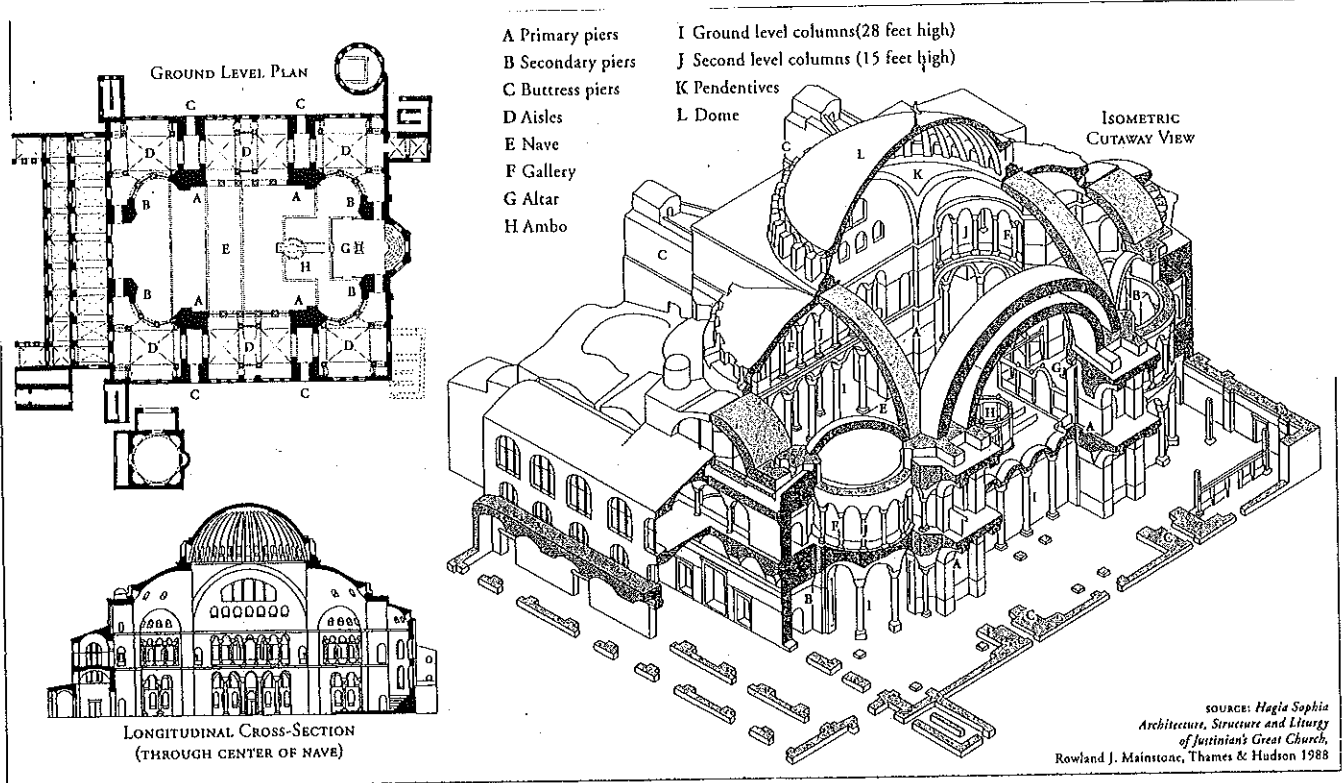
#### 1.1. Basilica-plan church: Cathedral at Porec [c.550 CE]



#### 1.2. Centrally organized church: San Vitale at Ravenna [548 CE]



### 1.3. Centrally organized church: Hagia Sophia at Constantinople [537 CE]



### 1.4. Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* [c. 600 CE] 4.31

“[Justinian] also raised at Constantinople many sacred buildings of elaborate beauty, in honour of God and the saints, and erected a vast and incomparable work [Hagia Sophia], such as has never been before recorded, namely the largest edifice of the Church, a noble and surpassing structure, beyond the power of words to describe. Nevertheless I will endeavor to the best of my ability to detail the plan of the sacred precinct. The nave of the sanctuary is a dome, supported by four arches, and raised to so great a height that the sight of persons surveying it from below can scarcely reach the vertex of the hemisphere, and no one from above, however daring, ventures to bend over and look down to the floor. The arches are raised clear from the pavement to the roof; but within those on the right and left are ranged columns of Thessalian stone, which, together with other corresponding pillars, support galleries, so as to allow those who wish, to look down upon the performance of the rites below. From these the empress also, when attending at the festivals, witnesses the ceremony of the sacred mysteries. But the eastern and western arches are left vacant, without any thing to interrupt the imposing aspect of so vast dimensions. There are also colonnades under the before-mentioned galleries, forming, with pillars and small arches, a termination to so vast a structure. But in order to convey a more distinct idea of this wonderful fabric, I have thought proper to set down in feet, its length, breadth and height, as well as the span and height of the arches, as follows:-- The length from the door facing the sacred apse where are performed the rites of the bloodless sacrifice, to the apse, is one hundred and ninety feet; the breadth from north to south is one hundred and fifteen feet; the depth from the centre of the hemisphere to the floor is one hundred and eighty feet .... There are also to the west two other noble colonnades, and on all sides unroofed courts of elaborate beauty.

## THE POWER OF ART

### **2.1. Eustratius Presbyter, *Life of S. Eutychius* [Patriarch of Constantinople, exiled between 565 and 577 CE], paragraph 53.**

“A young man who professed the craft of mosaicist was working ... at the house of Chrysaphius ..., removing from the wall an old mosaic portraying the story of Aphrodite. For the owner intended to convert his house into chapels of the archangel Michael ... and of our immaculate Lady the Mother of God. When [the mosaicist] had cut out the picture of the unclean Aphrodite herself, the demon that resided in it struck his hand, which became inflamed and swollen.... Seeing himself in great danger, he chose the better course and visited S. Eutychius so as to obtain God’s help through him. S. Eutychius said a prayer over the man and anointed his right hand [which was the injured one] with holy oil. He did this for three days, and the right hand was made as healthy as the other one—with God’s assistance.”

### **2.2. Anon., *Life of S. Symeon the Younger*, chap. 158.**

“[S. Symeon the Younger freed an artisan in Antioch from a demon who had possessed him for many years. In gratitude, the artisan] set up an image of [Symeon] in a public and conspicuous part of his city, namely above the door of his workshop. Upon seeing the image honored with lights and curtains, some ... persons were filled with anger and roused a number of troublemakers ... so that a crowd collected and shouted ...: ‘Kill the man who has done this! Throw down the image!’ By God’s dispensation, it happened that the artisan was not then in his house .... Unable to contain their fury, [the crowd] let a soldier climb a ladder so as to throw down the image. But when he had climbed up and stretched out his hands to carry out what he had been ordered to do, he immediately fell to the ground, and there was great noise in the crowd. In their ardor, they made a second man go up ..., but he too fell to the ground .... Getting frenzied all the more, those infidels put a third man to the task, but when he stretched out his hands to throw down the image, he too collapsed to the ground. Then great fear came over the Christians who stood around ....”

### **2.3. Anon., *Life of S. Theodore of Sykeon*, chap.**

“When [Theodore] was about twelve years old, an epidemic of bubonic plague fell upon the village and attacked him along with the others so that he came near to dying. They took him to the shrine of S. John the Baptist near the village and laid him at the entrance to the sanctuary. And above him—where the cross was set—hung an icon of our savior Jesus Christ. While he was suffering great pain from the plague, drops of dew fell upon him from the icon. Freed immediately from his suffering by the grace of God, [Theodore] recovered and returned home.”

### **2.4. Hypatius of Ephesus, “*Miscellaneous Enquiries*” addressed to ... bishop Julian of Atramytion.**

“You say that those who set up in sanctuaries [representations of] holy and venerable things in painting or carving alike are upsetting the Divine Tradition; that you understand Scripture to forbid such a practice; and not only does it forbid the making [of representations], but even bids us to destroy them when ... they already exist.”

It’s necessary to examine why Scripture says such things, and to understand at the same time why it is that the molding of sacred objects is allowed. Inasmuch as some people believed—as Holy Writ says—that “the Godhead is like unto gold and silver and stones and the tracing made by man’s device” [Acts 17:19]; inasmuch as they ... “worshipped the creature more than the creator” [Rom. 1:25]; [for this reason] it says: “Destroy and cut down their altars and burn with fire their graven images ...” [Deut.7:5,25]. ...

But, my reverend friend, we neither confess nor set down in writing that the Divine essence—whatever it may be—is similar or identical or equal to any existing thing. And as for the inexpressible and incomprehensible love of God towards us men and the holy patterns set by the saints, we ordain that these

should be celebrated in sacred writings since, for our part, we take no pleasure in any sculpture or painting. However, we permit simple folk, inasmuch as they are less perfect, to learn such things in an introductory manner by means of sight, which is appropriate to their natural development ....”

## 2.5. Plan of Ravenna

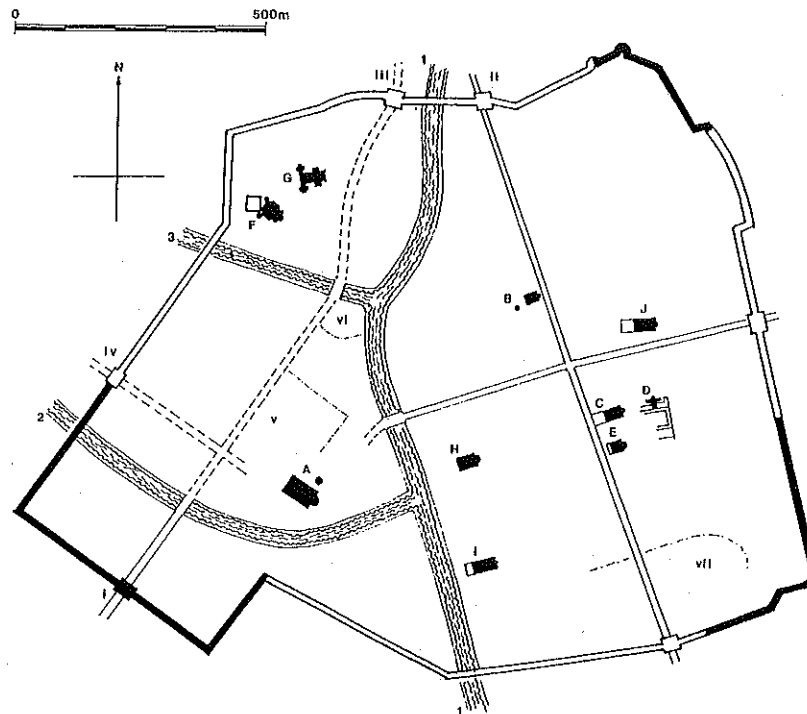


Figure 32. Ravenna, sketch plan of the post classical city. I, Flumen Padenna; II, Fossa Lamisa; III, Flumisellum Padennae; i, Porta Aurea; ii, Porta Nova; iii, Porta S. Victoris; iv, Porta S. Zenonis; v, vicinity of the Forum in the Regio Herculana; vi, vicinity of the Hippodrome; A, Basilica Ursiana, the cathedral, dedicated to the Anastasis or Resurrection, and the Neonian or Orthodox Baptistery; B, *Basilica sanctae Anastasiae*, the Arian cathedral, dedicated to St. Theodore by Bishop Agnellus (556?-570) and presently to S. Spirito, and the Arian Baptistery, now dedicated to S. Maria in Cosmedin; C, Church of Jesus Christ Our Lord, rededicated by Bishop Agnellus to St. Martin and now to S. Apollinare Nuovo; D, excavated remains of the Palace of Theodoric; E, probably S. Salvatore; F, S. Vitale; G, S. Croce with the "Tomb of Galla Placidia"; H, S. Francesco, occupying the site of the SS. Apostolorum; I, S. Agata Maggiore; J, S. Giovanni Evangelista (drawing by the author after Deichmann, 1989, plan 2, and Novara, 1993).