

Cultural matrix and summary

[History](#)



Byzantium Iconography and architecture are the styles of art, which were greatly developed during the epoch of the Byzantium Empire. Icons are religious images done on wooden plates in the Byzantine style. The word Icon springs from the Greek EIKON with the meaning image (Ostrogorsky). It is assumed that Icon painting started in the Byzantine Empire about the 6th century. One of the basic arguments for honoring of Icons is an oral tradition telling of the idea of Christ on the Mandylion ("The Veil of Veronica").

Legend tells how Christ himself, put his image on the Veil making the first Icon or "prototype" drawn without human hands. The name of this Icon is The Savior Acheiropoietos. Speaking about Byzantine architecture, the paramount object is the Church of Hagia Sophia. By this unique building the whole period in the development of architecture could be depicted (Brooks). The Byzantium Empire fell, because of attack of foreigners. However, its fall was caused not only by external attack, but by many internal problems (Weitzmann). The main of them are the economic downfall of Byzantium, first of all the fall of its craft and trade connected with the penetration of empire by foreign traders, who undermined its economy; the poor life of peasantry and the citizens of the town; aggravation of class contradictions in the society and the struggle inside the dominating group; feudal wars, treacherous policy of feudals. The self-interested politics of the countries of Eastern Europe, which did not provide Byzantium with any help in danger, also contributed to the fall of the Empire (Bowersock).

Byzantium created the outstanding culture, maybe even the most outstanding in the Middle Ages, the only existing in Christian Europe till XI century. It was the continuation of the richest antique culture and the beginning of the culture of the Middle Ages. During many centuries

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Constantinople remained the only great city of the Christian Europe, which did not have any analogues (Kazhdan). The literature and art of Byzantium imposed influence on other peoples' culture. The remaining monuments and the great creations of art show to us the whole brilliance of the Byzantine culture. That is why Byzantium deservingly occupied the significant place in the history of the Middle Ages.

References

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Civilization

Cultural Developments

Political Developments

Economic Developments

The Early Byzantium

(527– 843 CE)

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The Middle Byzantine period (843-1204 CE).

The Latin Occupation of 1204-61

The Late Byzantine

The development of sculpture, which is different from ancient tradition. The creation of Church of Hagia Sophia, and other domed sacred buildings alongside traditional basilica forms.

Art and architecture flourished

Many architectural projects and artistic monuments were created in correspondence with European tendencies

Art and architecture flourished

The practice of Christian monasticism, using Roman law, and Greek and Roman culture, a highly organized government in its great cities; later the invasion of foreigners and the loss of great cities
system of military governorship over
administrative divisions

The political system was restructured. New political capitals and Byzantine states were founded.

Great power of Byzantine religion, the influence on other states.

The loss of cities, economic crisis, successful economic and fiscal restructuring and the

beginnings of a virtuous cycle

the economic growth, trade development, the opening of the western European markets.

Economic Growth, new technological achievements, enhanced productivity

Crisis in this period in the monetary system, poor position of Byzantine merchants.

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