

The sacrifice of isaac by abraham

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Justinian from Constantinople sent his own general Belisarius to reconvene Raven from the Strongest and reinstate Orthodox Christianity.

Raven then became somewhat of an extension of the great city of Constantinople and the art clearly indicates a time of transition from the Early Christian to Byzantine era. (“ Building the Dream”) Shortly after Theodoric's death, Bishop Ecclesiae, along with a hefty contribution by a banker named Julian Argentarius, began construction of a church to commemorate Raven's celebrated martyr San Vitale. At that time, the cross-shaped basilica plan was popular. Instead of a wide central nave flanked by two aisles, a transverse aisle, and an apse at the end, San Vitale was designed around a central nave with two concentric octagonal walls. The central nave is surrounded by two proposed ambulatories which fill the auditorium, the smaller of the octagonal shapes, is supported by eight curved and marble-columned exedrae. San Vitale features traditional Roman architectural techniques such as groin vaults, arched doorways, and a dome-covered clerestory.

The lower ambulatory is interrupted by a triumphal arch that precedes a chancel and a cross-vaulted apse. On the opposite side of the apse lies an off-axis narthex's. To the left of the apse sits a prothesis where bread and wine are prepared for the Eucharist. To the right, a sacristy houses books and vestments. The exterior walls are made of various bricks taken from ancient Roman buildings and have amphorae built in to add extra support to the structure.

Tan terracotta adorns the roof and many windows are arranged to provide light to the numerous mosaics inside. The true beauty and value of the San Vital is not held in the exterior view but rather in the ornate and intricate mosaics displayed inside. The walls of the church are richly ornamented with colorful mosaic that make up scenes from both the Old and the New Testament. Many of these scenes show continuous narratives such as the Sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, the story of Cain and Able, and Moses and the Burning Bush. Above three large windows is a large apse mosaic depicting the Second Coming.

Christ is dressed in a purple robe sitting on a blue celestial orb of the Earth atop the Four Rivers of Paradise with an angel on either side of him. He is holding the Book of Revelation and the Seven Seals and is handing a crown to San Vitalis to his right. Bishop Ecclesiae is shown handing the church to the angel beside Christ. On the cross-vaulted ceiling above the chancel is an image of the Lamb of God wearing a halo, the lamb representing Christ who was sacrificed for the redemption of mankind. The lamb is surrounded by a laurel wreath that represents the triumph of Christianity and decorated in shades of green, blue, and gold. The wreath is guarded by four angels standing on globes that refer to the image of a young Christ sitting on the celestial orb of Earth.

The image of Christ as young and beardless was common throughout ancient Roman art. The San Vital features both a young and an older Christ marking the transitional period between ancient Roman art and early medieval works of art. The entrance to the chancel vault is marked by a triumphal arch

decorated by fourteen medallions with the Apostles and Saints important to the development of the church. An older portrayal of Christ with facial hair sits at the keystone within a rainbow Andorra. The supportive columns inside the San Vital are unlike any other.

They are made out Of a high quality marble that was transported from Eastern Europe. The capitals do not follow any traditional order. On top of the capitals are impost blocks that help make the transition to the arches above. The trapezoid shaped capitals are decorated with interwoven foliage and medallions. The impost blocks are decorated with animal figures and Christian symbols. Historians have speculated that the early Christians were trying to invent a new iconography.

(Harper) The beauty of the interior from the San Vital cannot be overstated. Every. Veer you look the walls seemed to be drenched in gorgeous mosaic. The small amount of surface that isn't overfed in mosaic is made of striated marble that was cut and arranged to form decorative patterning. Often praised as the most important features of the San Vital are the facing panels of the chancel depicting Justinian and his empress Theodore.

On the panel to the left of the altar, Justinian is standing center surrounded by his military guard unit, known as the Scholar Palatinate, and religious figures, including Bishop Maximizes who commissioned the mosaics. Justinian is presented more individualized than the others wearing a long royal purple robe. He has a halo around his head and a crown adorned tit many gems. This is to show that he is the leader of the church and of the state. He holds a paten, a bowl with bread intended for the sacrament of the

Eucharist, which overlaps the bishop's arm. This symbolizes that the imperial and churchly powers are in balance.

All of the figures are frontal and abstracted, not naturalistic. A clergyman holds a bejeweled Book of Gospels and an incense burner. Maximian holds a cross encrusted in jewels while his name sets above him to stress his importance. You notice that the scene seems to produce a slow forward movement towards Christ in the apse. They stand in front of a field of gold which is well-known tradition in Byzantine art.

The tesserae, some with gold leaf sandwiched between two pieces of glass, are purposefully set into the wall at different angles so they can reflect light in a way that sets off the beauty of the mosaic. Justinian often used Chi-Rho symbol is seen in the center of the guard's shield. Dry. Patrick Hunt at Stanford explains the importance of these works of art: The panels represent the reassertion of Constantinian orthodoxy against the Arian Goths—demonstrating power through art as somewhat propaganda, fusing political and religious imagery for a double statement of authority. These mosaics are perhaps the greatest of early Byzantine if not all post-Roman mosaics; they do serve as embellishment to reinforce the grandeur of Justinian, perhaps simultaneously last Roman emperor and first Byzantine emperor.

(Hunt) Directly across the Justinian scene stands Theodore, Justinian's beloved wife. Theodore was believed to have worked in a brothel and as an actress. Procopius, Justinian's principal historian, chronicled her life in *The Wars of Justinian* and the famed *Secret History*. She became friends with Justinian's wife and met Justinian who fell in love with her immediately. At the time, it

was illegal to marry an actress so his uncle, Justinian I, repealed the law and they were married for twenty-five years until her death.

She became an equal to Justinian, participating in the governance with significant influence. Theodore died a year after the completion of the mosaic seen in the San Vitale. The symmetry and hierarchy of scale mirrors the other panel implying the equality to Justinian.

She is dressed in elaborate royal purple clothing adorned with jewels and pearls to reflect the richness of Constantinople. Her halo signifies the divine origin and authority. She holds a decorated chalice for wine for the Eucharist and is also passing it toward the direction of Christ. Theodore is joined by attendants in a courtyard that symbolizes the imperial court and the consecration of the new church. The background differs from Justinian in that it includes more detailing. In the rich green colored courtyard stands a fountain in front of a doorway draped by decorative curtains. The height of the figures relative to the door and fountain give off less spatial ambiguity than the Justinian mosaic.

Justinian and Theodore never actually visited Ravenna but the church was built as somewhat of an extension of Constantinople. San Vitale's historical importance is reinforced by being inspiration to the main hall of the no longer existing Great Palace of Constantinople the city's church of Holy Wisdom, Hagia Sophia. The shape and general features were also imitated by Charlemagne in the Palatine Chapel in Aachen's. Because of their location, the mosaics in the Church of San Vitale escaped the ravages of iconoclasm that led to the destruction of many Byzantine structures.