

History of the Catholic Church

The 10th Century: The Decline of the Papacy

Events:

The Mayan civilization collapses and enters the Post-Classical Mayan period.

The rise of the Toltecs in Mexico.

The Fatimid Caliphate begins in Northern Africa.

Emperor Simeon the Great solidifies the First Bulgarian Empire.

The Archangel Michael icon is made.

Formation of the Tongan Dynasty in Oceania.

909: Foundation of Cluny.

917: The Bulgarians destroy the Byzantine Army in the battle of Anchialus.

919: The first use of gunpowder in battle with the Chinese of the battle with Langshan Jiang.

927: official recognition of the first independent national church of Europe: The Bulgarian Patriarchate.

927: Kingdom of England becomes a unified state.

928: The Ziyarid dynasty established in Iran.

936: Gorm the Old becomes the first recognized king of Denmark.

936: Goryeo Dynasty unites the Later Three Kingdoms of Korea into Korea.

955: The Battle of Lechfeld is a decisive victory of Otto I, the King of the Germans.

988: Vladimir I, Prince of Kievan Rus', baptized a Christian.

999: Samanid Dynasty was defeated and conquered by the Ghaznavids.

Inventions: fire arrows in China, first mention of hops in brewing beer, first use of liquid mercury.

Politics:

The 10th century is a political mess. Although most of the centuries have seen political chaos and lots of issues between and amongst ruling authorities, the 10th century sees both the rise of powerful kings and the decline of great kings, the rise of powerful kingdoms and the fall of powerful kingdoms, the advancement of peace and the conflicts of war. Every country seems to be intertwined in some type of political battle with each other.

The east is ensnared in the same battles that have lasted centuries: the Byzantines vs. the Bulgarians. Although these battles have raged for centuries and Bulgaria has switched hands

many times, the end of this century leaves Bulgaria as one of the strongest kingdoms in Europe. We have already explored the tenuous history between the Byzantines and Bulgarians that led to new battles every century. Yet, in this century a few new developments changed the tides of these constant skirmishes. The battle of 894 required Byzantium to pay annual tribute to Bulgaria. The new emperor to the throne refused to pay tribute. Upon his death, fearing a war, the next emperor tried to make amends by agreeing to pay tribute and to give his daughter in marriage to Simeon I, King of Bulgaria. All these attempts failed and battle was imminent. The Bulgarians attempted to create treaties and alliances with their neighbors to the north: the Magyars, the Saxons, and the Serbs. The Byzantines were cleverer and faster and were able to establish these northern groups as alliance while creating peace with the Arabs so as to use all their forces for this battle. As the troops lined up on the battlefield, much was at stake. This battle will be one of the most decisive and important battles of the middle ages. Throughout the first half of the battle, the Byzantine army had the upper hand and was about to decisively beat the Bulgarians. Then, the Bulgarians sent in their heavy calvary at this decisive moment and immensely defeated the Byzantine forces. The Byzantines, both shocked and surprised by the hidden calvary, fled the battle and were massacred in the process. This was the bloodiest battle of the Middle Ages and historians call it "the battle of the century." A Byzantine historian of the time commented that even 40 years after the battle, tens of thousands of skeletons still littered the battlefield. The war ended and the Bulgarian king received the title of Emperor of Byzantium, the tribute due to him for winning the war, his grandson married the daughter of Byzantine emperor, and they all enjoyed 40 years of peace.

The effects of this war as well as the political alliances formed will have devastating effects on the rest of Europe. Bulgaria will rise as one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful, kingdom in Europe. The strength of Bulgaria will cause the nations to the north, east, and west of Bulgaria to flee from their presence and head west into Europe. Not only did Bulgaria flex its muscles against the treacherous Magyars and Saxons who sided with the Byzantines but they will also push them further away from their territory.

The Magyars, known today as the Hungarians, were a group of five different tribal kingdoms that inhabited the land east of Europe and north of Bulgaria. For years these tribes worked among themselves to fight against the marauders to their north and east while ignoring Europe. The Bulgarian/Byzantine war changed their tone. With limited resources, Bulgaria at their backs, and new peoples moving in and causing additional stress on the Magyars, they began to raid eastern Europe. For the majority of the century these raids were more of a nuisance. As the political climate of Europe changed, so did the nature of this conflict.

In order to understand the effects of the Magyars on Europe, we need to return to the political conflicts that ended the 9th century. Charlemagne created an Empire the likes of which will not be seen for many centuries. He was able to conquer the lands of modern day France and Germany with conquest in Italy but were not part of his kingdom. With the exclusion of Spain and England, Charlemagne controlled Europe. When the Carolingian Empire split and fell under the grandsons of Charlemagne, the various parts of the empire went radically different paths. The west continued to live in the feudalistic system that was developing and set by the end of the 9th

century. The kings of the western Franks will continue to rule as divine ruler until their demise at the beginning of the 10th century. The middle part of the kingdom that went to Lothar eventually joined the western Franks into the land of France. The eastern part of the kingdom took a radically different route. The eastern Germans (although they were not called Germans at this time) broke into five separate duchies that all vied for power amongst powerful families. These families would fight amongst themselves to rule the various duchies with no central ruler. The last ruler, Louis the German, left no major descendant who would rule this region. With the introduction of the Magyars and military/ raiding pressure from the east, the duchies united under the first German king, Conrad. Conrad from Franconia was elected on 911 after the people felt that the western Frankish king could no longer protect them from invaders yet they were still loyal to the idea of the Carolingian Empire. Soon the Bavarians and the Swabian clans joined the Germans and recognize Conrad as their king. Originally the idea of feudalism never reached Germany. Somehow the feudalistic west didn't impose itself on the east. With the addition of a king and the creation of the German state, feudalism was the new mode of life. Thus life gradually changed into the peasant/lord relationship and the same processes of inheritance and taxation reached the eastern Germanic peoples.

The German people were united into one kingdom by Otto I. Having successfully ignored the Carolingian empire and the last vestige of their power over the eastern Franks, aka Germany, the German people became their own people. At first the last of the eastern Franks were a set of five duchies controlled by independent leaders leading to a divided rule. Otto I, who took succeeded his father as king of the Saxons and Franks, was a man with ambition. Otto I wanted to restore the imperial title which had lost its power and use over the last century. With this desire for power in mind, Otto united the five duchies into one kingdom, which we would call Germany, becoming the Germanic peoples. The rule of the five duchies was not sufficient for him. Desiring the imperial title of Roman Emperor, he sought to get the title from the Pope. Pope John XII was not a man who cared much for the politics of his time nor for the good of the church. Otto knew that the only way to get the imperial title was through the pope. He decided to unite the Germanic peoples with the pope by appealing to Pope John XII and confirming the donations to the papacy given in centuries past. On February 2, 962 King Otto was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope John XII. King Otto in turn reaffirmed the donations given to the pope in years past and submit to papal authority.

This alliance didn't last long. Now emperor, Otto began to bring order to Italy and exert his authority over matter in Rome. This move greatly alarmed Pope John who sought council from Otto's enemies. Otto, alarmed by Pope John's move, marched into Rome to demand an audience. Pope John fled to Tivoli. With no pope on the throne of Peter, Otto elected his own pope in place of John XII. Pope John XII died six months later.

The effects of what historians call the "Ottonian revival" is both insignificant and significant in the grand scheme of history. First, the event of Otto being crowned emperor by the Pope shows that no one by the Pope can confer that title. Second, although the imperial title was lost sometime around the 920's, the Germans revitalized the title and brought it into use. Third, due to the desire of Otto, the title of Imperial Emperor would remain with the Germans for about a

millennium. Fourth, the Emperor had the power to depose a pope and install a people. This conflict of papal power, although already problematic from the previous centuries, is back with a new force. The emperor could now choose his own bishops and the pope at his leisure, as we will see in the upcoming centuries. Fifth, the emperor has power to restore and affect the morality of the papal office and pope.

The effects of King Otto on the church cannot be dismissed. The most important contribution he made to the issues of the 10-14th centuries is called in the investiture conflict. Investiture is when a king or emperor gives the symbols of office to a newly ordained bishop. Recall: for the past nine centuries the pope chose and controlled the bishops. Until the rise of a feudalistic society, no one challenged a bishop's role over spiritual matters nor the pope's role in choosing, ordaining, and installing bishops. Beginning in the 8th century, kings tried to influence the election of a bishop and at times install their own bishops without papal authority. The pope always reprimanded those kings for circumventing papal authority. With the ordination of a bishop, the ordaining bishops would present to the newly ordained bishop the symbols of his office: the ring, miter, and crosier. At the peak of feudalism, kings and emperors tried to take this authority from the bishops and invest bishops themselves. Namely during the ordination of a bishop, the emperor or king would give the bishop (or priest) the symbols of his office: the ring, miter, and crosier. This change in command showed that the emperor or king had authority over religious matters, could choose his own bishops without papal authority, and secured his own power within his land over civil and religious matters. The investiture conflict ascended the ladder to the level of the pope. Starting at the end of the 10th century and continuing into the next several centuries, many kings and emperors will elect their own pope to the throne of Peter and install and invest them. The investiture conflict started by King Otto effectively put the church under his authority. This was not an unintentional move by Otto. He made it clear to the pope and the church that he is the sole ruler and the church comes under his authority.

The western Franks of the 10th century did little to change the conflicts. The French monarchs were divided between two different dynasties who were vying for power: The Robertian and the Carolingian. After the split of the kingdom between the three sons of Louis the Pious, the western Franks remained loyal to the Carolingian kings. However, political struggle led to revolving door of kings between the new, Roberian dynasty, and the Carolingian dynasty. Embattled in their own feuds, the French monarchs ignored anything happening east of the French lands leading to the sessions of the Germanic peoples into their own kingdom. By the end of the 10th century, the French have monarch like Louis V who is titled the "do-nothing king."

The Vikings continue their raids into this century. Although England is not their focal point, France takes on a new aim for the Vikings. Now wanting land and feeling successful against the powers of Europe, the Vikings aim to conquer Paris. They fail. In their failure King Charles the Simple, signs a treaty of fealty with the Vikings giving them land in northwestern France, called Normandy, and forcing them to swear fealty to the French crown. This treaty effectively established the land of Normandy, placated the Viking warriors, and gave wealth to the French crown. The name Normandy comes from the title Norseman.

In Italy different powers were at play. Italy of the 10th century is dominated by the Italian noble families fighting over the papal office. Each family is working to secure their power by electing one of their family members to the See of Peter. This gerrymandering led to a massive decline in the power of the pope, the effectiveness of the office, and the moral integrity of the church.

The Church

Two major challenges reflect the church of the 10th century: the decline of the papacy and the investiture conflict. The investiture conflict rides on the heels of the fights of power that have spanned the last few centuries. Starting around the time of Emperor Constantine, the Church was continually in a conflict of power over the ruling authorities of Europe. Although these conflicts subsided for the 5-7th centuries due to the Emperor abandoning the western part of the Empire, it reared its head again in the 8th century and pinnacled in the 10th. Starting in the 9th century the church was embattling a moral crisis. Feudalism gave the church unprecedented wealth at the cost of a decline in power. The kings now controlled church lands and could depose and install bishops at the whim and desire. For the first time since Constantine, the church felt powerless against the ruling authorities in Europe. The conflict reached its fore under King Otto I of Germany. King Otto, hoping to help the pope settle disputes in Italy, requested the title of Roman Emperor, a title only given by the pope. After being granted the title in 962, he began a campaign to restore the moral authority of the church and clean up the mess in Italy that left a scar on the church. Pope John XII felt betrayed by King Otto and sought advice from Otto's enemies. This caused King Otto to feel betrayed and he marched in to Rome, found that Pope John had fled, installed his own Pope to the office, and then named himself ruler over the Church.

The investiture conflict is not about the events of King Otto but are best told through his actions. Before Otto became king, the issue of investiture was already problematic for the church. With the rise of feudalism came the desire for kings to choose their own bishops and invest them with the signs of their office. Prior to the 9th century only bishops or the pope could invest bishops with the sign of their office. Kings gave the newly ordained bishops land and the temporal rule necessary to conduct church affairs. Now the kings gave everything to the bishops including the temporal powers, the lands, and the authority of bishop. King Otto took this controversy a step further by installing his own pope and by claiming that the church was under his authority. The issue of installing popes and investing bishops will embroil the church in a debate that will last centuries. Although the church has always stood firm that only the pope can name bishops and only bishops can ordain and invest bishops, the kings and ruling authorities will disagree and challenge papal authority.

The second major challenge of the 10th century is the decline of the papacy. Throughout the centuries the office of the pope has had many different challenge and some rather dark periods. The 10th century is one of the darkest periods in the history of the popes. Pope Nicholas I, who reigned from 858-867, was one of the greatest popes of the Middle Ages. Pope Nicholas sought the good of the church his entire pontificate. He reformed the moral teachings of the church, brought moral norms to clergy and Rome, fought for papal authority and won, and continued to advance the cause of east/west relations. Throughout his years in office, the church grew and

continued its efforts to establish her authority over the kings of Europe. The next several pope will lead us into one of the darkest ages of the papacy and one of the most unfortunate popes in history. Following the death of Pope Nicholas I, a series of popes were named and died.

Formosus was the bishop of Porto in Italy where he had served under several popes. Upon his return from Bulgaria as a papal representative, Pope John VIII excommunicated him and stripped him of his office for reasons unknown to us. Then Pope John convened a synod in Troyes where he forced Formosus to swear to never to attempt to regain his office. Shortly after this synod, the family of Pope John VIII bludgeoned him to death after they failed to poison him. His successor, Marinus I, absolved Formosus of his oath and reinstated him in his office as bishop of Porto. Pope Marinus lasted less than a year in office. Several popes were elected and died between the death of Pope Marinus in 882 and the election of Formosus in 891. This age in the papacy, including the next two centuries, is largely a squabble between the powerful Italian families and their desire for the prestige and power that comes with having a family member as pope. Thus popes came and went as the families feuded. Pope Formosus, the only pope by that name, was better known for events after his death than for events in his life. Pope Formosus found himself in a political battle that will cost him and the church dearly. The ruling family of Spoleto wanted him to name Wildo and his son Lambert as co-emperors. He did so knowing the cost of this action. After problems continued to arise, he requested help from Arnulf, the Carolingian king. Advancing upon Rome, Arnulf found the gates locked and Formosus imprisoned by the Agriltrude, the mother of the co-emperors. The Germans will finally release Formosus from prison and restore the peace of Italy.

The story doesn't end there. Following Pope Formosus, Pope Boniface VI lived 15 days in office. Then Pope Stephen VI returned with a vengeance upon Pope Formosus. He order the body of Pope Formosus to be exhumed, dressed in papal regalia, and put on trial. This trial accused him of breaking his oath at Troyes and illegally moving from one diocese to another. A corrupt and ill-spoken deacon spoke as Formosus' defense. Formosus was tried as a heretic and his body was thrown in the Tiber river. His family dug his body out of the river and laid it to rest. He was eventually returned to his tomb in St. Peters. The east saw this conflict as a heretic pope was on the throne of Peter and therefore the west must be in schism. To this day they hold this event against us.

Although we can hope this is the end of the major issues with the papacy of the Middle Ages, this is not true. The next line of popes will be as corrupt and the ones we have met thus far leading to one of the worst popes in history, Pope John XII. The Octavian household of Italy was a very prestigious and powerful family. They boast two popes in the family. Namely, Pope John XI who named himself pope in 931. On his death bed he coerced the Romans to elect his son to be pope. So, at the age of 18, the son of John XI became Pope John XII. Young and ill experienced in every way, John XII will bring the papacy to its lowest point since the cadaver council of Pope Formosus and for the next several centuries. Pope John XII had no interest in the spiritual life or being a religious leader. He used the papal office to throw elaborate parties, to seduce women, and use this power to do as he wished. Stories of the time state that women feared coming to Rome on pilgrimage because of Pope John XII. Some of the many horrendous

acts of Pope John include mutilating men, ordaining a deacon in a stable, not receiving communion at Mass, invoking pagan gods, arson, adultery, and concreting a 10-year old boy as bishop. He died in 964 from a stroke while he was lying in bed with a married woman.

The legacy of Pope John XII is in his political challenges. When the Germanic people united under King Otto, Otto wanted more than a small kingdom on the eastern edge of Europe. He wanted the imperial title of Emperor. Knowing that only the pope can confer this title, he went to Rome to request the title. Pope John didn't care about political maneuverings nor the state of the church. On February 2nd, 962, Pope John XII conferred the title of emperor on King Otto. Realizing the mistake he had made when Otto returned to reform Rome and the papal office, he sought advice from Otto's enemies. Feeling betrayed by the pope, Otto returned to Rome ready for conflict. But John had fled Rome leaving the papacy vacant. Otto installed his own pope and would continue to influence papal elections for the rest of the century. Now with the pope under his command, Otto secured his rule by putting the church under his rule. Emperor Otto now has the authority to choose his own bishops and to install and invest them at his leisure. The church is now embroiled in a fight for any semblance of authority.

From the 9th century until the reign of Pope Leo IX and then more importantly Pope Gregory VII, one of the greatest popes in history, the papacy took a sharp decline. The issues of the papacy were so bad that people made jokes about the status of the pope and the church. One of the most widely circulated stories was the election of pope Joan. Pope Joan was a satirical story about a woman who was accidentally elected as pope. The electors didn't realize she was a woman until one day she was riding her horse. As she was riding along, she gave birth. Then everyone realized she was a woman and that the church had erred in electing a woman to the office of pope.

Light still shone in the church of the 10th century. The feudalistic system largely focused on the first-born male of the house. What happened to the other sons? The first-born would inherit the family property and continue the trade of his father. The subsequent sons would then be sent to various other professions. One son was always chosen to be a religious, a priest, or a bishop, regardless of desire. Many stories of the Middle Ages tell of sons of noble families who would arrive at the monastery with an entourage of horses, clothing, riches, and women. Clearly these men had no interest in living the life of a monk nor an ascetical life. Monasteries were on a sharp decline in both rigor and discipline. A group of five nobles came to the monastery in the midst of this system and desired for something better. They joined together and bought a piece of land and built a monastery named Cluny. These five monks desired to build a monastery that would return to the rigor of the Rule of St. Benedict and become a model for all other monasteries. They succeeded. Through their careful follow of the Rule of St. Benedict and their beautiful liturgies, they inspired many monks to turn from their lax way of life and strive for something better. At the height of the power of Cluny, the monks of Cluny would venture to other monasteries and help them reform their ways. Additionally Cluny would found five new monasteries in this century.

Cluny has a catch, which sets the stage for the 11th century. The nobles who founded Cluny were not the ideal monks of the Rule of St. Benedict. They continued to live as nobles within the Rule.

Namely, they celebrated liturgy well, they sung the chants well, and they spent many hours in pray, but they did not manual labor. They refused to work in the field or perform any of the manual labor called for by the Rule of St. Benedict. Additionally they kept the peasant farmers who are part of the feudalistic system as their source of food and income. Cluny's reform would challenge monasteries to a new height of prayer and beauty but not fully reform it back to the Rule of St. Benedict.

In the east, a rather important development occurred out of the Byzantine/Bulgarian wars. In 919, the Bulgarian church held a national council and declared the church in Bulgaria to be its own autocephalous church with its own patriarch. Following the end of the Byzantine/Bulgarian wars, the Byzantine church accepted the new patriarchate as well as the status as autocephalous. This means that the Bulgarian church is now independent of the Byzantine church and has its own status as equal to the church in Constantinople. This event of creating a new church and a new patriarchate sets the stage for series of new patriarchs and patriarchates in the 12-14th centuries including the Russian and Serbian Patriarchates.

A few notable church events. In 993 the church begins officially recognizing saints. As the year 1000 approaches, people fear the second coming of Christ. Following from the Book of Revelation, the Devil reigns for 1000 years and then Jesus returns. Hence the fear that at the year 1000, Jesus will return.

Key Figures:

St. Bruno: born in 925 as the youngest son of Henry the Fowler and his second wife Matilda. At a young age Bruno wanted a clerical career. No sooner did he seek it than he received it. The Archbishop of Cologne fell vacant at the same time that Conrad the Red was leading a rebellion against King Otto. Otto, wanting a man he could trust in the position of archbishop, elected Bruno to the position of archbishop. As both a duke of two of the most powerful families in Europe and the archbishop of Germany, he was immensely powerful. King Otto made him is regent and advisor. Bruno continued to live the life of an archbishop combining civil and religious authority until his death in 965.

Saint Odo of Cluny: Born around 878 as the son of Abbo, feudal lord of Deols near Le Mans. Stories of Odo's life tell of his childless parents who on Christmas Eve prayed and received a son. After his birth, his father entrusted him to the Church of St. Martin in Tours who had just begun to be venerated. Odo lived a life of a normal monk of the Middle Ages. He spent six years studying at the Church of Martin in Tours. After his studies he adopted the life of the Benedictine Rule. His abbot, Berno, left the monastery to start Cluny. Some point after Berno left, Odo followed and joined Cluny. Odo continued to work for the reforms of Cluny and the reforms of the monasteries working with 10 different monasteries while in Cluny. After the death of the first abbot of Cluny, the monks elected Odo as abbot but he refused on grounds of unworthiness. The bishop threatened him with excommunication if he didn't accept the office of abbot. Odo continued to work for the reforms for the remainder of his life.

St. Ludmilla: She was born in 860 in Melnik as the daughter of the Sorbian prince Slavibor. She is the great grandmother of St. Wenceslaus. After her marriage to Borivoj of Bohemia, they both

converted to Christianity at the teachings of Methodius. Their efforts to convert Bohemia were not received well. The pagans initially drove them from their county but eventually they converted. She was canonized shortly after her death and is recognized as a saint by both the east and the west.

St. Matilda: she was the daughter of Count Dietrich of Westphalia and Reinhild of Denmark. She was raised by her grandmother, the Abbess of Eufurt convent. Matilda married Henry the Fowler, the Duke of Saxony, who became the Duke after his father in 912 and king in 919. She was noted for her piety and charitable works. Her husband and son criticized her for her excessive charity. She dealt with many revolts in her family between her husband and sons. Each time she was called to court to settle these disputes. Her son, Otto the Great, was crowned emperor while she was in charge of the kingdom. She spent her remaining years in the monastery.

Art and Music



(Above right) 10th century Triptych showing Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. From Constantinople.



(below left) Called the Dormition by the Greeks. Mary is "on her death bed" but she goes to sleep and then wakes up in Heaven.

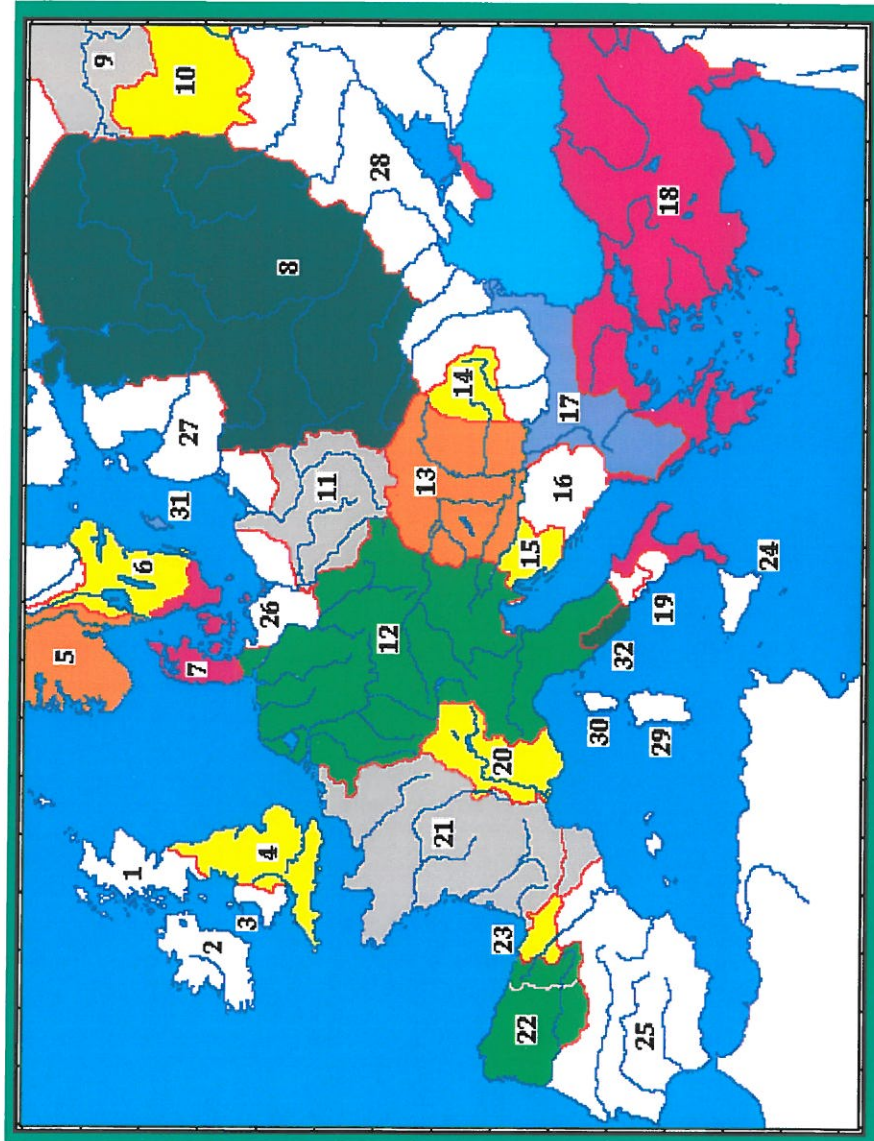
Over the course of the last two centuries many of the Christian countries developed architecture as art. The churches became increasingly elaborate and the interior ornately decorated.



Documents:

The 10th century produced no notable theologians or theological texts. Even the searches I performed to find texts of the 10th century skip this century in their lists.

Europe c. 1000



- 1 Scotland (split in several entities)
- 2 Ireland (split in several entities)
- 3 Wales (split in several entities)
- 4 England
- 5 Norway
- 6 Sweden
- 7 Denmark
- 8 Kievan Rus
- 9 Volga Bulgars
- 10 Mordvinians
- 11 Poland
- 12 Holy Roman Empire (w. Italy)
- 13 Hungary
- 14 Gyula
- 15 Croatia
- 16 Serbia (split in several entities)
- 17 Bulgaria
- 18 Byzantine Empire
- 19 S. Italian Principalities
- 20 Burgundy
- 21 France

- 22 Leon
- 23 Navarra
- 24 Sicily (Musl.)
- 25 Spain (Musl.)
- 26 West Slavic Peoples (pagan)
- 27 Baltic Peoples (pagan)
- 28 Russian Plain (Patzinaks, Cumans)
- 29 Sardinia
- 30 Corsica
- 31 Gotland
- 32 Papal State

