



SESSION 21: TENTH CENTURY & FINAL SEPARATION – CONTENT

- Following the death of Charlemagne the Western Empire began to disintegrate into feudalism of the Middle (Dark) Ages while dealing with Viking (Norse) invasions. In contrast, the Eastern Empire experienced political stability under the Macedonian dynasty and expanded by retaking Crete, Cyprus, Syria and Antioch from the Muslims, and by absorbing Armenia and Bulgaria.
- First, back to 858 and a conflict between Pope Nicholas I (858-867) and Patriarch Photius of Constantinople, called the Schism of Photius. Eastern Emperor Michael III had deposed Patriarch Ignatius in favor of the scholar Photius. Ignatius appealed to Pope Nicholas who sent a delegation to Constantinople to negotiate the restoration of papal jurisdiction over churches in Southern Italy and on the Northern frontier. (Recall that when an earlier pope had refused Justinian II's command to recognize iconoclasm, Justinian took Roman churches in Southern Italy and on the frontier.) And by now Eastern missionaries to Bulgaria had learned of the West's addition of the filioque to the Nicene Creed. Photius refused to negotiate and Nicholas excommunicated him. In response in 862 Photius raised the issue of the filioque and pronounced anathema on Nicholas. The schism was short-lived because Basil I succeeded Emperor Michael by killing him, whereupon he reinstated Patriarch Ignatius. Photius peacefully stepped aside and encouraged the veneration of Ignatius. But the several councils that resulted, Western and Eastern, marked the end of unity represented by the seven Ecumenical Councils.
- In 860 the Rus nation, of Viking origin, unsuccessfully laid siege to Constantinople. They then retreated North and took Kiev from the Slavs, making the capital of their nation, Russia.
- In 868 the Patriarch of Constantinople sent brothers Cyril and Methodius, monks from Thessalonica, to Moravia. Cyril devised the Slavonic alphabet, laying the foundation for Slavonic Christianity in the Balkans and Russia.
- In 882 Pope John VIII was poisoned by members of his family. The papacy immediately sank into violence, nepotism, simony (buying ecclesiastical positions), and discord. Historians consider that John VIII was the last able pope until Leo IX at the end of the tenth century. One historian refers to the tenth century in the West as "the century of iron, lead and darkness". During that 100 years there were 26 popes, 8 of whom were murdered. One died in bed with another man's wife. Pope Stephen VI had his predecessor disinterred, anathematized, placed on exhibition, and mutilated. Among the ardent Christians of the West there was the growing belief that the end of the world was imminent.

6. Of note is the woman Marozia (890-936), who ‘arranged’ for her son, grandson, nephew and two great grandsons to become popes. At 15 she became the mistress of Pope Sergius III. After the death of her husband she married Guy of Tuscany; they attacked Rome, smothered Pope John X and successively installed popes Leo VI and Stephen VII as puppets. In 931 she installed her son as Pope John XI who soon sold his position. After her third marriage she was imprisoned and died.
7. During the tenth century there were notable developments within the Church: 1) In the West *Eigenkirchen* (“my own church”) developed on feudal manors to serve the needs of their lords. They were under the authority of local lords, independent of the papacy. 2) In Rome and Constantinople and the major cities of East and West, liturgies began to involve processions of bishops through the streets and entering churches at the “Little Entrance”, representing the Incarnation of Christ and His ascension. 3) In the East there was a resurgence of Christian art following iconoclasm – the Pantocrator icon was placed in domes and the icon Mother of God appeared in the apse behind altars. 4) In the East second marriages were not encouraged, third marriages required 2-4 years of penance without communion, and fourth marriages were not recognized. In contrast in the West, repeated marriages were accepted as long as there was no living spouse. Interestingly, Byzantine Emperor Leo VI (the Wise) had married three times. His third wife died and he had no male heirs. A concubine bore his son, Constantine VII; he married the concubine and personally crowned her Empress as Patriarch Nicholas refused to do so. Nicholas was deposed and Pope Sergius III (see Marozia) confirmed the fourth marriage. 5) Heresy in both West and East created conflict within Christianity: In the West the monk Gottschalk, studying Augustine, espoused ‘double predestination’. In the East Bulgarian priest Bogomil espoused the belief of ‘Paulicians’ that the material cosmos is evil and that the soul stems from God. He forbade intercourse, meat and wine. His followers were called ‘Bogomils’.
8. In the tenth century monasticism flourished in both the East and West. In the East it was in response to political stability; in the West it was in response to fragmentation of the Roman Empire and the sad state of the papacy. In the West it developed as coenobitic orders – Benedictines, Cistercians, Franciscans and Dominicans; In the East it developed mostly in remote areas (e.g. caves of Cappadocia) as coenobitic (communal), eremitic (hermits alone) and *stylos* (on pillars) forms. It included the development of the great monastic centers of Cluny in the West and Mount Athos in the East. Another fast-growing monastic tradition unique to the East was *hesychasm* (that is, ‘quietness’). Although it had existed since the 300’s, it grew especially under the leadership of Saint Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022), emphasizing monastic spirituality and discipline to acquire knowledge of God through inner prayer (e.g. the Jesus Prayer). It was based upon the teachings of the Cappadocian Fathers, upon the mystical divine light that flows from God. Five hundred years later Saint Gregory Palamas (Thessalonica) would bring hesychasm to its height of theology.
9. In 909, in reaction to papal corruption, a monk Berno told Duke William of Aquitaine (region in France) that, “On the day of judgement the prayers of monks will be more welcome than the baying of hounds”. William donated land for the creation of a monastery (Cluny), by virtue of a deed that specified its independence from the papacy. It grew rapidly, requiring clerical celibacy and no individual ownership. (It did allow ownership of land by the monastery, whose great wealth was its demise two centuries later.) In Cluny monks became ‘cantoris’ (i.e. chanters, singers) after years of extensive training. These cantoris became outstanding and were called upon to spread their hymnology throughout the West. In 998 (November 2) the abbot of Cluny made All Soul’s Day, a feast commemorating the departed, a universal observance. Cluny developed such a monastic

reputation that it became responsible for monasteries throughout France, and then in Spain, Portugal, Northern Italy, Switzerland, Germany and England.

10. Orthodox tradition is that, accompanied by Saint John the Beloved, the Theotokos visited the Greek Southern isthmus and declared it the Holy Mountain. In 859 the monk Saint Euthymius the Younger went there, the first recorded presence of a monastic. In 943 Athanasios the Athonite built the first monastery there, the Great Lavra. This began the tremendous growth of an exclusively monastic presence on Mount Athos. In 978 Athos was granted independence and financial support from the East. In that year 150 monks were in the Great Lavra and 3,000 monks were on Athos. It has since been the center of Orthodox monasticism, and today there are thousands of monks in many monasteries; thousands of Orthodox pilgrims visit Mount Athos each year.
11. In 957 Empress Olga (Helen) of Russia visited Constantinople and became a Christian. She returned to Kiev and built the first Orthodox church in Russia, the Church of Holy Wisdom. In 967 Olga's grandson became Prince Vladimir. A pagan, but surrounded by nations becoming Christian, he studied Western Christianity, Eastern Christianity and Islam. His advisors told him, "If the Greek faith were evil, Olga, who was wiser than all other men, would not have embraced it". Then Vladimir captured the city of Cherson, North of Constantinople, threatening to attack the capitol if Emperor Basil II did not give his daughter in marriage. Basil said he must be baptized. He was. Basil gave her, and Vladimir returned Cherson as a wedding gift. The couple returned to Kiev, and mass baptisms in Russia ensued.
12. Both East and West made great advances in missions. In 924 King Wenceslas of Bohemia became Christian and patron saint as a result of Western evangelism. In 966 the Polish king was baptized, and in 967 Czechoslovakia became a Christian nation. In 995, by Eastern influence, the Hungarian (Magyar) king became Christian. From 961 to 1000 the Byzantine army conquered Crete, Cyprus, Syria (Antioch), Armenia and Bulgaria.
13. In 1009 the Patriarch of Constantinople no longer included popes on his list of patriarchs as doctrinally sound, due to their use of the filioque.
14. Around 1050 Bishop Nicetas of Nicomedia wrote [see Readings].
15. In 1049 Western Emperor Henry III visited Rome. He found the papacy so corrupt that he deposed the pope and installed Bruno of Toul as Pope Leo IX. Leo was earnest, reforming, and a good leader and administrator. His first act was to require celibate clergy down to the level of subdeacon; he supported monasticism and Cluny. In 1049 at the Synod of Reims he required an accounting of Western bishops and accepted the resignations of all who had practiced simony. Leo believed the Donation of Constantine to be genuine and cited it in communication with the Patriarch of Constantinople. He made two other mistakes - appointing Cardinal Humbert as his diplomat, and fighting the Christian Norse who defeated him. Leo, Henry III and Eastern Emperor Constantine IX began negotiating an alliance to resist invading Normans. Leo took Greek (Eastern) churches in Italy. The Eastern patriarch demanded that Latin (Western) churches in Constantinople use Byzantine Rite. The churches refused and the patriarch shut them down. Leo then enlisted Cardinal Humbert, who reasserted the Roman claim to supremacy.

16. In 1053 Constantine IX and the Patriarch of Constantinople expressed support for the defeated and imprisoned Leo. Leo then sent a delegation, led by Humbert, to Constantinople to seek a more conciliatory relationship. On April 19, while the delegation was on its way, Leo died.
17. Arriving in Constantinople, Humbert reminded the Patriarch of Roman supremacy. The Patriarch questioned the validity of the delegation, as Leo had died. On June 16 Humbert laid a papal bull excommunicating the Patriarch of Constantinople on the altar of Hagia Sophia and left. Thus was the separation of the Roman church from Orthodoxy made permanent.