After the Edict of Milan, 3 major monotheistic religions begin to appear:

- Judaism (Tanakh = Torah, Prophets, & Writings)
- Christianity (Old & New Testament)
- Islam (Qur’an)

All three faiths are “religions of the book”....meaning they have written records of God’s will and word.

All three believe in the same God of Abraham and that this God created Earth and the universe.
Early Jewish Art
Overview of Judaism:

- The Jewish people trace their roots to the Hebrews who lived in the land of Canaan (Israel, Lebanon, and Palestine).

- According to the Torah, G-d spoke to Abraham (b. 1870 BCE) and promised him that Canaan would be the home of the Jews. He is the 1st Hebrew and father of the Jews.

- G-d rewards Abraham for his faith and awards Isaac (Abraham’s 2nd son) the Land of Israel (Canaan) for the Jewish people.

- The prophet Moses leads Jacob (Isaac’s son) and his children out of slavery in Egypt to back Canaan. This is known as *The Exodus*.

- Moses is given the 5 books of the *Torah* (including the Ten Commandments) by G-d on top of Mount Sinai.

*3D Rendering of Solomon’s Temple a.k.a. the First Temple.*

*3D Rendering of Solomon’s Temple a.k.a. the First Temple.*
Abraham’s Family Tree

- Terah
  - Nahor
    - Haran
      - Milcah
      - Iscah
      - Lot
    - Bethuel
      - Rebekah
        - Esau
        - Jacob
          - Rachael
          - Leah
    - Laban

- Abraham
  - Sarah
  - Hagar
    - Ishmael
      - Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, Shuah
  - Isaac
    - Rebekah
      - Esau
      - Jacob

12 Patriarchs + Dinah
Early Jewish Art

- Judaism is one of the oldest monotheistic religions...approximately 3000 years old.

- The Ten Commandments (cornerstone of Jewish law) were written on tablets and kept in a wooden box called the Ark of the Covenant.

- In the 10th Century BCE the Jewish King Solomon built the First Temple to house the Ark of the Covenant.

- In 586 BCE King Nebuchadnezzar II & the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, and stole the Ark of the Covenant.

- Jewish law forbade the use of idols.
Early Jewish Art

- Cyrus the Great and the Persians conquered Babylon in 539 BCE, he allowed the Jews to return to their homeland.

- The Jews rebuilt their temple & it became known as the Second Temple of Solomon.

- Titus and the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in 70 CE.

- The site of the Temple(s) is known as the Holy Mount and is the site of...
The Dome of the Rock (691 - 692 CE). Jerusalem, Israel.
Wall with Torah Niche (244 - 245 CE). Tempera paint on plaster wall. Dura-Europos, Syria.

- Synagogues were located in private homes or in buildings made to look like a home.
Early Jewish Art

The Crossing of the Red Sea (244 - 245 CE). Tempera paint on plaster wall. From a wall painting at the house-synagogue, Dura-Europos, Syria.
Early Jewish Art

- Synagogue discovered in 1928 when workers were digging irrigation ditches.
- In the 1960s excavations revealed homes surrounding the synagogue.
- Entire prayer hall floor was covered in mosaic.

Early Jewish Art

- Synagogues are places of worship used for studying the Torah (part of the Old Testament).

- Synagogues could have been any large room were the Torah scrolls were kept.

- In the *Floor Mosaic of the Beit Alpha Synagogue* we see the 12 signs of the Zodiac.

- Figures in the corners are winged personifications of the seasons.

- The center is the representation of the sun in a chariot with the moon and stars.

*Floor Mosaic (5th - 6th Century CE)*. Stone and glass. Beit Alpha Synagogue, Galilee, Israel.
Early Christian Art

Overview of Christianity:

- Belief that God is manifested as a trinity: Father (God), Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus was born as the son of God to a virgin named Mary.

- At the age of 30, Jesus gathered a group of followers and performed miracles of healing and preached the love of God.

- The Christian Bible is divided into 2 parts: the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament.

- The life and teachings of Jesus Christ (approx. 7 - 2 BCE to 30 - 36 CE) were recorded from 70 - 100 CE.

- The Roman Empire officially recognized Christianity as a religion in 313 CE.

The Good Shepherd (3rd Century CE). Marble. Found in Anatolia, Turkey. Located in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio.
Early Christian Art

Overview of Christianity:

- Jesus limited his teachings to Jews...his apostles and later followers preached his teaching to the gentiles (non-Jews).

- Christianity grew rapidly during the 4th century CE

- Many upper-class Romans joined the Christian church.

- Christian communities were organized into “dioceses”

- Senior church officials who governed these dioceses were called “bishops”.

- The bishop’s church is called a “Cathedral”.

Early Jewish Art

- After Jesus is arrested, Peter is jailed in Rome.

- He converted the prisoners and jailers to Christianity, but needed water to baptize them.

- He is seen striking a rock with a staff, which makes water flow from it.

- Christ is seen in the niche flanked by two Christian martyrs.

*Cubiculum of Leonis, Catacomb of Commodilla (Late 4th Century CE). Near Rome, Italy.*
“Pagan” Art

- Constantine was baptized as a Christian on his deathbed in 337 CE and Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman empire.

- Non-Christians had become targets for persecution.

- A farmer plowing a field outside Mildenhall accidentally unearthed 34 pieces of Roman silver dating from the 4th century CE.

- The farmer didn’t tell anyone for 4 years.

- The government confiscated these pieces and claimed they belonged to the Crown rather than the farmer.

- The validity of the farmer’s story has been questioned.


- The Titan sea god, Oceanus, is seen in the middle.

- Maenads & satyrs dance around the platter.

Satyr = follower of Bacchus that is part goat.

Maenad = female follower of Bacchus.
- Bacchus stands with a foot on a panther while he holds grapes...a male follower begs for another drink.

- Hercules is drunk and has to be held up by satyrs.

“Pagan” Art

- Roman patricians Symmachus and Nicomachus were proponents of paganism.

- This diptych shows the close relations between the families...possibly through marriage.

- A priestess with a wreath of ivy around her head (Bacchus) leaves an offering at an alter.

- The oak tree is sacred is Jupiter.

"Pagan" Art

- - The inside of the diptych panels were carved in so that wax could be poured in and written on with a stylus.

Imperial Christian Art

- Early Christian churches were based on one of two Roman models for architecture:

Longitudinal Plan: Longer building with rows of columns divide the *nave*. The columns and the nave lead to the altar.

Central-Plan: Circular plan with the altar in the center.

Old St. Peter’s Basilica (320 - 327 CE). Rome, Italy.

Santa Costanza (350 CE). Rome, Italy.
A. PLAN AND RECONSTRUCTION DRAWING, OLD ST. PETER’S BASILICA
Rome. c. 320–327; atrium added in later 4th century.
Approx. 394’ (120 m) long and 210’ (64 m) wide.

B. PLAN AND SECTION, CHURCH OF SANTA COSTANZA
Rome. c. 350.
Imperial Christian Art

- In Greek religions worshipping occurred in open air temples...

- Christians as a community worshiped in buildings.

- Built in Rome by Bishop Peter of Illyria (modern day Croatia).

- Uses very simple brickwork on the outside, but lots of marble columns with Corinthian capitals on the inside.

Church of Santa Sabina (422 - 432 CE). Rome, Italy.
Church of Santa Sabina (422 - 432 CE). Rome, Italy.

- 24 fluted columns were used from a 2nd Century “pagan” building.

*Spolia* = Latin for spoils...name given to re-used pieces of architecture.
Church of Santa Sabina (422 - 432 CE). Rome, Italy.
Imperial Christian Art

- Church based on a central-plan.
- Originally served as a mausoleum for Constantine’s daughter, *Constantina*.
- Dedicated as a church in 1256 CE as Constantina was sanctified, or made holy.

Santa Costanza = Italian for Constantina

- Mosaics surround the ambulatory (large circular area surrounding the altar).

- Junius Bassus was a Roman official who was baptized just before his death at the age of 42.

- Made up of two levels of sculptures called *registers*.

- Depicts stories found in the Hebrew Bible.

- Christ is shown at the center of both registers.
- Christ rests his feet on Coelus, the pagan god of the heavens..., showing that he is the “Cosmocrator” or ruler of the cosmos on the top register.

- Christ (bottom register) enters Jerusalem on a horse...

syncretism = combining images, symbols, culture, or ideas from other traditions and give them new meaning. (theology/religion)

eclecticism = combining different elements from multiple artworks or architectural pieces into a single work of art or architecture. (art/architecture/psychology)
- Abraham shown passing the test of faith after binding his son, Isaac, to an altar.

Abraham Binding Isaac (5th - 6th Century CE).
Stone and glass. Beit Alpha Synagogue, Galilee, Israel.
Imperial Christian Art

- In 395 CE Emperor Theodosius I split the Roman Empire into 2 divisions.....East and West.

- Ravenna, Italy became the capital of the Western Roman Empire in 402 CE.

Oratory = small chapel

Galla Placidia = Daughter of Honorius (Western Emperor)

Cruciform = cross-shaped

Oratory of Galla Placidia (325 - 326 CE). Ravenna, Italy.
- Galla Placidia ruled the Western Roman Empire from 425 - 440 CE.

- Building became known as the *Mausoleum of Galla Placidia* because it is thought that she and her family once resided there. (left = Constantine III, center = Galla Placidia, right = Galla’s son or brother (unknown).

- In 1577 the contents of the sarcophagus were accidentally burned.
Martyrdom of St. Lawrence (325 - 326 CE). Mosaic. Oratory of Galla Placidia, Ravenna, Italy.