**Byzantine Architecture and Mosaics**

Your task: Please read p. 292 -296 in Art in Focus and answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. The best examples of the Byzantine style were great \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. A) What is the Hagia Sophia?

B) Describe the structure of the Hagia Sophia:

C) Why were mosaics used in the Hagia Sophia?

D) What is the meaning of the mosaic featured in figure 13.11?

1. Define the following terms:

**Atrolabe:**

**Catacombs:**

**Bronze weights:**

1. True or False: When Constantine moved his capital to Constantinople, contacts and trade between East and West were broken off.
2. Why did the Roman emperor move to Ravenna?
3. A) What is the San Vitale?

B) What do the mosaics inside San Vitale depict?

1. Why can’t the figures on the walls of San Vitale and other Byzantine churches be described as realistic or natural?
2. Why did Byzantine artists not aspire to create figures of beauty and grace?

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1. The best examples of the Byzantine style were great \_churches\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. A) What is the Hagia Sophia?

The Hagia Sophia was a church that was built in the 6th century A.D. by the emperor Justinian.

B) Describe the structure of the Hagia Sophia:

It blends the engineering skills of the Romans with a Greek sensitivity for carefully balanced proportions. Its most impressive feature is the dome. The dome is higher than the dome in the Pantheon. The dome rests on four huge piers (verticals pillars) that support arches made out of cut stone.

C) Why were mosaics used in the Hagia Sophia?

Churches as large as Hagia Sophia required special decoration on the inside. Works of art had to have bright colours and be large enough to be seen from great distances. Mosaics met these special needs.

D) What is the meaning of the mosaic featured in figure 13.11?

The meaning: The emperors are proclaiming the loyalty and dedication of church and state to the Virgin and the Child.

1. Define the following terms:

**Atrolabe:** It was an instrument used by ancient astronomers to measure the angles of stars above the horizon. It is representative of Middle Eastern advances in measurement and mathematics.

**Catacombs:** Early Christians found refuge and religious expression in secret tunnels and underground mazes. Catacombs were these places of refuge.

**Bronze weights:** Merchants of the Byzantine empire carried on trade and weighed goods using small weights made of bronze and decorated with silver inlay. These artifacts represent an item of daily commerce from the Byzantine era.

1. True or False: When Constantine moved his capital to Constantinople, contacts and trade between East and West were broken off.
2. Why did the Roman emperor move to Ravenna?

The emperor moved to Ravenna because it was isolated and seemed a safe refuge from barbarian invaders.

1. A) What is the San Vitale?

It was a famous church that Justinian (eastern emperor) had built as a way of rivalling the churches his predecessors had built.

B) What do the mosaics inside San Vitale depict?

One mosaic shows the emperor Justinian with the archbishop, deacons, soldiers, and attendants. The bodies of the most important people overlap those of the lesser ones. The archbishop beside Justinian places his leg in front of the emperor’s cloak, perhaps to show that in spiritual matters the archbishop was the leader of all people, including the emperor.

1. Why can’t the figures on the walls of San Vitale and other Byzantine churches be described as realistic or natural?

They cannot be described as realistic or natural because they are flat and stiff. They are more abstract and formal than early Christian art.

1. Why did Byzantine artists not aspire to create figures of beauty and grace?

They intended their pictures to be religious lessons, presented as simply and clearly as possible. Important court dignitaries were an important part of these lessons. They reminded common people that everyone – even members of the highest royalty – had to pay homage to God to gain salvation.