

History

Lesson 3 of an enquiry of 4 lessons

Constantinople

Enquiry: How powerful was the Pope?

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The Pentarchy

The pope may have seemed like the most obvious leader of the Christian Church in the year 1000. After all, he lived in Rome - the same city where Saint Peter had once lived. Yet the pope's position was not always clear.

Medieval popes had to share their power with other leaders in the Church. These five leaders were called **patriarchs** - together, they formed the **Pentarchy**. The five patriarchs lived in Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Each patriarch had a say in how the church was run.



Constantinople and Rome

In the year 1000, the main challenge to the pope's power *within* the church came from the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Patriarch in Constantinople led the **Eastern Church**, which had different rules to the **Western Church**.

To understand why the Patriarch of Constantinople could challenge the pope, we need to look to ancient history. The Roman Emperor Constantine I had moved his capital from Rome to Constantinople in 330. Since then, the people in Constantinople claimed to be the 'true Romans'. This challenged the power of the pope.



Latin and Greek

The Eastern and Western Churches struggled to talk to one another because they spoke different languages. The Eastern Church - led from Constantinople - spoke Greek. The Western Church - led from Rome - spoke Latin. As time went on, these churches became more different and more distant.

When they did speak to each other, they argued about which version of Christianity was correct. As more time passed, tensions between the Eastern and Western churches kept growing and growing.



Different rituals and beliefs

The Eastern Church thought that the Western Church had changed some parts of Christianity. Rome's use of unleavened bread in the communion and the *filioque* (adding the phrase 'and the son' to the Nicene Creed) were seen as **innovations**. The Eastern Church wanted to remove these new **rituals**.

Meanwhile, the Western Church believed that the holy fools, dendrites and stylites in Constantinople as were also innovations that must be stopped.

The powerful Patriarch of Constantinople challenged the pope's power. To try and solve this problem, the pope made a decision in 1054 that would change the church forever...



Glossary

Patriarchs - people who led different areas of Christian church.

Pentarchy - the five patriarchs of Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem.

Eastern Church - the Church led by the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Western Church - the Church led by the pope in Rome.

Rituals - religious ceremonies like the communion, where some Christians drink wine and eat bread to represent the blood and body of Jesus Christ.

Innovation - changes to the original way of doing things. In the medieval Church, innovation was seen as wrong.



Comprehension Questions

1. How many patriarchs were there in the Pentarchy?
2. Who led the Eastern Church?
3. Why did the Eastern and Western Churches find it very difficult to talk to each other?
4. What Western ideas and rituals did the Eastern Church claim were innovations?
5. What Eastern practices did the Western Church claim were innovations?

