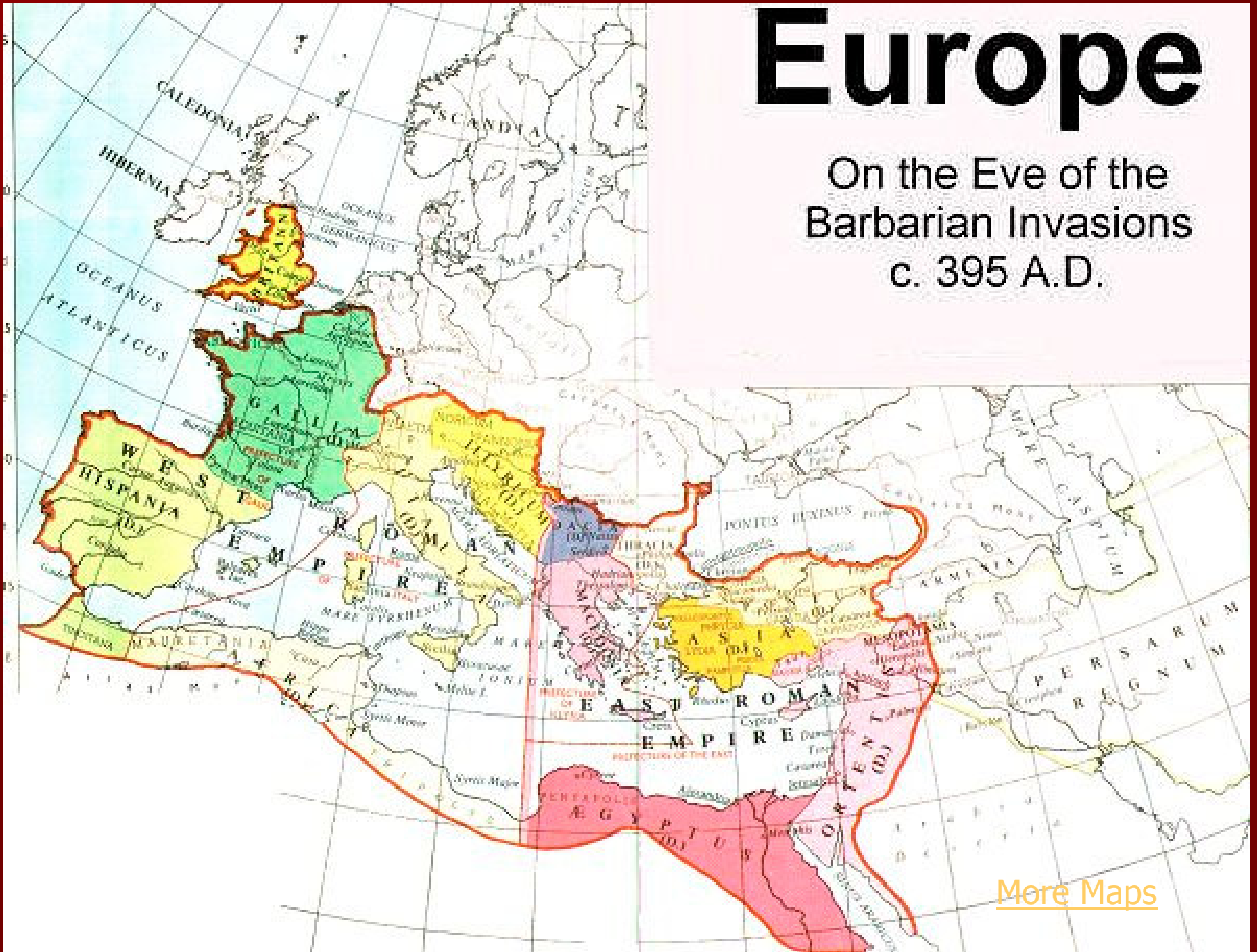


Early Christian Music

Beginnings of Western European
Style

Europe

On the Eve of the
Barbarian Invasions
c. 395 A.D.



[More Maps](#)

Dates

- 313 – Edict of Milan legalizes Christianity
- 330 Constantine makes Byzantium capital of East Roman Empire
- 455 – Vandals sack Rome
- 590-604 – Pope Gregory (Gregorian Chant)
- 768-814 – Charlemagne
- 1050 – Height of Holy Roman Empire
- 1095 – First Crusade

Building on Greek and Roman

- Boethius – 6th-century
- Translated 30 Aristotle books from Greek to Latin
- Wrote “Consolations of Philosophy” in prison
- Common source for most Medieval music treatises – Foundation of Western music
 - 1. Music of the Universe
 - 2. Human Music
 - 3. Instrumental Music and Song

Still Attached to Religion

- Needed to separate proper Church music from rude folk music
- Early Christian music sounded much like ancient Jewish psalm singing
- So: Hebrew, Greek and Latin sources (just as in Theology and visual arts)
- After much experimentation, Western sacred music in 6th century was codified in Gregorian chant

Arian Heresy

- 4th Century: Arius encouraged Christian hymns with melodies from drinking songs and theatrical tunes
- Brought in lots of converts
- 4th Cen: St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan
- Eastern (Byzantium) sound: more florid, contemplative
- Western (Rome) sound: simpler, metrically even

Constantinople vs. Rome

- Eastern Church kept a tighter rein on thought and religion-very conservative
- Roman Christian art was more of the people

Beginnings of Technique and Notation

- Odo of Cluny – Abbot from 927-942
- Arranged tones A-G in neumatic notation
- Measured spaces on monochord (relative pitches)
- Guido of Arezzo (11th-Cen) built on this by adding lines of staff for reference
- Solmization (do-re-mi)

Evolution

- Chant (Plainsong)
- 9TH, 10TH, 11TH Centuries:
- Polyphony
- Organum

