

4. THE PERIOD OF CONFUSION FROM 476 TO 1042 A.D.

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Byzantium was the chief power and nominally never relinquished its claims. In 535 and 544, expeditions were made to reconquer broken Italy for the Byzantines by Belisarius and eventually the Exarchate of Ravenna was set up.

In Constantinople Justinian promulgated his famous code of the Roman Law. However, by 568 the wildest of the German tribes, the Lombards, descended into Italy and, in a few years because the Italians were indifferent and the Byzantines too weak, they occupied a large part of the country.

Some parts in the south, principally Bari, remained in Byzantine hands and so Italy was split into several parts and remained so for 1300 years.

During this period and until 774 Italy had three capitals: Rome which was the centre of the Church movement; Ravenna for the Byzantines and Pavia for the Lombards.

It is interesting to note that the Lombards became deeply religious, and it was their king who made over to the Pope the district of Sutri which was the first temporal dominion of the Church and later became a political factor of the greatest importance for hundreds of years.

In the south, Byzantine rule did not relax and was broken only by incursions of the Lombards from the north and of the Arabs, then a very dynamic people who had conquered Sicily. They made the Mediterranean an Arab lake. They attacked Rome and Monte Cassino and threatened Southern Italy until the capture of the Arab fortress on the Garigliano in 915.

Art and culture had virtually disappeared. The books on architecture by Vitruvius were lost for about 1500 years. Some of Livy were lost for ever. The only glimmer of light during the Dark Ages came from Charlemagne. He gave sufficient stability to his empire to enable the arts, which were essentially Christian, to emerge.

449 - 616 A.D. Conquest of England by Angles, Saxons and Jutes.

950 A.D. Kupe discovers New Zealand.

5. PERIOD OF NORMAN OCCUPATION, 1042 TO 1194 A.D.

At the beginning of the 11th Century Sicily was in the hands of the Arabs; Apulia and Calabria were under the feeble rule of Constantinople; Gaeta, Naples and Amalfi were city republics; Benevento, Capua and Salerno were capitals of Lombard principalities.



**Constantine and Fausta.**

From a Contemporary Medallion.

About the time William the Conqueror was taking over England, the Normans were one of the most virile peoples in Europe. Norman pilgrims started to arrive at the shrine of St. Michael on Monte Gargano and began the penetration of the south. Soldiers of fortune fought in the service of rival states and the first permanent Norman garrison was at Aversa.

Finally a family known as the Hautevilles set up a kingdom in Southern Italy and Sicily. The area on the mainland was virtually the foundation of the kingdom of Naples. This was a most important epoch, for Byzantine domination practically ceased and what dealings Italy had with the east she had within her own rights,