



Smithsonian Associates

Constantine the Great: The First Christian Roman Emperor?

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Wednesday, November 1, 2023 - 12:00 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. ET

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT: A TIMELINE

272/3: Constantine born in Naissus (Niš, Serbia)

284: Accession of Diocletian

293: Formation of the Tetrarchy (Diocletian and Maximian as Augusti, Galerius and Constantius Chlorus as Caesars)

303-313: The Great Persecution

305: Abdication of Diocletian and Maximian; Galerius and Constantius Chlorus become Augusti

306: Death of Constantius Chlorus; Constantine hailed Augustus in York

310: Revolt and death of Maximian; Constantine's "Pagan Vision"

312: The "Vision of Constantine"; Battle of Milvian Bridge, defeat and death of Maxentius

313: The "Edict of Milan"; Donatist Schism in North Africa

314: Council of Arles

315: Dedication of the Arch of Constantine

c.318/321: Outbreak of the "Arian Controversy"

324: Constantine's conquest of the east, death of Licinius

325: The Council of Nicaea (the first ecumenical council); *homoousios*

326: Deaths of Crispus and Fausta

326/7: Pilgrimage of Helena to Jerusalem

330: Dedication of Constantinople

335: Dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem

337: Baptism and Death of Constantine; accession of Constantine II, Constantius II and Constans

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT: SOME SUGGESTED READING

Constantine has been a figure of fascination ever since his death, so there are many books available which explore his life and his legacy for both Christianity and the Roman empire. The following suggestions provide some possible starting points for those who wish to read further, whether on how interpretations of Constantine have changed down the years or on the wider world which Constantine helped to shape.

General Reading

P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity, AD 150-750* (1971)

Av. Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire, AD 284-430* (1993)

P. Heather, *Christendom: The Triumph of a Religion* (2022)

Older Studies

J. Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great* (German original 1852, English translation 1949)

N.H. Baynes, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church* (1929)

A.H.M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (1948)

More Recent Books

T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (1981)

H.A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (2000)

C.M. Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire* (2004)

N. Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (2006)

R. Van Dam, *The Roman Revolution of Constantine* (2007)

P. Leithart, *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (2010)

Primary Sources

Good if slightly dated translations of Eusebius and Lactantius can be found on the Christian Classics Ethereal Library website (<https://www.ccel.org/fathers2>), including the many letters of Constantine preserved in Eusebius' writings.

Extracts from these works and the other key literary sources on Constantine can also be found in D.M. Gwynn, *Christianity in the Later Roman Empire: A Sourcebook* (2015)

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