

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88209-5 - The Roman Revolution of Constantine

Raymond Van Dam

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE ROMAN REVOLUTION OF CONSTANTINE

The reign of the emperor Constantine (306–337) was as revolutionary for the transformation of Rome's Mediterranean empire as that of Augustus, the first emperor three centuries earlier. The abandonment of Rome signaled the increasing importance of frontier zones in northern and central Europe and the Middle East. The foundation of Constantinople as a new imperial residence and the rise of Greek as the language of administration previewed the establishment of a separate eastern Roman empire. Constantine's patronage of Christianity required both a new theology of the Christian Trinity and a new political image of a Christian emperor. Raymond Van Dam explores and interprets each of these events. His book complements accounts of the role of Christianity by highlighting ideological and cultural aspects of the transition to a post-Roman world.

Raymond Van Dam is Professor of History and Director of the Interdepartmental Program in Greek and Roman History at the University of Michigan. He is the author of numerous books, most recently *Families and Friends in Late Roman Cappadocia* and *Becoming Christian: The Conversion of Roman Cappadocia*.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88209-5 - The Roman Revolution of Constantine
Raymond Van Dam
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

THE ROMAN REVOLUTION OF CONSTANTINE



RAYMOND VAN DAM
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88209-5 - The Roman Revolution of Constantine
Raymond Van Dam
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA
www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521882095

© Raymond Van Dam 2008

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2008

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Van Dam, Raymond.
The Roman revolution of Constantine / Raymond Van Dam.
p. cm.

Appendices include material in Latin with English translation.
Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-88209-5 (hardback)

I. Constantine I, Emperor of Rome, d. 337. 2. Church history – Primitive and early church, ca. 30-600. I. Title.

BRI80.v36 2007

937'.08092-dc22 2007008119

ISBN 978-0-521-88209-5 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88209-5 - The Roman Revolution of Constantine

Raymond Van Dam

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For Jody

“The look, the light in your eyes”

– George Strait, “Carried Away”

CONTENTS



PREFACE  *ix* ABBREVIATIONS  *xi*

Introduction  AUGUSTUS AND CONSTANTINE ◉ 1

SECTION I. A ROMAN EMPIRE WITHOUT ROME ◉ 19

1. CONSTANTINE'S RESCRIPT TO HISPELLUM ◉ 23

2. HIS FAVORITE ROOSTER: OLD ROME
AND NEW ROME ◉ 35

3. "HOPE IN HIS NAME": THE FLAVIAN DYNASTY ◉ 79

4. READING AHEAD ◉ 130

SECTION II. A GREEK ROMAN EMPIRE ◉ 143

5. CONSTANTINE'S DIALOGUE WITH ORCISTUS ◉ 150

6. "THE MOST HOLY RELIGION": PETITIONING
THE EMPEROR ◉ 163



7. "THE ROMAN LANGUAGE": LATIN AND THE
GREEK EAST ◉ 184

8. FALLING WATER ◉ 217

viii CONTENTS

SECTION III. EMPEROR AND GOD ◉ 221

9. “BEGOTTEN OF THE GODS”: THE IMPERIAL TETRARCHY ◉ 228

10. “BEGOTTEN FROM THE FATHER”: THE
CHRISTIAN TRINITY ◉ 25211. “ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON”: HISTORY BECOMES
THEOLOGY ◉ 28312. THE SEARCH FOR THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE
OF THE EMPEROR ◉ 317*Epilogue*  ONE EMPEROR ◉ 354APPENDIX I. HISPELLUM: DATE, TEXT, AND TRANSLATION  363APPENDIX 2. ORCISTUS: DATES, TEXT, AND TRANSLATION  368EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS  373BIBLIOGRAPHY  385 INDEX  427

PREFACE



AN EARLY INTEREST IN CLASSICAL STUDIES LED ME INSTEAD TO LATE antiquity. As an undergraduate I was fortunate to study with a classics professor who enjoyed reading patristics texts; as a graduate student I wrote my doctoral dissertation under the supervision of a distinguished historian of the later Roman empire. Their direction expanded my sense of antiquity to include early Christianity and early medieval and early Byzantine history. Now their influence lives on in my own teaching and research. As a teacher I assign my students to read books and articles by Dick Whittaker, my dissertation supervisor. As a researcher I consult volumes of church fathers from the library of Bob Otten, my undergraduate classics professor. At Caesarea in Palestine scholars such as Jerome studied in the great library founded by Origen and augmented by bishop Eusebius. Among the books they read were the writings of Origen and Eusebius. All of us who work as professors deeply appreciate this fulfilling sense of intellectual continuity from our teachers to our students.

Courses on the Roman empire, late antiquity, early Christianity, medieval history, and Byzantine history without fail include Constantine. Since one delight of teaching such courses is the anticipation of the inevitable arguments, over the decades the best critics of my ideas about Constantine and his age have been students, both undergraduates and graduates. During the past several years it has been my privilege to enjoy the company of a remarkable group of graduate students here at the University of Michigan. These students have completed their degrees in my home department of history, my two adjunct departments of classical studies and Near Eastern studies, the Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology, and now our new Interdepartmental Program in Greek and Roman History. Many of them have taught with me as graduate student instructors; they have also shaped my thinking about late antiquity through their own research on ancient and

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88209-5 - The Roman Revolution of Constantine
Raymond Van Dam
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

X PREFACE

postclassical history. The highest reward of teaching is the intellectual stimulation of learning from students.

Research is simultaneously a solitary undertaking and a collegial enterprise. We think and write alone, but we also read the books and articles of hundreds of scholars from around the world. The output of publications on Constantine and related issues is both overwhelmingly large and impressively brilliant. A quick count reveals that I have met in person only a small percentage of the contemporary authors cited in my bibliography. It is hence all the more gratifying to acknowledge my pleasure in having met the rest of you in your scholarship.

One essential requirement for research is the kindness of friends. My department generously awarded me a one-semester leave from teaching. The comments from the audience at a seminar organized by the Miller Center for Historical Studies at the University of Maryland were most stimulating, and Ken Holum, Marsha Rozenblit, Art Eckstein, and Jeannie Rutenburg were gracious hosts. Noel Lenski sent me an advance copy of his excellent *Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*. Kent Rigsby and Geoffrey Schmalz kindly read and commented on early drafts. As a senior editor at Cambridge University Press, Beatrice Rehl has been an encouraging friend and a wonderful patron saint for all of us in ancient studies.

ABBREVIATIONS



ACW	Ancient Christian Writers (Westminster)
Budé	Collection des Universités de France publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé (Paris)
CChr.	Corpus Christianorum (Turnhout)
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum latinarum</i> (Berlin)
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum (Vienna)
FC	Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.)
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte (Berlin)
<i>ICUR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Christianae urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores</i> , ed. J. B. de Rossi (Rome, 1857–1888), 2 vols.
<i>ICUR</i> nova series	<i>Inscriptiones Christianae urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores</i> , nova series, ed. A. Silvagni, A. Ferrua et al. (Rome and Vatican City, 1922–)
<i>IGR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes</i> , ed. R. Cagnat et al. (Paris, 1906–1927), Vols. 1, 3–4
<i>ILCV</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae veteres</i> , ed. E. Diehl (Berlin, 1925–1931), 3 vols.
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae selectae</i> , ed. H. Dessau (reprint: Berlin, 1962), 3 vols. in 5
LCL	Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA)
<i>MAMA</i>	<i>Monumenta Asiae Minoris antiqua</i> . Vol. 1 = Calder (1928). Vol. 4 = Buckler, Calder and Guthrie (1933). Vol. 5 = Cox and Cameron (1937). Vol. 6 = Buckler and Calder (1939). Vol. 7 = Calder (1956)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae historica (Berlin, Hannover, and Leipzig)

xii ABBREVIATIONS

NPNF	A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (reprint: Grand Rapids)
OGIS	<i>Orientalis graeci inscriptiones selectae: supplementum sylloges inscriptionum graecarum</i> , ed. W. Dittenberger (Leipzig, 1903–1905), 2 vols.
PG	<i>Patrologia graeca</i> (Paris)
PL	<i>Patrologia latina</i> (Paris)
PLRE	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> (Cambridge). Vol. 1, A.D. 260–395, ed. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris (1971). Vol. 2, A.D. 395–527, ed. J. R. Martindale (1980)
SChr.	Sources chrétiennes (Paris)
SIG ³	<i>Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum</i> , ed. W. Dittenberger (Third edition: Leipzig, 1915–1924), 4 vols.
TAM	<i>Tituli Asiae Minoris</i> . Vol. 2 = Kalinka (1930–1944). Vol. 3 = Heberdey (1941).
Teubner	Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanorum Teubneriana (Leipzig and Stuttgart)
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool)

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88209-5 - The Roman Revolution of Constantine
Raymond Van Dam
Frontmatter
[More information](#)



Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88209-5 - The Roman Revolution of Constantine
Raymond Van Dam
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

