



# The Roman Revolution of Constantine

*By Raymond Van Dam*

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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.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"Van Dam's illuminating insights and careful scholarship are matched by playful interpretations of ambiguous evidence and an eminently readable prose. The approach of the book is particularly refreshing as it brings together at least two fields of study which have far too often been separated in late Roman and early Byzantine scholarship: political philosophy and the development of Christian theology. Van Dam's analysis of each in light of the other enriches our understanding of both and exposes the complex internal dynamics of late Roman society and culture that are obscured by a narrower focus on Constantine's biography or conversion. For this reason the book is important for patristic theologians and scholars of early Christianity as well as for Roman, late antique, and Byzantine historians. Van Dam's study of Emperor Constantine constitutes a major reappraisal of this pivotal figure for Roman history and western civilization as a whole. Despite its importance, however, the book will surely not be the final word for either popular or scholarly discussions of the famous Christian emperor. New generations will feel compelled to evaluate him afresh in light of their own interpretive stances. Indeed Van Dam has intimated as much in his Introduction, suggesting that "as we repeatedly construct Constantine, we are Eusebius' true heirs." --BMCR

"This diverse, far-reaching book is a penetrating, original study of a second Roman revolution, when the Roman Empire switched to a new universal religion within a generation. Highly recommended," --Choice

### **About the Author**

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

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