

The not disputed that
constantine did much



The Emperor Constantine I was the sole ruler of the Roman world between 324 and 337 C. E. His reign was likely the most crucial of all the Roman emperors in determining the future course of western civilization.

Constantine began the process of making Christianity the religious foundation of Europe. Also, his Constantinople replaced the city of Rome as the center of imperial power. This set the stage for the occurrences of the Middle Ages.

His philosophical view of monarchy became the foundation for the concept of the divine right of kings, which prevailed in Medieval Europe. In 324, after his defeat of Licinius, Constantine decided to rename Byzantium after himself and make it a governmental rival of the old Empire. For the first time a Christian emperor had ascended the Roman throne. Although there is some dispute about the depth of his faith, it is not disputed that Constantine did much to entrench Constantinople and eventually much of Europe in Christianity. Among the basic criteria for choosing Byzantium as the location were its strategic geographical position between Europe and Asia and its strategic value for the command of the seas and of the main routes over land from all directions.

The new capital was to be the characteristic expression of the new Christian spirit of the Empire. The exhaustion of the old Rome had been already widely realized. Surprisingly, in spite of this obvious imbalance in wealth, power, population and general vibrancy, The Byzantium Empire and old Rome briefly participated equally with the political status of one imperial capital. They equally participated in the royal authority of the bearers in the east and west. Gregory the Theologian has expressed this synergy of the two cities

with interesting imagery: Nature did not give two suns, but there are two cities of Rome, both luminaries of the entire Ecumene, the ancient and the new state, differing among themselves inasmuch as the one shines before the sun and the other after it, one beauty matching another beauty by means of a synergy (Carmina, 562ff, PG 37).

Constantine had built Constantinople to mirror the original empire. It had its own slaves, poor masses, hippodrome, and religion. It grew and developed during the fourth and the fifth centuries to such an extent, that it came to be the brightest single expression of the identity of the Empire.

This was obviously coupled with a steep decline in resources in the west. However, Constantinople would quickly overshadow all the elements of brilliance of old Rome and become the new head of the Empire. As a center of administrative economic and spiritual life, Constantinople gradually acquired its own distinctive elements of brilliance, wealth and influence. This incredible building plan put a strain on finances. Constantine may have sold Licinius' war chest, which he had captured in battle, to pick up some of the slack.

The sixth century Greek historian Zosimus notes that Constantine's taxes were initially so excessive that fathers were forced to hire out their daughters as prostitutes to pay taxes. The emperor seems to have been an easy target of criticism for his financial dealings. Christianity in Constantinople When Constantine I had come to power, the empire was tormented by economic hardship and insecurity. The impoverished masses had been failed by their gods and searched for salvation.

Christianity, a religion which had been originated by the tired, poor and meek outcasts, was finally ready to be embraced by these hungry masses. St. Pauls promises of a new life after death and elimination of the old Jewish restrictions made this move possible. Constantine simply institutionalized it. The ecumenical dynamism of Christianity emerged as a power for the renewal of the structures and the institutions of the disorganized Empire. Constantine made some other major institutional changes, which would change Christianity forever.

For one, he published two edicts. One provided compensation for anyone who had been persecuted for his Christian beliefs by the old empire, the other was law that gave Christianity a preferential status in the empire. Although proclaiming tolerance for the old religions, Constantine asserted that ritualistic purity and sanctity were conditional for the righteous and obedience to God's sacred laws that were to be taught within the church. Because Constantine wanted