

IV.1 Historical  
BackgroundHISTORICAL BACKGROUNDIV.1.a. Roman  
EmpireThe Roman Empire

Remember that we are not interested in the general memorization of all the rulers of Rome but just in those that have some special bearing on our course of study. In this age those rulers are:

- Constantine (312-337)
- Constantine's sons (337-361)
- Julian the Apostate (361-363)
- Theodosius (379-395)

And the following divided empire rulers in the west:

- Honorius -(423)
- Valentinian III (455)

and in the east:L

- Theodosius II -(451)
- Marcian (457)
- Leo (474)

The east/west division complicates matters for us but it is a necessary observation at this time as our period (the Imperial Age) ends with the fall of the western empire (476) although the eastern empire will continue to 1453.

Constantine (312-337)

His rise to power in the Empire has been discussed in an earlier section. His forceful personality and military skill contributed to his position "at the top." The depth of his religious interest will remain uncertain in my mind but I do not doubt but what there was some change in heart or attitude at the Mulvian bridge or slightly earlier. I am prone to give persons the benefit of the doubt in such cases and it is hard to see much on his part that looks like duplicity in this matter. Whether he used the church for personal gain and political advancement is, I think, a sufficiently open question that we should not try to solve it in this course. He did desire a unity of ecclesiastical thought which would make for a stronger empire but this in itself is hardly blameworthy. Those who want an enjoyable exercise into areas of this sort will enjoy reading Dorothy Sayers drama: THE EMPEROR CONSTANTINE.