

## **Constantine and the Battle of the Milvian Bridge**

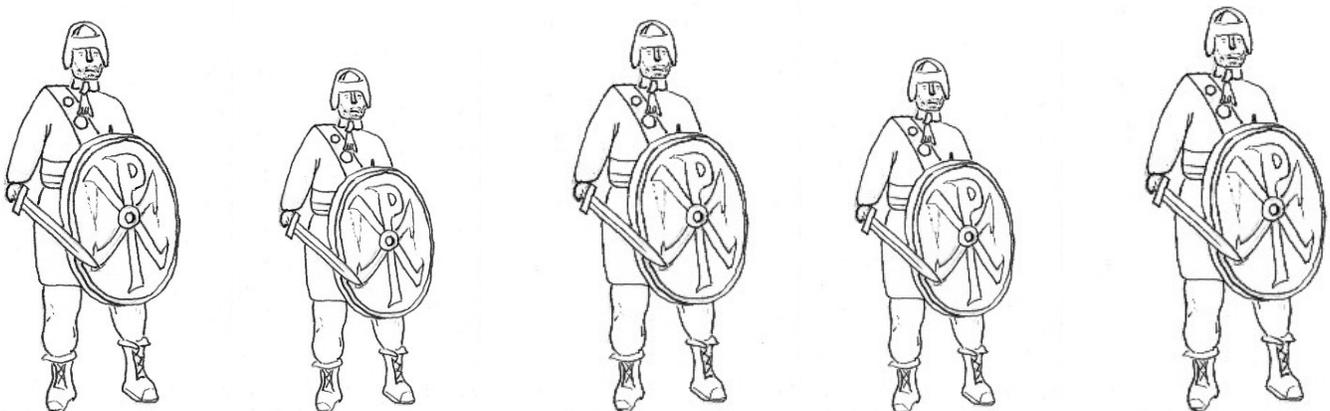
As a young man Emperor Constantine was a pagan who worshipped the false-Roman god **Sol Invictus** (The Unconquered Sun). He was coronated in York, England as ruler of the Western Empire. He had prepared and gathered his army to fight against another Emperor, Maxentius, in October of 312. Emperor Constantine saw the sign of the Holy Cross as light in the sky with the words "In this sign conquer". Constantine responded to this call from God by having every soldier paint a **Chi-Ro** on his shield. The battle was a huge victory. The other army had made a **pontoon bridge** and when they tried to retreat, back across the Tiber the bridge fell apart. The river blocked their escape and Constantine's army won the battle! He was unifying the West and East into the one Byzantine Empire.

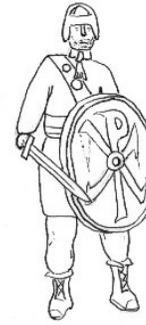
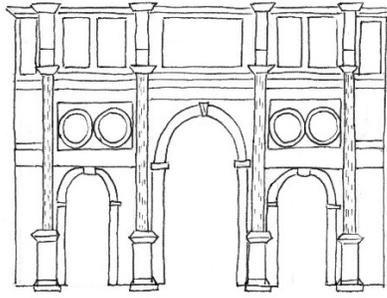
The **Roman Senate** built a huge monument to mark the victory; it was also the ten-year anniversary of Constantine's reign. They weren't convinced about the story they heard of the vision from the God of the Christians so when they wrote the inscription on the **Triumphal Arch** of Constantine, they kept it vague. It could give thanks to either the Sol Invictus or the true God.

After this, things happened quickly. The very next year Constantine declared freedom of religion with the **Edict of Milan**. After 313 years, of being arrested just for being faithful to Christ imagine how happy Christians must have been. They didn't have to hide their icons or crosses anymore. Christians who had lived in fear, hiding, now lived openly.

Ten years later, in 324 Emperor Constantine defeated his last challenger and reunited the Empire. He moved the capital to a new city; and named it Constantinople (Constantine's City).

The **Council of Nicea** met in 325. With peace in the land, Constantine had time to go in person.





## Terms to investigate

The Roman god Sol Invictus

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Chi-Ro

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Pontoon Bridge

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Roman Senate

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Triumphal Arch of Constantine

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Edict of Milan

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Council of Nicea

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## Resources

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/battle-milvian-bridge>

<https://www.biography.com/political-figure/constantine-i>

<http://www.romanarmy.net/constantine.shtml>

[https://orthodoxwiki.org/Constantine the Great](https://orthodoxwiki.org/Constantine_the_Great)

