

# Transition From Pagan To Christian

William Sterling



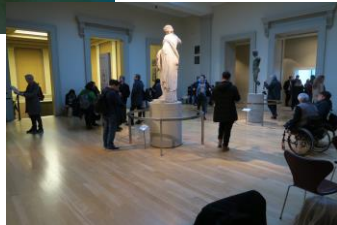
city lit



Fragments of a Colossal Bronze Statue of Constantine, Rome



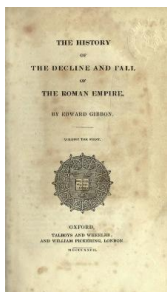
Hinton St Mary Mosaic in the British Museum c. 1985



Today there are statues and a Café in the same position



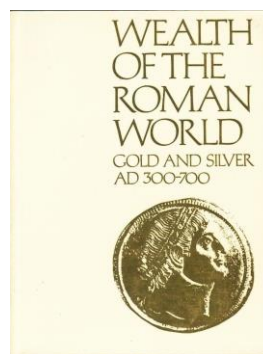
Bellerophon ↑ and Jesus ↓



Edward Gibbon by Reynolds



“the pure and genuine influence of Christianity may be traced in its beneficial, though imperfect, effects on the barbarian proselytes of the North. If the decline of the Roman empire was hastened by the conversion of Constantine, his victorious religion broke the violence of the fall, and mollified the ferocious temper of the conquerors.”

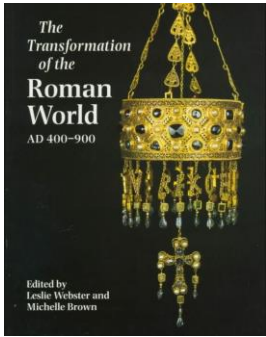


“Although we speak of a religious crisis in the late Roman Empire, there is little, real sign that the transition from paganism to Christianity was fundamentally difficult.”

Dr J P C Kent of the Museum’s Coins and Medals Department “The World of Late Antiquity”

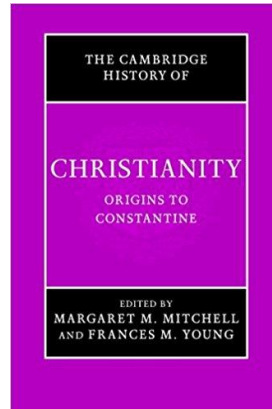
“Decorative art shows no clear division between paganism and Christianity”

K S Painter “Gold and Silver from the Late Roman World Fourth-Fifth Centuries.”



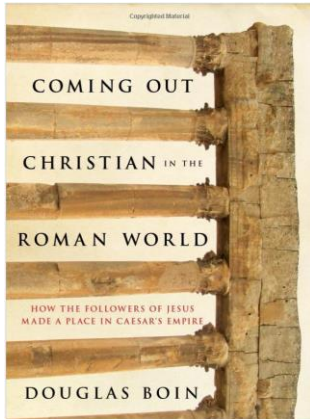
“The new religion and new ecclesiastical practices were a steady focal point around which the new ideological currents and social realignments revolved, as Christianity gradually penetrated the various social strata before becoming the official religion of the state. At the same time, important aspects of the classical spirit and civilisation still survived to complete our picture of late antiquity.”

Eutychia Kourkoutidou-Nicolaidou  
 “From the Elysian Fields to the Christian paradise”

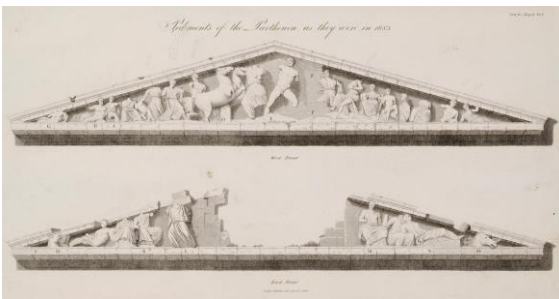
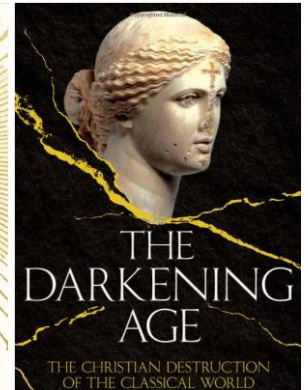
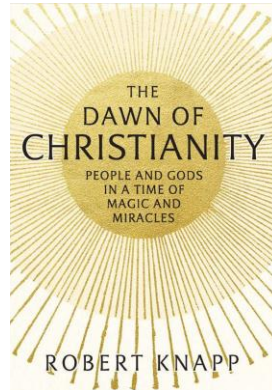


“The Christian culture that would emerge in late antiquity carried more of the genes of its “pagan” ancestry than of the peculiarly Christian mutations.”

Wayne A Meeks “Social and ecclesial life of the earliest Christians”



“I don't think there was ever anything wrong with the ancient world. It was perfectly fine the way it was - before it changed. And I knew whom to blame.”



Jacques Carrey's Drawings of the Parthenon Pediments 1674







Bronze Statuette of Nero as Alexander from Gaul found in Suffolk, British Museum



Marble bust of Trajan celebrating his Decennalia in 107/8



Carved gem of Decius, British Museum



Marble bust of Diocletian, Istanbul



Coin of Licinius I, British Museum



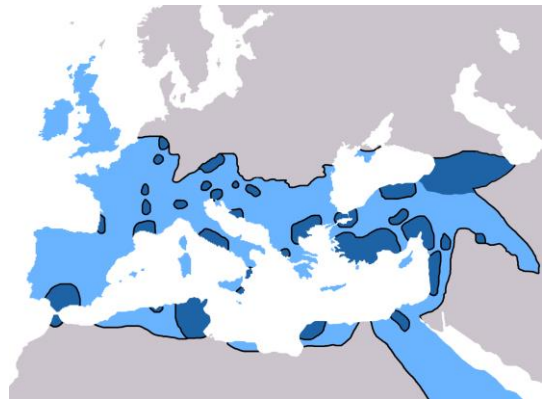
Coin of Galerius, British Museum



Constantine's Arch



The Inscription on Constantine's Arch translates as:  
 "To the Emperor Caesar Flavius Constantinus, the greatest, pious, and blessed Augustus:  
 because he, inspired by the divine (or divinity), and by the greatness of his mind, has  
 delivered the state from the tyrant and all of his followers at the same time, with his army  
 and just force of arms, the Senate and People of Rome have dedicated this arch, decorated  
 with triumphs"



Spread of Christianity Dark Blue before Constantine, Light Blue up to c. 600



Fragments of the Colossal Acrolithic Statue, Rome with helpful tourist to show scale



Reconstruction of Constantine Statue from the New Basilica in Rome



Jupiter based on the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, British Museum



The Great Cameo showing Constantine with his family crowned by the goddess of Victory and a chariot drawn by centaurs, Leiden



Helena with a reworked head on an earlier statue (Rome) and a pepper pot from the Hoxne hoard (British Museum)



Helena's Sarcophagus, Vatican



Coin of Constantine from 313 with Sol Invictus behind him

Cameo of Constantine being crowned by Constantinople





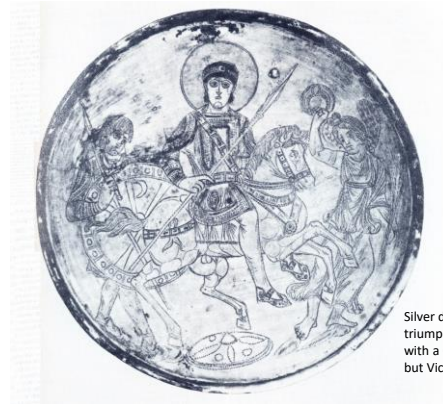
Constantine and family watching the chariot racing in Constantinople from the base of the obelisk in the Circus Maximus of the new city



Mosaic of Charioteer Eros from Tunisia 4th



Terracotta bowl with charioteer c. 375



Silver dish showing the triumph of Constantius II with a Chi-Rho on a shield but Victoria crowning him



Silver gilt missorium of Theodosius I to celebrate his decennalia 388 still using Classical figures at the bottom

### ΙΧΘΥΣ

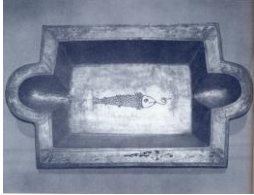
- Iota (i) for *Iēsous* (Ἰησοῦς) - Jesus
- Chi (ch) for *Christos* (Χριστός) - anointed
- Theta (th) for *Theou* (Θεοῦ) - God's
- Upsilon (y) for *(h)gios* (Υἱός) - Son
- Sigma (s) for *sōtēr* (σωτήρ) - Saviour



Early Christian inscription from Ephesus



Fish in a spoon from Thetford Hoard C4th, BM  
Fish dish from Kaiseraugst 351



Triclinium mosaic from Populonia, BM

Fish and bread from Roman catacombs



Christian funerary stele for Licinia Amias early C3rd Rome – note Dis Manibus, fish and anchor

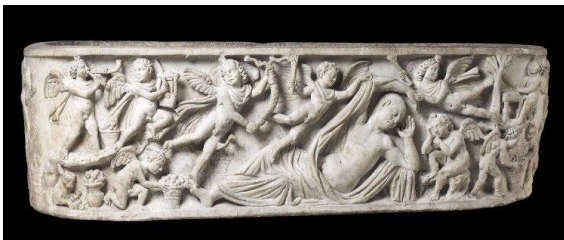
Gravestone for Titus Valerius Pudens C1st Lincoln, BM – note dolphins (ie fish in Roman terms) and trident



Two Roman marriage rings C4th and C5th, British Museum



Jason and the Golden Fleece Red Figure Attic Plate



Roman Sarcophagus c. 250, British Museum



Jonah Sarcophagus c. 280-300, British Museum – note lamb and peacock





Sarcophagus from Cemetery of St Calixtus Rome showing typical Marriage roundel with Jonah beneath



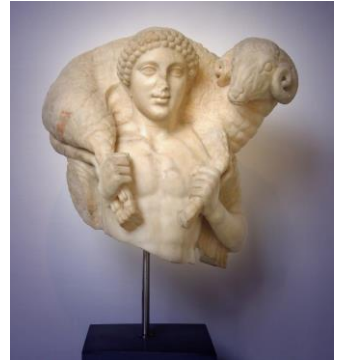
Jonah Sarcophagi from Rome ↑ and British Museum is ↓



Jonah figure from 250-280 now in Cleveland Museum



Moschophoros c. 570 BC



Roman copy of Kriophoros of Kalamis



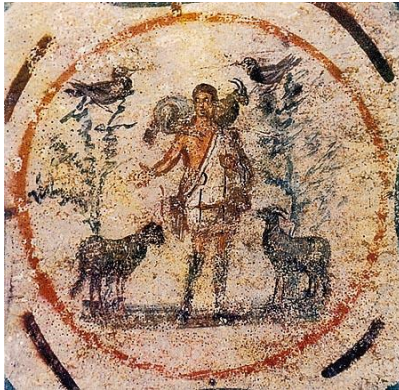
The Good Shepherd from the catacombs of Domitilla Rome



Silver bowl from the Carthage Treasure C4th, British Museum



Christian Baptistry at Dura Europos Syria with the good shepherd and Adam and Eve prior to 256



Good Shepherd from the Catacomb of Priscilla, 250-300



Good Shepherd Roman catacombs C2nd

Mercury from the Chaourse Hoard C3rd, BM



Roman ivory boxes with pastoral scenes, British Museum



Marble table leg from Thessaloniki c 350-400



Roman rings with pastoral scenes, British Museum







Silver plate from the Klimova Hoard 527-565



Sarcophagus of Livia Primitiva with fish, good shepherd and anchor



Marble worshippers with Orans arms, British Museum



Shedrak, Meshack and Abednego in the Burning Fiery Furnace from the Roman catacombs



Noah and dove from the Roman catacombs



Catacombs of Domitilla



Roman Villa at Lullingstone C4th, British Museum

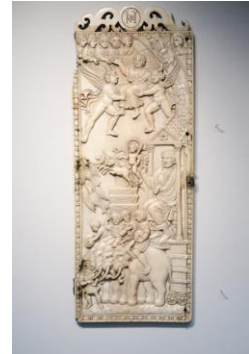


Lullingstone





Head of Mercury from Uley, British Museum



Two ivory panels showing Bellerophon killing the Chimera and the apotheosis of a Roman emperor with old gods including Sol probably dating from the reign of Gratian 375-383, British Museum



The Projecta Casket from the Esquiline Treasure mid C4th, British Museum – Venus riding in her giant shell supported by Tritons is mirrored below by Projecta herself



SECUNDE ET PROIECTA VIVATIS IN CHRISTO

Top of the Casket with Inscription: Secunde et Proiecta Vivatis in Christo – Secundus and Proiecta may you live in Christ



Muse Casket and Tyche of Constantinople from the Esquiline Treasure



Saucepan from Esquiline Treasure with Venus and Adonis, Louvre



Silver saucepan from Algeria with Neptune and dolphins C6th





Statuette of Venus from the Kaiseraugst hoard 350-1



Silver flak with Nereid and sea creatures dating from Constans II 641-651 now in Russia

Nereid from Projecta casket



Nereid from Byzantine silk c. 600 used as relic wrapping now in Switzerland



Eros on a sea creature 6th, British Museum



Thetford Hoard 4th, British Museum



The Great Dish from the Mildenhall Treasure, British Museum



Mildenhall silver



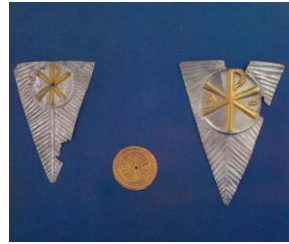
Mildenhall ladle and spoons



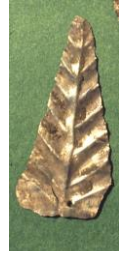
Votive plaques from Stony Stratford ↑ and Barkway ← and →, British Museum



Votive plaques from Ashwell, British Museum ↑



Votive plaques from Water Newton → and ← British Museum



Silver bowl with cover from Mildenhall with centaurs and giant heads



Mildenhall bowl with pastoral scenes and giant heads



Kaiseraugst dish with pastoral scenes and giant heads



Achilles plate from the Kaiseraugst Treasure





Silver dish with Meleager and Atalanta from reign of Heraclius 613-629 Russia



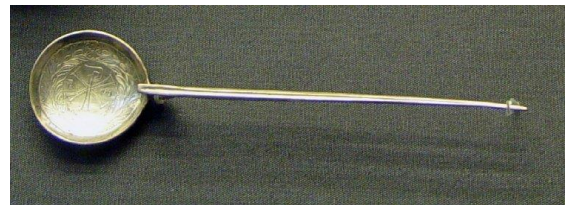
Cyprus Treasure 641-651 with St Stephen or St Bacchus, British Museum



Spoon from the Cyprus Treasure c. 600 British Museum



Spoons from the Butchery Lane Hoard Canterbury



Items from the Carthage Treasure C4th, British Museum





Hercules on the Mildenhall Great Dish



Hercules wrestling Antaeus from the Hoxne Treasure



Byzantine gold medallion with Hercules, British Museum



Bottom of a glass showing a couple with a statue of Hercules from a Christian burial, British Museum

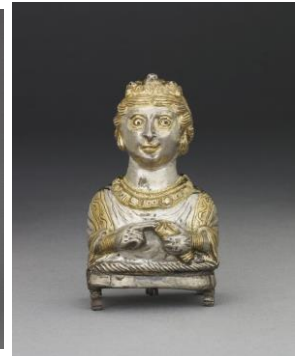


Chaourse hoard

Water Newton



Pepper pot from the Chaourse Hoard mid C3rd, British Museum



Pepper pot from the Hoxne Treasure early C5th, British Museum



The Franks Casket c. 700 Northumbria, British Museum