Constantine the Great Encyclopedia Article

Constantine the Great

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Constantine the Great

285-337

Roman emperor who united and strengthened a fragmented Empire. Proclaimed emperor in 306, he finally defeated other contenders for the throne in 325. He established Christianity as the state religion, thus creating the foundation of medieval Europe. He founded Constantinople (Istanbul) as his capital, thereby strengthening the eastern part of the Empire, which became a separate entity that survived the collapse of the Empire in the West, leading to the distinction between western and eastern Europe.