

Religion in Late Antiquity Rome

Paganism and the transition into Christianity

- Constantine I ended Persecution and expulsion of Christians
- He supported Christianity after 324 and remained tolerant to Pagans
- The Edict of Milan— to treat Christians benevolently in the Roman Empire.
- Constantine converts to Christianity on his deathbed in 337
- Libanius the historian writes in his In “Defense of the Temples” that Constantine 'looted the Temples' around the eastern empire in order to get their treasures to build Constantinople



- **Persecution of Paganism Under Theodosius I**
- Between 389-391, there was the Theodosian Decree which established a ban on paganism
- Visiting Temples were forbidden
- Pagan holidays/celebrations were abolished

• Temple Conversion into Churches

• The Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels and of the Martyrs

- This was the Pantheon of Rome a Roman Temple turned church in 609AD
- This church is now on the site of an earlier temple commissioned by Marcus Agrippa during the reign of Augustus (27 BC – 14 AD).
- Emperor Hadrian rebuilt the temple chose not to inscribe the new temple but rather to retain the inscription of Agrippa's older temple, which had burned down.
- In 609AD Byzantium emperor gave the building to Pope Boniface IV, which was then converted into a new Basilica
- "Boniface, asked the same [Emperor Phocas, in Constantinople] to order that in the old temple called the Pantheon, after the pagan filth was removed, a church should be made, to the holy virgin Mary and all the martyrs, so that the commemoration of the saints would take place henceforth where not gods but demons were formerly worshipped." (Deacon quoting Macdonald)



<https://www.jeffbondono.com/TouristInRome/SantaMariaDegliAngeli.html> - Jeff Bondono

Sources-

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