

## CHAPTER HEADINGS

In the manuscripts the whole *VC* is divided into chapters, the numbering of which is still used for reference. The headings of these chapters go back to an early editor or copyist, and not to Eusebius himself (see *Introd.*, § 1). Since they have their own historic interest, and occasionally provide useful information, a translation of them is presented here, on the basis of the Greek text in pp. 3-13 of Winkelmann's edition. The headings and subheadings in the Plan (*Introd.*, § 5) and in the translation itself have been made by the present translators, who believe they are a better guide to Eusebius' plan and thought.

### CHAPTERS OF THE GODLY LIFE OF THE BLESSED EMPEROR CONSTANTINE

#### *Book I*

1. Preface on the death of Constantine
1. 3 On the accession of his sons
2. Further preface
3. On God who honours devout emperors and destroys tyrants
4. That God honoured Constantine
5. That he reigned piously for more than thirty years as monarch, and lived more than sixty
6. That he was a servant of God and victor over nations
7. A comparison with Cyrus the Persian emperor and Alexander of Macedon
8. That he ruled over almost the entire world
9. That he was the pious son of an emperor and bequeathed the government to his sons as emperors
10. On the need for and moral benefits of this history
11. That the account told only the deeds of Constantine concerned with his love of God
12. That like Moses Constantine was reared in houses of tyrants
13. How Constantius his father would not allow the agents of

- Diocletian and Maximian and Maxentius to persecute the Christians
14. How Constantius his father, being reproached for poverty by Diocletian, filled his treasury and then returned the money to those who had contributed
15. On the persecution carried out by the others
16. How Constantius his father made a pretence of idolatry, and then rejected those who were willing to sacrifice, while retaining in the palace those determined to confess
17. On Constantius' Christ-loving policy
18. That on the resignation of Diocletian and Maximian Constantius, who was graced with a large family, became senior Augustus
19. How as a young man Constantine his son visited Palestine in earlier times with Diocletian
20. How Constantine took refuge with his father because of the plots of Diocletian
21. The death of Constantius, leaving his son Constantine as Emperor
22. How after the funeral of Constantius the troops proclaimed Constantine Emperor
23. A brief account of the overthrow of the tyrants
24. That it was by God's will that Constantine obtained the Empire
25. Constantine's victories over barbarians and Britons
26. How he decided to liberate Rome from Maxentius
27. That he meditated on the defeats of the idolaters, and chose Christianity instead
28. How when he prayed God vouchsafed the vision of a cross of light in the sky at noon and a writing urging him to 'Conquer by this'
29. How the Christ of God appeared to him in his sleep, and directed him to use a sign of the same shape as the cross in his wars
30. The making of the same cruciform sign
31. A description<sup>1</sup> of the cross-shaped sign, which the Romans now call the *labarum*

<sup>1</sup> *Ekphrasis*, the technical term for a rhetorical description.

32. How Constantine received instruction<sup>2</sup> and read the divine Scriptures
33. On Maxentius' debaucheries in Rome
34. How the wife of the Prefect killed herself to save her chastity
35. The destruction of the people of Rome by Maxentius
36. Magic practices of Maxentius and shortage of food in Rome
37. Defeat of Maxentius' troops in Italy
38. Maxentius' death on a bridge over the River Tiber
39. Entry of Constantine into Rome
40. On his statue holding a cross and its inscription
41. Celebrations in the provinces and gifts made by Constantine
42. Bishops honoured and churches built
43. On Constantine's benefactions to the poor and needy
44. How he attended the councils of bishops
45. How he was long-suffering with the Africans
46. Victories over barbarians
47. The death of Maximian<sup>3</sup> after his plot and of others, whom Constantine found out by revelation
48. The celebration of Constantine's Decennalia
49. How Licinius maltreated the east
50. How Licinius intended to plot against Constantine
51. Licinius' measures against bishops and prohibitions of synods
52. Christians subjected to banishments and confiscations
53. Decree that women should not assemble in churches and that congregations pray outside the gates
54. Those not sacrificing to be discharged from the army, and those in prison not to be fed
55. On Licinius' wicked, greedy, and disgusting behaviour
56. That he then adopted a policy of persecution
57. That Maximian, subdued by fistulous sores and maggots, wrote in favour of Christians
58. That Maximin after persecuting Christians and fleeing lived like a domestic slave

<sup>2</sup> Lit. 'was catechized', i.e. received Christian instruction.

<sup>3</sup> Following Valesius's emendation. The MSS have 'Maximin'. See notes at I. 47.

59. That blinded by disease Maximin wrote in favour of Christians

### Chapters of the first Book

#### *The Chapters of the Second Book*

1. The secret persecution of Licinius destroying bishops in Amasea in Pontus
2. Destruction of churches and butchery of bishops
3. How Constantine was roused on behalf of Christians destined for persecution
4. That Constantine made military preparations with prayer, but Licinius with divination
5. What Licinius said as he sacrificed in the grove about the idols and Christ
6. Visions in the cities ruled by Licinius, as if Constantine's armies were marching through
7. That in battle, wherever the cross-shaped sign appeared, victorious events ensued
8. That fifty were selected to carry the cross
9. That of the cross-bearers, the one who fled fell, while the one who stood faithfully by it survived
10. Various engagements and Constantine's victories
11. Flight and trickery of Licinius
12. How Constantine would win victories by praying in his tent
13. Generous treatment of prisoners of war
14. Further on the prayers in the tent
15. Licinius' cunning over friendly relations and his idolatry
16. How Licinius urged his troops not to engage the cross in battle
17. Constantine's victory
18. Licinius' death and celebrations of victory for it
19. Joy and festivals
20. Constantine's legislation on behalf of confessors
21. On behalf also of martyrs and ecclesiastical property
22. How he also revived the spirits of the people
23. That he proclaimed God as the source of good things; and on copies of laws

24. A law of Constantine on piety towards God and about Christianity, including the following:
25. Demonstration based on ancient times
26. On the persecuted and the persecutors
27. What great evils the persecution caused to the aggressors
28. That God chose Constantine as his minister of good things
29. Constantine's pious words about God and praise of confessors
30. A law releasing people from banishment, curial service, and confiscation
31. The same for those sent to islands
32. Those ignominiously put to work in mines and factories
33. On confessors who served in the army
34. Release of free men who had been serving in women's quarters, or given over to slavery
35. On the inheritance of properties of martyrs, confessors, and persons subject to banishment and confiscation
36. The Church to be heir of those without kin, and their personal bequests to be valid
37. Those in possession to surrender such lands and estates and houses, but not the fruits they have enjoyed
38. The manner in which petitions on these matters are to be submitted
39. The treasury to restore to the churches lands and estates and houses and so forth
40. *Martyria* and cemeteries to be restored to the churches
41. Those who have bought church property or received it by gift are to restore it
42. A call to worship God earnestly
43. How the legislation of Constantine was put into effect
44. That he promoted Christian officials; but if they were pagans,<sup>4</sup> they were forbidden to sacrifice
45. On laws prohibiting sacrifices and ordering people to build churches
46. Constantine's letter to Eusebius and the other bishops on the building of churches, and that they should repair and enlarge old churches with the help of the governors

<sup>4</sup> Literally 'Hellenes'.

47. That he wrote against idolatry
48. Constantine's letter to the provinces on the error of polytheism, with a preface on vice and virtue
49. On the father of the Godbeloved Constantine and on Diocletian and Maximian the persecutors
50. That it was as a result of the oracle of Apollo, saying that he could not utter oracles because of the righteous, that the persecution was provoked
51. That while still young Constantine personally heard Diocletian when he wrote the orders for persecution, because he had heard that the righteous were Christians
52. The number of tortures and punishments that were fiercely inflicted
53. That barbarians gave refuge to Christians
54. What retribution overtook those who persecuted because of the oracle
55. Constantine's expression of praise to God and acknowledgement of the sign of the cross and prayer for churches and peoples
56. That he prays for all to be Christian, but does not use compulsion
57. Expression of praise to God who through a Son has enlightened those in error
58. Further expression of praise for his government of the universe
59. Expression of praise to God who constantly teaches what is good
60. Exhortations at the end of the decree that none interfere with another
61. How disputes arose from the Alexandrian church because of the case of Arius
62. On the same also in the case of the Melitians
63. How Constantine sent a message and wrote about peace
64. Constantine's letter to Alexander the bishop and Arius the presbyter
65. That he constantly thought about peace
66. That he also resolved the disputes in Africa
67. That it was from the east that true religion began
68. That pained by the strife he counsels measures for peace

- 69. How the dispute between Alexander and Arius arose, and that these topics should not have been the subject of argument
  - 70. Exhortations to concord
  - 71. Not to argue over the same thing for the sake of verbal niceties
  - 72. That for religion's sake his anguish made him weep, and he desisted from his intention to visit the east because of these things
  - 73. Persistence and aggravation of the disputes after this letter
- Chapters of the second book

*The Chapters of the Third Book*

- 1. Comparison of the piety of Constantine with the wickedness of the persecutors
- 2. More on the piety of Constantine, who boldly flaunted the sign of the cross
- 3. On his picture, in which the cross was raised supreme and the dragon was pierced beneath
- 4. More on the debates because of Arius in Egypt
- 5. On the disagreement over Easter
- 6. How he ordered a Council to be held in Nicaea
- 7. On the world-wide Council, which bishops from all peoples attended
- 8. That as in the Acts of the Apostles they assembled from various peoples
- 9. On the merits and seniority of the 250 bishops
- 10. The Council in the palace, at which Constantine entered and took his seat
- 11. Silence in the Council after Bishop Eusebius made his speech
- 12. Constantine's address to the Council on peace
- 13. How he reconciled in concord those bishops who were at variance
- 14. The agreed statement of the Council on the faith and on Easter
- 15. How Constantine joined the bishops at a feast for his twenty years reign

- 16. Gifts to the bishops and letters sent to all
- 17. Constantine to the churches on the Council of Nicaea
- 18. His letter on agreement over Easter and against the Jews
- 19. Exhortation to follow for preference the greater part of the world
- 20. Exhortation to obey what had been written by the Council
- 21. Advice to the returning bishops on concord
- 22. How he sent some on their way, and wrote to others; and distributions of money
- 23. How he wrote to the Egyptians about peace and urged them to it
- 24. That he often wrote with pious concern both to bishops and to congregations
- 25. How in Jerusalem at the holy place of our Saviour's resurrection he ordered a temple for worship to be built
- 26. That the godless had hidden the divine tomb with rubble and idols
- 27. How Constantine ordered the material and rubble of the idol-house to be thrown far away
- 28. Revelation of the holy tomb
- 29. How he wrote about the building both to governors and to Macarius the bishop
- 30. Constantine to Macarius on the building of the Martyrion of the Saviour
- 31. To be built more beautiful than all the churches in the world as to walls and columns and marble
- 32. Furthermore representations to be made to the governors about the beauty of the ceiling and workmen and materials
- 33. How the Church of the Saviour was built as the prophesied New Jerusalem
- 34. Description<sup>5</sup> of the building of the most sacred tomb
- 35. Description of court and colonnades
- 36. Description of the walls and roofwork of the shrine, of its beauty and gilding
- 37. Description of the double colonnade on either side and the three eastern doors
- 38. Description of the dome and twelve pillars and bowls

<sup>5</sup> See n. 1.

39. Description of the inner court, arcades and entrance
40. On the abundance of offerings
41. On the building of churches in Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives
42. That the Empress Helena the mother of Constantine came to pray and built these churches
43. More on the church in Bethlehem
44. On Helena's generosity and good works
45. How Helena piously attended churches
46. How at 80 years of age she made her dispositions and died
47. How Constantine laid his mother to rest, and had earlier honoured her in life
48. How in Constantinople he built *martyria* and abolished all idol-worship
49. The sign of the cross at the palace and Daniel at the fountains
50. That he also built churches in Nicomedia and other cities
50. 2. On the church built in Antioch
51. That in Mamre too he ordered a church to be built
52. Constantine to Eusebius about the Mamre church
53. That the Saviour appeared there to Abraham
54. General destruction of images and idol-shrines
55. Removal of the idol-shrine at Aphaca in Phoenicia and its obscenity
56. Destruction of the temple of Asclepius at Aigai
57. How the pagans<sup>6</sup> condemned the idols and were converted to the knowledge of God
58. How in Heliopolis he destroyed Aphrodite and was the first to build a church
59. On the disturbance at Antioch because of Eustathius
59. 3. How Constantine tried to make peace by writing about these things
60. Constantine to the Antiochenes not to take Eusebius away from Caesarea but seek someone else
61. Constantine to Eusebius praising his refusal of Antioch
62. Constantine to the council, Eusebius not to be taken away from Caesarea
63. How he tried to eradicate the heresies

<sup>6</sup> See n. 4.

64. Constantine's decree against the heretics
65. On the seizure of the meeting-places of the heretics
66. How when unlawful books were found in their possession many heretics returned to the Catholic Church

*The Chapters of the Fourth Book*

1. How with gifts and promotion he honoured very many people
2. Relief from a quarter of the tax
3. Equalizations also of the heavy taxes
4. That for those who lost financial cases he made personal grants
5. Submission of the Scythians<sup>7</sup> after their defeat by the sign of our Saviour
6. Submission of the Sarmatians on the grounds of a slave revolt
7. Embassies of various barbarians and gifts from him
8. That also after an embassy from the Persian king he wrote to him about the Christians there
9. Constantine Augustus to Shapur the king of Persia in which he confesses most pious faith in God and Christ
10. Further, against idols and expressing praise to God
11. Further, against tyrants and persecutors and on Valerian who was taken prisoner
12. That he observed the fall of the persecutors and is now gratified by the peace of the Christians
13. Exhortations to love the Christians in his area
14. How the Christians had peace by the earnest prayers of Constantine
15. That both on coins and in pictures he portrayed himself as praying
16. That he also prohibited by law the setting up of his portrait in idol-shrines
17. Prayers and readings of divine Scriptures in the palace
18. Legislation to respect the day of the Lord's Day and Friday
19. How he ordered even non-Christian<sup>8</sup> soldiers to pray on the Lord's Days

<sup>7</sup> i.e. Goths; see note *ad loc.*

\* Lit. *ethnici*, 'from the nations'.

20. Words of the prayer given to the soldiers by Constantine
21. The signs of the Saviour's cross on the armour of the soldiers
22. Earnestness in prayer and respect for the Easter feast
23. How he prohibited idolatry but honoured martyrs and festivals
24. That he said he was a kind of bishop of non-Christian affairs<sup>9</sup>
25. Further on prohibition of sacrifices and initiation rites and single-combat shows and the former obscene persons by the Nile
26. Reform of the existing law against the childless, and similarly further reform of that pertaining to wills
27. That he made laws that a Christian might not be slave to Jews, that the decisions of synods are legally binding, and so on
28. Gifts to churches and grants to virgins and the poor
29. Written works and speeches of Constantine
30. That to one covetous person he measured out a grave to shame him
31. That he was mocked for his excessive generosity
32. On the work which Constantine wrote 'To the assembly of the saints'
33. How he stood to listen to Eusebius' speeches about the tomb of the Saviour
34. That he wrote to Eusebius on Easter and sacred books
35. Constantine to Eusebius, praising his work on Easter
36. Constantine to Eusebius on the making of sacred books
37. How the books were manufactured
38. How the port of Gaza was designated a city because of Christianity and named Constantia
39. That in Phoenicia one place was made a city, and in the other cities there was destruction of idol-shrines and building of churches
40. That having in his thirtieth year proclaimed three sons as Emperors he proposed to carry out the dedication of the Martyrion in Jerusalem

<sup>9</sup> The chapter heading puts in the word 'affairs', which is missing in the main text; see note *ad loc.*

41. That because of the disputes in Egypt he ordered a Council to be held meanwhile in Tyre
42. Constantine to the Council in Tyre
43. At the festival of the dedication in Jerusalem bishops were from every province
44. On their greeting by Marianus the notary and the distributions to the poor and dedications in the church
45. Variety of addresses by bishops in meetings and by Eusebius the author of this history
46. That both the description<sup>10</sup> of the Saviour's Martyrion and a tricennialian oration were later delivered by him before Constantine himself
47. That the Council of Nicaea was held during the Vicennialia and the dedication in Jerusalem during the Tricennialia of Constantine
48. How Constantine would not allow anyone to praise him to excess
49. Marriage of Constantius Caesar his son
50. Embassies and gifts of Indians
51. How in dividing the government between his three sons Constantine piously explained their imperial duties
52. How when they grew up he also led them towards piety
53. That after about thirty-two years as Emperor and over sixty years of life his body remained healthy
54. On those who abused his excessive generosity for profit and pretence
55. How Constantine went on writing until the end
56. How on his campaign against Persia he took with him bishops and a tent to form a church
57. How after receiving Persian embassies he kept the vigil with the others at the Easter festival
58. On the building of the so-called Martyrion of the Apostles in Constantinople
59. Further description<sup>11</sup> of the Martyrion
60. That in this he also added the building of a tomb for his own burial
61. Indisposition at Helenopolis and prayers about baptism

<sup>10</sup> See n. 1.

<sup>11</sup> See n. 1.

62. Constantine's exhortation to the bishops about their imparting the bath of baptism
63. How after receiving the bath he praised God
64. Constantine's death at midday on the feast of Pentecost
65. Lamentations of soldiers and officers
66. Conveyance of the remains from Nicomedia to the palace in Constantinople
67. How even after death he was treated with honour by the *comites* and others just as when alive
68. How the army decided that his sons be now Augusti
69. Mourning for Constantine in Rome and honour by means of his images after death
70. Depositing of the remains by his son Constantius in Constantinople
71. Liturgy<sup>12</sup> in the so-called Martyrion of the Apostles to mark Constantine's death
72. On the phoenix
73. How they depicted Constantine on coins as ascending to heaven
74. That God who was honoured by him rightly gave honour to him in return
75. That Constantine was more pious than the Roman emperors before him

The chapters of the fourth book

<sup>12</sup> 'Religious service'.

## TRANSLATION

Eusebius Pamphili  
On the Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine

BOOK I

I—II. *Preface*

I—3. *Constantine's immortality*

[15] I (1) It was but recently the whole human race celebrated various ten-year periods for the great Emperor with festive banquets. It was but recently we ourselves hymned the conqueror with praises for his twenty years, taking the floor at the Council of God's ministers. Just now we wove garlands of words also for his thirty years, in the very palace hardly yesterday to crown his sacred head. (2) But today our thought stands helpless, longing to express some of the conventional things, but at a loss which way to turn, stunned by the sheer wonder of the amazing spectacle. Wherever it casts its gaze, whether east or west, whether all over the earth or up to heaven itself, every way and everywhere it observes the Blessed One present with the Empire itself. (3) On earth it perceives his own sons like new lamps filling the whole with his radiance, and himself powerfully alive and directing the whole government of affairs more firmly than before, as he is multiplied in the succession of his sons. If previously they still shared the honour of Caesars, now that they have put on his whole mantle of Godfearing virtue, they have been declared Imperatores Augusti, singled out with their father's honours.

2 (1) When our thought observes the one who was recently visible in a mortal body, and amazingly present with us even after his life is ended, when Nature rejects over-prolongation as alien—when our thought observes him endowed with the imperial palaces and properties and honours and panegyrics, it is utterly disconcerted. (2) But now that it reaches upward to the very vaults of heaven, it pictures there too the thrice-blessed soul in the presence of God, [16] stripped of all mortal and earthly attire, and

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## EUSEBIUS

### *Life of Constantine*

Introduction, translation,  
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