The Constantinian Compromise: Senators, Bishops and the Emperor in Late Antique Rome

Given the historic role played by the victorious Constantine in spreading Christianity, it is ironic that senatorial aristocrats were more cooperative with Constantine than were the early fourth-century bishops of the city. Although the bishops of Rome and the clergy, along with other Christians, benefitted greatly from the restoration of their property and the recognition of their legal standing under Constantine, their resistance to imperial intervention in the Donatist controversy marginalized the bishop of Rome for centuries to come, as I demonstrate based on a range of texts and documents from the fourth-fifth centuries.

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