



 CATALOGUE ENTRY

The Triumphant Entry of Constantine into Rome

about 1621

Peter Paul Rubens

Flemish, 1577–1640

oil on oak panel
19-3/16 × 25-1/2 in.
(48.7 × 64.5 cm)

The Clowes Collection
2001.237

Marks, Inscriptions, and Distinguishing Features

None

Entry

¹ In this virtuoso display of paint handling and moving composition, the Flemish master Peter Paul Rubens captures the Emperor Constantine's dignified entry—or *adventus*—into the city of Rome. The sovereign, adorned in armor with a crimson mantle and jeweled diadem,¹ raises his left hand in mercy and bows his head in humility as he leads his troops into the ancient polis atop a gray horse. The men behind him bear the signature elements of the Roman army: elaborate plumed helmets, red mantles, and banners—including the labarum. Unusually, Constantine precedes the lictor (attendant) carrying the fasces (symbol of imperial authority), emphasizing his role as the bringer of peace and harmony. He is greeted by the female personification of Rome, who charges forth from the ancient, facadelike city gate proffering a golden statue of Victory. Behind her stand two priests, shrouded in white and bearing laurel wreaths, accompanied by two torchbearers. Two robed figures kneel in supplication in the middle ground before Constantine, while a woman and child gaze up at the arriving conqueror. As a divine echo of the terrestrial homage, the winged figure of Victory crowns the emperor with a laurel wreath as the cherubic Fame sounds the horn of Truth. Against a streaky gray underlayer, Rubens brushes in form using a vibrant palette and golden highlights to create a monumentalizing composition that attests to the emperor's triumph.

² This oil sketch is one of thirteen panels executed by Rubens as studies for a tapestry cycle illustrating the life of Constantine,² a series that survives in seven extant editions dating to the seventeenth century.³ In addition, two prints were produced after the Clowes panel by Nicolas-Henri Tardieu and F. B. Lorieux,⁴ and one painted copy was documented on the market in the mid-twentieth century.⁵

³ Constantine I (about 272–337) was a pioneering statesman at the head of the Roman Empire. Son of the army officer-cum-Augustus Constantius Chlorus (about 250–306) and his companion Helena, Constantine came to power as Caesar of the Roman Empire's western provinces, comprising Britain, Gaul, and Iberia, upon his father's death in 306. He was recognized as Augustus by Maximian (250–310) in 307 after his marriage to Fausta, daughter of the retired emperor.⁶ Through the course of his career, he became renowned for his military successes as well as his civil, military, and economic reforms.

⁴ Constantine is probably most famed for his conversion or adherence to Christianity, which positioned him as the first Christian emperor.⁷ His Edict of Milan, co-sponsored with Licinius (died 325) in 313, proclaimed tolerance for the new religion. He later supported the Church through such acts as the construction of Old St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the appointment of Christians to prominent offices, and the return of lands confiscated under Diocletian (died 313). His adoption of Christianity may have originated in his early years through his mother Helena, who traveled to Jerusalem in 327, but it is usually associated with a dream in which the Chi-Rho symbol appeared to the emperor amid the words "In Hoc Signo Vinces" (With this sign you will conquer).⁸ His defeat of Maxentius (died 312) at the Milvian Bridge established the position of this insignia in Constantinian iconography and provided a basis for the concept of a unified church and state. Similarly, the founding of the city of Constantinople in 330 as a monument to the rising strength of the Eastern empire further cemented Constantine's place in world history. Though the city had the modern trappings of a Roman metropolis, Constantine overlaid its plan with new monuments and Christian sites. Lastly, upon his death, he divided up his vast empire among his three sons and two half-nephews, thereby disrupting the tetrarchical model of governance introduced by Diocletian and instituting the process of dynastic succession. The tapestry series illustrates these most significant episodes that defined Constantine's dynamic life. The large number of editions of this series indicates the popularity of this ancient ruler—one who fought for the Christian religion and the reorganization of the federal infrastructure—for political leaders in the seventeenth century.

⁵ The narrative of Constantine's *adventus* is found in the twelve-volume *Annales Ecclesiastici a Christo nato ad annum 1198* by Caesar Baronius (1588–1607), which contains the fourth-century works *Vita Constantini* and *Historia Ecclesiastica* by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (about 260–died before 341). The brief description of this episode in volume three emphasizes the joyous liberation of the city from the tyrant Maxentius, who reigned through "perfidy and terror."⁹ The vigor of the rulers' battle is suggested here by the prominent sheathed swords of Constantine and Roma, the fallen column in the foreground, and the bodily expression of gratitude to Constantine by the Romans. Yet, as noted Rubens scholar Koenraad Brosens has pointed out, the presence of this episode in Baronius's history did not secure the narrative moment in the canon of Constantinian imagery.¹⁰ Brosens traces two earlier extant iterations of the scene: a fresco by Bernardino Cesari (1571–1622) at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome (fig. 1) and an earlier seventeenth-century Flemish tapestry (fig. 2).¹¹ While the former emphasizes the tribute paid to Constantine through the energetic mass of thankful citizens, the latter offers a more conventional interpretation through the procession of captured soldiers and reserved civilians. Both scenes, however, make clear reference to the city by including identifiable Roman monuments. Rubens, in contrast, renders Constantine more significant by setting him astride a horse rather than riding in a chariot, and by greatly reducing the number of figures present in the scene. Just as important, he merely alludes to the location by incorporating classical references, such as the round building in the distance and the archway adorned with coffered panels, which directly recalls the barrel vault in the Arch of Constantine (dedicated 315).¹²



Figure 1: Bernardino Cesari (Italian, 1571–1622), *The Entry into Rome*, fresco. Basilica of St. John Lateran, Rome.



Figure 2: *The Entry into Rome, or Triumphal Procession*, from the *Story of Constantine* series, early 17th century, tapestry in wool and silk, 133-5/64 × 154-21/64 in. Fondation Toms Pauli, Lausanne, inv. 10.

6 David DuBon, Julius Held, and others have observed that the source for the characterization of Constantine likely derived from antique representations of Marcus Aurelius (121–180), such as that visible in a relief (fig. 3) from his arch and in the famous bronze statue formerly located in front of the Lateran Palace (fig. 4).¹³ Ancient coins, such as those commemorating the *adventus* of Constantine into Milan in 313, could have also served as models for Rubens, particularly in the equestrian pose and gesture of mercy. It has been suggested that the motif of Victory crowning the emperor with a wreath of laurel may derive from a Roman cameo (fig. 5) that was to be represented in Rubens's unrealized gem book.¹⁴ Rubens achieves further historical accuracy by invoking the lyric poet Horace's (65–8 BCE) description of Roman emperors wearing scarlet (*coccineus*) cloaks, often of a shimmery nature, to distinguish themselves from their troops, who wore red mantles.¹⁵ Even the elaborate helmets of Constantine's troops and of Minerva echo ancient designs that Rubens had observed in Rome.¹⁶ This quest for archaeological fidelity is entirely consistent with the image of Rubens as an artist, collector, and scholar.



Figure 3: *Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121–180) and the surrender of the Germanic tribes*, around 176–180 CE, marble relief, 122-3/64 × 82-43/64 in. Museo del Palazzo dei Conservatori, Musei Capitolini, Rome, Italy, Inv. MC0809. Photo Credit: White Images/Scala/Art Resource, NY.



Figure 4: *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius*, around 161–180 CE, gilded bronze, 166-59/64 in. Marcus Aurelius Exedra, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Musei Capitolini, Rome, Italy, Inv. MC3247. Photo © Vanni Archive / Art Resource, NY.



Figure 5: *Gemma Constantiniana*, about 320–330 CE, two layers of cut sardonyx stone in white and blue with 17th century gilded and stone-set setting decoration, 11-1/32 × 8-17/64 in. Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden, Netherlands, GS-11096.

7 Based on Brosens's arrangement of the scenes according to Baronius's *Annales Ecclesiastici*,¹⁷ the Clowes panel was likely intended to follow *The Trophy* (fig. 6) and precede *The Marriages of Constantine and Licinius* (fig. 7). This revision to previous scholarly thought allows for maximum glorification of the imperial figure, which must have been an artistic priority for Rubens. In positioning the scene of *Constantius Appoints Constantine His Successor* (fig. 8) rather than *The Marriages of Constantine and Licinius* as the inaugural image, Brosens emphasizes the rightful succession of Constantine to the imperial throne, thereby defending the ruler against allegations of an improper ascent to power.¹⁸ The identification of a battle scene as *The Battle against Maxentius* rather than *The Battle against Licinius*, and its placement after *The Vision of Constantine* and *The Labarum*, corresponds to Baronius's chronology, in which Constantine witnesses the Chi-Rho symbol before battling Maxentius.¹⁹ This, in turn, dictates an order of *The Collapse of the Milvian Bridge*, which precipitated the death of Constantine's enemy, followed by *The Trophy* immediately after it.²⁰ Baronius organizes the remaining scenes in the following manner: *The Marriages of Constantine and Licinius*, *The Baptism*, *The Founding of Constantinople*, *Constantine and Helena Worshipping the True Cross*, and *The Death of Constantine*.²¹ Brosens highlights that not only did Rubens defuse the potentially controversial aspects of Constantine's life to present a powerful, successful, and just ruler, but that the varying sizes of the panels facilitated a bespoke arrangement of the tapestry series in a variety of spaces.²²



Figure 6: Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640), *The Trophy Raised to Constantine (Constantine as the Triumphantor)*, 1622, oil on panel, 15 × 11-1/2 in. Collection of Saul P. Steinberg.



Figure 7: Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640), *The Marriages of Constantine and Licinius*, 1622, oil on panel, 18-5/8 × 25-23/64 in. Private Collection. Photo © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images.

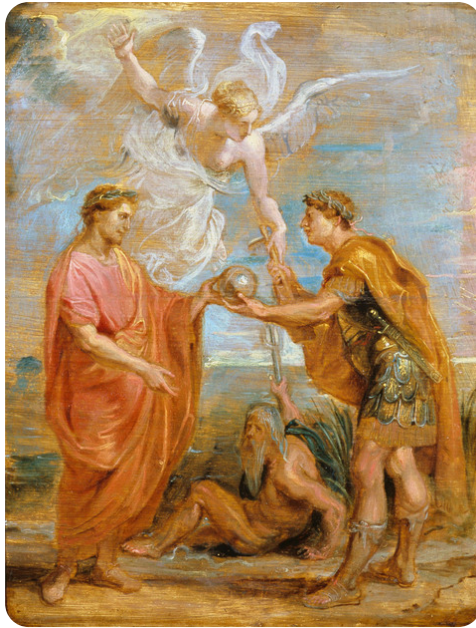


Figure 8: Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640), *Constantius Appoints Constantine as His Successor*, 1622, oil on panel, 14-51/64 × 11-57/64 × 13/64 in. (panel). Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Gift of James Fairfax AC 1993. Photo Credit: HIP / Art Resource, NY.

8 Like the Clowes panel, the *editio princeps* of the tapestries has a distinguished provenance,²³ which raises the question of the original patron. A series of documents involving Rubens and the humanist scholar Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637), the Comans-De la Planche tapestry workshop in Paris, and other parties have been variously interpreted over the years. Correspondence between Rubens and Peiresc indicate that the artist was likely in touch with the royal workshop regarding the project by the summer of 1622, and a letter dated August 25 refers to a debt of 500 livres owed to Rubens,²⁴ suggesting a commission by either the workshop or the French king.²⁵ A letter of 1 December 1622 relays that four of the *cartoons* had arrived in Paris and were viewed by Peiresc and other important men. As Held originally noted,²⁶ however, Peiresc had to explain to those present what the scenes represented and their significance, revealing that not only the men from the public works but also Peiresc himself were not previously aware of the narrative structure of the series.²⁷ Furthermore, Held points out that certain favorable parallels could be drawn between Louis XIII (1601–1643) and Constantine, such as the foregrounding of Christian piety and the double wedding of Louis XIII and his sister Elisabeth with that of Constantine and his half-sister.²⁸ Yet, as Brosens emphasizes, the language of this letter indicates that there were also attendees who were not part of the royal entourage.²⁹ Further, certain elements of Constantine's story—his murder of his wife, son, and rival Licinius, and his possibly opportunistic baptism by an Arian bishop, all of which contributed to his lack of canonization in the Western church³⁰—did not offer favorable parallels to the French monarch. One last bit of evidence against the idea that Louis XIII was patron of the tapestry series is the fact that the sketches and cartoons remained in the possession of the tapestry manufactory after the inaugural weaving.³¹ Typical practice dictated that these materials stayed in the possession of the patron as a sort of copyright. Further supporting the theory upheld by Held and Brosens is the selection of Rubens as designer: his grand classicizing style would have marked a new direction for the Comans-De la Planche workshop, which had previously made its mark in Paris with busy Mannerist compositions.³² While this theory remains speculative, it offers the most comprehensive synthesis of the available documents and the known facts of tapestry production.

9 A letter of 17 January 1956 from Rubens connoisseur Ludwig Burchard to George H.A. Clowes describes the oil sketch as “in the finest state of preservation,”³³ and even today the painting maintains its high quality in terms of condition.³⁴ A highly finished sketch (*modello*) executed on a single plank of oak, the painting reveals no major changes under X-ray and infrared examination. This suggests that a rougher version (*bozzetto*) of the composition, in which the artist worked through the details of the composition and the positioning of the figures, likely preceded the current sketch.³⁵ The Clowes panel, as the earliest surviving trace of Rubens's conception of Constantine's entry into Rome, offers a superb look into the artist's finely honed creative process, while also revealing his expert handling of the brush. In its combination of utility and beauty, *The Triumphant Entry of Constantine into Rome* thus embodies Rubens's genius as a master of design.

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Provenance

Marc Comans (1563–1644) and François de la Planche, known also by his Flemish name Frans van der Plancken, (1573–1627), owners of the Faubourg Saint-Marcel manufactory in Paris;³⁶

Probably owned by the Comans family until about 1640–1660.³⁷

Possibly in the collection of Henri de Valois (1603–1676) or his brother, Adrien de Valois (1607–1692), Paris, until 1676 or 1692.³⁸

Philippe II d'Orléans (1674–1723) by 1723;³⁹

By descent to Louis-Philippe-Joseph d'Orléans (1747–1793), Paris, until 1792;⁴⁰

Thomas Moore Slade in association with George, 7th Lord Kinnaid (1754–1805), William Morland (1739–1815) and Thomas Hammersley (1747–1812).⁴¹

Robert Banks Jenkinson, Second Earl of Liverpool (1770–1828), by 1815;

Sale at (Christie's, London) of Jenkinson's estate in 1829;⁴²

John Smith (active 1825–1849), London;⁴³

George John, 5th Baron Vernon (1803–1866);⁴⁴

Thomas Emmerson (died 1855);

Sale at (Phillips Son & Neal, London) in 1832;⁴⁵

“Marshall”;⁴⁶

(Thomas Griffith, Norwood) in 1881;⁴⁷

Georges Bottolier-Lasquin (died 1932), Paris, by 1887;⁴⁸

To his brother, Henri Lasquin (died 1919), Paris, by 1913.⁴⁹

Possibly (Galerie Van Diemen & Company, New York) by 1931.⁵⁰

(Newhouse Galleries, New York) by 1956;⁵¹

G.H.A. Clowes, Indianapolis, in 1956;

The Clowes Fund, Indianapolis, from 1958–2001, and on long-term loan to the Indianapolis Museum of Art since 1971 (C10069);

Given to the Indianapolis Museum of Art, now the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, in 2001 (2001.237).

Exhibitions

Slade's Gallery, Chatham, Kent, 1792–1793;

No. 125 Pall Mall, London, 1793, *The Orleans Gallery now Exhibiting at the Great Rooms, late the Royal Academy*, no. 58 (as part of the series of twelve designs of *Triumphal Entry of Constantine*);

British Institution, London, 1815, *Pictures by Rubens, Rembrandt, Vandyke, and Other Artists of the Flemish and Dutch Schools*, no. 121;

École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1887, *Exposition au profit des inondés du Midi*, no. 139;

John Herron Art Museum, Indianapolis, IN, 1959, *Paintings from the Collection of George Henry Alexander Clowes*, no. 50;

The Art Gallery, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN, 1962, *A Lenten Exhibition*, no. 43;

Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, IN, 1963, *Northern European Painting—The Clowes Fund Collection*, no. 32;

Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1964, *Constantine The Great: The Tapestries—The Designs*, no. 4a;

Bruce Museum of Arts and Science, Greenwich, CT; University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; Cincinnati Art Museum, 2004–2005, *Drawn by the Brush: Oil Sketches by Peter Paul Rubens*, no. 11;

Guangdong Museum, Guangzhou, China; Hunan Museum, Changsha, China; Chengdu Museum; 2020–2021, *Rembrandt to Monet: 500 Years of European Painting*.

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André Henri Constant van Hasselt, *Histoire de P.-P. Rubens* (Brussels: Imprimerie de la Société des Beaux-Arts, 1840), 284, no. 583;

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G. F. Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain: Being an Account of the Chief Collections of Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, Illuminated Mss.,* 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1854), II, 502, no. 14;

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Kjell M. Wengsten, et al., *Floating Lights and Shadows: 500 Years of European Painting* (Jiangsu Phoenix Literature and Art Publishing: Nanjing, 2020), 48–51 (reproduced).

Notes

1. The diadem may reference the tradition upheld by Caesar Baroniuss that Constantine was the first emperor to wear a crown rather than a laurel wreath. See Julius S. Held, *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens: A Critical Catalogue*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Published for the National Gallery of Art by Princeton University Press, 1980), 1:76.
2. The other sketches are *Constantius Appoints Constantine as His Successor* (Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Gift of James Fairfax), *The Vision of Constantine* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection), *The Labarum* (private collection), *The Battle against Maxentius* (Kansas City, MO, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Purchase William Rockhill Nelson Trust), *The Collapse of the Milvian Bridge* (London, The Wallace Collection), *The Trophy* (private collection), *The Marriages of Constantine and Licinius* (private collection), *The Baptism of Constantine* (private collection), *The Founding of Constantinople* (Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle), *Constantine and Helena Worshipping the True Cross* (private collection), *The Death of Constantine* (private collection), and *Triumphant Rome* (The Hague, Mauritshuis). Though thirteen sketches survive, only twelve tapestry panels were woven, as no tapestry was ever made after *Triumphant Rome*. For an overview of the scholarship on these "twelve-plus-one" sketches, see Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 97–116.
3. While the tapestry from the *editio princeps* follows the composition of the Clowes panel without major changes, the dimensions of the visual field have been altered such that the immediacy of action is heightened: the approximately square dimensions compress the interaction between Constantine and Rome. In addition, there is more greenery in the foreground of the woven panel, and the palette has been imbued with stronger contrast.
4. For these prints, see Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), figs. 63 and 64.
5. Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 217.
6. On the struggle for legitimacy as Caesar and, subsequently, Augustus during the early years of his reign, see Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 27–34.
7. On Constantine's legendary conversion, see Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 43.
8. Timothy D. Barnes reports that Constantine also had a statue of himself holding the labarum erected in the Basilica of Maxentius as a signal that through this sign, he had liberated the city of Rome. See Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 43–47. As such, the Clowes panel may be understood in the context of the liberation of Rome for Christianity as well as from the reign of Maxentius.
9. "Duci sane omnibus videbantur subacta vitorum agmina, quae urbem graviter obsederant; scelus domitum, victa perfidia, diffidens sibi audacia et importunitas catenata, furor victus; et cuncta crudelitas inani furore frendebat: superbia atque arrogantia debellatae, luxuries coercita, et libido constricta nexu ferro tenebantur." See Caesar Baroniuss, *Annales Ecclesiastici denuo excusi et ad nostra usque tempora perducti*, vol. 3, ed. Augustino Theiner (Paris: Barri-Ducis, 1864), 543.
10. Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 216.
11. A third interpretation was present at the Villa Montalto but is now lost. See Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 216. Other scenes of triumphant entry that Rubens knew include Andrea Mantegna's *Triumph of Julius Caesar* (about 1484–92; Royal Collection Trust, Hampton Court), which Peter Krüger argues would have been seen by the artist first in Mantua and then in London in 1629; [ancient coins](#) showcasing the figure of Minerva holding a winged victory; and, more generally, scenes of the triumph of the Church and Christ's entry into Jerusalem. See Peter Krüger, *Studien zu Rubens' Konstantinszyklus* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), 176–179.
12. The Arch was, in fact, erected by the Roman senate to commemorate Constantine's defeat of Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge.
13. David DuBon, *Tapestries from the Samuel H. Kress Collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art: The History of Constantine the Great Designed by Peter Paul Rubens and Pietro da Cortona* (London: Phaidon, 1964), 10; and Julius S. Held, *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens: A Critical Catalogue*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Published for the National Gallery of Art by Princeton University Press, 1980), 1, 75–76.
14. Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 216. The *Gemma Augustae* features the personification of the Roman Empire crowning Augustus with oak leaves.
15. Nancy de Grummond, "The Study of Classical Costume by Philip, Albert, and Peter Paul Rubens," in *Papers Presented at the International Rubens Symposium, April 14–16, 1982, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art* (Sarasota, FL: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 1983), 78–79.
16. Marjon van der Meulen, *Rubens Copies after the Antique*, vol. 1, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 23, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 1994), text ill. 73. For a larger perspective on Rubens's representation of armor, see Emil Keiser, "Antikes im Werke des Rubens," *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* N.F. X, nos. 1/2 (1933): 127; Howard D. Rodee, "Rubens' Treatment of Antique Armor," *The Art Bulletin* XLIX, no. 3 (September 1967): 223–230; and Nancy De Grummond, "The Study of Classical Costume by Philip, Albert, and Peter Paul Rubens," in *Papers Presented at the International Rubens Symposium, April 14–16, 1982, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art* (Sarasota, FL: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 1983), pp. 78–93.
17. The order in which the tapestries originally hung has been a subject of debate. See, for example, David DuBon, *Tapestries from the Samuel H. Kress Collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art: The History of Constantine the Great Designed by Peter Paul Rubens and Pietro da Cortona* (London: Phaidon, 1964), 37–38; John Coolidge, "Louis XIII and Rubens: The Story of the Constantine Tapestries," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 67, no. 6 (1966): 271–290; Julius S. Held, *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens: A Critical Catalogue*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Published for the National Gallery of Art by Princeton University Press, 1980), 1, 70–84; and Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 147–155.
18. This opening scene also complements the closing scene of *The Death of Constantine*, as Brosens highlights. See Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 150.
19. For Baroniuss's account of the vision, the labarum and the battle against Maxentius, see Caesar Baroniuss, *Annales Ecclesiastici denuo excusi et ad nostra usque tempora perducti*, vol. 3, ed. Augustino Theiner (Paris: Barri-Ducis, 1864), 537–543.
20. One of the telling pieces of evidence is the presence of Maxentius's head on a pike in *The Trophy*. Baroniuss reports that soldiers beheaded the corpse of Maxentius after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge and paraded it during Constantine's entry into the city. See Caesar Baroniuss, *Annales Ecclesiastici denuo excusi et ad nostra usque tempora perducti*, vol. 3, ed. Augustino Theiner (Paris: Barri-Ducis, 1864), 546.
21. Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 150–151.
22. Brosens notes, for example, that only three of the eight known editions of the series feature all twelve woven panels. Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 153–154. Krüger, in contrast, argues that the variety of dimensions of the panels suggests that the series was designed for a fixed space. See Peter Krüger, *Studien zu Rubens' Konstantinszyklus* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), 21.

23. Louis XIII gave seven of these twelve tapestries to Cardinal Francesco Barberini (1597–1679) in Paris on September 23, 1625, according to a letter penned by his assistant, Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588–1657): “Tornato alle stanze trovamo Monsu di Bonoil (mastro di ceremonie di Luigi XIII, addetto alla persona del legato) che era quivi, cò il segretario di Monsu di Leancourt ad aspettarlo per presentarli da parte del Re e di quell’altre Maestà otto pezzi di arazzo tessuti con oro e seta con istorie attinenti alla vita di Costantino di disegno del Rubens, de’quali nhavevano già attaccato uno nella camera cioè quello nel quale era espresso il Battesimo dell’Imperatore.” As transcribed in Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 364. The eighth panel seems to have been left in Paris, according to a document of 1630 listing the tapestries in the Barberini collection and the 1627 inventory of François de la Planche. See Brosens, *The Constantine Series*, 366–367. In 1636–1637, the cardinal commissioned Pietro da Cortona (1596–1669) to design an additional five scenes plus a baldachin and dorsal to be woven at the newly established Barberini tapestry manufactory in Rome. The entire collection of tapestries stayed in the Barberini collection until 1889, at which point the panels were split up, only to be reunited by Mitchell Samuels in December 1956. Samuels, in turn, sold the series in 1959 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, which then donated it to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
24. “Subito che il Sgr. de la Planche hebbe ricevuto la lettera ch’io gli mandai di parte di V.S. egli mi mando a dire ch’egli m’haverrebbe fatto sborzare subito la somma di 500 lb. che V.S. gli scriveva disborzare, et havendo io inteso che certa tappezzeria ch’io gli haveva ordinata era quasi finita volsi sapere a cui termine a poco apprezzo la potrei sperare. Mi fu risposto che fra 15 à 20 giorni sarebbe fornita, il che mi mosse a non volere altramente darmi la brigga di numerare la somma poi che in si breve spatio di tempo io haveva da restituirla per il prezzo della tappezzeria, di maniera che non tenne a lui, ch’io non ricevessi subito i dannari contanti, ma a la mia negligenza di non volergli lasciare passare per le mie mani diverse volte in si breve spatio di tempo, si come io le scrissi allora, che V.S. ha havuto torto di havere improvato le nostre conventioni, che erano in termini di ogni ragione. Onde la prego di non imputarne la causa ad altro et di commandarmi con ogni authorità, pregando le dal Sigr. ogni maggior bene.” As transcribed in Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 359–360. A letter of August 4 also mentions a debt, but the letter dated a few weeks later better articulates the circumstances.
25. Brosens observes that Rubens did not contact the French court about the payment but about the manufactory. See Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 95.
26. Julius S. Held, *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens: A Critical Catalogue*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Published for the National Gallery of Art by Princeton University Press, 1980), 2:67.
27. “Di modo ch’io non volsi mancar di trovarmi all’assignatione, il che non fu inutile poi che V.S. m’haveva scritto il particolare delli soggetti, che se ben gli altri sapevano in generale che erano della Vita di Constantino, nulladimeno non sapevano il particular di chiascheduna historia ch’io gli andai esponendo....” As transcribed in Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 361.
28. A letter of 26 February 1626 from Rubens to Palamedes Fabri de Valavez (1582–1645), Peiresc’s brother, employs the phrase “in the service of Your Majesty,” but Brosens interprets this as but a gracious and elegant turn of phrase. See Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 365.
29. “Et si come non si pote far l’assemblea tanto secreta che non vi si incontrassero molte persone o venute a caso con l’arcivescovo nuovo di Parigi, o con altri SSri. ch’andavano per comprar tappezzerie, o a posta per veder le sue opera....” As transcribed in Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 361.
30. Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 127.
31. Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 80.
32. Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 81.
33. Letter from Ludwig Burchard to G.H.A. Clowes, 1956, File 2001.237, Registration Historical Files, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields.
34. A few cracks in the lower half of the panel are the only marks of the passage of time on the surface.
35. Though no *bozzetti* exist for the *Constantine* series, there are extant examples from Rubens’s next tapestry series, *The Triumph of the Eucharist*, which he began in the mid-1620s. See Anne T. Woollett, “Faith and Glory. The Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia and the *Triumph of the Eucharist*,” *Spectacular Rubens: The Triumph of the Eucharist*, exh. cat., ed. Alejandro Vergara and Anne T. Woollett (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust, 2014), 22.
36. It was presumably included in the 3 August to 1 September 1627 probate inventory of the Comans-De la Planche workshop taken upon the death of the latter in 1627: “Item douze petitz desseigns peintz en huile sur des planches de bois, de la main de Pierre Paul Rubens, représentant l’Histoire de Constantin, prisé à raison de 100# pièce 1,200#,” as transcribed in Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 366, from the above cited inventory in the Archives Nationales, Paris.
37. On the vagaries of the Comans-De la Planche workshop between 1627 and 1633, including its dissolution and the resulting division of shared property, see Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 98–100.
38. The Valois seal appears on the verso of *The Milvian Bridge* and *The Death of Constantine*, leading Brosens to speculate that more of the oil sketches may have been in this collection. See Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 45, 102. Brosens nevertheless believes quite firmly that the twelve sketches were dispersed after 1627. See Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 108.
39. Twelve oil sketches are listed in the posthumous inventory of Philippe II d’Orléans in 1724: “Item douze tableaux quarrés peints sur bois representant l’histoir de Constantin dans leurs bordures en bois sculptés doré numeroté 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. Prisés ensemble de la somme de deux mille quatre cent livres.” See Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 370.
40. An inventory of the paintings in the collection of the duc d’Orléans was recorded in March 1792 by Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Lebrun for Thomas Moore Slade. It lists “Pierre Paul Rubens, 2 esquisses de l’histoire de Constantin 15,000,” and is transcribed in Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, vol. 3, *The Constantine Series*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part 13, ed. Arnout Balis (London: Harvey Miller, 2011), 375. Brosens also mentions inventories of 1752 and 1785 of Louis d’Orléans (1703–1752) and Louis-Philippe d’Orléans (1725–1785) respectively.
41. Brosens notes that this and other oil sketches from the *Constantine* series were offered for sale at Slade’s gallery in Chatham, Kent, in 1792–1793, and then again in London, at 125 Pall Mall in 1793. In the latter this oil sketch was no. 58.
42. Christie’s London, *Italian, French, Flemish and Dutch pictures*, 25 May 1829, lot no. 63.
43. Christie’s London, *Italian, French, Flemish and Dutch pictures*, 25 May 1829, lot no. 63, in an annotated copy at the Getty Research Institute.
44. Provenance Index Database, Getty Research Institute, ledger of John Smith.
45. Phillips Son & Neal, London, *Splendid and Highly estimable collection of pictures*, lot no. 70.
46. Provenance Index Database, Getty Research Institute.
47. George Redford, *Art Sales: A History of Sales of Pictures and Other Works of Art* (Whitefriars Press: London, 1888), 2:323. (Although this may refer to a copy of the oil sketch.)
48. Georges Bottolier-Lasquin, or Georges B.-Lasquin, was a collector and “expert en art” for auction sales. He is listed as the owner of the oil sketch in the catalogue, *Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, Exposition [de tableaux de maîtres anciens] au profit des inondés du midi*, 1887, 41, no 139.
49. Henri Lasquin’s ownership is noted in Casimir Stryjenski, *La Galerie du regent, Philippe, duc d’Orléans, Paris*, 1913, 188, no. 478. See also *American Art News*, “Death of ‘Expert’ Lasquin,” 1 February 1919, 5, for a brief biography of Lasquin.
50. Katharine Grant Sterne, “Some Old Masters in New York Galleries,” *Parnassus* (February 1931), 10, mentions an oil sketch from the life of Constantine with “pink and yellow draperies swirling gaily against a grey sky.” For the painting’s location in the 1920s, the RKD, The Hague, suggests that it was included in a 1924 auction; this is in error, since the auction catalogue clearly indicates that no. 36 was a copy on canvas of the original,

which is painted on oak panel. See Koninklijke Kunstaal Kleykamp, The Hague, *Vente collection importante tableaux et sculptures des XV^e, XVI^e, XVII^e siècles, appartenant à un amateur*, 10 June 1924, 8 (introduction by C. Hofstede de Groot), lot no. 36 (reproduced).

51. Bill of Sale, 6 February 1956, Newhouse correspondence, Clowes Registration Archive, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields.