



Constantine's Bible: Politics and the Making of the New Testament

David L. Dungan

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Most college and seminary courses on the New Testament include discussions of the process that gave shape to the New Testament. Now David Dungan re-examines the primary source for this history, the Ecclesiastical History of the fourth-century Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, in the light of Hellenistic political thought. He reaches startling new conclusions: that we usually use the term "canon" incorrectly; that the legal imposition of a "canon" or "rule" upon scripture was a fourth- and fifth-century phenomenon enforced with the power of the Roman imperial government; that the forces shaping the New Testament canon are much earlier than the second-century crisis occasioned by Marcion, and that they are political forces. Dungan discusses how the scripture selection process worked, book-by-book, as he examines the criteria used-and not used-to make these decisions. Finally he describes the consequences of the emperor Constantine's tremendous achievement in transforming orthodox, Catholic Christianity into imperial Christianity.

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