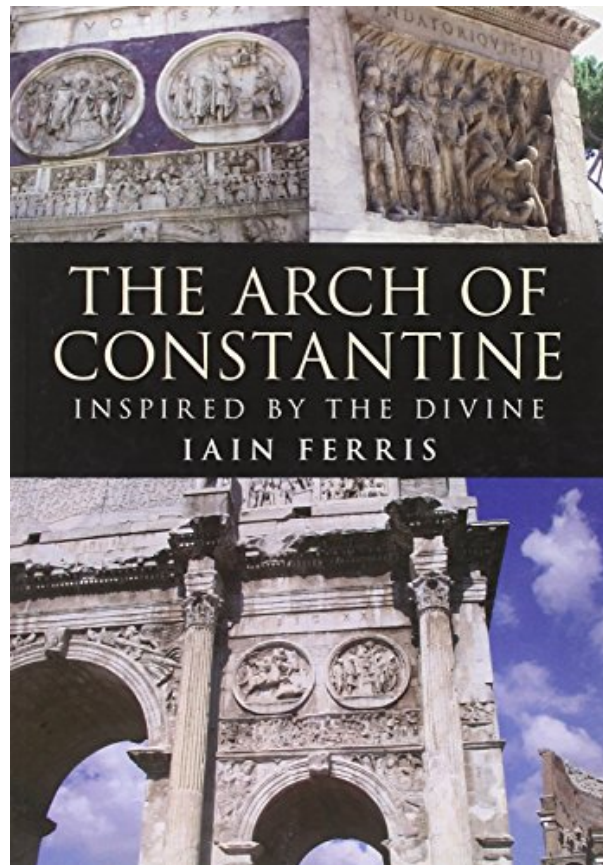
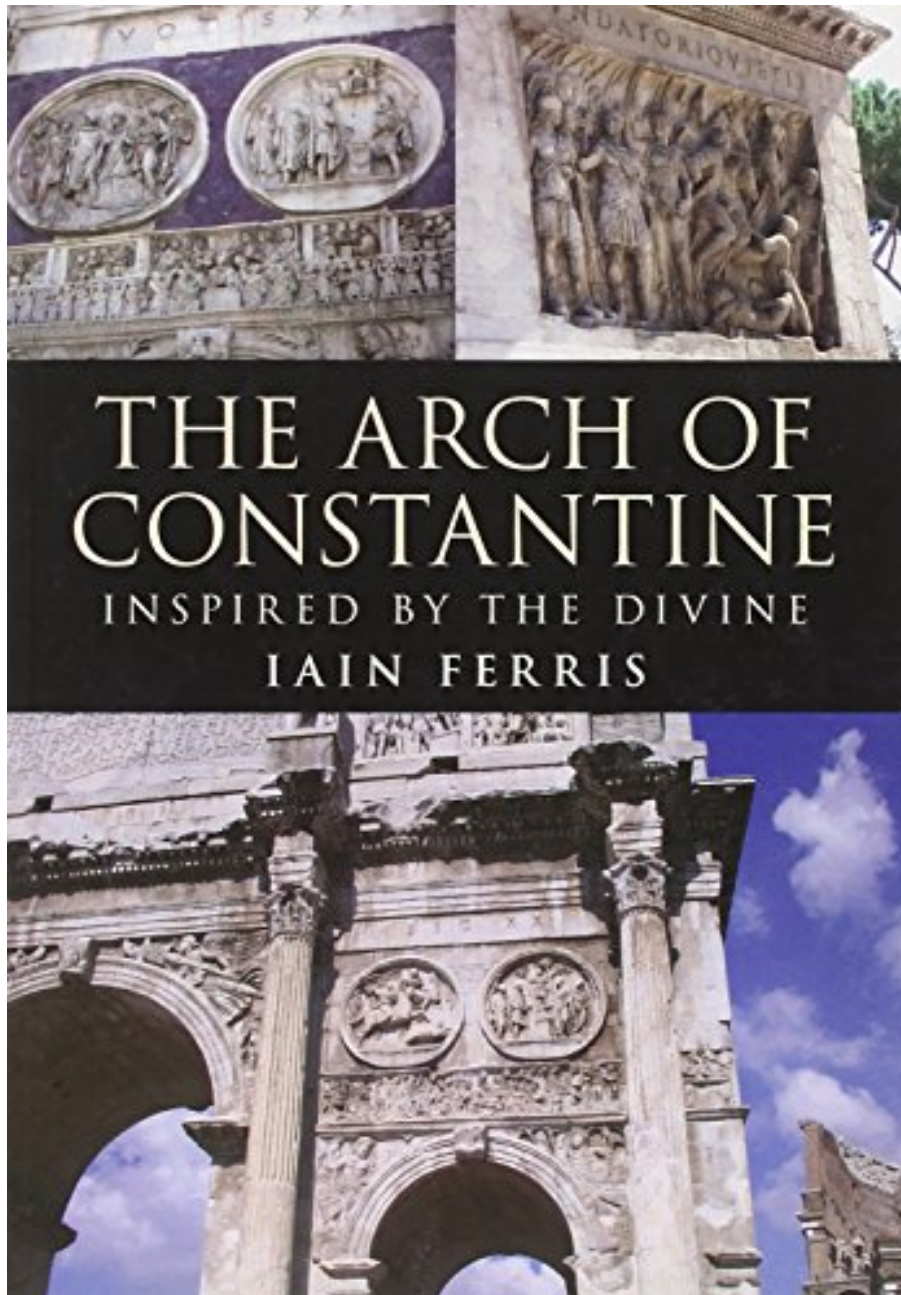


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Dr Iain Ferris is a professional archaeologist of thirty-five years' standing, and has taught at Birmingham and Manchester Universities. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. His other books include *Vinovia and Roman Britain through its Objects*, both published by Amberley. He lives in Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales.

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Right next to the Colosseum in Rome stands the Arch of Constantine. Completed AD 312–315, it was built to celebrate ten years of the Emperor Constantine's reign and his victory at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. The arch is undoubtedly the most impressive civic monument surviving from this period.

At 21 metros high, this triumphal arch is impossible to miss and is a key attraction for tourists visiting Rome. And yet this is the first modern book in English on the monument. Iain Ferris analyses the arch and the reign of Constantine himself, as well as discussing the reuse of older buildings in its construction, its complex and impressive decoration, and the use of arches as civic commemorative monuments in the Roman world. All of this is set against the broader geographical, chronological, and cultural context.

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A TRIUMPHANT BOOK ABOUT A TRIUMPHAL MONUMENT

By Critical Mass

THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE by Iain Ferris (author of HATE AND WAR The Column of Marcus Aurelius) is an outstanding and comprehensive study of what is considered to be the last and arguably the most magnificent of Rome's triumphal monuments. The first chapter is a fine overview of the political and personal background to the life and times of Constantine and its potential relevance as to what appears on the Arch and where. Here, as is the case throughout the book, the well written text is buttressed by an abundance of detailed and clear photographs in b&w which clarify and support what is being expounded. The second chapter deals with the material fabric and architectural/sculptural structure of the Arch as well as the significance of what is inscribed on its attic (thus the sub-title of the book: "Inspired by the Divine"). Ferris also addresses the seminal scholarship of Elizabeth Marlowe who has dealt with the Arch's place in the urban topography of Rome, possibly equal in importance to what is actually presented on the monument itself. The longtime debate about who built the Arch and when is discussed in depth; and the author comes out on the side of the generally accepted conclusion that it was indeed constructed to honor Constantine with the groundwork for it beginning in 313AD.

Additional chapters deal with the "good" emperors - Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius - and what their monuments contributed to the A of C; an in depth discussion of the various sculptural programs intentionally "inspired by the divine"; the specter and building legacy of Maxentius in Rome ("The Ghost in the Machine"); "Collage and Memory" discusses the use of "spolia" on the Arch and the reasons for the specifics of it. The subject is also treated with reference to the new capital - Constantinople (Istanbul) - of the Eastern Roman Empire and its relationship to the acquisition of "holy Christian" relics. A final chapter ("A Metaphor for Modernity") not only deals with the artistic legacy of the Arch but contains an excellent discussion and critique of Bernard Berenson's "misguided" 1954 analysis of the A of C. An Appendix, 39 color photographs, and a superb and up to date very extensive bibliography (along with notes) completes the book.

It is also the opinion of this reviewer that the Arch of Constantine should rightfully be considered both the last Pagan monument and first Christian monument above ground in the city of Rome.

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