

# The One, the Many: A Novel of Constantine the Great, Athanasius of Alexandria, and the Battle to Unify the Roman Empire and the Christian Church

Tim J. Young



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ARNOBIUS OF CARTHAGE experiences the epic Battle of Milvian Bridge, witnesses the decisive Christian Council of Nicaea, and walks the imperial streets of the new Rome. Still, deep in his soul he realizes he's lost. Despite the security of family wealth and privilege, the death of his first love profoundly unsettles him. Now, Arnobius' wish is to know what in life lasts, if anything. Initially finding the answer in the One of Plato—absolute Unity, God—he's still not satisfied. How does this abstract, distant, philosophical One relate to his own life and the flux of the many? Bullheaded and magnanimous by turns, the Roman emperor Constantine the Great also yearns for the One. Yet his is a different kind of unity—practical, down to earth. His sole obsession is to establish one empire under one ruler, all beneath God, the One. But which god will be his divine partner in the battle for unity? Whichever god, bitter fighting inside the Christian Church impedes Constantine's passionate vision and mission. Athanasius, the unwavering bishop of Alexandria, is at the center of the fray, tenaciously holding to his own vision of God in stiff opposition to others who know the One and the many differently. For Arnobius of Carthage, good friends with both men, the imperial and ecclesial struggle is too much. All he wants is personal peace. And love. Will he ever know them?



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# **Ann Reiter:**

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