

Medieval Sourcebook: Banning of Other Religions Theodosian Code XVI.i.2

Although toleration was give to Christianity in 311CE by Constantine I, Christianity did not become the legal religion of the Roman Empire until the reign of Theodosius I (379-395). At that point not only was Christianity made the official religion of the Empire, but other religions were declared illegal.

Theodosian Code XVI.1.2

It is our desire that all the various nation which are subject to our clemency and moderation, should continue to the profession of that religion which was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter, as it has been preserved by faithful tradition and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the apostolic teaching and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe in the one diety of the father, Son and Holy Spirit, in equal majesty and in a holy Trinity. We authorize the followers of this law to assume the title Catholic Christians; but as for the others, since in our judgment they are foolish madmen, we decree that the shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to give their conventicles the name of churches. They will suffer in the first place the chastisement of divine condemnation an the second the punishment of our authority, in accordance with the will of heaven shall decide to inflict.

from Henry Bettenson, ed., *Documents of the Christian Church*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), p. 31 [Short extract used under fair-use provsions]

This text is part of the [Internet Medieval Source Book](#). The Sourcebook is a collection of public domain and copy-permitted texts related to medieval and Byzantine history.

Unless otherwise indicated the specific electronic form of the document is copyright. Permission is granted for electronic copying, distribution in print form for educational purposes and personal use. If you do reduplicate the document, indicate the source. No permission is granted for commercial use.

Paul Halsall June 1997
halsall@murray.fordham.edu

