CONSTANTINE, DIVINE EMPEROR OF THE CHRISTIAN GOLDEN AGE

JONATHAN BARDILL

CAMBRIDGE

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ABBREVIATIONS

Reference Works

AE	*L'Année épigraphique: revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'antiquité romaine* 1888–. Paris.
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt.* 1972–. Berlin–New York.
BMC	H. Mattingly and others, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum.* 6 vols. (London 1962–1976)
CAH²	*Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed. 14 vols. (in 19). (Cambridge 1971–2005)
CIL	T. Mommsen and others, eds., *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.* 17+ vols. (Berlin 1862–)
DACL	F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, eds., *Dictionnare d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie.* 15 vols. (in 30). (Paris 1924–1953)
FHG	C. Müller and T. Müller, eds. *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum.* 5 vols. (Paris 1848–1928)
ICVR	G. B. de Rossi, ed., *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae* (Rome 1857–1861)
IGR	R. Cagnat, *Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes.* 4 vols. (vol. 2 never published). (Paris 1906–1927; reprinted Chicago 1975)
ILCV I	E. Diehl, *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres* I (Berlin 1925)
ILS	H. Dessau, ed., *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae.* 3 vols. (Berlin 1892–1914)
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae.* 9 vols. (as 17). (Zurich–Munich 1981–1999)
LTUR	E. M. Steinby, ed., *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae.* 6 vols. (Rome 1993–2000)
OLD	P. G. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Combined edition, reprinted and corrected (Oxford 1996)
PG	J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Græca.* 161 vols. (Paris 1857–1866)
P. Lond.	F. S. Kenyon and H. I. Bell, eds., *Greek Papyri in the British Museum.* (London 1893–1907)
P. Oxy.	Grenfell, G. P., Hunt, A. S., and others, eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri.* 68+ vols. (London 1898–)
PLRE	A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, eds., *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire.* 3 vols. in 4. (Cambridge 1971–1992)
Repertorium	*Repertorium der Christlich-antiken Sarkophage.*
I	F. W. Deichmann, *Rom und Ostia.* (Wiesbaden 1967)
II	J. Dresken-Weiland, *Italien mit einem Nachtrag Rom und Ostia, Dalmatien, Museen der Welt.* (Mainz 1998)

III	B. Christern-Briesenick, *Frankreich, Algerien, Tunisien.* (Mainz 2003)
RIC	*The Roman Imperial Coinage* (London)
I	C. H. V. Sutherland, *31 BC to AD 69 – Augustus to Vitellius.* Revised edition. (1984)
II	H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, *Vespasian to Hadrian.* (1926)
III	H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, *Antoninus Pius to Commodus* (1930)
IV.1	H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, *Pertinax to Geta* (1936)
IV.2	H. Mattingly, E. A. Sydenham, and C. H. V. Sutherland, *Macrinus to Pupienus* (1938)
IV.3	H. Mattingly, E. A. Sydenham, and C. H. V. Sutherland. *Gordian III to Uranius Antoninus* (1949)
V.1	P. H. Webb, *Valerian to Florian* (1927)
V.2	P. H. Webb, *Probus to Amandus* (1933)
VI	C. H. V. Sutherland, *From Diocletian's Reform (AD 294) to the death of Maximinus (AD 313)* (1967)
VII	P. M. Bruun, *Constantine and Licinius, AD 313–337* (1966)
VIII	J. P. C. Kent, *The Family of Constantine I, AD 337–364* (1981)
IX	J. W. E. Pearce, *Valentinian I to Theodosius I* (1951)
X	J. P. C. Kent, *The Divided Empire and the Fall of the Western Parts AD 395–491* (1994)
RPC	A. Burnett, M. Amandry, P. P. Ripollès, *Roman Provincial Coinage.* 2 vols. + supplement. (London 1992–)
SIG	W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum.* 3rd ed. 4 vols. (Leipzig 1915–1924). Reprinted 1960.
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae.* 10+ vols. (Leipzig 1800–)

Series

ACL	Ante-Nicene Christian Library
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CFHB	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CSHB	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae
CUF	Collection des universités de France
FC	Fathers of the Church
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
JACE	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum Ergänzungsband
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MGHAA	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctorum Antiquissimorum
PC	Penguin Classics
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SLNPF	Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church
TCL	Translations of Christian Literature Series 1. Greek Texts
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians

Journals

AAAH	*Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia*
AB	*Analecta Bollandiana*
AC	*L'Antiquité classique*
AIPhO	*Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AJPh	*American Journal of Philology*
AnTard	*Antiquité tardive*
ArtBull	*Art Bulletin*
BABesch	*Bulletin Antieke Beschaving*
BCH	*Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*
BJ	*Bonner Jahrbücher*
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
Boreas	*Boreas: Münstersche Beiträge zur Archäologie*
ByzZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CJ	*The Classical Journal*
ClAnt	*Classical Antiquity*
CPh	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CRAI	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*

DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EMC	*Échos du Monde Classique, Classical Views*
G&R	*Greece and Rome*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
HThR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IstMitt	*Istanbuler Mitteilungen*
JARCE	*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*
JbAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JDAI	*Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JLA	*Journal of Late Antiquity*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JRA	*Journal of Roman Archaeology*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSAH	*Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*
JSAN	*Journal of the Society for Ancient Numismatics*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JThS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
JWI	*Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*
LNV	*Litterae Numismaticae Vindobonenses*
MAAR	*Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*
MediterrAnt	*Mediterraneo Antico*
MDAI(R)	*Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung*
MEFRA	*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Antiquité*
NC	*Numismatic Chronicle*
NZ	*Numismatische Zeitschrift*
OJA	*Oxford Journal of Archaeology*
PAPhS	*Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*
PBSR	*Papers of the British School at Rome*
P&P	*Past and Present*
RAC	*Rivista di archeologia cristiana*
RBen	*Revue Bénédictine*
REA	*Revue des études anciennes*
RHPhR	*Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
SBN	*Studi bizantini e neoellenici*
SCI	*Scripta Classica Israelica*
STh	*Studia Theologica*
StudPat	*Studia Patristica*
TAPhS	*Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*
T&MByz	*Travaux et mémoires*
TPAPhA	*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*
VChr	*Vigiliae Christianae*
YClS	*Yale Classical Studies*
ZAC	*Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*
ZKG	*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

CHRONOLOGY

273 — Constantine born to Constantius Chlorus and Helena at Naissus (27 February).

284 — Diocles (later Diocletian) proclaimed emperor near Nicomedia (20 November).

285 — Maximian appointed Caesar (early summer), so forming the Dyarchy.

286 — Maximian elevated to junior co-Augustus with Diocletian (1 April).

289 — (approx.) Constantius separates from Helena and marries Theodora. Panegyric X is delivered (21 April).

291 — Panegyric XI celebrates Maximian's birthday (21 July?).

293 — Constantius and Galerius appointed Caesars to Maximian and Diocletian respectively (1 March), so forming the First Tetrarchy. Constantius drives Carausius from the coast of Gaul. Carausius murdered and replaced by Allectus.

296 — Constantius liberates Britain from Allectus. Narses invades Armenia (autumn).

297 — Panegyric VIII to Constantius is delivered (1 March). Galerius captures the harem of Narses at Oskha in Armenia (autumn).

297–298 — Galerius captures Ctesiphon (winter) accompanied by Constantine.

298 — Panegyric IX by Eumenius is delivered.

301–302 — Constantine travels through Palestine to Egypt with Diocletian.

303 — Diocletian posts the First Persecution Edict in Nicomedia (24 February).
Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius meet in northern Italy and discuss the imperial succession (autumn).
Galerius required on lower Danube frontier.
In Rome, Diocletian and Maximian celebrate their *vicennalia* and the victory over Narses (20 November).
In the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline, Maximian swears an oath to retire with Diocletian.

305 — Diocletian and Maximian retire; Galerius and Constantius are appointed Augusti in East and West; Maximinus Daza and Severus are proclaimed their respective Caesars (1 May), so forming the Second Tetrarchy.
Active persecution ceases in the West under Constantius.
Constantine joins his father in Gaul. They cross to Britain and win a victory over the Picts (summer or autumn).

306 — Constantius dies in York and Constantine succeeds (25 July).
Constantine restores property and freedom to Christians in Britain, Gaul, and Spain.

Galerius proclaims Severus the new Augustus and Constantine Severus' Caesar.

Maxentius claims imperial status in Rome (28 October) and summons his father, Maximian, from retirement in his support. He extends toleration to Christians in his realms (winter).

307 Severus defeated by Maxentius at Ravenna and later murdered.

Constantine marries his second wife, Fausta (daughter of Maximian and Eutropia) and is raised to the rank of Augustus by Maximian. Galerius does not recognize the appointment.

Panegyric VII celebrates the marriage (December).

308 Maximian attempts to take Rome from Maxentius but fails (April).

Diocletian, Maximian, and Galerius meet at Carnuntum (11 November) and declare Licinius successor to Severus, Constantine Caesar to Licinius, and Maxentius as usurper. Maximian steps down again.

310 Maximian attempts to regain power but is captured by Constantine and forced to commit suicide at Marseille (July).

Panegyric VI describes Constantine's vision of Apollo.

Galerius acknowledges Constantine and Maximinus Daza as Augusti, so bringing the Tetrarchic system to an end.

311 Galerius posts edict of toleration to Christians in Danubian provinces and Greece (late April) but dies a month later in Serdica, having entrusted his wife and bastard son to Licinius. His territories are divided between Licinius and Maximinus.

Panegyric V celebrates Constantine's *quinquennalia* (25 July).

Constantine and Licinius attempt to curb Maximinus' persecuting tendencies in the East.

311 or 312 Diocletian dies at Spalato (Split; 3 December).

312 Constantine crosses the Alps (spring or summer), becomes master of northern Italy, defeats Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge (28 October), and enters Rome the next day.

Maximinus' edict of toleration in the East (end of year).

313 Constantine and Licinius meet in Milan and forge an alliance through the marriage of Constantine's oldest half-sister, Constantia, to Licinius. They agree on a policy of religious freedom (February).

Maximinus attacks Licinius at Hadrianopolis (Adrianople; April) but is defeated and flees eastwards. Licinius kills surviving members of other Tetrarchic families.

Maximinus issues edict ending persecution and restoring confiscated property in his territories (May).

Licinius sends to governors of both the Balkans and provinces newly taken from Maximinus (Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt) a letter extending to Christians the same benefits already enjoyed by those in the West (13 June).

Maximinus, besieged in Tarsus, commits suicide (July).

Constantine perhaps visits Britain.

Panegyric XII delivered in Constantine's honour (autumn).

314 Council of Arles convened to discuss the Donatist controversy.

315 Constantine's *decennalia* celebrated in Rome (18/21 July–27 September).

Arch of Constantine dedicated by the Senate and people of Rome.

316 Constantine defeats Licinius at Cibalae (autumn).

317 Peace negotiated at Serdica between Constantine and Licinius.

Licinianus (son of Licinius), Crispus (Constantine's son by Minervina), and Constantine Junior (Constantine's first son by Fausta) named Caesars (1 March).

319 Constantine bans private acts of divination.

321 Panegyric IV delivered by Nazarius on the *quinquennalia* of the Caesars (1 March).

323 Constantine encroaches on Licinius' territory.

324 Constantine defeats Licinius at the River Hebrus (3 July) and Chrysopolis (18 September) and adds Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt to his domains.

Constantinople founded on site of Byzantium.

Constantius (Constantine's second son by Fausta) named Caesar, and Helena and Fausta made Augustae (8 November).

325 Licinius executed at Thessalonica (spring).

Council of Nicaea convened to discuss the Arian controversy (June–July). Bishops invited to banquet to celebrate beginning of Constantine's *vicennalia* (25 July).

325 or 326 Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, receives letter from the emperor instructing him to build a basilica at the site of the Holy Sepulchre.

326 Trial and condemnation of Crispus; suspicious death of Fausta.

Constantine enters Rome (15 July) to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of his accession ten days later.

327 Helena embarks on pilgrimage to Holy Land (spring) and is joined by Eutropia, Constantine's mother-in-law.

Council of Nicomedia readmits Arius to the church.

328 Constantine constructs a bridge over the Danube.

Helena dies, probably in Nicomedia, and is buried on the Via Labicana in Rome.

330 Constantinople dedicated: radiate statue of Constantine placed on top of porphyry column (11 May); circus procession of Constantine's statue (12 May).

332 Constantine wins a victory over the Goths (winter).

333 Constans (Constantine's third son by Fausta) proclaimed Caesar (25 December).

334 Constantine wins a victory over the Sarmatians.

Council at Caesarea investigates accusations against Athanasius.

335 Council at Tyre (July–September) finds Athanasius guilty.

Dalmatius (nephew of Constantine) named Caesar (18 September).

Church of Holy Sepulchre dedicated in Jerusalem, and Eusebius recites the extant oration on the church of the Holy Sepulchre (September).

Council of Tyre summoned to Constantinople and presents new accusations against Athanasius.

Eusebius recites a second oration on the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople (November).

336 Constantine adopts the title *Dacicus Maximus*.

Arius dies (24 July).

Constantine's thirtieth anniversary celebration (*tricennalia*) at Constantinople, at which Eusebius recites his *In Praise of Constantine* (25 July).

337 Constantine baptized and dies at Nicomedia (22 May). He is buried in a shrine of the Apostles in Constantinople (late May or early June).

Constans agrees to the construction of a temple in honour of the imperial family at Hispellum.

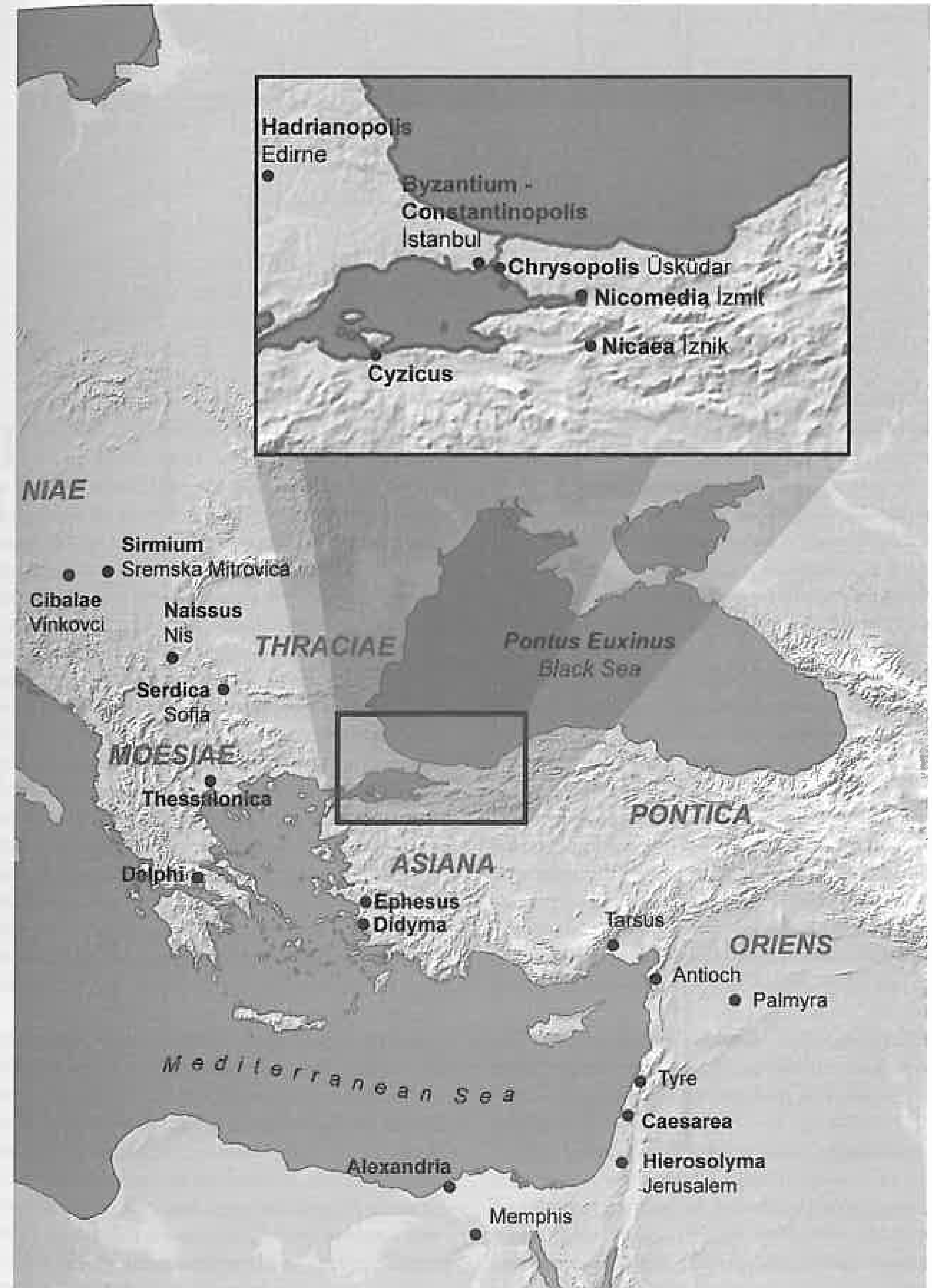
Massacre of the sons and grandsons of Theodora, including the Caesar Dalmatius (early June).

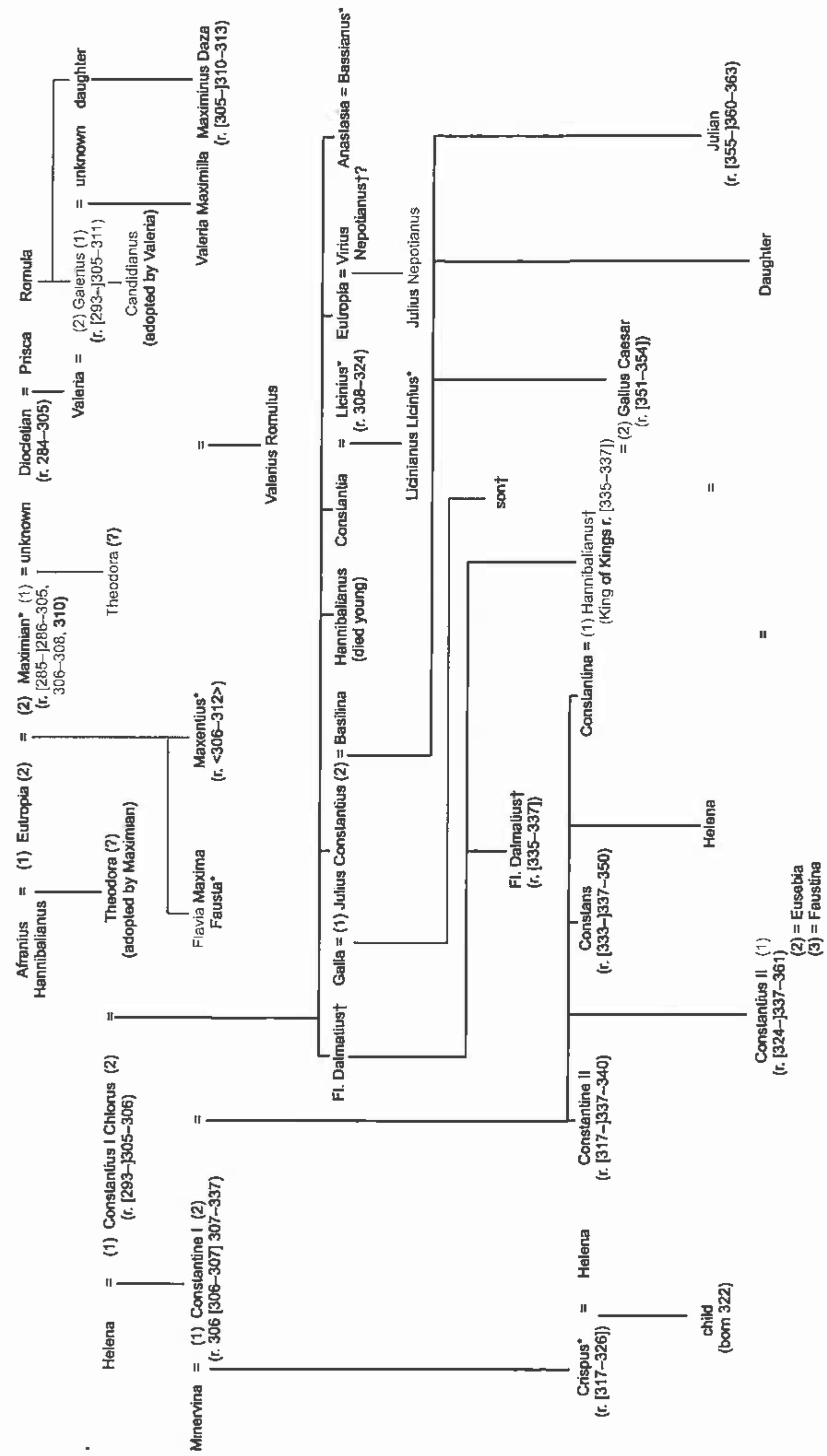
Constantine's sons (Constantine, Constantius, Constans) proclaimed Augusti (9 September).

339 Eusebius of Caesarea dies (May).

359 Patriarch Macedonius moves Constantine's body to the church of St. Acacius.

Map of the Roman Empire under the Tetrarchs and Constantine





The Families of the Tetrarchs and Constantine

INTRODUCTION

THE STORY OF CONSTANTINE NEVER CEASES TO FASCINATE. There are at least three reasons for this. In the first place, like any good tale, it has something to please everyone – a quest for power, military campaigns on a wide geographical scale, victory over adversity, political intrigue, scandal, murder, religious disputes, and an absorbing cultural context. Second, it is an important story: Constantine took two crucial decisions that changed the course of European history – on the one hand he embraced the persecuted Christians and even converted to their faith, securing Christianity's position even today as a major monotheistic religion; on the other, he founded Constantinople as a rival to Rome, ensuring the survival of the empire in the East long after the loss of Rome and the western provinces in the fifth century. Last, but by no means least, there is room for debate and speculation: our sources tantalize us by revealing enough to whet our appetite for this man and his times, but not so much that we can ever know all the answers.[1]

Despite the huge amount of interest shown in Constantine and his age by historians, theologians, archaeologists, and art-historians, the quantity of documentary and archaeological evidence relating to his reign is not as extensive as we might have hoped, and the discovery of new material is not frequent. Consequently, much of the available information has been sifted and discussed again and again by scholars, generating such a massive amount of literature that it would not be unreasonable to ask whether there is anything substantially new to be said.

Yet different scholars choose to explore the particular themes that take their interest, they bring their own perspective to bear on the interpretation of the available evidence, and they choose to emphasize and assess certain pieces of evidence as more significant whilst judging the importance of others to be less. As a result, various Constantines – some more plausible than others – have emerged in the scholarly literature over the years.[2]

My own thoughts on the emperor, as expressed here, are subject to the same personal decisions. I have, however, sought not merely to present a personal interpretation but also to explore the difficulties of analysing the available evidence, the differing inferences that might be drawn, and the ambiguities present. Ambiguity, it must be said from the start, will be a recurrent theme, for Constantine worked hard to accommodate both pagans and Christians, and had to adapt his behaviour and propaganda accordingly. I can only hope that my preferred perspectives, interpretations, and emphases give a truer, or – given that the nature of the evidence means that the whole truth will never be known – a fuller and more plausible picture of the real Constantine and the motivations behind his actions. At the very least they give another perspective.

My purpose in writing about Constantine has not been – or has not primarily been – to produce another historical account or biography (of which there are many),[3] but to explore and hopefully achieve a better understanding of the emperor's philosophy and propaganda of rulership and its

relationship to his changing public and private faith. What were the messages that Constantine and his court wished to convey to the Roman people through art, architecture, and texts? What image of himself, his style of rulership, and his religious beliefs did Constantine hope to project? Were his personal beliefs reflected publicly? Did Constantine, like his Tetrarchic predecessors, consider himself in close proximity to the gods? If so, how did he reconcile his profession of Christian faith – a religion that recognized only one God – with pagan traditions of imperial divinity?

To tackle these issues, I have in two respects taken a different approach to the age of Constantine than most of my predecessors.

In the first place, I have judged it necessary not just to deal with the Constantinian age, but, where necessary, to set Constantine in the much broader context of the kings and emperors of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Whilst there is a danger in such an approach of drawing false and anachronistic parallels, I believe that the method, if applied with caution, can suggest new ways of interpreting the limited evidence we possess about Constantine himself, and can help in assessing his position in relation to the earlier traditions. I do not mean to suggest by this approach that Constantine and his court were aware of all this history, rather that similar concepts and ideas may have been transmitted to them through texts and images, although perhaps in an altered form. The test of such an approach is whether the interpretations it suggests have a meaningful application in the Constantinian age in respect of a significant number of pieces of evidence.

Second, I have sought to bring together both archaeological and historical evidence. The published works devoted to Constantine tend to be purely historical, and the best treatments of the relevant archaeological and art-historical evidence often appear separately in books dedicated to Roman art and architecture, in journal articles, or in exhibition catalogues. The two types of evidence are seldom discussed side by side with equal prominence or accuracy, which is an unfortunate situation given that the two are complementary sources of information, each of which ought to be used to enhance our understanding of the other.[4] Although by attempting to tackle both subjects at the same time I run the risk of satisfying neither the archaeological nor the historical specialists, I believe such an approach has great benefits that outweigh the potential pitfalls. The significance of archaeological (particularly iconographical) evidence can never be fully appreciated without a careful consideration of the historical circumstances to which it relates, and I hope that the simultaneous exploration of both will not only give a broad perspective to the subject we are discussing but also introduce readers less familiar with the Constantinian period to the full spectrum of evidence available.

This book seeks not only to present the reader with much of the available archaeological and historical evidence bearing on Constantine's public image but also to argue for a new way of looking at Constantinian propaganda. A case can be made, as I explain in the pages that follow, that the evidence, when taken as a whole, suggests that Constantine was following more closely and more overtly than most earlier Roman emperors a solar philosophy of kingship whose beginnings can be traced back to the Hellenistic period and beyond. This interpretation was suggested to me by a short but seminal paper by Norman Baynes, in which he discussed Eusebius' portrayal of the nature of Constantine's rulership.[5] The validity of Baynes' insightful suggestion that Eusebius was inspired by much earlier traditions of kingship philosophy was later clearly demonstrated when his argument was placed in its wider context by Francis Dvornik in his two volumes on *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy*.[6] Here I have sought to show that the representation of Constantine's rule in terms of kingship philosophy was not confined to Eusebius' rhetoric but was an integral part of the propaganda emanating from the palace, and that this is reflected in both texts and archaeology. I have also placed much more emphasis on the importance of the solar aspects of both kingship theory and Christianity.

I remain mindful of Baynes' warning that "we may imagine that we have discovered the key to a personality, and then we persuade ourselves that it will open every lock."[7] Whilst I would not claim that the philosophical perspective presented here is "a single master-key" to Constantine's religious and

political beliefs and actions, nevertheless it would seem to explain a great deal. Others may prefer to interpret each piece of evidence in isolation and make no attempt to detect an underlying philosophy. Indeed, I am sure that there will be some who will want to take each element of my argument, probe it ruthlessly for weak points, and then deny the validity of the overall case. But it is, in my opinion, the impression left by the complete dossier of archaeological and historical evidence that must be taken into account, and I therefore believe that the case has something to recommend it and deserves to be set forth.

Although those looking for a traditional, strictly chronological narrative of Constantine's reign will not find it here, throughout the book I have endeavoured to give sufficient historical context for the reader to appreciate the changing political and religious circumstances, and I have provided a chronological chart. I have also striven to give adequate supporting annotation for readers who may want to explore the subject further in both primary and secondary literature. The primary literature becomes more accessible to those without ancient languages as the number of accurate scholarly translations and commentaries continues to grow. In this regard I must acknowledge my debt to the excellent translation of, and commentary on Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* by Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall, to which all who study Constantine cannot fail to refer with profit. Although not always based on the most accurate edition of a text, translations in series such as the Loeb Classical Library and the Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church are widely available, and for that reason I have cited them in the hope that the references may encourage students to consult the primary sources for themselves. I do not make any claim to having provided a complete secondary bibliography – a hopeless task in such a popular scholarly field. I have merely cited the large number of works that I have found most relevant and useful for the issues I have chosen to address, conscious of the fact that I could have read and listed many more were there no limits to my research time and the finances of both the publisher and the organizations that have contributed generously to the costs of publication. The notes and bibliographies in those works will in turn guide the reader who wants to delve deeper into the ever-increasing wealth of academic literature.

Eusebius and Other Sources on Constantine

The extent of our knowledge about the reign of Constantine and his Tetrarchic predecessors has suffered badly because of the loss of the first thirteen books of the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus.[8] This history of Rome, which continued the work of Tacitus from A.D. 96 to the year 378, would have provided a unique insight into the period by an author who was politically aware and militarily experienced. Other texts whose losses are to be lamented are Praxagoras' *History of Constantine the Great*, which was written shortly after the emperor's death,[9] and a ten-book history of the emperor by Bemarchius, who wrote in the mid-fourth century.

In this situation, historians are forced to rely on less complete and less even-handed treatments of Constantine. Amongst these are the brief historical summaries by Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, and Orosius, and the anonymous but important *Origin of Constantine*, which was probably written soon after the emperor's death.[10] In addition there is the *New History* of the pagan historian Zosimus, which was written in the late fifth century and covered the period 200–410, although it now regrettably lacks the reign of Diocletian.[11] This work must be used with caution because of the negative way in which Constantine is portrayed – a result of the author having drawn extensively on the lost *History* of Eunapius, which was probably written as a retort to the sympathetic treatments Constantine had received from Praxagoras and Bemarchius.

Fortunately, to counter the negative pagan perspective of the likes of Zosimus, scholars can turn to the surviving Christian accounts of Constantine's reign. The Christian tradition generated a number of contemporary works about Constantine and his age, in particular those by Lactantius and Eusebius of Caesarea.[12] Both authors wrote several works, but of special interest and importance are Lactantius' *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* and Eusebius' *Church History*,

Life of Constantine, and *In Praise of Constantine*.[13] The first of these was written between 313 and 315, and in it Lactantius describes the terrible judgements that God passed on the persecutors of the Christians from Nero to Diocletian. Eusebius' *Church History* traced the story of the Christian faithful from the time of Christ to his own day. It passed through several editions, the first published before 300 in seven books, the second at about the end of 313 with two new books (a summary of the persecution in Palestine as Book Eight plus what is today Book Nine), the third around 315 (in which the account of Palestinian martyrdoms was replaced by the present eighth book), and the fourth and final edition soon after the defeat of Licinius.[14] Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*, which tells the eponymous hero's story from around 301, when he travelled with Diocletian in Palestine, to 337, when he accepted baptism and died, is the most important single source we possess about Constantine. One analysis of the text has concluded that the book reached its final form at the hands of an unknown editor after Eusebius' death in 339. This editor, it is claimed, composed some passages of his own to link together two unfinished Eusebian works: a continuation of the *Church History* from the year 325 and a panegyric begun after Constantine's death. Whatever the stages in composition, the result may be called a "literary hybrid."[15] To the main text of the *Life*, Eusebius appended three speeches, the second of which was Eusebius' own oration *In Praise of Constantine*, which was read before the emperor in 336 during the celebration of his thirtieth year of rule. In it, Eusebius presented a sophisticated philosophy of Constantinian kingship, explaining the intimate relationship of the emperor to Christ and God.

All four texts, despite their inestimable value, must be used with caution when trying to understand the emperor's personal motives and ideals because the accounts they present are heavily coloured by the authors' own political and Christian agendas and perspectives. Lactantius, for instance, makes no attempt to hide his violent hatred of Constantine's enemies whilst at the same time expressing the highest regard for Constantine himself. His tone naturally raises questions about his reliability.[16] As for Eusebius, he portrays Constantine as the founder of a Christian empire, admitting in the introduction to his *Life* that he intends to omit accounts of wars and laws, to concentrate instead on "the recording of actions dear to God" and "what relates to the life which is dear to God," adding that "the occasion demands that I offer unrestrained praises in varied words."[17]

Since scholars must rely heavily on the *Life of Constantine* when fashioning a view of the Constantinian era, I shall make a few observations on the importance of approaching Eusebius' account with healthy scepticism, and on the difficulties of assessing the accuracy of the information it provides.[18] In the first place, we should remember that Eusebius was a provincial bishop who lived and wrote in Caesarea in Palestine. He visited the imperial court in Constantinople on just four occasions, all after the emperor's victory over Licinius in 324.[19] His first meeting with the emperor was probably at the Council of Nicaea in 325, when Constantine would have become familiar with the bishop's thinking on the relationship of the Father to the Son. The two probably met again in December 327 at the Council of Nicomedia, but their paths did not cross again until November 335, when Eusebius travelled to Constantinople and recited to the emperor an oration concerning the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which had recently been dedicated. In the summer of the following year, Eusebius was again in the capital, this time to recite his *In Praise of Constantine* in celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of Constantine's accession, and he may have remained there until at least Easter in 337.

In addition to their rare meetings, we know from Eusebius of a few letters that passed between the bishop and the emperor – although Timothy Barnes claims "it is not unduly skeptical to suspect that Eusebius quotes all the important letters which he ever received from Constantine."[20] Yet, despite his distance from the centre of politics, it is clear from Eusebius' works that he endeavoured to compose reliable history. His inclusion in the *Life* not only of letters written to him by the emperor but also of other imperial letters and decrees illustrates his desire to preserve historically important materials.[21] Before citing one decree, he comments that it should be quoted "both so that the actual text of this decree may survive through our history and be preserved for those after us, and in order to confirm the truth of our narratives."[22] The extent to which he achieved his aim of writing a truthful history is, however, debatable, for it is clear that in certain instances Eusebius altered historical facts (generally to present Constantine or members of his family in the best light), omitted important information (often for the same purpose), and placed interpretations on events, actions, and imagery that reflect his own preferred perspective rather than reality.[23] Let me give some examples.

In the *Life*, Eusebius describes Constantius, Constantine's deceased father, as "recognizing only the God over all," clearly intending the reader to understand that he had been a Christian and that Constantine followed in his pious footsteps. Yet, Constantius is known to have destroyed Christian churches – even if, as one text claims, he acted unwillingly and only to avoid upsetting his colleagues. Although Constantius brought Christian persecution to an end in the West in 305, the majority of coins minted under him depicted the gods Hercules and Jupiter, and there was no attempt by him to dispense with these images of traditional pagan religion.[24]

Eusebius' omission of an important and terrible episode in 326 demonstrates perfectly his self-professed aim to "offer unrestrained praises." So shocking and shameful that they get no mention in the *Life* whatsoever are the death sentence passed on Crispus, Constantine's son by his first wife, and the mysterious but probably related death of his second wife, Fausta.

Deliberate misrepresentation occurs in Eusebius' account of the arrangements that the ageing Constantine made for the succession to the throne. Eusebius falsely claims that the emperor expected his three surviving sons by Fausta – the Caesars Constantine, Constantius, and Constans – to succeed him. Apparently Eusebius felt it necessary to make this fallacious assertion to avoid the necessity of making any reference to Constantine's nephew Dalmatius, who had also been raised to the rank of Caesar by the emperor. Mention of the murders of Dalmatius and his brothers immediately after Constantine's death on the orders of Constantius would have tarnished the reputation of the Constantinian house, and so Eusebius preferred to omit this episode and present the resulting rule-of-three as if it had always been Constantine's intention.[25]

As for Eusebius placing his preferred spin on events, there are many places in which we may reasonably be suspicious of the Christian motives he ascribes to the emperor's actions. For instance, Eusebius categorically states that Constantine banned all sacrifice. If this were true, it would constitute a revolutionary move against traditional Roman religion. Yet, when examined in detail, there is reason to doubt that such a bold law was passed and rigorously enforced, although there can be no doubt that, after 324, Constantine was outspoken in his criticism of paganism.[26]

These examples suffice to show that readers of the *Life* who are interested in exploiting its information for historical purposes must always bear in mind what Eusebius might have had to gain by altering or suppressing the truth, or by placing a particular interpretation on the facts – whether with regard to promoting Constantine as the ideal Christian ruler, or to putting down the emperor's rivals, or to promoting his own religious viewpoint.

Bearing these possibilities in mind is one thing; *proving* deception, omission, or distorted interpretation is quite another. When suspicions arise, the best test is to compare Eusebius' assertions with other historical evidence – if it exists. For example, Eusebius claims that the young Constantine fled from the plots of Diocletian and Galerius to the protection of his father in Gaul. On arrival in the West, he found Constantius on his death bed, and the emperor greeted his son with open arms, placed charge of the empire in his hands, and then expired. Next, having assumed the purple, Constantine campaigned successfully on the Rhine and in Britain. The sequence of events seems too dramatic to be true, and, indeed, when we compare the *Origin of Constantine* and the panegyric of 310, we discover that Constantine, whether or not he fled from a conspiracy in the eastern court, arrived in Boulogne to find his father very much alive. The campaign against the Picts in Britain was jointly conducted by father and son, and it was only later that Constantius died.[27]

To take another example, in neither the *Church History* nor the *Life of Constantine* do we find full details of the events leading up to the breakdown of

the peace accord between Constantine and Licinius in 316. In the fourth edition of the former book, which appeared after Constantine's victory in 324, the favourable view of Licinius that had been expressed in earlier versions was adjusted.[28] In the *Life*, which was probably started in earnest shortly before Constantine's death, Licinius was consistently represented as a jealous, crafty, deceitful ingrate waging war against God.[29] In both cases, the omission of the events that led to the war is probably explained by the fact that Constantine was the aggressor. It is perhaps not surprising to find the pagan historian Zosimus claiming as much,[30] but the preservation of significant information in the *Origin of Constantine* provides a more reliable indication that Constantine may have engineered the breakdown. This he did by unreasonably proposing that his brother-in-law Bassianus be made a Caesar, the other Caesar presumably being his son, Crispus. Licinius could never have accepted such a proposal, since he had a newborn son of his own, whom he would have expected to be promoted to the rank of Caesar alongside Crispus. The situation became darker when Constantine's second wife, Fausta, unexpectedly became pregnant after eight years of barren marriage. By his proposal to elevate Bassianus, Constantine had unintentionally created a rival to his potential second son. The story goes that Licinius used Bassianus' brother Senecio to persuade Bassianus to assassinate Constantine. Bassianus, however, was killed when he was caught in the act, and Senecio fled to Licinius' protection. Whether there is any truth in the charge of attempted assassination we shall never know, but it is not unlikely that it was trumped up by Constantine to justify Bassianus' removal. When Licinius refused to hand Senecio over to justice, Constantine had a justification for going to war.[31]

Unfortunately, when such contradictions are found in our historical sources, it is not always easy to determine whether we should believe Eusebius or reject his assertions in favour of the contrary accounts. That is because other writers, too, had their agendas. Some, like Zosimus for example, being firmly anti-Christian and anti-Constantine, were equally prone to distorting the truth for their own purposes. The situation is somewhat easier when Eusebius' version in the *Life* can be compared with his own accounts in his earlier *Church History*. Such comparison can reveal how Eusebius adjusted his original story in the light of subsequent events. For instance, the *Church History* contains no reference to Constantine's famous dream and vision. Admittedly, Eusebius may not have heard the story until a meeting with Constantine in 325 or 336, but the decision to add it to the historical account of the *Life*, which was written after Constantine had emerged as the sole ruler of the empire, illustrates Eusebius' desire to portray Constantine's rise to power as a direct consequence of his having been selected by the Christian God to be His champion – as Constantine himself no doubt wished it to be portrayed.[32]

The better quality historical evidence for testing Eusebius' accuracy comes from official documents, such as laws and letters sent out by the emperor himself. Eusebius refers to many laws passed by Constantine, but he does not quote them. Whether he had the texts at hand we do not know, but clearly his brief summaries do not correspond closely to the reality of those laws that do survive. It is evident that not only has he often misrepresented the detail of the laws but he has also given them a Christian interpretation not always evident from the laws themselves.[33]

When Eusebius claims that Constantinople was full of churches, it is only right to be suspicious, since we know that he was keen to paint his emperor as a fervent believer and defender of the faith.[34] Indeed, if we search in other sources for information that might help clarify the number of Constantinian churches in the city, we find that only three are named (in addition to the emperor's own burial place, which was also used for worship). However, we also possess a letter from Constantine to Eusebius, in which the emperor requested fifty bound copies of the gospels to be prepared and sent to him because "it is particularly fitting that more churches should be established."[35] Even with such evidence in support of Eusebius' claim, however, the general scepticism that surrounds Eusebius' reliability – particularly with regard to the extent to which Constantinople was a Christian city, and to which Constantine was a Christian emperor – can still lead to doubt. Thus, in their commentary on the *Life*, Cameron and Hall prefer to reject the possibility that there were more than a handful of churches in the city.[36]

In short, it is necessary to consider Eusebius' assertions alongside those of other authors and together with the archaeological evidence. When there are inconsistencies we must begin to explore the motives that each author may have had for omitting, altering, or misrepresenting the facts. More often than not, it will not be possible to determine whether one particular account should be trusted above the others. Sometimes, the most plausible reconstruction of reality will come from assuming that different aspects of the truth are reflected to different degrees in different accounts. But at other times we will only be able to advance several possible scenarios without certainty about which is correct.

We must be equally cautious when exploiting the valuable information that can be gained from the surviving panegyrical orations written by rhetoricians of the schools of Gaul.[37] These works praised Constantine and other later Roman emperors on occasions such as the fifth or tenth anniversary of their accession, their birthday, their marriage, or their entrance into or departure from a city. Some also attempted to win from the emperor specific concessions for a particular town, such as a reduction in taxes. In each case, flattery was necessary.[38] Such speeches are likely to have been delivered all over the empire on days of celebration, in which case those that survive by Gallic authors represent a small proportion of the thousands that must have been delivered.[39] We must also be aware that the surviving speeches give a local, Gallic perspective, and that therefore any view the panegyrics might provide of the empire as a whole is distorted by their "parochial lens."[40]

The structure of such a speech was constrained by strict rhetorical rules, such as those laid down in the handbooks of Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Menander Rhetor, and the imagery and phraseology was not original but drawn from authors of the past, especially Cicero. Nevertheless, the orators were skilled in working within these constraints to create a speech relevant to current political circumstances, the place of delivery, the expectations of the imperial court, and the needs of whoever had commissioned the oration. The orator had to say what he thought the emperor wanted to hear – but whether he always correctly assessed this is open to scholarly debate. Although they give us (amongst other things) an insight into ideologies of rulership in Late Antiquity, the orations are works of flattery constructed according to what has been called "a trained method of perception," and we must therefore take care in assessing the extent to which they reflect the image the orator had of his ruler, the image that the emperor himself wished to propagate, and the reality about the emperor.[41]

As a result of these difficulties, the best sources of information we have for assessing Constantine's beliefs and the reasoning behind his actions are – as Norman Baynes emphasized in a fundamental lecture read to the British Academy in 1930 – the emperor's own writings.[42] We possess not only a number of Constantine's laws, which are preserved in the *Theodosian Code*,[43] but also a selection of letters and edicts sent out to governors, bishops, and kings, many of which are preserved (in Latin) in an appendix to Optatus' treatise *Against the Donatists* and (in Greek translation) in the works of Eusebius, particularly the *Life of Constantine*.[44] The authenticity of those in Optatus was questioned by Otto Seeck but defended by others, including Norman Baynes.[45] The accuracy of those in Eusebius can hardly be doubted, since a letter of Constantine preserved by Eusebius in the *Life* and said by him to have been written after the victory of 324 for circulation to the eastern provinces has also been found on a papyrus from Egypt. The papyrus is written in a handwriting style that dates perhaps as early as 330, and which is nonliterary, suggesting that it is an official document. The text agrees verbatim with that given by Eusebius, thus demonstrating the accuracy of the information Eusebius records.[46] In addition to Constantine's laws and letters, we also possess an oration by the emperor himself, the *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, which is the first of three speeches Eusebius decided to append to his *Life of Constantine*.[47] Norman Baynes preferred not to consider this speech in his essay on Constantine's faith because, at the time, its authenticity was contested. Those doubts have been allayed, and it is now the issues of the oration's date and place of delivery that have come to the fore.[48]

Despite the inestimable value of our texts, we cannot afford to ignore Constantine's archaeological legacy. I mean not only monuments, which were often built on a special site at a significant moment

in commemoration of an important event, but also coins and medallions, whose legends and designs (called "types" by numismatists) give an insight into imperial propaganda. Despite their importance, however, these artefacts can be just as troublesome to interpret as our texts. It would therefore not be difficult for the modern beholder to infer from a monument or coin a meaning that was never intended.

Coins, for example, may carry design elements that had not been given imperial sanction but were created on the initiative of mint officials. Alternatively, they may have been commemorative issues intended for circulation to a restricted circle of senior army officers,[49] and if so, any message they conveyed could not be considered widespread propaganda. One might think it would be straightforward to understand the meaning of a prominent public monument such as the triumphal arch erected beside the Colosseum to commemorate Constantine's victory of 312 and his tenth year of rule. But any attempt at interpretation raises many issues, such as the extent of the pagan Senators' involvement in the choice of decoration, the degree to which Constantine himself influenced the design, Constantine's faith at the time, and the extent to which the availability of old sculpture dictated the choice of imagery. Coins, monuments, and their interpretation in their historical context will be central to this study of Constantine.

The Structure of the Book

The organization of this book may seem unorthodox to those expecting a run-of-the-mill chronological narrative of the reign of Constantine, and I will explain its logic briefly here.

Chapter 1 concentrates on two important and suggestive aspects of Constantinian portraiture: the adoption of a new, youthful, clean-shaven portrait style in 306, and the decision that the portrait would include the diadem from 324. I argue that introduction of the latter is a strong indicator that Constantine was casting his image more in the style of an eastern monarch than a Roman emperor.

Chapter 2 explores another attribute adopted by Constantine – rays emanating from the head (either at angles or vertically in the form of a tangible-looking crown). The use of the rays is most strikingly illustrated by the bronze, radiate statue of Constantine erected in 330 upon a porphyry column in Constantinople. The possible significance of this feature is explored with reference to Roman and Hellenistic uses of radiate headgear, and it is suggested that in Constantine's case, and particularly with respect to his statue in Constantinople, the rays should be understood in the light of philosophical theories that the ruler reflected on earth the light of a supreme solar Deity.

The light emitted by the ruler in these philosophies of kingship was the light of salvation, and Chapter 3 therefore explores – from Hellenistic times to Late Antiquity – the idea that, by reflecting the light of the Supreme Deity, the worldly ruler became the saviour of his people. Such salvific imagery was applied to Constantine and also exploited by him. Since the salvation of the state was the responsibility of the ruler, and since the ruler was sustained by the Supreme Deity, it was necessary for the people to secure the benevolence of the Deity by engaging in proper worship if the emperor was not to fail in his protective capacity. Therefore, Constantine, together with Licinius, set out to ensure the good will of the Divinity by agreeing a policy intended to harness all the available power of prayer and sacrifice by allowing freedom of worship.

The matter of Constantine casting himself in the role of an eastern monarch and the issue of his relationship to the Supreme Deity are explored further in Chapter 4 – this time using the evidence for the procession held on the day of the dedication of Constantinople in 330. The ceremony, which was repeated each year on the city's birthday, involved a statue of Constantine being paraded around the hippodrome on a carriage as if it were the statue of a god. The ritual recalled those held in honour of eastern kings.

In Chapter 5, I argue that the famous story of Constantine's heavenly vision is best examined not as if it were an unusual, natural phenomenon that must be identified, but rather as a powerful tale that was forged according to long-standing traditions of rulership, traditions that served to connect the ruler with a supreme solar Deity who promised victory and long life by bestowing upon him a potent sign.

Chapter 6 examines the remains of Constantine's colossal, marble statue in Rome and the image of rulership it projected. Constantine was portrayed not only as victorious ruler but also in a pose and costume associated with the Supreme Deity, raising once again the issue of his relationship with his God.

It is not until Chapter 7 that I turn from Constantine's image and his relationship with the supreme solar Deity to the material and textual evidence concerning his nascent Christianity. It is clear that Constantine was generous to the Christians, bringing persecution to an end and funding the construction of churches, but his personal faith is much more difficult to understand from the available data. Even though he believed himself to be a Christian as early as 314, he continued to promote the Unconquered Sun, and Chapter 8 explores how Constantine may have reconciled this with his claims to be Christian: the sun could serve as a symbol for the Christian God.

Finally, Chapter 9 tackles the problem of imperial divinity. The emperors of Late Antiquity had become even closer to the gods than their predecessors, who had been worshipped during their lifetime even though they had not been proclaimed state gods until after death. Constantine apparently did not attempt, and probably did not wish, to put an end to emperor worship (for even in 337 Constans was willing to allow the construction of a temple of the imperial cult) and he probably encouraged it with monuments like his colossal statue in Rome, and events like the annual procession of his statue in Constantinople's hippodrome. This raises the question of how Constantine reconciled the tradition of imperial divinity with his monotheistic faith, which required him to believe that there was only one God in heaven. The answer, I believe, lies in the fact that Christians had adopted and adapted established traditions of kingship and applied them to Christ. On the one hand, this threatened the authority of pagan emperors, but on the other hand it opened up a new possibility for the first Christian ruler: if Constantine was the earthly representative of the supreme solar Deity, and if that Deity could be assimilated to the Christian God, then it followed that Constantine was analogous to Christ and was therefore (at least according to Nicene orthodoxy) one with the Divinity.

Notes

1 The gaps in our evidence are stressed by Barnes 2007, 191; 2009, 376–77; 2011, 1–2.

2 For overviews of the different assessments of Constantine, see Baynes 1972, 33–40 n. 16; Eadie 1971, 4–8; Barnes 1981, 273–75; Odahl 2005, 280–84; Lenski 2006, 7–10; Barnes 2011, 6–8, 10–11.

3 For historical studies, see, for example, Burckhardt 1949; MacMullen 1969; Dörries 1972; Keresztes 1981; Barnes 1981, esp. 3–77, 208–60; Grant 1993; Odahl 2005; Herrmann-Otto 2007; Brandt 2007; Stephenson 2009; Barnes 2011. Still useful, though lacking annotation, is Jones 1948 (reprinted 1962). For brief summaries of the period, see, for instance, Bleckmann 2003, Pohlsander 2004, and Lenski 2006, 59–90.

4 An exception is Lenski 2006, but although many facets of the reign have been usefully brought together in a single volume, they are nevertheless largely treated as discrete subjects in separate chapters.

5 Baynes 1933–1934.

6 Dvornik 1966.

7 Baynes 1972, 5.

8 For a useful survey of the ancient historical writings on Constantine, see Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 1–38.

9 Barnes 2011, 195–97. Photius' summary of Praxagoras is translated in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 7–8.

10 Aurelius Victor: ed. Dufraigne 1975, trans. Bird 1994; Eutropius: ed. Verheyk 1821, trans. Bird 1993; Orosius: ed. Zangemeister 1882, trans. Deferrari 1964; *Origin of Constantine*: ed. Mommsen 1892, I, 1–11, trans. Stevenson in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 39–62.

11 Zosimus, *New History*: ed. Paschoud 1986 and 2000, trans. Ridley 1982.

12 Briefly, see Barnes 2011, 8–9, 176–78 (Lactantius' career); 9–13 (Eusebius' career).

13 Lactantius, *Persecutors*: ed. and trans. Creed 1985; Eusebius, *Church History*: ed. Schwartz, Mommsen, and Winkelmann 1999, trans. Williamson and Louth 1989; Eusebius, *Life*: ed. Winkelmann 1991, trans. Cameron and Hall 1999; Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine*: ed. Winkelmann 1991, trans. Drake 1976.

14 Barnes 1980, further developed by Burgess 1997.

15 Barnes 1994c, 2002b. Quote from Cameron and Hall 1999, 27, who object to Barnes' interpretation.

16 For an excellent example of Lactantius obscuring the truth (with regard to the rank and familial connections of Maximinus Daza and Constantine), see Mackay 1999.

17 Eusebius, *Life* 1.10.4; 1.11.1–2, ed. p. 20, trans. p. 72. See also Barnes 2002, 102–103.
18 See also the comments of Barnes 2002, 114–16.
19 See Barnes 1981, 266 (summer 325; December 327; November 335; summer 336). Note the continued stay proposed by Drake between the summer of 336 and Constantine's death: Drake 1988.
20 Barnes 1981, 267. Eusebius, *Life* 3.24, ed. p. 94, trans. p. 131, suggests that he had access to many more documents than he chose to quote. Whether any of these documents was addressed to Eusebius personally is, however, uncertain.
21 For a list of these documents and their dates, see Barnes 2002, 110–14.
22 Eusebius, *Life* 2.23.2, ed. p. 58, trans. p. 104.
23 See Barnes 1981, 267–71.
24 See pp. 89–92.
25 Cameron and Hall 1999, 12; Burgess 2008, 11–12; Barnes 2011, 163–68.
26 See pp. 284–89.
27 Eusebius, *Life* 1.20–25, ed. pp. 26–28, trans. pp. 77–79; *Origin of Constantine* 2, ed. Mommsen 1892, I, 7, trans. Stevenson in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 43; *Pan. Lat.* VI.7.5, ed. and trans. pp. 228, 575–76.
28 Barnes 1981, 150.
29 Cameron and Hall 1999, 224–30, on Eusebius, *Life* 1.49–59 (esp. 1.50.2).
30 Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 15–16.
31 *Origin of Constantine* 14–15, ed. Mommsen 1892, I, 8, trans. Stevenson in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 45; Barnes 1981, 66–67; 2011, 100–103.
32 For this and other examples, see Cameron and Hall 1999, 4–9.
33 See pp. 277–80, 289–90.
34 Eusebius, *Life* 3.48.1, ed. p. 104, trans. p. 140.
35 Eusebius, *Life* 4.36, ed. pp. 133–34, trans. pp. 166–67.
36 Cameron and Hall 1999, 327.
37 On the dates of the orations, see Barnes 2011, 181–84.
38 Rees 2002, 24–25.
39 Rees 2002, 18–19.
40 Rees 2002, 190–92 (quote from p. 191).
41 On the problems of exploiting the evidence provided by panegyrics, see MacCormack 1981, 1–14 (the quote comes from p. 26); Kolb 2001, 55.
42 Baynes 1972. Drake 2000, 287, rightly adds, "attention must also be paid to whether he [Constantine] did what he said."
43 *Theodosian Code*: ed. Mommsen, Meyer, and Krüger 1905, trans. Pharr 1952.
44 Optatus, *Against the Donatists*: ed. Ziwsa 1893, trans. Edwards 1997. For the letters preserved in Eusebius' *Church History* and *Life of Constantine*, see: Carriker 2003, 279–98; Cameron and Hall 1999, 16–21.
45 Seeck 1889; Baynes 1925.
46 Jones and Skeat 1954 on *P. Lond.* 878; Eusebius, *Life* 2.26–29. For a photograph of the papyrus, see Cameron 2006b, 97. See also the catalogue entry by Michelle Brown in the same volume, Hartley and others 2006, 120.
47 *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*: ed. Heikel 1902, trans. Edwards 1999.
48 See pp. 299–302.
49 On imperial coin types as propaganda, see Sutherland 1959, esp. 48–55, and, briefly, MacCormack 1981, 9–10. On the presentation of medallions to senior officers to make up the shortfall in pay, see Abdy 2006, 54–55.

I

A CHANGE OF IMAGE

On 25 July 306, the emperor Constantius Chlorus died in York, having named as his successor his son, Constantine, who was at his side. The portraits of Constantine that appeared on coins minted in Rome soon after he came to power were nothing out of the ordinary, conforming to contemporary practice in imperial representation. Like the images of the four rulers who constituted the empire's First Tetrarchy – Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius (Figure 1a–d) – the portraits of Constantine had a square head, a thick neck, a beard of stubble, short-cropped hair, and a furrowed brow (Figure 2). Such imperial portraits not only conveyed an impression of stern efficiency and sense of duty but also, through their uniformity, an impression of harmony and unity of purpose among the rulers.[1]

At the same time, the mint of Trier (ancient Augusta Treverorum) in Germany, which was under Constantine's direct control, was issuing coins with a very different image. Although it maintained the short-cropped hair typical of the Tetrarchs, the portrait showed Constantine without the furrowed brow, and with a boyish look, sometimes clean-shaven, at other times with light stubble (Figure 3).[2] Constantine established a refined version of this likeness after he defeated his rival Maximian in 310. The emperor was now shown clean-shaven, with longer locks at the fringe, and with a more manly but youthful and handsome face (Figure 4).[3] The new image recalled the portraits of Constantine's esteemed imperial predecessors Augustus and Trajan,[4] yet ultimately evoked depictions of the great conqueror Alexander of Macedon.[5] The emperor's physical characteristics have been explained by one modern scholar as reflecting the qualities that contemporary orators expected the emperor to bring to the empire: "serenity, calm, tranquillity, and personal illumination."[6]

Constantine's own father, who had adopted the official name Marcus Flavius Valerius Constantius on his promotion to the rank of Caesar in 293, had earlier begun to adapt the Tetrarchic portrait model, particularly by introducing a large, curving nose that was to become a "dynastic badge" (Figure 1d).[7] The hooked nose served as a visual representation of the name Flavius, a name that Constantius seemingly adopted to designate his own family; it was therefore indicative of his dynastic ambitions.[8] More strikingly innovative than Constantius' introduction of the nose, however, was Constantine's rejection of Tetrarchic portrait norms by adopting a beardless, youthful look. This drift from the prevailing imperial standard in portraiture was enhanced in 324 by further important changes to the emperor's pose and headgear: Constantine's youthful portrait, which had been placid in 310, acquired an energetic heavenward gaze, and the emperor now wore the diadem.

The Diadem

The term "diadem," from the Greek verb *diadeō*, meaning "I bind" or "I tie," might be applied to both metallic and cloth bands that could be

Figure 1a–d. The first Tetrarchy. (a) Diocletian as Augustus. Obverse of gold coin minted in Nicomedia. A.D. 295. (b) Maximian as Augustus. Obverse of gold coin minted in Nicomedia. A.D. 294. (c) Galerius as Caesar. Obverse of gold coin minted in Antioch. A.D. 294–295. (d) Constantius Chlorus as Caesar. Obverse of gold medallion minted in Trier. A.D. 297. (a–d) © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (a = 1864, 1128.165; b = 1864, 1128.176; c = 1861, 1106.6; d = 1928, 0208.1).

tied around the head.[9] The first of Constantine's diadems, which appeared on coins in 324, was a flat band of cloth placed around the head and secured behind by a reef knot, with the ends left hanging down (Figure 5). Such a knotted cloth band might also be termed a "fillet." From its introduction until 330, Constantine's diadem became more richly ornamented, acquiring a decoration of pearls, small jewels, and leaves, and finally progressing to a much heavier headdress

Figure 2. Constantine as Caesar. Obverse of gold coin minted in Rome. A.D. 307. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. (1868,0331.1)

with large stones in prominent settings (Figures 6, 7). The introduction of the additional decoration, it seems, served to distinguish Constantine from his Caesars, who were generally permitted to be shown wearing only theenlrg plain diadem.[10] The diadem became part of Constantine's royal costume, and Eusebius informs us that he wore it at celebrations of his thirtieth year of rule (*tricennalia*) in 336 and also after death as he lay in state in the palace the followingenlrg year.[11]

According to the sixth-century *Chronicle* of Malalas, it was on 11 May 330, at a race-meeting to celebrate the inauguration of the city of Constantinople, that Constantine wore the diadem for the first time.[12] The fact that Constantine's coin portraits show the diadem as early as 324 may mean that Malalas wrongly connected the emperor's adoption of the headgear with the dedication of Constantinople in 330 rather than with the city's founding in 324. However, since Malalas explicitly refers to the *jewelled* diadem, it seems equally possible that Constantine did indeed make his first public appearance wearing that particular type of diadem in 330, but that Malalas wrongly assumed that that was the first occasion on which he had worn a diadem. Be that as it may, we should note the author's surprise at the imperial adoption of this headgear: "none of the previous emperors had ever worn such a thing."[13] Although it is uncertain whether this claim is absolutely correct, the sentiment is important, demonstrating that

Figure 3. Constantine as Caesar. Obverse of gold coin minted in Trier. A.D. 306–307. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. (1864,1128.187)

Figure 4. Constantine as Augustus. Obverse of gold *solidus* minted in Trier. A.D. 319–320. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. (R.1874,0715.122)

Figure 5. Constantine wearing plain diadem, his head turned to heaven. Obverse of gold coin minted in Ticinum. A.D. 326. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. (R.1874,0715.137)

Figure 6. Constantine wearing diadem decorated with small jewels and leaves, his head turned to heaven. Obverse of gold medallion of 1½ *solidi* minted in Siscia. A.D. 326–327. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. (R.244)

the innovation of 324 was particularly striking. What should we deduce from it?

By 324, the fourfold government of two Augusti and two Caesars instituted by Diocletian had been torn apart in numerous wars. Of the six contenders who had jostled for control of the Roman empire in the early fourth century, Maximian had been taken captive by Constantine at Massilia (modern Marseille) in 310 and had soon after been forced to commit suicide for allegedly plotting to assassinate his captor;[14] Galerius had died of an agonizing and aggressive disease in May 311;[15] Maxentius had been eliminated by Constantine at the Milvian Bridge outside Rome in October 312;[16] and Maximinus Daza, having been defeated by Licinius at Hadrianopolis (also known as Adrianople, modern Edirne) in April 313, had fled to Tarsus where he died three months later.[17] Thus, Diocletian's ideal of a harmonious rule-of-four had been brought to an end, leaving the West under Constantine's sole control and the East under Licinius.

Both Constantine and Licinius rejected the collegiate style of government favoured by Diocletian and harboured personal dynastic ambitions, which they failed to reconcile. Tensions between the two Augusti gradually increased until Constantine, it seems, engineered a pretext for declaring war in 316. Constantinian victories followed at Cibalae (modern Vinkovci in eastern Croatia) and Hadrianopolis before Licinius managed to force a stalemate through strategy.[18] Licinius ceded most of Europe to Constantine according to an agreement reached at Serdica in 317. Having lost Sirmium, Licinius reestablished his capital in Nicomedia, and Constantine now resided in Serdica and Sirmium. The Thracian frontier was established as the boundary between the eastern and western empires, and the two sons of Constantine (Crispus, his only son by Minervina, and Constantine, his first son by Fausta) and the infant son of Licinius and Constantia (Licinianus) were promoted to the rank of Caesar, thus designating them the three heirs to the empire.[19] Relations deteriorated in 321 when Constantine refused to recognize Licinius and his son as consuls in the West, and for the three following years East and West had different consuls.[20] The fragile pact was broken in 323 when Constantine encroached on Licinius' territory, purportedly to suppress a barbarian army that had crossed the Danube. Licinius complained that

Figure 7. Constantine wearing heavily jewelled diadem, his eyes turned up to heaven. Obverse of gold coin minted in Thessaloniki. A.D. 335. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. (R.1950,1203.1)

his sovereignty had been violated, and waited for war.[21] On 3 July 324 at the River Hebrus near Adrianople, Constantine was victorious over Licinius, who was forced to withdraw to Byzantium. A sea-battle followed at the mouth of the Hellespont in which Crispus defeated Licinius' admiral, Amandus. Now with no hope of holding Byzantium, Licinius fled across the Bosphorus to Chalcedon on the western coast of Asia Minor. A final battle ensued at Chrysopolis (modern Üsküdar) on 18 September, and the remains of Licinius' army were crushed; Licinius and his son were arrested and later executed in Thessaloniki, despite Constantine's promise of mercy. Licinius' partisans were then tracked down and killed.[22] The victory made Constantine the first sole ruler of the Roman empire for thirty-nine years. The Roman world was finally at peace.

There can be no doubt that by adopting the diadem and heavenward gaze, Constantine was graphically depicting the end he had brought to the Tetrarchic political scheme as a result of his emergence as the new, unchallenged ruler of the empire. But does the imagery convey a more profound message? Did Constantine choose these specific types of portrait and headgear to convey a particular image of his style of rulership? Patrick Bruun, for instance, described the diadem as a "new emblem of power" and inferred that it was "pointing to a new concept of sovereignty."[23] That inference must, I think, have a degree of validity. After all, Constantine might have found it sufficient to depict his break from the past simply by changing his portrait from the block-headed, stubbly Tetrarchic style. But the adoption of the diadem was more remarkable, for the diadem was not, as we shall see, a common attribute of Constantine's imperial Roman predecessors. Since Constantine's alleged "new concept of sovereignty" has remained unexplored, we must, if we are to have any possibility of understanding why Constantine adopted it, look back to the diadem's origins and understand why it had been rejected by other Roman emperors.[24]

In his short life, Alexander the Great had extended the power of Macedon over the old cities of Greece, over the Persian empire in Anatolia and Mesopotamia, and even further east in the Punjab. He was the first Macedonian ruler to adopt the diadem of cloth (sometimes referred to as a fillet), which in his case was purple spotted with white. Our texts claim that he adopted it in imitation of the kings of Persia to whose lands he was now heir, and the fact that a fillet had traditionally been worn by successful athletes may have prepared the way for its assumption as a symbol of military victory.[25] We do not know exactly when Alexander began wearing the diadem, but after he died in 323 B.C., the headgear became intimately associated with the king's conquests and his rule over Asia.[26] A silver *tetradrachm* issued by Lysimachus between 306 and 281 B.C. shows Alexander wearing the diadem, together with the horns of Zeus Ammon (Figure 8).[27]

The Hellenistic kings who inherited the lands that Alexander had conquered followed the great king's lead in adopting the diadem.[28] According to R. R. R. Smith, this headgear now became "the main exclusive symbol of Hellenistic kingship."[29] Given the division of Alexander's empire among the successor kings, the diadem could no longer symbolize kingship of all Asia, but it could nevertheless suggest "kingship in Asia in the style of Alexander" and "royal power predicated on personal charisma and victory."[30]

Figure 8. Alexander wearing the diadem and the horns of Zeus Ammon. Silver *tetradrachm* issued by Lysimachos. 306–281 B.C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. (1919,0820.1)

The attitude towards the diadem was rather different in the Roman world, however. Kingship (*regnum*) was feared by the Romans, being equated by them with usurpation, disregard for the law, and tyranny. It was claimed that Romulus, the founder of Rome, had been killed because his rule had become tyrannical,[31] and there was a tradition that, after the fall of Tarquinius Superbus (the seventh and last king of Rome), the citizens had sworn that their city would never again be ruled by a monarch.[32] Thus, when rumours spread that the envoy of the deceased king of Pergamum had brought Tiberius Gracchus a diadem and purple robe in anticipation of his coronation as a king in Rome, Gracchus was slain as a tyrant.[33]

Yet, as Rome became more and more exposed to Hellenistic thought and culture, some Romans acknowledged that not all kingships were bad, and that a valid distinction had been drawn by the Greeks between kingships and tyrannies.[34] Cicero, for instance, wrote thus of Tarquinius Superbus in his *Republic*:

> Do you not see, therefore, how a king was transformed into a despot, and how a good form of government was turned into the worst possible form through the fault of one man? For here we have a master over the people, whom the Greeks call a tyrant; for they maintain that the title of king should be given only to a ruler who is as solicitous of the welfare of his people as is the father for his children, and maintains in the best possible conditions of life those over whom he is set.[35]

Elsewhere in the same work, Cicero had Laelius comment that Servius Tullius, Superbus' predecessor, had been "a very just king."[36] In contrast, Cicero's Scipio was wary of monarchy. He (like the historian Polybius) argued that the best form of government was not a monarchy alone but a combination of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy – although if pressed to choose just one system he would opt for monarchy on the grounds that it was a reflection of the heavenly government under Jupiter.[37]

The Roman distrust of monarchy is well illustrated by the case of Julius Caesar, who enjoyed the title *dictator perpetuo* along with divine and royal attributes that barely distinguished him from a king. It is reported that he liked to imitate Alexander,[38] and that as a young man he saw a statue of the great conqueror in the temple of Hercules in Gades in Spain and heaved a sigh that he had achieved nothing by comparison at the same age.[39] Strabo calls Caesar an "Alexander-lover" and says that, like the great king, he was well-disposed towards the people of Troy.[40] In 46 B.C., an equestrian statue of Caesar was set up in the Forum Iulium, and for this a statue of Alexander by the sculptor Lysippus was reused; only the head was altered. In the following year, after his victory at Munda, Caesar asked Cicero to write a letter to him, taking as a model the advice that Theopompus and Aristotle had given to Alexander. At the same time, the Senate ordered another statue of Caesar to be erected, in this instance in the temple of Quirinius with the inscription DEO INVICTO ("To the unconquered god"). Clearly this honour was intended to suggest an affinity between Caesar and Alexander, since we know that in 336 B.C. the Macedonian had been hailed as "unconquered" (*anikētos*) by the Pythian oracle at Delphi, and that in 324 B.C. a proposal had been made that a statue of "Alexander the Invincible God" should be erected in Athens. Commenting on a circus procession in which Caesar's statue was paraded with those of the gods, and on the erection of the statue by the Senate, Cicero referred to the arrogance of Alexander and by implication criticized Caesar.[41]

Yet, despite Caesar's admiration for Alexander, when Mark Antony offered him the diadem – the unmistakable mark of a king – he declined the honour and sent the headgear to the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, declaring that Jupiter was the only king of the Romans. He did this, the sources report, because the public, wary of Caesar's continually increasing authority, failed to applaud Antony's gesture.[42] This offer was made in 44 B.C. as one of three attempts in that year to make Caesar a king.[43] Caesar's growing power and honours fuelled fears of tyranny, which finally led to his assassination by supporters of the Republic.[44] On their coins, the conspirators depicted Victory standing on the sceptre whilst tearing the diadem with her hands (Figure 9).[45] Clearly, Rome was not ready to accept a monarchy.

Figure 9. Victory standing on a sceptre and breaking a diadem. Reverse of silver *denarius* minted by Marcus Junius Brutus. 43–42 B.C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. (2002,0102.4786)

Antony's behaviour in the East further discredited the concept of a Hellenistic monarchy in the eyes of the Romans. He arrived in Ephesus in 41 B.C. and was hailed by the people as a new Dionysus.[46] He then toured the East as a god and steeped himself in eastern culture. In 37 B.C., he married the Egyptian queen Cleopatra VII at Antioch, despite already being married to Octavian's sister. Antony was hated in Rome not only for wronging Octavia but also for making a dramatic public division of the territories in the East between Cleopatra and her sons. At that ceremony, Antony's son Ptolemy was dressed in boots, a short cloak, and a felt hat surmounted by a diadem – dress typical of the eastern kings who had inherited Alexander's empire.[47] Antony even requested in his will that if he were to die in Rome, his corpse should be paraded through the forum and then sent to Cleopatra in Alexandria, presumably to be buried in the city named after the great conqueror.[48]

Octavian scorned Antony and labelled him *Graeculus* ("Greekling"), appealing to the strong conservative tradition in Rome, according to which Greek culture and values were extravagant, effeminate, cowardly, and contrary to the Roman ideals of *gravitas* and *dignitas*. Having exploited this particular weakness, Octavian was careful to avoid the possibility of having the same criticism levelled at him when he consolidated his power after the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra in 31 B.C.

Like Caesar, Octavian could not resist the temptation of comparing his own achievements with those of Alexander.[49] He did not destroy the city of Alexandria, but visited Alexander's tomb, handled the great conqueror's mummified body, and placed on it a golden crown and flowers.[50] He began using the Macedonian's portrait on his personal seal,[51] and he brought back from Alexandria two paintings of Alexander by Apelles, which he later set up in his forum in Rome.[52] Over time, legends emerged connecting Octavian, who later called himself Augustus, with Alexander.[53] Suetonius asserts that he had been sired by Apollo in the guise of a serpent, a tale that copies exactly the myth of Alexander's conception.[54] He also claims that Augustus' father visited an oracle of Bacchus in Thrace to ask about the future of his son. When he poured a sacrifice of wine over the altar, a pillar of fire shot through the roof of the temple, and the priests said that such a phenomenon

had not been witnessed since Alexander had made sacrifices at the same altar.[55]

Despite Augustus' admiration for Alexander, when a murderous conspiracy against him was thwarted in 23 B.C., he was reminded of the fate of Caesar and abruptly resigned his consulship to demonstrate his Republican (rather than monarchical) principles. The Senate compensated Augustus by both increasing and making permanent his proconsular authority, and, to give him a certain status in Rome, it granted him the perpetual power of a tribune. The populace, however, seems to have feared that Augustus' resignation from the consulship heralded the return of the anarchy of the Republic, and riots broke out. By 19 B.C., the Senate had come to realize that it could not do without Augustus' guidance, and they were relieved to gradually restore to him much of the power he had formerly held. Apparently Augustus was now granted an *imperium* (authority) equivalent to that of the consuls, valid in Italy, Rome, and the provinces. Augustus was, however, careful to disguise his supremacy under a veil of Republicanism to please the middle classes who had a nostalgic regard for the old régime.[56] He even shifted his public image away from one of a godlike, charismatic leader (a style that the Romans had inherited from the Greeks of Asia Minor) towards one suggesting that he was a model of Roman *pietas* (dutiful respect).[57] Rome thus became, and remained until the reign of Diocletian, a sort of monarchical republic.[58]

The diadem of the Hellenistic kings was – at least in public – almost entirely avoided by Augustus and subsequent Roman emperors, regardless of the esteem in which they held Alexander.[59] It was considered a symbol of eastern monarchies, which were associated by the Romans not only with tyranny but also more specifically with weak and effeminate eastern kings.[60] Indeed, when the anonymous author of the *Epitome de Caesaribus* set out to discredit Constantine, he followed mention of the deaths of Crispus and Fausta with the damning claim that Constantine "wore the garb of kings adorned with jewels and on his head a diadem continually."[61] Constantine's decision to adopt the diadem, whilst more understandable in the eastern context of the foundation of Constantinople, was clearly a striking break with a long Roman tradition, even if that break may have been rendered somewhat less severe by a degree of understanding in Rome that not all kingships were necessarily tyrannical.[62]

Naturally, an imperial attribute such as the diadem – or the radiate crown (to which we shall turn our attention later) – did not have a fixed meaning; rather, the meaning differed according to the historical, political, and geographical circumstances in which the attribute was used, and also depending on the location of the image and the significance of any inscription or legend that might accompany the image. What one emperor intended to convey by being portrayed wearing a particular attribute may have been significantly different from the impression another ruler hoped to impart. And even then, different viewers, whether at the same or different times, may have inferred different meanings. Bearing these difficulties in mind, it is nevertheless not unreasonable to explore the possibility that by adopting the diadem, Constantine was claiming, like earlier Hellenistic rulers, to be a monarch whose royal status over a wide area had been established by military triumph. After all, we cannot find any precedent for the public adoption of the diadem in the Roman world. Smith may well be correct in asserting: "The monarchical and royal meaning of the diadem worn by hellenistic and later kings of the eastern empires and principalities was . . . transferred in some measure to Constantine's diadem and its later mutations."[63] But in what measure? Why did Constantine decide to adopt this new regalia? And what exactly did it mean?

The fact that Constantine's diademed profile bust began to appear on coins in 324 suggests a link with the emperor's victory over Licinius in that year, a victory that represented the climax of Constantine's ambitions to become the uncontested ruler of the Roman empire.[64] Furthermore, the following year, 325, was not only Constantine's twentieth year of rule (*vicennalia*) but also the occasion of the Council of Nicaea, at which the Arian controversy, which had bitterly divided the Eastern Church, was resolved – if only apparently and temporarily. In a letter communicating the decisions of the council to the bishops, Constantine explained what his objective had been: "I have judged it appropriate for me that my aim above all else should be that among the most blessed congregations of the universal Church a single faith and a pure love and a religion that is unanimous about Almighty God be observed." Having outlined the decisions of the council, he concluded, "I observe that devilish savagery has by the divine power and through our actions been obliterated, while our faith and peace and concord are everywhere flourishing."[65]

The simultaneous achievement of political unification of the empire under a single ruler and religious unification of the Christian Church might well have been thought to justify the comparison of Constantine with Alexander, and therefore to provide a justification for the emperor's adoption of the diadem.[66] Yet clearly Constantine was not simply mimicking Alexander as an actor might do. He did not, for instance, feel the need to cultivate Alexander's thick mass of wavy hair that stood high above his forehead and fell like a lion's mane.[67] This hair may have symbolized Alexander's strength, power, wisdom, and godlike beauty, but Constantine did not need it. The diadem was sufficient to indicate Constantine's position as a successor to Alexander's empire. In other respects, the emperor was his own man. Constantine, if contemporary authors reflect imperial thinking, was not merely copying Alexander nor aspiring to be like him; rather, he had gone beyond Alexander's achievements. In his *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius praised his imperial hero for having surpassed Alexander: "our Emperor began where the Macedonian ended, and doubled in time the length of his life, and trebled the size of the Empire he acquired."[68] Already in 313, after the victory at the Milvian Bridge, a panegyrist had suggested as much: Constantine had prevailed despite having a smaller force than Alexander, and despite having to confront fellow Romans rather than unwarlike easterners.[69]

The Heavenward Gaze

The contention that Constantine understood the diadem in terms of Hellenistic concepts of kingship is strengthened by the fact that its appearance on Constantinian coins was accompanied by an upward-looking imperial head.[70] This second iconographically distinctive feature was striking enough to be described by Eusebius, who chose to interpret it in Christian terms. The emperor, he wrote in the *Life of Constantine*, "appeared to look upwards in the manner of one reaching out to God in prayer."[71] Following Eusebius, some scholars have claimed that the portraits of Constantine with a heavenward gaze represent the introduction of a new Christian imagery into imperial art.[72] However, the iconography had been firmly established in the pagan world, and although we may follow Eusebius in inferring from it a close connection between the emperor and the Supreme Deity, it is impossible to determine from the gaze alone whether Constantine meant to imply adherence to a specific religion, as Eusebius would have us believe.[73]

It seems clear that Constantine's heavenward gaze was inspired by Hellenistic precedents,[74] since Lysippus' first statue of Alexander is said to have represented the king "looking up with his face turned towards the heavens (as indeed Alexander often did look, with a slight inclination of his head to one side)."[75] Other portraits of the king copied this pose, and many examples survive (Figure 10). The pose was ultimately derived from depictions of the god Apollo as a divinely inspired musician, a fact that indicates that Alexander looked heavenward to seek guidance from the Supreme Deity.[76] Fortunately, we know how one contemporary interpreted Lysippus' statue, since he composed verses that were engraved on the sculpture. The viewer inferred from the gaze that Alexander had modelled his rule on earth on that of Zeus in the heavens, and even that he vied with Zeus:

> Eager to speak seems the statue of bronze,
> up to Zeus as it gazes:
>
> "Earth I have set under foot: Zeus, keep
> Olympus yourself!"[77]

It is said that Alexander's friends and successors tried to imitate "the poise of the neck, which was bent slightly to the left, and the melting glance of his eyes."[78] Indeed, the pose was commonly used in the statuary and coin portraits of the king's successors.[79] The moisture in Alexander's raised eyes

Figure 10. Alexander the Great. Marble portrait head from Kyme. Hellenistic, third-second century B.C. Istanbul Archaeological Museums (inv. 388 T). © Jonathan Bardill.

has been explained as suggesting the inner emotion generated by communion with the divine, and the parted lips of some representations seem to suggest a passionate breathlessness induced by the ecstatic experience.[80]

Alexander's pose would have continued to be familiar in Late Antiquity, since originals or copies of his statues still survived. One of these was displayed on the *euripos* (central barrier) of the hippodrome in Constantinople, no doubt having been obtained, like so many of the city's statues, in the Constantinian period.[81] However, the iconography of the heavenward gaze was preserved not only because of the survival of Greek statuary but also because it had passed into Roman portraiture under the influence of eastern tradition.[82] A fine example of a Roman imperial portrait expressing such heavenly inspiration, if not apotheosis to divine status, is a head of Commodus in the Palazzo Massimo in Rome (Figure 11). The eyes, large and open wide, are elevated to the heavens. Together with the placid, youthful face they convey the impression that the ruler is somehow intoxicated. The head was once adorned with rays (only the sockets for their attachment are now visible), presumably to suggest either divine illumination, or, if the portrait is posthumous, the emperor's consecration as a god in A.D. 197.[83]

By the time the imperial portraits of Late Antiquity were produced, any impression of intoxicated possession by an external power had been lost in the rigid, stylized form of the contemporary portrait style, with its block-heads, short-cropped hair, and stubble (Figure 12 and Figures 55–60 on pp. 68–73). The rigidity suggests instead firm control. The Late Antique emperor's stiffness was not just iconographic. When Constantine made his triumphal entrance into

Figure 11. Commodus. Marble portrait head with eyes raised heavenward. End second century A.D. Palazzo Massimo, Rome (inv. 2165T). © Jonathan Bardill.

Rome after his victory in 312 and was hailed by the citizens as a saviour and benefactor, he was, Eusebius comments, "not in the least excited by their shouts or elated by their plaudits, fully aware that his help came from God."[84] This lack of emotional response must have manifested itself visibly, as Ammianus explains when he describes Constantius II's entrance into Rome in 357:

> Accordingly, being saluted as Augustus with favouring shouts, while hills and shores thundered out the roar, he never stirred but showed himself calm and imperturbable as he was commonly seen in his provinces. For he both stooped when passing through lofty gates (although he was very short), and as if his neck were in a vice, he kept the gaze of his eyes straight ahead, and turned his face neither to right nor to left, but (as if he were a lay figure) neither did he nod when the wheel jolted nor was he ever seen to spit, or to wipe or rub his face or nose, or move his hands about. And although this was affectation on his part, yet these and various other features of his more intimate life were tokens of no slight endurance, granted to him alone, as was given to be understood.[85]

Although the severe, rigid Tetrarchic portraits do not suggest the ecstatic inspiration of divine power in the same way as the youthful, Apolline portraits of Alexander, their huge, wide-open eyes, which are sometimes clearly elevated, are a partial substitute. Besides looking to the heavens in search of divine inspiration, the disproportionately large eyes give the impression that they emit divine power, almost as if they are powerful searchlights.[86] In texts, this idea can be traced back to much earlier periods. Suetonius, for example, says that Augustus "had clear, bright eyes, in which he liked to have it thought

Figure 12. Bronze head of the statue of a Tetrarch from Adana, Turkey. Height: 37.8 cm. Cologne Digital Archaeology Laboratory (CoDArchLab) (www.arachne.uni-koeln.de) (FittKB83-05-03_38637,01.tif).

that there was a kind of divine power, and it greatly pleased him, whenever he looked keenly at anyone, if he let his face fall as if before the radiance of the sun."[87] A panegyrist writing in 297 made a similar claim about the four Tetrarchs, but went further in suggesting that the light emitted from their eyes and from their mind's eye had the power to heal and to save:

> . . . neither the Sun itself nor all the stars watch over human affairs with such unremitting light as you, who illuminate the world with scarcely any discrimination of night and day and provide for the well-being of nations not only with these eyes which animate your immortal countenances, but much more with those eyes of your divine minds, and bless with your healing light not only the provinces where the day rises, passes by and disappears from view, but also those in the northern belt. Thus, Caesar, the benefactions which you distribute over the world are almost more numerous than those of the gods.[88]

Although they pointedly departed from the norms of Tetrarchic portraiture, dispensing with the cropped hair and beard, depictions of Constantine preserved the wide, raised eyes, as in the cases of the head in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Figure 13) and of the colossal statue from the Basilica of Maxentius (to be discussed in Chapter 6).[89]

In Late Antiquity, the upward gaze was adopted not only for portraits of emperors but also for those of philosophers. The value of these portraits in understanding the meaning of the gaze is enhanced because we also have literary evidence about them. Formerly described by their biographers in human terms, philosophers in this period acquired a more superhuman aspect, despising their mortal bodies and aspiring to be closer to the gods. A succession of Late Antique interpreters of the philosophy of Plato (called "Neoplatonists" by modern scholars) were described as a "golden chain" connecting man with the divine, and as a "holy race" devoted to philosophy and the worship of divine beings. Their

Figure 13. Constantine. Marble portrait head with eyes raised heavenward. Ca. A.D. 324–337. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. R. R. R. Smith.

biographers claimed that they performed miracles, portrayed them as priests of the gods, and said that they possessed physical characteristics expressing divine possession.[90] Marinus of Samaria, for instance, wrote of the philosopher Proclus: "Nor did he seem destitute of divine inspiration; for he produced from his wise mouth words similar to the most white and thick falling snow; so that his eyes emitted a bright radiance, and the rest of his countenance was resplendent with a divine light."[91] Unlike the portraits of most contemporary individuals, representations of philosophers had a dramatically upward-turned facial expression. An early example is a portrait of Carneades dating to the late third century (Figure 14), but similar portraits continued to be produced into the fifth century. It seems likely that the raised eyes were meant to indicate divine possession achieved through theurgy. By means of sacramental

Figure 14. Philosopher Carneades. Marble portrait head. Late third century A.D. F. J. Dölger Institute, Bonn. Reproduction from H. von Heintze, "*Vir gravis et sanctus:* Bildniskopf eines spätantiken Philosophen," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 6 (1963) pl. 1.

words and actions it was believed that a theurgical practitioner might achieve a state of divine madness (*enthousiasmos*) in which he was filled with supernatural power (*dynamis*) and might thereby achieve the separation of the soul from the body (*ekstasis*) and advance towards union with the gods.[92]

Constantine's elevated gaze is likely to have been understood in the context of such contemporary thinking about philosophers: Constantine was filled with divine power. However, the iconography of the philosopher's gaze was derived from that of Alexander and the Hellenistic and Roman rulers who had imitated him, and it is therefore unlikely that such royal associations would have been overlooked by viewers of portraits showing Constantine looking to the heavens. Indeed, it must be borne in mind that Constantine's heavenward gaze appears on coins together with the diadem, an attribute first worn by Alexander, and with the youthful, beardless portrait, which looks back to portraits of Alexander and Apollo (Figures 5, 6). Furthermore, the very design of Constantine's coins seems to have been inspired by Hellenistic rather than Roman precedents, since only the emperor's head and neck are shown, rather than the whole bust as is usual on Roman coins.[93] The iconographical inspiration, therefore, is likely to have come from Hellenistic precedents, although the interpretation would probably have been coloured by contemporary perceptions of philosophers.

Since it was inspired by Hellenistic precedents, the upward gaze of Constantine is likely to have conveyed something of the meaning that the pose had had for the Hellenistic kings, as reflected in the verses describing Lysippus' statue of Alexander and, more particularly, in philosophical writings on rulership, which explored the behaviour expected of a good king. One such discussion of kingship is the first of Dio Chrysostom's *Orations on Kingship*, written at the beginning of the second century. According to Dio's philosophy, the king, "keeping his eyes upon Zeus, orders and governs his people with justice and equity in accordance with the laws and ordinances of Zeus."[94] Comparable ideas in the works of Eusebius and Lactantius, both contemporaries of Constantine, suggest that a similar interpretation might reasonably be placed on Constantine's upward gaze. In his oration *In Praise of Constantine*, Eusebius, making close reference to philosophical treatises on kingship, explains that the emperor "pilots affairs below [on earth] with an upward gaze, to steer by the archetypal form [in heaven]."[95] Lactantius, writing a little earlier than Eusebius, states: "He who looks up to the true and living God who is in heaven, he who seeks his maker, the father of the soul, not merely with his mind and senses, but with his face and elevated eyes, directs his gaze above."[96] In the light of such texts, it would seem that, by looking towards the heavens, Constantine was seeking to model his rule on the heavenly archetype. This conclusion is also suggested by Constantine's own words in his *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*: "the only power in human beings equivalent to God's is the absolutely unfeigned veneration of God and the turning to him . . . and the fact of not having inclined towards the earth but, so far as lay in our power, of lifting our intellects toward what is upright and sublime."[97]

We cannot, of course, deduce from the testimony of Christian authors like Eusebius and Lactantius that Constantine's pose was meant to imply that the Deity to whom he looked was the Christian God.[98] Indeed, an investigation of the precise religious meaning that the iconography held for Constantine himself must be postponed until later in this book, since it requires us to address other crucial questions, such as: "When did Constantine become a Christian?" However, regarding the meaning of the upward gaze for the *observer* of the portraits, the very fact that such depictions give no clear indication about the nature of the Supreme Deity to whom Constantine raises his eyes is crucial, since it results in an ambiguity that may have been deliberate.[99]

Whether a pagan or Christian god was involved, and whether the religious ambiguity was calculated, the evidence suggests that Constantine's heavenward gaze was meant to indicate that, like contemporary philosophers, he was filled with divine inspiration or enthusiasm and that, like the ideal king of philosophical treatises, he governed on earth by looking to a heavenly archetype for guidance in approaching divine perfection. In addition, it also seems likely that the gaze was connected with the concept of the "divine mind" that we have already noted in connection with the wide eyes of Tetrarchic portraiture. However, that is an issue to which we will return in Chapter 7.

When he claimed that Constantine gazed heavenward to rule on earth according to the model of celestial government, Eusebius was clearly influenced by a long tradition of philosophical thought on the nature of kingship that can be traced back to authors such as Dio Chrysostom. This is true of many other views on kingship that Eusebius expressed in his oration *In Praise of Constantine*. It is reasonable, therefore, to pose two questions. Was Eusebius' interest in kingship philosophy shared by Constantine and his advisors in the imperial court? And if so, did the significance the court attached to such philosophy influence imperial iconography, prompting Constantine's adoption of the diadem, the youthful portrait, and the heavenward gaze? I think the answers to both questions are affirmative, and I would suggest that this conclusion receives strong support from the main monument erected in 330 in the forum of the emperor's new capital city. To this we may now turn.

Notes

1 Constantine's "Tetrarchic" portrait: *RIC* VI, Rome 141. On the Tetrarchic portrait style, see Hannestad 1988, 307–308; Kleiner 1992, 400–408; Rees 1993, 188; Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 180–83 (and p. 185 on Constantine's first portraits of 306); Kolb 2001, 47–49; Bergmann 2007.
2 *RIC* VI, Trier 627, 636; Wright 1987, 494–96 with figs. 6–8.
3 On the coinage with this portrait, see Bruun 1976. Generally on the change, Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 185–86; Kolb 2001, 84–85; Hannestad 2007.
4 *RIC* VII, 32–33; Wright 1987, 496; Hannestad 1988, 327; Kleiner 1992, 434 with Fig. 393; Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 185–87; Hannestad 2001, 96; Hannestad 2007, 98–99. That Augustus was a model for Constantine is made explicit by silver medallions minted late in Constantine's reign carrying the legends "AVGVSTVS" and "CAESAR" in imitation of Augustan coins minted 300 years earlier. See Bruun 1992, 225 with Figs. 15–16.
5 *RIC* VII, 33; Harrison 1967, 94–96. Trajan himself had admired Alexander: see Moles 1990, 299–300. For the attitude to Alexander in Late Antiquity, see Smith, R. 2007, 177–78, 224.
6 See Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 200–201 (quote from p. 201).
7 Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 184–85.
8 Van Dam 2007, 90–92.
9 On the term "diadem," see Lehmann 1982, 437–48 and the earlier comments of Calder 1981, 334–35.
10 *RIC* VII, 43–45; Bastien 1992–1994, I, 156–59; Kolb 2001, 78–79, 201–204 (M 15); Kolb 2007, 176.
11 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 5.6, ed. Heikel 1902, 205, trans. Drake 1976, 90; Eusebius, *Life* 4.66.2, ed. pp. 147–48, trans. p. 179 (where "crown" is an incorrect rendering).
12 Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.8, ed. Dindorf 1831, 321, ed. Thurn 2000, 246–47, trans. Jeffreys and others 1986, 175; *Chronicon Paschale* A.D. 330, ed. Dindorf 1832, I, 529, trans. Whitby and Whitby 1989, 17.
13 Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.8, ed. Dindorf 1831, 321, ed. Thurn 2000, 247; trans. Jeffreys and others 1986, 175. Malalas says that by adopting the diadem Constantine was fulfilling a Biblical prophecy in which a king is honoured with a crown of precious stones from God (Psalm 21:3 [= Septuagint, Psalm 20:3]).
14 Barnes 1981, 34–35, 40–41; Potter 2004, 352–53.
15 Barnes 1981, 39. On the identification of the disease, see Odahl 2005, 316 n. 34.

16 Barnes 1981, 41–43.
17 Barnes 1981, 62–64.
18 Barnes 1981, 65–67; 2011, 100–103. The date of Cibalae, which many sources date to 314, was plausibly redated by Patrick Bruun to 316, a conclusion subsequently strengthened by other scholars: see Odahl 2005, 337–38 n. 2; Barnes 2007, 190; Stephenson 2009, 334–35; Barnes 2011, 7.
19 Jones 1964, 84–85; Barnes 1981, 67–68; Pohlsander 1984, 86; Potter 2004, 378.
20 Barnes 2011, 104–105.
21 Barnes 2011, 106.
22 Barnes 1981, 73, 76–77; Barnes 2002a, 198; Van Dam 2007, 175; Barnes 2011, 106. On Crispus' involvement, see Pohlsander 1984, 88–89.
23 *RIC* VII, 43.
24 The significance of Constantine's adoption of the diadem has attracted relatively little attention from scholars: see Alföldi 1935, 149–50; Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 177, 187; Bergmann 1997, 124–25; Leeb 1992, 59–61; Kolb 2001, 76–79, 85, 201–204 (M15); Walter 2006, 14, 15; Van Dam 2007, 16–17; Canepa 2009, 198–99.
25 Diodorus of Sicily 17.77.5, ed. and trans. Bradford Welles 1963, VIII, 341; Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1946, II, 50–51; Justin, *Epitome of the Philippic History* 12.3.8, ed. Seel 1972, 108, trans. Yardley and Develin 1994, 110; Bastien 1992–1994, I, 143.
26 Fredricksmeyer 1997 argues that Alexander adopted the diadem in October 331 B.C. after his victory at Gaugamela, and that it was a symbol associated with the god Dionysus as a conqueror of the East.
27 On this medallion, see Pollitt 1986, 26.
28 Pollitt 1986, 31–37.
29 Smith 1988, 37. Compare Alföldi 1935, 145: "Das Wahrzeichen der Alleinherrschaft im Hellenismus ist das Diadem gewesen."
30 Smith 1988, 38.
31 Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 1.5.11, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, I, 20–21.
32 Livy, *History of Rome* 2.1.9, ed. and trans. Foster 1919, 220–21; Cicero, *Republic* 2.30, ed. and trans. Keyes 1928, 162–63: "When Tarquinius had been banished, the title of king came to be as bitterly hated by the Romans as it had been longingly desired after the death, or rather the departure, of Romulus. Hence, just as then they could not bear to be without a king, so now, after the banishment of Tarquinius, they could not bear even to hear the title of king mentioned."
33 Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus* 14.2, ed. and trans. Perrin 1914–1926, X, 176–77; Weinstock 1971, 335; Millar 1992, 613.
34 On this distinction, see Whitmarsh 2001, 206–207 with references.
35 Cicero, *Republic* 2.26, ed. and trans. Keyes 1928, 156–57. See further Chrysos 1978, 67.
36 Cicero, *Republic* 1.37, ed. and trans. Keyes 1928, 86–87.
37 Cicero, *Republic* 1.45, ed. and trans. Keyes 1928, 102–105: "Since this is true, the kingship, in my opinion, is by far the best of the three primary forms, but a moderate and balanced form of government which is a combination of the three good simple forms is preferable even to kingship." Dvornik 1966, 466–78; Ferguson 1975, 159.
38 For the following and more, see Anderson 1928, 4042; Weinstock 1957, 232–37.
39 Suetonius, *Julius* 1.7.1, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 42–43.
40 Strabo, *Geography* 13.1.27, ed. and trans. Jones 1917–1932, VI, 54–57.
41 Weinstock 1957, 212–13. Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 58–60, suggests that Dio is mistaken in stating that the statue with the inscription *deo invicto* was in the temple of Quirinius, and claims that the inscription should in fact be associated with the statue on the Capitol set up in 46. Gradel 2002, 62–63, rightly rejects this theory.
42 Weinstock 1971, 338–40; North 2008, 146, 158–60.
43 Alföldi 1935, 146; Weinstock 1971, 318–41; Meier 1995, 475–79; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 69–70.
44 Meier 1995, 479–82.
45 Alföldi 1935 146 with fig. 10.4; Crawford 1974, I, 518 no. 507/2; II, 741 with pl. LXI no. 507/2.
46 Plutarch, *Life of Antony* 24.3, ed. and trans. Perrin 1914–1926, IX, 186–89.
47 Plutarch, *Life of Antony* 54.5, ed. and trans. Perrin 1914–1926, IX, 262–63.
48 Plutarch, *Life of Antony* 58.4, ed. and trans. Perrin 1914–1926, IX, 270–71.
49 Anderson 1928, 55–56; Gurval 1995, 71–72.
50 Dio Cassius 51.16.5, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, VI, 44–47; Suetonius, *Augustus* 18, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 174–75.
51 Pliny, *Natural History* 37.4, ed. and trans. Rackham and Eichholz 1938–1962, X, 170–71; Suetonius, *Augustus* 50, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 228–29.
52 Pliny, *Natural History* 35.93, ed. and trans. Rackham and Eichholz 1938–1962, IX, 330–31.
53 Anderson 1928, 57–58.
54 Suetonius, *Augustus* 94.4, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 286–89. Compare Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 2.4, 3.1, ed. and trans. Perrin 1914–1926, VII, 226–27, 228–29.
55 Suetonius, *Augustus* 94.5, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 288–89.
56 Jones 1951.
57 Hallett 2005, 255.

58 Dio Cassius 53.17.1, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, VI, 234–35: "From his time there was, strictly speaking, a monarchy."

59 Alföldi 1935, 147–50. Bruun 1966, 44 n. 1, notes that the evidence for diadems before Constantine is contentious. Bastien 1992–1994, I, 144–47, notes the rare uses of the diadem from Augustus to Constantine (mainly in private contexts, such as on gemstones). Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 177 n. 34, observes that the claim that Aurelian wore a diadem decorated with a star ([Aurelius Victor], *Epitome De Caesaribus* 35.5, ed. and trans. Festy 1999, 38; Malalas, *Chronicle* 12.30, ed. Dindorf 1831, 299, ed. Thurn 2000, 231, trans. Jeffreys and others 1986, 164; Bastien 1992–1994, I, 145; Curran 2000, 17) is unsupported by numismatic evidence. See also Smith 1988, 34–38. For the diadem's appearance on coin portraits of Gallienus (253–268) and Numerian (283–284), note Alföldi 1935, 148–49, pls. 10.9, 10.10; L'Orange 1947, 88 with fig. 60a; Bastien 1992–1994, I, 145–46; Bergmann 1998, 114, pls. 19.5, 19.6; Canepa 2009, 198.

60 On the Roman attitude about eastern kings, note Smith 1988, 129.

61 [Aurelius Victor], *Epitome De Caesaribus* 41.14, ed. and trans. Festy 1999, 45; Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 4–5.

62 Smith 1988, 38 with n. 59.

63 Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 177. Compare Bastien 1992–1994, I, 157: "Le bandeau de Constantin I, signe de pouvoir impérial, copie on le sait celui des rois hellénistiques."

64 Bastien 1992–1994, I, 157 and Kolb 2001, 78, 85, also connect the adoption of the diadem with the collapse of the Tetrarchic system and Constantine's rise to unopposed rule. According to the *Patria*, Constantine brought a statue of Alexander the Great from Chrysopolis to the Strategion in Constantinople. The original location of the statue may be correctly recorded but could equally have been invented because Chrysopolis was the place of Constantine's victory over Licinius; the invention would have served to strengthen the parallel between Constantine and the Macedonian. See Bassett 2004, 242–44 (no. 166); LaRocca 1993, 557.

65 Eusebius, *Life* 3.16–20, ed. pp. 89–92, trans. pp. 127–30.

66 Dagron 1984b, 24, rightly observes the importance of the coincidence of political and religious unification.

67 L'Orange 1947, 28–38. On the significance of long hair, see also Zanker 1995, 256–66, 297–304.

68 Eusebius, *Life* 1.8.1, ed. p. 18, trans. p. 70.

69 *Pan. Lat.* XII.5.1–3, ed. and trans. pp. 302–303, 596. For other indications of the attitude to Alexander in Late Antiquity, see Smith, R. 2007, 177–78, 224.

70 On the posture: *RIC* VII, 44. On its interpretation in conjunction with the diadem: Bergmann 1998, 114; Hannestad 2001, 95. The upward gaze had first been adopted in imperial portraiture by Gallienus (253–268): see Mathew 1943, 67–68 with pl. IV.

71 Eusebius, *Life* 4.15.1–2, ed. pp. 125–26, trans. pp. 158–59.

72 Odahl 2005, 358 n. 14. Walter 2006, 14, while pointing out that Constantine "also modelled his style on Alexander the Great," observes that looking to heaven and extending the hands "were, of course, pious gestures endemic in Jewish and Christian practice."

73 L'Orange 1947, 92–94.

74 Bruun 1966, 33; Bastien 1992–1994, I, 57–58. Odahl 2005, 358 n. 14, is far too polarized when he asserts "modern academics who wish to interpret this pose as an ambiguous Hellenistic motif are utterly wrong."

75 Plutarch, *On the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander* 2.2, ed. and trans. Babbitt 1936, IV, 431.

76 Harrison 1967, 95–96. Compare the interpretations of Kantorowicz 1963, 120 ("It expressed, of course, in the case of imperial statues, the emperor's inspired connection with the deity above, perhaps even a close inner relationship between his *numen* and the god."); Smith 1988, 47 ("a statement of relationship. Looking up, above men, to the gods, the king on earth aspires to divine association or godlike status"); Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 187 n. 100 (who describes the diademed upward-looking emperor as "flooded with something like royal charisma").

77 Plutarch, *On the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander* 2.2, ed. and trans. Babbitt 1936, IV, 431.

78 Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 4.1, ed. and trans. Perrin 1914–1926, VII, 230–31; Plutarch, *On the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander* 2.2, ed. and trans. Babbitt 1936, IV, 432–33; Plutarch, *Pyrrhus* 8.1, ed. and trans. Perrin 1914–1926, IX, 366–67. These and other texts may be consulted in Muller-Dufeu 2002 nos. 1792–97.

79 L'Orange 1947, 39–48; Pollitt 1986, 20–37; Smith 1988, 47; Plantzos 1999–2000, 68–69.

80 L'Orange 1947, 19–23. A qualified interpretation of Alexander's moist eyes is given by Adamantius, *Physiognomy* A14, ed. and trans. Redpath 2007, 508–509. His eyes are said not only to have been moist but also to have quivered, and to have been bright, thus reflecting lofty thoughts, and also a desire for glory beyond that befitting men. See also the comments of Elsner 2007, 209–212.

81 Cameron 1973, 186–87.

82 L'Orange 1947, 49–94.

83 L'Orange 1947, 70, 72; Bergmann 1998, 264–66 with pl. 47.1.

84 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.9.10, ed. p. 832, trans. pp. 293–94; Eusebius, *Life* 1.39.3, ed. p. 36, trans. p. 85.

85 Ammianus Marcellinus 16.10.9–11, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1935–1940, I, 246–47; MacCormack 1981, 40–43; Stewart 2003, 112–13; Smith, R. 2007, 210–12.

86 Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 198–200.

87 Suetonius, *Augustus* 79, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 266–69. The Arabic translation of Polemon, *Physiognomy* A16, ed. and trans. Hoyland 2007, 368–69, is generally negative about eyes from which rays of light emanate, although a sparkle like clear glass seems to save Hadrian from such an assessment of his bright eyes. See the comments of Swain 2007, 167–68.

88 *Pan. Lat.* VIII.4.3, ed. and trans. pp. 114, 545.

89 L'Orange 1947, 110–26.

90 Fowden 1982, 34–35.

91 Marinus of Samaria, *Life of Proclus* 23 (lines 569–74), ed. and trans. Masullo 1985, 80, 111, trans. Taylor 1999, 234. For similar references, see L'Orange 1947, 95–97.

92 L'Orange 1947, 95–110; Zanker 1995, 307–27. On theurgy, see Fowden 1982, 37; Turcan 1996, 279–90; Leadbetter 2009, 124–26.

93 On the absence of a complete bust, see L'Orange 1947, 92. See also Bastien 1992–1994, I, 57–59, who writes on p. 58 that "l'extase héroïque associée au diadème en 325–326 est un retour à la conception monarchique d'Alexandre."

94 Dio Chrysostom, *First Kingship Oration* 45–46, ed. and trans. Cohoon 1932, 24–25.

95 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 3.5, ed. Heikel 1902, 201, trans. Drake 1976, 87.

96 Lactantius, *Epitome* 20.10, eds. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 692, trans. Fletcher 1871–1886, II, 107 (here *Epitome* 25.10; compare *Divine Institutes* 2.1.17–18, eds. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 98–99, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 120). On this passage, see Nicholson 2001, 193, 195–96 (writing specifically of the eyes of the colossal statue from the Basilica of Maxentius).

97 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints* 14, ed. Heikel 1902, 173–74, trans. Edwards 2003, 33.

98 As rightly observed, for instance, by Bastien 1992–1994, I, 58–59. However, Nicholson 2001, 182–84, finds divine election alone insufficient as an explanation for the upward gaze, which he believes to have conveyed a veiled Christian meaning.

99 Bruun in *RIC* VII, 33 n. 3, for instance, sees no Christian attitude.

2

EMPERORS AND DIVINE PROTECTORS

CONSTANTINE'S RADIATE STATUE

IN NOVEMBER 324, CONSTANTINE ESTABLISHED THE limits of his new city about 3 km beyond the old walls of Byzantium. Philostorgius describes the emperor marking the boundary with a spear, proclaiming that he would continue to advance until stopped by "the one who is in front of me."[1] Five-and-a-half years later, on 11 May in the year 330, Constantinople was dedicated in a ceremony that appears to have consisted of two distinct parts.[2] A description of the first part is found in the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* or *Brief Historical Notes*, a work composed largely of eighth-century material and perhaps completed around 800.[3] Given the late date and the genre of this text, it is difficult to determine how much (if any) of the description corresponds to what really occurred in 330,[4] but in short it would appear that Constantine's radiate statue was placed on a carriage and escorted from the area near the Capitol (later to become the Philadelphion) to Constantine's new forum (Figure 171 on p. 254), where it was placed on top of a column and revered by everyone, including the army, as embodying the *Tychē* (Fortune) of the city.[5]

Originally, the column was some 37 m high, consisting of a shaft of seven drums of purple porphyry on a marble pedestal that was in turn seated on a platform of five steps.[6] Today, the steps are below modern ground level, and the pedestal and lowest drum of the column are obscured by Turkish stonework added in 1779. The porphyry shaft, however, rises to its original height, and there is no reason to believe there were ever more drums.[7] The capital (presumably Corinthian in style) that once crowned the column and supported the statue has been lost, perhaps having been damaged when the statue fell in 1106.[8] In place of the capital, there are ten courses of stonework and a large marble slab added by Manuel I Comnenus (1143–1180) when he decided to top the monument with a cross (Figure 15).[9]

Fortunately, the column was recorded in a more authentic state by various artists, in particular by a German who visited Constantinople in 1574 when the original base was still visible, and only the lowest step had disappeared below ground level (Figure 16).[10] In addition, excavations undertaken around and under the column in 1929–1930 exposed the steps below the column and provided access to the original pedestal, allowing its dimensions to be established.[11]

The lost statue that originally topped the monument is mentioned in several Byzantine texts, which allow us to establish important details of its appearance. Anna Comnena, writing about 40 years after the toppling of the statue, says it faced east and held a sceptre in its right hand and a globe in its left. Malalas, a sixth-century chronicler, refers to a spear rather than a sceptre, claiming that it fell from the statue during an earthquake in 557. Other sources report that the globe was thrown down by earthquakes in 477 and 869. Writing of the statue's erection in 330, Malalas mentions its most significant attribute – seven rays on its head.[12] Graphic evidence

Figure 15. Constantine's porphyry column in 2010. Built ca. A.D. 324–330. Istanbul. © Jonathan Bardill.

to be discussed shortly suggests the statue was naked. Taken together, these snippets of information allow us to assemble a picture of the whole (Figures 17–19).[13]

Although Timothy Barnes has claimed that Constantine's original statue would have worn a diadem and that the rayed crown was added later, perhaps after 477 when the globe must have been replaced, his assertion is unconvincing for several reasons.[14] First, a mid-sixteenth-century drawing records a carving on the base of the column that includes a radiate portrait of Constantine, and therefore hints at the appearance of the statue above. Second, Hesychius, describing the column in the sixth century, appears to have been inspired by an inscription on the monument that referred to Constantine shining like the sun. The text is entirely plausible for the fourth century, considering that an inscription on

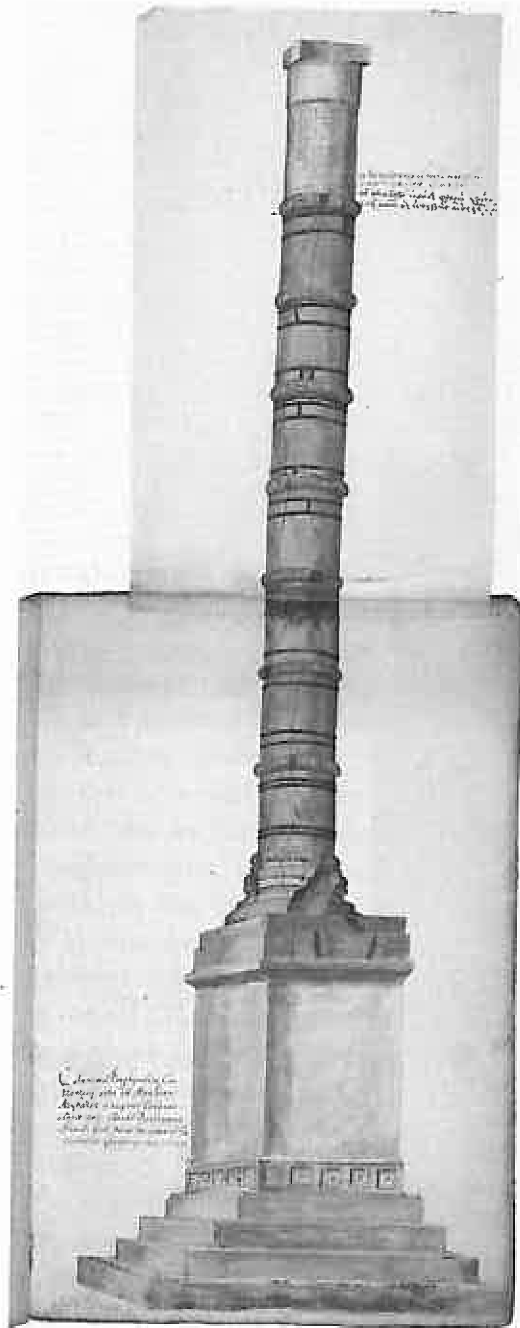


Figure 16. Constantine's porphyry column. Built ca. A.D. 324–330. Istanbul. Drawing by anonymous German artist. 1574. Freshfield Album, folio 1. Trinity College, Cambridge. Courtesy of the Master and Fellows, Trinity College, Cambridge.

a Constantinian statue base in Leptis Magna describes a "marble statue radiating with his divinity." Third, the radiate crown had connotations of divinity and was last used as an imperial attribute during the reign of Constantine. It seems most unlikely that a later Christian ruler would have considered bestowing a radiate crown on Constantine's statue, decorating the base of the column, and applying a new inscription referring to Constantine's radiant nature. If the column had received such extensive and unusual attention after Constantine's death, we might have expected a chronicler to mention it. Fourth, when Malalas mentions the seven rays, he does so in the context of the statue's erection in 330. While he may have been mistaken, it is clear that he believed the rays to have been an attribute of the original statue.

We cannot be absolutely certain of the form of the rayed crown that adorned Constantine's statue. There are two possibilities. The first is a rather heavy-looking crown consisting of a wide band of metal secured around the head by two ribbons (*lemnisci*) tied at the back. A number of wide, vertical rays of metal would have been attached to the band. This was a type of crown that all the Roman emperors, up to and including Constantine, were shown wearing on their coins. Whether the crown really existed is a matter of debate, but depictions of it are clearly meant to look like a tangible object rather than merely symbolic rays of light. The sun-god Sol was also occasionally shown wearing something similar, although in one respect his headgear was distinct from that of the emperors: it was never shown with ribbons at the back (Figure 20). The second type of crown that may have adorned Constantine's statue is one from which more slender rays emanated at angles from a band around the head. This would have recalled Sol's more usual headgear (Figure 21) and that worn by a number of Hellenistic kings.

Two pieces of evidence support the case for the statue having worn a crown with vertical rays. First, on the pedestal of the column was a carving in relief, drawn in the mid-sixteenth century by the Danish artist and architect Melchior Lorck (Figure 22). Lorck recorded the presence of a small, wreathed portrait of the emperor wearing a crown with rays rising vertically (Figure 23). There are doubts about the accuracy of Lorck's record, since such radiate crowns had disappeared from Constantine's coins four years before the statue was erected and were rarely shown on frontal portraits.[15] However, even

Figure 17. Reconstruction of the imperial statue and the porphyry column in Constantine's Forum at Constantinople. Ca. A.D. 324–330. A. Tayfun Öner.

Figure 18. Reconstruction of the imperial statue on the porphyry column in Constantine's Forum at Constantinople. Ca. A.D. 324–330. A. Tayfun Öner.

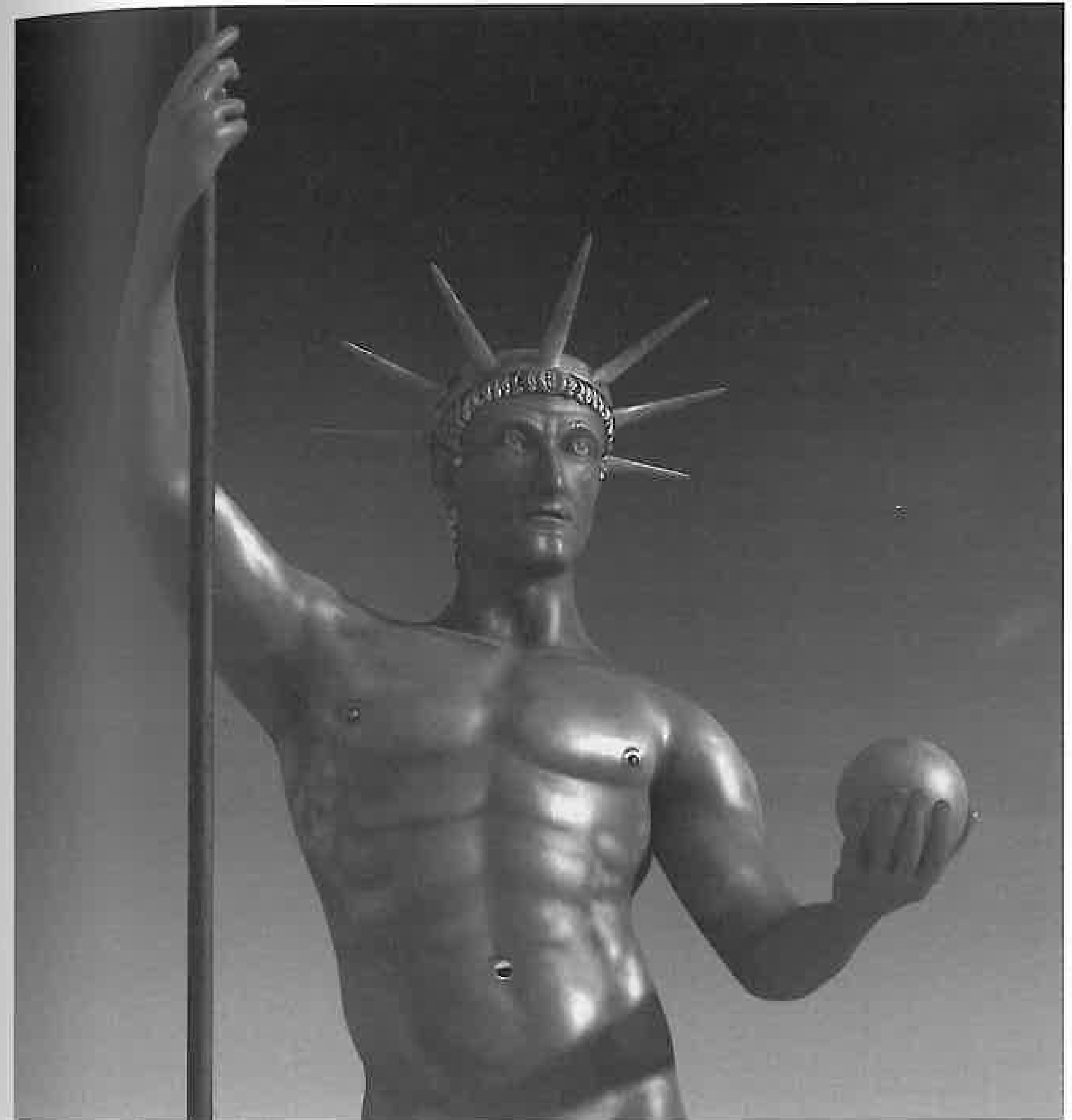


Figure 19. Detail of a reconstruction of the imperial statue on the porphyry column in Constantine's Forum at Constantinople. Ca. A.D. 324–330. A. Tayfun Öner.

if we assume that the drawing (barring aspects of the artist's style) is accurate, it is not safe to assume that the relief decoration on the base would have reflected the type of crown worn by the statue on top of the column. Second, there is the illustration of Constantine's column on the Peutinger Map (often referred to by its Latin name, *Tabula Peutingeriana*; Figure 24). The map is a twelfth-century copy of a fourth- or fifth-century original,[16] and it shows a rather stumpy column topped by a naked statue that does not appear to wear any headgear. This negative evidence might be seized upon as proof that

Figure 20. Sol wearing crown of vertical rays. Reverse of silver *denarius* minted in Rome by C. Coelius Caldus. 51 B.C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (2002,0102.4379).

Figure 21. Sol, wearing a *chitōn*, rides in four-horse chariot and radiates angled rays of light. Reverse of silver *denarius* minted in Rome by M. Aburius Geminus. 132 B.C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (2002,0102.903).

the rays of Constantine's crown rose vertically and were therefore indistinct from a distance – or even, as Barnes suggested, that the statue originally had no radiate crown at all.[17]

Yet, if Constantine's statue had worn a crown with vertical rays that were indistinct from the ground, one wonders how Malalas could have known that the crown consisted of exactly seven rays. It would have been much easier to count rays emanating from the head at an angle. Furthermore, seven rays would seem too few for a crown with vertical rays, since the evidence of coins suggests that such crowns incorporated about eleven rays. Nero's colossal statue in Rome – our closest parallel to Constantine's – is shown on an amethyst gem with seven angled rays emerging from its head (Figure 40 on p. 52). That Constantine's rays were angled is also implied by several authors who associate Constantine's statue with the sun. This connection is made by Hesychius, writing in the sixth century, by the tenth-century author of the *Patria*, who claimed that a statue of Apollo had been reused to represent Constantine, and by Anna Comnena, who in the mid-twelfth century expressed a belief that Constantine had rededicated a statue of Apollo in his own name, but that the people had nevertheless continued to refer to it as *Anthēlios* ("opposite the sun," "facing east," "like the sun"). Clearly, the headgear was of a type viewers associated with Helios and Apollo, and therefore the rays were probably not vertical, as on imperial crowns, but angled.[18]

Claims that the statue was a reused work of antiquity cannot be rejected, especially given the number of ancient statues Constantine is known to have obtained to adorn his new city. It is therefore not unlikely that Constantine made use of a colossal statue of either a Hellenistic king or a god whose head was adorned with angled rays.[19] It is possible, for example, that he reused a statue of Helios said to have stood in Byzantium, originally in the square called the Tetrastoon, but later at the site of a temple of Helios built by Septimius Severus on the acropolis.[20]

Fragments of a huge bronze from Rome that represents either Constantine after 330 or his son Constantius II may give an impression of the appearance of the statue of Constantine that stood on the porphyry column.[21] A head, a cupped left hand, and a globe (pieces that may or may not belong

Figure 22. Drawing of the base of Constantine's porphyry column by Melchior Lorck. A.D. 1561. Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

to the same statue) are today displayed in the Musei Capitolini, but precisely when and where in the city the statue was erected is uncertain (Figures 25–27).[22] The head shows both the hooked nose associated with the Constantinian dynasty and the elevated gaze typical of Constantine's coin portraits dating to after 324. The long locks covering the back of the neck, the curls of the fringe, and the fleshy face are known from Constantine's later coin portraits and would seem to suggest a date after 330 (Figure 7).[23] Although coins minted in the 330s show Constantine wearing a jewelled diadem, it seems that the bronze head did not wear one. There are regularly spaced holes around the crown of the head but not

Figure 23. Drawing of head of Constantine wearing crown with vertical rays. Detail of Figure 22. Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

lower down, around the temples, where a diadem or crown would have been attached. It has therefore been suggested that the statue was adorned not with a diadem but with angled rays emerging directly from the head.[24] If this statue wore rays and carried a globe in its left hand, it may have been a standing statue similar in appearance to the lost bronze that once adorned the porphyry column in Constantinople.

In a lengthy article about Constantine's column and statue, Garth Fowden makes little reference to Constantine's radiate crown, commenting only that the attribute was "natural and usual in imperial imagery."[25] Whilst it is true that Roman emperors were commonly depicted wearing a crown with vertical rays, particularly on coins of double value, Fowden's appeal to the unexceptional nature of the attribute directs us away from any investigation of its possible import. It must be emphasized that the meaning of such attributes changed according to the context in which they were employed, and that Constantine's crown must therefore be considered in its own right and according to the precise circumstances of its adoption. However, as far as we know from the available evidence, Constantine made no statement concerning its intended meaning, and we have no clear indication from contemporary texts as to what observers inferred from it. Thus, if we are to attempt to comprehend the significance of the radiate statue that graced Constantine's porphyry column, we have no choice but to consider the history of the radiate crown and explore the messages earlier rulers had apparently intended to convey by their adoption of it. Only by doing so can we hope to gain insight into the possible impression Constantine hoped to create by adopting the attribute. Whilst it is necessary to consider that Constantine was operating in a unique historical context and might conceivably have tried to associate entirely new ideas with the crown, we should begin by looking back to the use that had been made of the crown by Constantine's Hellenistic and Roman predecessors to see where the investigation leads.

Hellenistic Kings and the Import of the Radiate Portrait

The possibility that the rays on the head of Constantine's statue were angled like those on the crown of a Hellenistic king would seem to be strengthened when we remember the presence of other Hellenistic elements – youthful portrait, diadem, and heavenward gaze – on certain Constantinian coins contemporary with the statue. We must therefore consider the possibility that, after founding his eastern capital in 324, Constantine consciously adopted a number of the trappings of eastern kings. If so, we must also wonder whether these trappings were meant to convey the meaning they had held for his Hellenistic predecessors.

Of the kings who inherited Alexander's empire, the first to be depicted with a radiate bust was Ptolemy III Euergetes on coins minted under his son, Ptolemy IV (222–205 B.C.; Figure 28). Thereafter, the attribute was adopted by a number of Hellenistic rulers on their coins down to Hermaios Soter of Bactria (40–1 B.C.).[26] It is probably significant that some of these rulers also adopted the title *Epiphanēs*. Derived from the verb *phaō*, meaning "to shine," *Epiphanēs* literally means "manifest" (suggesting an ability to appear dramatically and manifest great power) and metaphorically "illustrious."[27] Not all

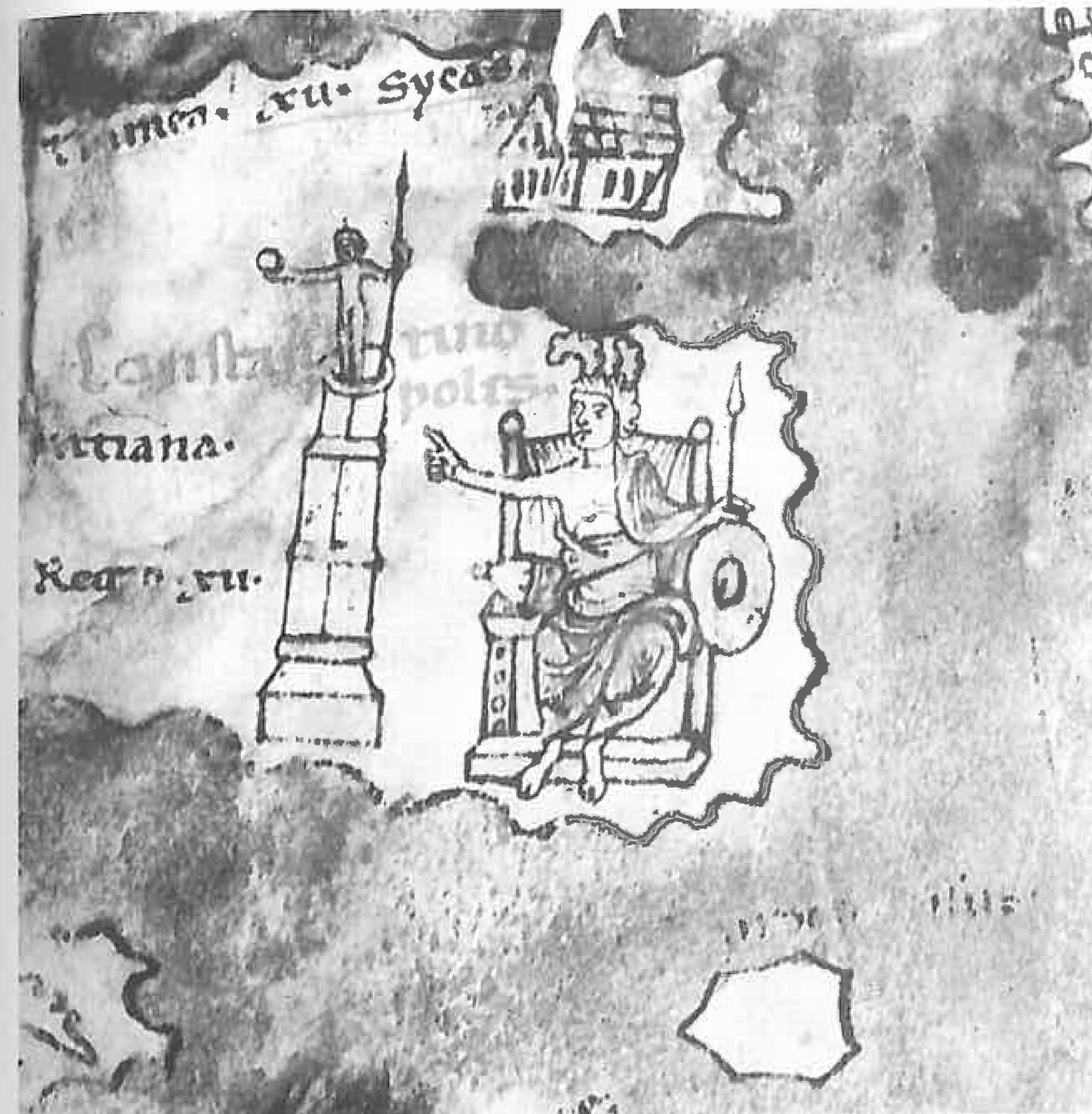


Figure 24. Constantine's statue on the porphyry column beside the enthroned Tyche (Fortune) of Constantinople. Peutinger Map. Twelfth-century copy of fourth- or fifth-century original. Reproduction from L. Bosio, *La Tabula Peutingeriana* (Rimini 1983) fig. 22.

of the rulers who appeared radiate on coins adopted the title *Epiphanēs*, and conversely a number of kings who adopted the title are not known to have been depicted with rays.[28] That does not mean, however, that the title and the attribute had nothing in common.

The significance of both the radiate portrait and the title *Epiphanēs* may be better understood by examining surviving texts on kingship. We know that treatises on kingship existed in the early Hellenistic period and were recommended reading for Ptolemy II Philadelphus.[29] Regrettably, however, none survive, and we must turn to later writings on the subject to understand the philosophy of the period. Some particularly important texts are fragments preserved in an anthology compiled, probably in the early fifth century A.D., by John Stobaeus, where they are spuriously ascribed to authors named Ecphantus,

Figure 25. Colossal bronze head, left hand, and globe from a statue of Constantine or Constantius II. Musei Capitolini, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

Figure 26. Colossal bronze head, from a statue of Constantine or Constantius II. Musei Capitolini, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

Diotogenes, Sthenidas, and Archytas.[30] An analysis of the Greek of these texts led Louis Delatte to conclude that the dialect is artificial, being a mixture of various Doric forms with some Ionian, Attic, and epic forms thrown in for good measure. He suggested that the texts were written by someone striving for an archaizing effect in the first or second century A.D. when these forms had vanished from everyday use.[31] However, his conclusions have been criticized, especially by Holger Thesleff, who has argued that the language is essentially Attic or Koine with a strong Doric influence. Having analysed the philosophies expressed in the fragments, Thesleff concluded that they belonged neither to the tradition of the Pythagorean school, which ended in the late fourth century B.C., nor to the school of Roman Neopythagoreanism that emerged in the first century B.C. He proposed that, with the exception of the passages

Figure 27. Colossal bronze head, from a statue of Constantine or Constantius II. Musei Capitolini, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

ascribed to Archytas, which he dated to the mid- or late fourth century B.C., the texts were composed in the middle of the following century, possibly in southern Italy during the reign of Hieron II of Syracuse (270–216/215 B.C.).[32]

Even if the fragments were written at a late date, as Delatte holds, it is likely that their authors derived many ideas from much earlier philosophical writings on kingship. The difficulty for scholars interested in Hellenistic kingship lies in isolating genuinely Hellenistic ideas from the doctrines of later periods.

The fact that certain themes in these texts seem to make sense of some of the attributes and titles of the Hellenistic kings may indicate the antiquity of those themes. In particular, Ecphantus' philosophy seems to provide a useful approach to understanding the significance of the king's crown of rays. He describes the king as created from the same

Figure 28. Ptolemy III Euergetes wearing radiate crown. Gold coin of Ptolemy IV Philopator minted in Alexandria. Ca. 222–205 B.C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1841,B.3706).

matter as other men but participating in the divine to a greater degree than they, having been fashioned by the Supreme Deity in his image.[33] The king is "an alien and foreign thing which has come down to human beings" from heaven.[34] He is pure and radiant, sharing in the brilliant, immaculate nature of his creator:

> Accordingly the king, as a copy of the higher king, is a single and unique creation, for he is on the one hand always intimate with the one who made him, while to his subjects he appears as though he were in a light, the light of royalty. For he is judged and approved by this light, as is the mightiest of winged creatures, the eagle, set face to face with the sun. Thus royalty is explained in the fact that by its divine character and excessive brilliance it is hard to behold, except for those who have a legitimate claim. . . . Royalty itself is then a sure and incorruptible thing, very hard for a human being to achieve by reason of its exceeding divinity. And he who stands in it must be pure and radiant in nature, so that he may not tarnish its exceeding brightness by his own blemishes, even as some people defile even the most sacred places.[35]

Similar ideas about the brilliant nature of a good king are found in other, more accurately dated texts. In the late first century A.D., for example, the philosopher Plutarch explained that the king is filled with divine radiation just as the sun represents and reflects the power of God on earth.[36] Although Plutarch rejected claims that the king was either God or the son of God (since he could be neither incorruptible nor possess absolute power), he did consider that the king could become the visible earthly image of the Deity by leading a virtuous life and ruling with the laws of justice.[37] Writing at about the same time, Dio Chrysostom claimed in the third of his *Orations on Kingship* that the sun was the best and most conspicuous god. A good king, being a god-loving man, would strive to imitate the sun, and by labouring to do so would bring about salvation (*sōtēria*).[38]

The thinking on kingship set out by the likes of Ecphantus, Plutarch, and Dio was clearly influenced in part by earlier pharaonic solar symbolism. For instance, the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt are known to have adopted some of the titles of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs.[39] In a hieroglyphic stele of 311 B.C., Alexander IV was given a full array of pharaonic titles and described as "chosen by the sun" and "chosen of the sun, the son of the sun."[40] Many ancient Egyptian titles were translated into Greek by Ptolemy IV Philopator and adopted by Ptolemy V Epiphanes, who is described on the Rosetta Stone as "son of the sun to whom the sun has given victory."[41] Ptolemaic queens from Arsinoe II onwards claimed to be incarnations of the goddess Isis, and it followed that their sons were incarnations of the sun-god Horus. Thus, late in 37 B.C., Cleopatra VII and Antony could rename their three-year-old son Alexander Helios.[42]

On the basis of such evidence it may be suggested that both the radiate portrait of the Hellenistic king and the title *Epiphanēs* were closely associated with various beliefs – that the ruler had been created by and in the image of the solar deity; that he had been chosen to rule by the sun-god; that he imitated the sun-god and reflected the light of that divinity on earth; and that by doing so he achieved victory and the salvation of his people.[43]

The intimate connection perceived between the sun-god and the concepts of victory and salvation

was clearly demonstrated by the Colossus of Rhodes, a huge statue of Helios that probably stood at the entrance to the island's military harbour. The timing of its erection suggests that it proclaimed the dawning of a new era under the protection of the sun-god after the failure of the siege of the island by Demetrius Poliorketes in 304 B.C. The statue was under construction for twelve years but stood for only about sixty-six, felled by an earthquake that occurred sometime between 228 and 223 B.C. An attempt at reconstruction may have been made by Hadrian, but another earthquake struck only twenty years later. Since the bronze was taken as scrap metal by an Arab in 653, nothing remains of the statue. However, the dedication once inscribed on its base is preserved in the *Palatine Anthology*, and it explains the monument as a gift to the sun-god and as a symbol of freedom:

> To thy very self, O Sun, did the people of Dorian Rhodes raise high to heaven this colossus, then, when having laid to rest the brazen wave of war, they crowned their country with the spoils of their foes. Not only over the sea, but on the land, too, did they establish the lovely light of unfettered freedom. For to those who spring from the race of Heracles dominion is a heritage both on land and sea.[44]

We know nothing for certain about the appearance of the Rhodian statue, despite the number of imaginative modern artistic representations that exist. However, for it to have been identified as Helios, it must have had the attributes of that god – in particular a radiate crown.[45]

The simultaneous appearance in Constantine's iconography of the diadem, the heavenward gaze, and the radiate crown suggests that he was making conscious reference to the attributes of the Hellenistic kings of the East. These symbols of power were evidently considered to be significant in the context of Constantinian propaganda. If the emperor's crown of rays were to be seen from the point of view of the kingship theory described in Ecphantus, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom, it would have suggested not that the emperor was a solar god but rather that he was the solar deity's chosen king on earth, imitating that god and reflecting divine light on his subjects to ensure their freedom, security, and salvation.

Roman Rulers, the Sun-God, and the Radiate Crown

Although it seems unlikely that the statue on the porphyry column showed Constantine wearing a radiate crown of the type typically worn by Roman emperors (that is, a crown with vertical rays, secured at the back with ribbons), it is nevertheless the case that, from 309 or 310 until 326, Constantine was regularly shown on coins wearing precisely this type of traditional Roman imperial headgear. However, establishing the significance of this crown is far from easy.

Andreas Alföldi claimed that the presence of ribbons in depictions of the Roman crown indicated that it was the same as the diadem of the Hellenistic kings. In his opinion, the rays too were inspired by Hellenistic iconography, but were symbolic rather than real, representing divine light and acquiring solar connotations in Rome.[46] Marianne Bergmann suggested that the crown, although inspired by Hellenistic models, was entirely symbolic, invented as a way of introducing divine solar rays into imperial portraiture without controversy.[47] More recently, Steven Hijmans has argued that the rayed crown was a real object, that the ribbons at the back suggest that it should be considered distinct from the rays worn by Sol, Helios, and the Hellenistic kings, and that since the imperial crown does not appear in depictions of every divinized emperor, it cannot be considered a symbol of divinity. In his opinion, the imperial radiate crown originally had neither solar nor divine connotations, but came to be a symbol of the rank of the Augustus. Be that as it may, even Hijmans accepts that uninformed Roman viewers of radiate portraits on coins might intuitively have seen the crown as evoking radiance and divinity.[48] To better appreciate the possible meanings of this attribute, it is useful to sketch the history of its use from Caesar to Constantine.

If Florus is to be trusted, the first mortal Roman to be granted the honour of wearing a radiate crown was Julius Caesar.[49] The significance of this should probably be assessed in light of the fact that Caesar

Figure 29. Silver *denarius* minted in Rome for Sepullius Macer. Obverse shows head of Caesar with star behind. Reverse shows Venus with Victory in right hand, and with a sceptre resting on a star in the left. 44 B.C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1901,0407.452).

was offered the diadem, which, as we have seen in Chapter 1, was associated with Alexander and the Hellenistic kings. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that Caesar's radiate crown was not a new Roman creation but the established Hellenistic radiate crown of angled rays, which was worn by eastern monarchs, perhaps to suggest that they had been chosen by the sun-god and that they reflected his saving power on earth.

If we assume that Caesar's crown carried a solar connotation – suggesting that he shared to some degree in the sun's radiant nature – it would have been a fitting attribute for a number of reasons. In the first place, it had been traditional in Caesar's family to worship the god Vediovis, who was identified with the sun-god Apollo. Second, Caesar's birthday fell during the annual games in honour of Apollo (the *ludi Apollinares*).[50] Furthermore, because the sun was king of the stars, a radiate crown might also have carried an astral significance. This would have been particularly appropriate in Caesar's case, since he had claimed descent from Venus and had adopted her star as his symbol.[51] Thus, in 48 B.C., in celebration of his victory in Gaul, Caesar issued coins showing Venus with a star in her hair.[52] On *denarii* of Sepullius Macer, minted in 44 B.C., Venus is shown on the reverse with her sceptre resting on star, and on the obverse a star is shown behind Caesar's own head (Figure 29).[53]

Caesar's decision to adopt the star (which became known as the *sidus Iulium*) as his sign was presumably taken not only because it was the sign of Venus but also because it was the symbol of a divine or deified ruler – and we might therefore wonder to what extent Caesar's radiate crown also carried a connotation of divinity.[54] This aspect of the star's symbolism was to become particularly important when the Senate, in recognition of Caesar's absolute power, decreed his divinity in the last months of his life. Having apparently rejected the title of "Jupiter Julius," which would have elevated him to the status of the supreme Olympian deity, Caesar accepted the more modest appellation "Julius the god" (*divus Iulius*).[55]

After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C., the European Greeks, desperate to regain their independence from Macedon, had stopped worshipping the great conqueror. In Asia Minor, however, Alexander's cult had persisted, and as a consequence it had become the custom there to worship kings and, later, politicians, generals, and governors as divinities.[56] Thus, when the East came under Roman authority, influential Roman figures were treated similarly until Augustus came to power and became the focus of worship.[57] The Senate's decision to deify Julius Caesar whilst he was still alive is a clear demonstration of the influence that such eastern practices had in Rome.[58]

Caesar's ever-increasing powers, which virtually constituted a monarchy, culminated in his assassination by supporters of the Republic. Following his murder, there were reports that the sun shone with a pale light throughout the year and that the people

Figure 30. Octavian adorning Caesar's statue with a star. Reverse of silver *denarius* minted in Rome by L. Lentulus. 12 B.C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (2002,0102.4978).

feared that the darkness would never end.[59] Furthermore, it is said that a comet appeared on seven nights during the games staged by Octavian in Caesar's name, as if giving approval to the Senatorial decision to deify him. The comet was interpreted as Caesar's soul rising to heaven, and as inaugurating a new Golden Age (*saeculum aureum*) under the rule of the new god.[60]

Octavian, Caesar's grandnephew dutifully ordered a star to be placed over Caesar's statues, and he is shown on coins carrying out the instruction himself (Figure 30).[61] He also claimed to be the son of the divine Caesar (*divi filius*) and did not fail to exploit Caesar's solar and astral symbolism to his own advantage, engraving the star on his helmet.[62] Having defeated Caesar's assassins, Brutus and Cassius, at the battle of Philippi in 42 B.C., Octavian pointedly adopted the solar deity Apollo as his protective god, since the opposition had associated themselves with that divinity on their coins and in their battle-cries.[63] In addition, Octavian began to wear a wreath of laurel, the tree of Apollo, and use a seal bearing a sphinx, the symbol of the kingdom of Apollo (*regnum Apollinis*) that had been prophesied by the Sibyl.[64] However, Octavian (who from 27 B.C. would call himself Augustus) was never depicted wearing a radiate crown during his lifetime. It was only after the Senate posthumously declared him *divus Augustus* in A.D. 14 that this attribute was added to his portraits, in much the same way as Caesar's statues had been posthumously adorned with a star. Despite the fact that Augustus did not adopt the radiate crown while alive, the significance of the attribute can only be fully understood in the context of the Golden Age he inaugurated and the close connection he cultivated with Apollo.

The association of Octavian with Apollo verged on identification with the god. As early as 40 B.C., Octavian dressed as Apollo to host a dinner party at which the guests masqueraded as other Olympian deities.[65] Following his victory over Sextus Pompey at Naulochus in 36 B.C., Octavian ordered the construction of a new temple to Apollo on a spot struck by lightning on the Palatine Hill. He then built his own residence next door.[66] Five years later, as an expression of his debt to Apollo for his naval victory over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium, he enlarged the temple to the god that stood on the promontory there.[67] At the same time in Rome, in front of Apollo's temple on the Palatine, he raised a statue of Apollo Actius on a high podium decorated with ships' prows (Figure 31).[68] On an arch erected nearby in honour of his father, Octavian set up a marble statuary group by the second-century sculptor Lysias depicting Apollo and Diana in their chariot.[69] In the library adjacent to the temple of Apollo, a fifty-foot high bronze statue of the god was set up. Apollo was presumably given Augustus' features, but the emperor's affinity with the god was such that some described the statue not as one of Apollo but of Augustus himself "with all of Apollo's insignia" (*cum Apollinis cunctis insignibus*).[70]

It was at about this time, in the late 30s and early 20s B.C., that a new imperial portrait-type was created, quite different from the earlier bony, boyish representations of Octavian. This new style, with its calm, dignified expression, had, in Zanker's words, "a kind of ageless beauty which would have reminded his contemporaries of Apollo's own features" (Figure 32).[71] The portrait-type omitted certain features typical of Hellenistic dynasts and modified others to create a youthful but confident image of a saviour

Figure 31. Statue of Apollo Actius holding a cithara and sacrificing on a high podium decorated with ships' prows. Reverse of silver *denarius* minted in Rome by C. Antistius Vetus. 16 B.C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1846,0910.177).

figure.[72] Such a youthful, Apolline portrait was to be adopted some three-and-a-half centuries later by Constantine, after he too had jettisoned a boyish likeness. Doubtless Constantine was not only alluding to the precedent of Alexander but also to the glorious age of Augustus.

In addition to all this, there was even a rumour that Augustus had been fathered by Apollo himself. It was said that when Augustus' mother, Atia, attended a late-night ceremony in the Temple of Apollo in the Circus Flamininus, the god had visited her in the guise of a snake. Atia's husband dreamt of a sunbeam issuing from his wife's womb and later of his son holding the thunderbolt, sceptre, and other insignia of Jupiter, wearing the radiate crown of Apollo, and riding in the four-horse chariot of the sun-god. In the 20s B.C., the temple in which the conception had allegedly taken place was rebuilt in Augustus' honour by one Gaius Sosius, a former enemy who allied himself with the emperor after Actium.[73]

After ten years of cultural renewal, Augustus consecrated his Golden Age between 30 May and 3 June 17 B.C. Standing before Apollo's temple, three choruses consisting of twenty-seven youths and twenty-seven maidens dressed in white sang Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*, which had been composed specially for the occasion. The song was addressed to all the gods, but especially to Diana, the moon goddess, and Phoebus Apollo, the "nourishing Sun-god." Together, these two deities evoked the concept of eternity (*aeternitas*) and the predictable mutability of the ages. Horace's song was a prayer for the fertility of the earth and of Roman mothers, and for the morality of Roman youth. It expressed a desire that the Sun's chariot should never rise over a greater city than Rome, and appealed to Phoebus Apollo to cause Rome to prosper for five years "and thence forever down through the ages."[74] The prayer

Figure 32. Portrait head of Augustus from Pergamum. 27 B.C.–A.D. 14 (Istanbul Archaeological Museums inv. 2165 T). © Jonathan Bardill.

would have been given greater impact by the representation, on the central acroterion of the temple, of Sol-Helios in his four-horse chariot.[75] In the same year, another comet appeared in the sky announcing the beginning of the new age. A provincial mint filled the reverse of its *denarii* with an image of the blazing phenomenon accompanied by the inscription DIVVS IVLIVS ("Julius the god"), associating this astronomical event not only with the apotheosis of Caesar, but also with the inauguration of the Golden Age under Caesar's adopted son, Augustus (Figure 33).[76]

Having campaigned successfully for three years in Spain and Gaul, Augustus returned to Rome on 3 July 13 B.C. On the following day he approved the building of an altar dedicated to the goddess Peace (*Pax*). Although such abstract virtues had at first been perceived as gods or goddesses in their own right, from the time of Sulla they were often understood as virtues incarnate in the ruler himself. It is significant, therefore, that the altar was dedicated specifically to *Pax Augusta*, the Augustan Peace, suggesting that the peace and security of the Augustan Golden Age flowed from Augustus himself.[77]

The decoration of the Altar of Augustan Peace (*Ara Pacis Augustae*), dedicated on 30 January 9 B.C., evoked the new age of Apollo.[78] The lower frieze on the exterior of the enclosure wall surrounding the altar was decorated with a symmetrical arrangement of scrolled acanthus tendrils, which often terminated in palmettes or swans with outspread wings. The luxuriant vegetation – amongst which were flowers, fruits, animals, and birds – expressed the fertility and abundance of the age, and its symmetry exemplified the peace and order Augustus had achieved. The acanthus, palmettes, and swans were chosen because of their potent symbolism. Acanthus was closely associated with the Greek sun-god, Helios, who was often represented elsewhere rising from the plant.[79] The palm, an ancient solar symbol in the Near East, was connected with Phoebus-Apollo, who was so intimately associated with Helios that the two gods were often said to be identical.[80] It was a palm-tree that the goddess Leto had grasped as she gave birth to Apollo on Delos, and since that island was surrounded by swans, the birds were thereafter considered sacred to Apollo.[81] Thus, the decoration of the Altar of Peace had been carefully designed to suggest that under the rule of Augustus the Golden Age of Apollo had returned.

Another demonstration of Augustus' affinity with the sun-god was the construction of a monumental solar calendar.[82] In 10 B.C., a red granite obelisk that had been shipped from Heliopolis in Egypt was erected in the Campus Martius, close to the Altar of Peace and Augustus' mausoleum. Obelisks had been connected with the sun since the time of the pharaohs, and the inscription on the Augustan base dedicated the monument to the sun in commemoration of the conquest of Egypt. The obelisk served as a gnomon or pointer, casting its shadow at midday along a bronze meridian line. From this, the position of the sun in the zodiac could be read, and hence the accuracy of the civil calendar could be checked against the progress of the solar year. Augustus had been aware that the calendar was inaccurate since a bungled reform thirty-six years earlier, and so a year after the erection of the obelisk, in his role as Pontifex Maximus, he decreed that a correction should be made. By consulting the meridian line, Romans could see for themselves that the civil calendar was now in harmony with the universe. The decision to locate the obelisk and meridian beside the imperial mausoleum was highly significant since it suggested that the predictability of the sun's rise and fall, and hence cosmic stability, was intimately connected with the immortality of the emperor and his dynasty.[83]

Another obelisk from Heliopolis was erected by Augustus at the middle of the central barrier of the Circus Maximus, forming the monumental focus of the entire structure. The circus itself was dedicated to the sun-god, and the obelisk therefore served to reinforce this connection.[84] It was an act that Constantine would later imitate by ordering the construction of a masonry obelisk at the centre of the *euripos* of the hippodrome in Constantinople, thereby connecting himself with Augustus, his reign with the rule of the sun, and his new city with the old Rome.

Mindful of Caesar's assassination, Augustus was cautious about state-sanctioned divinity, since a formal cult would have smacked of an eastern monarchy.[85] In his *Georgics*, the poet Vergil presented Octavian as having restored peace but was cautious

Figure 33. Silver *denarius* of Augustus minted in Spain. Obverse shows head of Augustus wearing oak wreath. Reverse shows comet with inscription referring to the divine Julius Caesar. Ca. 17 B.C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1860,0330.21).

about his divinity. He described him as preparing his way to heaven during life on earth and claimed that he would appear as a new star after death.[86] Whilst Augustus prohibited the direct worship of his living person, like Caesar he was aware of the importance that ruler cult played in the East in binding the people to their leader. Therefore, he stressed his connection with *divus* Julius, Mars, Apollo, and Jupiter; he accepted many honours worthy of the gods, even allowing himself and his family to watch the races from the shrine of the gods in the Circus Maximus; and he was recognized as having the *numen* (divine power) of a god. For these reasons Augustus was worshipped in his lifetime in the West, but only in provincial, municipal, and private cults over which the state exercised little control.[87] Unlike Caesar, he was officially appointed a god of the Roman state only after his death.[88] The Senate honoured the deceased emperor with the new name *divus Augustus* in August of A.D. 14, and even went so far as to decree a state temple to him and to establish a priestly college for his worship.[89] The contemporary astrologer Manilius commented: "Be not slow to credit man with vision of the divine, for man himself is now creating gods and raising godhead to the stars, and beneath the dominion of Augustus will heaven grow mightier yet."[90]

It was only at this point, as *divus*, that Augustus began to be depicted wearing the radiate crown. In A.D. 15, during the reign of Tiberius, *dupondii* and *asses* were minted in honour of "Augustus, divinity and father" (*divus Augustus pater*), and the deceased was shown wearing a radiate crown with vertical rays and ribbons – the type that would later become a regular attribute of the Roman emperors (Figure 34).[91] On other coins portraying the *divus* Augustus, some of which show him wearing a radiate crown, a star was placed above his head.[92] At an uncertain date after Augustus' death, a radiate crown was added to the statue of Octavian in the precinct of Apollo on the Palatine. This statue, which stood on a column decorated with ships' prows and anchors, had been set up to commemorate the victory at Actium. The monument is shown with the added crown on coins minted under Vespasian and Titus (Figure 35).[93] The rays emerge at angles from Octavian's head, and the naked statue therefore prefigures that of Constantine on the porphyry column in Constantinople. In A.D. 21/22 bronze *sestertii* were minted showing on the reverse the *divus*

Figure 34. Divus Augustus wearing radiate crown. Obverse of copper alloy *as* minted in Rome under Tiberius. Ca. A.D. 15. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (R.6413).

Augustus enthroned like Jupiter, carrying a long sceptre, and sporting a crown of angled rays (Figure 36). The depiction may represent a prominent statue of Augustus in Rome.[94]

Figure 35. Radiate statue of Octavian on a column decorated with ships' prows. Reverse of silver *denarius* minted in Rome under Vespasian. A.D. 79. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1860,0330.67).

Figure 36. The divine Augustus enthroned wearing radiate crown. Obverse of copper alloy *sestertius* minted in Rome under Tiberius. A.D. 21/22. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1867,0101.2020).

Therefore, Augustus was shown wearing two types of radiate crown, but of these it was the crown with vertical rays and with ribbons hanging down that was to be regularly adopted on the coins of Nero and of subsequent Roman emperors. The crown with vertical rays is thought by some scholars to have been modelled on the crown of angled rays worn by Hellenistic kings and sun-gods, and therefore to have retained a solar aspect. Indeed, Sol, as we have noted, was depicted with both angled rays and vertical rays, although he is shown with the latter much less frequently.[95] Given the Roman aversion to kingship, it may seem surprising that a Hellenistic model has been proposed for the radiate crown of the emperors, but since the attribute was (so far as we can judge) first used in portraits of Augustus only after his death, its bestowal on him would have been far less threatening than its adoption by Caesar when he was at the height of his power.

Troubled by the proposed Hellenistic source for the crown of vertical rays, Hijmans has suggested that it should instead be connected with the spiky wreaths awarded to victorious athletes at the Actian Games – games instituted by Augustus in honour of Apollo after his victory at Actium.[96] Hijmans argues

Figure 37. Copper alloy *as* minted in Rome. Obverse shows head of Nero. Reverse shows Nero wearing flowing robes of Apollo and playing the cithara. A.D. 62. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1921,0612.5).

that no solar connotation should be attached to the crown because its ribbons indicate that it should be considered a tangible object rather than a depiction of intangible light. For him, the attribute merely served to mark Augustus as victor at the battle of Actium and to designate later rulers as the emperor.[97] In his opinion, iconographic tradition dictated that intangible solar light would have been represented by angled rays, by a nimbus (similar to a halo), or by both.[98]

Hijmans' argument is not entirely convincing, however. If the crown with vertical rays was so closely connected with Actium, it is striking that no portrait of the living Augustus datable to the years after that victory wears the crown: in particular, Octavian's statue commemorating Actium was adorned with a radiate crown only after his death – and that was a crown with angled rays. Even if we accept the suggestion that the crown with vertical rays was derived from the Actian wreath, the spikes of the wreath were doubtless meant to symbolize the rays of Apollo-Helios, so it seems likely that some solar meaning would have been transferred from the wreath to the crown. Furthermore, Sol was himself sometimes shown wearing a crown of vertical rays – maybe not with ribbons, but nevertheless giving the impression of a real crown.[99] Therefore, a tangible crown might nevertheless have suggested intangible solar radiance.

Whether the crown was real or symbolic, and whether it was ultimately derived from the crown of Hellenistic kings (apparently a symbol that the king reflected the sun-god's light on earth) or from the Actian wreath (apparently a symbol of Apollo's rays and probably also of victory granted by Apollo), there seems to be no reason to reject the possibility that it was worn to symbolize a special relationship between the wearer and Sol-Apollo-Helios.

The first time a *living* emperor was shown wearing the radiate crown was during Nero's reign (54–68). Nero's adoption of the attribute was connected with his belief that he shared an affinity with Apollo. This belief was acknowledged at the closing of the Juvenile Games of 59, when Nero's lyre recital was greeted by the audience with a cry of "Glorious Caesar! Our Apollo, Augustus, another Pythian!"[100] The emperor's ability to compete with Apollo as an inspired god of song and prophecy was also advertised on his coins. Dressed in a laurel crown and the flowing robes of Apollo, Nero was shown playing the cithara and gazing to heaven for inspiration (Figure 37).[101] These coins are mentioned by Suetonius, who remarks that Nero "was acclaimed as the equal of Apollo in music and of the Sun in

driving a chariot."[102] Nero's solar aspect became much more prominent after the Great Fire of Rome in A.D. 64, although even before that date writers of the time had seen the possibility of comparing the emperor with the awesome sun-god Phoebus-Apollo.

Already in A.D. 60, the poet Lucan had claimed that Nero was a god during his lifetime. Upon his death, he would become the Supreme Deity, taking the sceptre from Jupiter or the reins of the solar chariot from Phoebus-Apollo. Then mankind would lay down its arms, and all nations would love one another.[103] In the same decade, a passage was inserted into Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* comparing Nero to Apollo on account of his physical beauty and the quality of his voice. The emperor, it was said, rose into the sky like the sun in his chariot and illuminated the world with his brilliance. The long Apolline locks falling down Nero's neck are noted specifically as a characteristic of the sun-king.[104] From A.D. 64, Nero chose to place less emphasis on his affinity with Apollo the lyre-player and more on his connection with the mighty Phoebus-Apollo. In that year he celebrated the god's tremendous power by singing of the fate of Niobe, whose seven sons were shot down by Apollo.[105] Two years later, when Nero crowned Tiridates king of Armenia in the Theatre of Pompey, the building was not only richly gilded for the occasion but also adorned with an embroidered awning depicting the emperor riding through the stars in the chariot of the sun-god.[106]

A.D. 64, the tenth year of Nero's reign, saw not only the Great Fire but also monetary reform. On newly minted *dupondii* the obverse showed the bust of the emperor wearing the radiate crown with vertical rays (Figure 38),[107] and reverses of other coins showed the full figure of the emperor with a crown of angled rays (Figure 39).[108] By adopting this attribute of the *divus* Augustus, Nero was deliberately imitating his eminent predecessor, particularly because the first appearance of the crown coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of Augustus' deification.[109] We cannot, however, conclude that Nero was assuming divine status whilst alive, since divinity does not seem to have been the meaning (or at least not the primary meaning) of the radiate crown. This is clear because, after the deceased Claudius was divinized, he was not shown wearing the headgear, whereas

Figure 38. Nero wearing radiate crown. Obverse of copper alloy *dupondius* minted in Rome. A.D. 64. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (R.9986).

Vespasian and Titus, like Nero, adopted it in their lifetimes.[110] However, it seems reasonable to infer that Nero's radiate crown, like Augustus', emphasized his intimate association with Apollo-Sol and perhaps alluded to the age of peace and love that Lucan had described.

Nero's solar aspect was also recognized in the provinces. Coins minted in Patras showed, on the reverse, "Apollo Augustus" playing the lyre,[111] and coins probably from Nicopolis showed a lyre-playing figure labelled "Nero Apollo the Foun-der."[112] Inscriptions, too, recorded an affinity between emperor and god that verged on equation. Thanking Nero for granting the Greeks freedom in A.D. 66, the people of Acraephia hailed him as "the New Helios lighting the Hellenes" (νέος Ἥλιος ἐπιλάμψας τοῖς Ἕλλησιν).[113] Statues in Athens bore the inscriptions "To Emperor Nero Caesar Augustus, New Apollo," "Of Emperor Caesar, son of a god, Augustus Nero, New Apollo," and "Of Nero Caesar, son of Apollo."[114] A citizen of Sagalassos in Pisidia addressed Nero as the "New Sun," and a soldier from Prostanna similarly hailed him as the "New Sun-God."[115]

After the Great Fire, Nero set about building a new palace, which he called the Golden House (*domus aurea*).[116] In some areas of this new residence,

Figure 39. Nero wearing toga and crown of angled rays holds *patera* in right hand and long sceptre in left. To the right stands the empress (probably Poppaea), veiled and draped, holding *patera* in right hand and cornucopia in left. Reverse of *aureus* of Nero minted in Rome. A.D. 64–65. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1864,1128.248).

according to Suetonius, "all parts were overlaid with gold and adorned with gems and mother-of-pearl."[117] As in the case of the gilding of the Theatre of Pompey in A.D. 66, excessive golden adornment of the palace was intended to radiate light, suggesting that the visitor was in the presence of a brilliant sun-king ruling over a Golden Age. This much is suggested by Seneca, Nero's tutor, who denounced the new solar ideology and the high regard in which gold and silver were held, complaining that when people praise an epoch as the best, they call it a "Golden Age."[118]

Nero also commissioned a colossal statue of gold and silver, about 31.5 m high, which he hoped to install in the vestibule of his palace.[119] The statue was seen by Pliny the Elder while it was being fashioned by the sculptor Zenodorus in the workshop, and Pliny lived to see its erection in the Sacred Way, although this did not happen until A.D. 75, under the emperor Vespasian.[120] Pliny states that the statue had originally been intended to represent Nero himself but had recently been rededicated to the Sun because of the public detestation of Nero's crimes. Since the statue was not completed in Nero's lifetime, it is impossible to determine exactly how it was originally meant to look. We should be somewhat wary of Pliny's assertion that Nero had intended to erect a statue of himself, since it may have its origin in gossip connected with Nero's reputation as a bad emperor. Even if Pliny is correct, we have no evidence that the intention was to portray the emperor wearing a radiate crown – although, bearing in mind Nero's coins, it is not unlikely.[121] Certainly the statue had a crown of rays when it was completed, since Pliny states that it was dedicated to Sol. Coins of Gordian III (A.D. 238–241) clearly show the naked statue – now standing beside the Colosseum, where Hadrian had relocated it – wearing a crown with angled rays and holding a steering oar resting on the globe.[122] The details of its appearance are seen more clearly on an amethyst gem of uncertain date in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin (Figure 40).[123] Nero's colossal statue, standing in a prominent position in the heart of Rome and wearing a radiate crown, is clearly an important precursor to Constantine's radiate statue atop the porphyry column in Constantinople.

Nero may have intended his Colossus, when complete, to show him naked except for a crown with angled rays, just as the statue is shown in later depictions. The choice of such a crown, recalling that of the Hellenistic kings, would have been natural given Nero's love of the East. From A.D. 59 or 60, for example, the emperor had been shown on coins wearing the aegis (an animal skin worn as a cuirass by Jupiter). Like the radiate crown, the aegis had been an attribute of the Hellenistic kings, and Nero presumably adopted both to suggest that he, like the eastern kings, shared certain qualities with the divinities with whom those attributes were associated (Jupiter in the case of the aegis; Sol-Apollo-Helios in the case of the crown).[124] The globe and rudder, known to have formed part of the statue by the third century, would also have been fitting for Nero's original design, since the image of the monarch as helmsman of the ship of state is familiar from eastern theories of kingship.[125]

It was common for portraits of an emperor, living or dead, to be adorned with attributes of one or several gods, not to suggest that he was a god but rather to make a comparison with a god and thereby

Figure 40. Amethyst intaglio probably showing the Colossus of Nero in Rome. Roman imperial period. Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. © bpk / Antikensammlung, SMB/Johannes Laurentius/Inv. no. FG 2665.

indicate that he possessed positive qualities that were in the province of a particular god.[126] Therefore, even if Nero had intended to erect a colossal, naked statue of himself wearing a rayed crown, it would not necessarily have been his intention to claim that he was the sun-god. Indeed, the absence of characteristic attributes of Sol – such as the *chlamys* (cloak) or *chitōn* (long robe), the whip, and the raised right arm – and the presence of nonsolar attributes (such as the rudder) would have hindered such an equation.[127] Rather, the desired implication may have been that Nero had a powerful, radiant presence, derived from an intimate association with Sol-Apollo. Yet the perspective may be reversed. It is also possible to argue that the statue, being naked with a radiate crown, was meant to represent Sol, who, deprived of his *chlamys*, had been given facial features resembling Nero's and a rudder symbolizing careful government.[128] As we shall see, a similar ambiguity emerges when contemplating the significance of the radiate statue in Constantinople.

The trouble with portraits of emperors endowed with divine attributes, and with portraits of gods endowed with imperial facial characteristics, was that they were open to misrepresentation because they "blurred the boundaries between mortal and divine."[129] Imagery intended to make a comparison between a ruler and a god could potentially be

(a) (b) (c)

Figure 41. (a) Titus wearing radiate crown. Obverse of copper alloy *dupondius* minted in Rome. A.D. 80–81. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (R.11200). (b) Trajan wearing radiate crown. Obverse of copper alloy *dupondius* minted in Rome. A.D. 104–111. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (R.11978). (c) Hadrian wearing radiate crown. Obverse of copper alloy *dupondius* minted in Rome. A.D. 118. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1915,0407.32).

misconstrued as expressing the ruler's autocratic desire to receive honours generally reserved for the gods.[130] Seneca, it should be noted, had written an address to Nero at the beginning of his reign in which – clearly under the influence of Hellenistic political theory – he described the ideal emperor not only as possessing absolute power but also as being just, merciful, and answerable to the gods. The ruler was said to hold a status second only to that of the gods and was expected to conduct himself after their example. The citizens, Seneca claimed, were devoted to protecting their ruler since he was their benefactor and united the state.[131] It seems unlikely that Nero's ego later grew to such an extent that he utterly rejected this assessment of what it meant to rule, since he is known to have vetoed a proposal in A.D. 64 for a temple and cult to be set up in his honour. Tacitus records his dismissal on the grounds that "it might be wrested into an omen of, and aspiration for, his decease; for the honour of divinity is not paid to the emperor until he has ceased to live and move among men."[132]

Assuming that Nero had intended the Colossus to sport the radiate crown that it eventually wore upon its completion, it is likely that the monument was designed to suggest that the emperor shared in the luminosity of the sun-god, and perhaps that he had been elected to rule by the sun-god. In addition, the evidence of Lucan and Seneca suggests that such a connection with the sun-god would have been meant to imply that Nero – like Augustus before him – was presiding over a new Golden Age, an era traditionally associated with Apollo. Indeed, when describing Nero's reign, a poet of the age chose to imitate the description of paradise in Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*.[133]

The solar imagery that had been so extensively exploited by Nero was turned against him after his demise. One illustration of this is the emperor Domitian's symbolic restoration of Augustus' solar meridian. The fact that the instrument had grown inaccurate over time (presumably owing to subsidence) was used to argue that under Augustus' successors, Roman rule had not been in conjunction with the ordered universe. Domitian ordered the restoration of the monument, suggesting that under his government Augustan institutions were once again in good hands.[134]

Once the *dupondii* of Nero (which were valued at two *asses*) had shown a living emperor wearing the radiate crown, the design soon became a standard marker for coins of double value. Later emperors such as Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian were shown wearing the crown on their *dupondii* and other double-value coins (Figure 41a–c).[135] In 215, the emperor Caracalla introduced a silver coin whose ancient name is unknown, but which is known to scholars as the *antoninianus*. The fact that it was struck

Figure 42. Caracalla wearing radiate crown. Obverse of silver *antoninianus* (double *denarius*) minted in Rome. A.D. 215. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1937,0406.2).

with either a radiate portrait of the emperor or a portrait of the empress with a crescent moon suggests that it was probably a double-value coin (a double *denarius*; Figure 42).[136] The *antoninianus* became, until Aurelian's monetary reform, the most important denomination of the third century. As a result, the radiate crown and crescent moon became the most frequently seen imperial attributes on third-century coins, particularly because inflation forced the introduction of additional double-value coins.[137]

Any connection that the radiate crown may have connoted between its wearer and Sol-Apollo was probably soon overshadowed by the crown's metrological significance.[138] But despite having become principally a double-denomination marker, the radiate crown is unlikely to have completely lost its original solar symbolism (whether that symbolism had been derived from the crown of the Hellenistic kings and solar deities or from Actian wreaths). The extent to which its original solar significance came to the fore is likely to have varied according to historical circumstances.

For instance, the connection between the radiate crown and the emergence of a Golden Age of peace and prosperity seems to have been exploited again in the reign of Septimius Severus (193–211). Severus took as his wife Julia Domna. Her father, Julius Bassianus, was a priest of the cult of a Ba'al (god) by the name of El-Gabal in Emesa, the capital of the province of Syria-Phoenicia. By the Greeks and Romans, Ba'alim were usually associated with Zeus or Jupiter, but as the sun-cult grew in the West, they came to be associated there with sun-gods. Thus, El-Gabal is said by various sources to have been a sun-god.[139] These solar connections perhaps explain why, annually between 197 and 211, Severus issued coins representing the god Sol. The reverses of one series of gold coins minted in 197 showed the naked emperor, recognizable because of his curly hair and beard, wearing a crown of angled rays and rising from the ocean in Sol's chariot while raising his right hand in a powerful gesture associated with the sun-god (Figure 43).[140] These coins, which suggest an intimate connection between the emperor and the rising sun, were possibly minted to commemorate Severus' victory over Clodius Albinus at Lugdunum (modern Lyons in France). The victory had followed Severus' earlier defeat of the eastern usurper Pescennius Niger at Issus (near modern İskenderun in Turkey) in 194. The overthrow of rivals in both East and West had established Severus as sole ruler of the whole Roman empire, and the coins of 197 therefore announced the inauguration of a brilliant new age.

Severus further associated himself with Sol by being shown wearing the radiate crown on coins that were probably minted between 201 and 202. His portrait overlapped that of his wife, whose bust rested on a crescent moon (Figure 44). When depicted together, the sun and moon were meant to convey the idea of universal and eternal stability. The legend dedicated the coins "To eternal concord" (CONCORDIAE AETERNAE), thereby suggesting that the harmonious union of Severus and Domna had brought about a lasting age of peace.[141] The fact that portraits of the empress were associated with the moon suggests that the emperor's radiate crown, despite its denominational significance, still possessed power as a solar attribute.[142]

As part of a highly significant monetary reform in about 294–296, Diocletian introduced a large coin of billon (an alloy of copper and 2%–3% silver), which weighed about 10 g and which was originally

Figure 43. *Aureus* minted in Rome. Obverse shows bust of Septimius Severus. Reverse shows Severus wearing the crown and cloak of Sol, riding in Sol's chariot. A.D. 197. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1850,0412.131).

similar in size to the copper *as* of the earlier empire. Modern scholars generally refer to this coin, which showed the emperor wearing a laurel crown, as a *nummus*. Two other new coins were apparently made of pure copper. The heavier coin, weighing around 3 g, showed the emperor's radiate image (Figure 45),[143] strongly suggesting that it was (initially at least) valued at double the lighter coin, which weighed about 1.3 g and carried a laureate image. These two copper coins may therefore have been the successors of, respectively, the *antoninianus* (double *denarius*) of the third century and the *denarius* of the first to early third centuries.[144] The 10-g *nummus* and the 3-g radiate were the two main bronze denominations of the Diocletianic period.[145]

A currency inscription dated 1 September 310 discovered at Aphrodisias records the value of the *nummus* as 25 *denarii* and also indicates that the copper radiate had recently been doubled in value to four *denarii*.[146] However, within a decade the copper radiate and laureate ceased to be produced. In addition, the standard weight of the *nummus* was decreased in stages from 307, so that it weighed only around 3.4 g by around mid-313. The *nummus* was now barely larger than the old Diocletianic radiate, and the production of these shrunken *nummi* in large quantities made the earlier fractions of the *nummus* still in circulation largely redundant, and they eventually dropped out of the coinage system.[147]

Constantine appeared wearing the radiate crown on *nummi* minted in London in 312[148] and on other coins minted in London, Trier, Arles, and Ticinum. On the *nummi*, which were perhaps minted

Figure 44. Septimius Severus, wearing radiate crown, and Julia Domna with a crescent. Reverse of *aureus* of Caracalla minted in Rome. A.D. 202. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1864,1128.286).

Figure 45. Diocletianic copper alloy radiate. Obverse shows bust of Diocletian with radiate crown. Reverse shows the emperor receiving a Victory-topped globe from Jupiter. Mint of Alexandria. Ca. A.D. 296–297. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1917,0204.153).

to commemorate Constantine's campaigns in Bretagne at the end of 311, the emperor was shown wearing the crown over his helmet (Figure 46).[149] Since the *nummi* and other radiates were not double-value coins, it seems likely that the crown was used because of its solar significance. Indeed, there are three good reasons to imagine why this should be so: in the panegyric of 310 Constantine had been associated with Apollo; coins minted in the same year had begun to show him with a youthful, beardless, Apolline appearance (as on the obverse of Figure 46); and in that year, too, Sol – who had hardly appeared on coins for the last thirty years – had begun to appear frequently (as on the reverse of Figure 46).[150]

With the exception of a few other examples struck at Ticinum for Constantine and Licinius,[151] *nummi* with radiate crowns were, in the western mints, reserved for the Caesars.[152] In these cases the crown cannot be explained as a mark of value, and it was presumably used because of its solar significance. It has plausibly been suggested that the bestowal of this attribute on the Caesars suggests a transfer of some of Constantine's and Licinius' radiant power to their heirs.[153] Indeed, Eusebius speaks of the Caesars pulling Constantine's solar chariot during his lifetime and reflecting his light on earth after his death.[154]

Around 318, in Licinius' eastern mints of Heraclea, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antioch, and Alexandria, the reduced *nummus* began to carry a numerical mark indicating that its value had been halved to $12^1/_2$ *denarii*. The busts of Constantine and Licinius that appeared on these coins wore the radiate crown, whereas the Caesars were helmeted or laureate. The reason for the difference between the western and eastern practice in the use of the crown is uncertain. It is also impossible to know whether the use of the radiate portrait was connected with the fact that by now the *nummus* had been reduced to the same size as the old Diocletianic radiates, few if any of which would by this time have been in circulation.[155]

Although in this period the radiate crown did not serve as a denominational signifier, it was clearly intended to convey that meaning in some cases. Sometime between 309 and 311, Constantine reformed gold coinage by introducing a coin today known as the *solidus*, which was struck at 72 to the pound of gold and which weighed about 4.5 g.[156] The emperor's radiate portrait regularly appeared on multiples worth one-and-a-half or two *solidi*.[157]

While in such instances the radiate crown on Constantinian coins retained the metrological implication it had acquired under Nero and had conveyed

Figure 46. Copper alloy *nummus* minted in London. A.D. 312. Obverse shows Constantine wearing radiate crown over helmet. Reverse shows Sol radiate with *chlamys*, whip, and globe. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1977,1005.14).

on Diocletian's 3-g double *denarius*, its use for that purpose was now generally uncommon.[158] Here, then, is a good illustration of the fact that imperial attributes did not have unchanging uses and meanings. Just as Constantine's adoption of the diadem was a striking break with Tetrarchic (and indeed Roman) tradition, his assumption of the crown of vertical rays may have had a more profound significance for him than it had for his contemporaries. Whether the crown was ultimately derived from the Hellenistic crown of angled rays or the Actian wreath, there seems to be no doubt that it suggested a degree of association between the wearer and the sun-god. In Constantine's case, the crown's solar aspect would have acquired a greater importance, given that the emperor was associated with Apollo as early as 310 and with Sol Invictus from 310 until 325. Although this headgear made its last appearance on coins during Constantine's reign in 326 (Figure 47),[159] it is clear that the attribute retained a powerful meaning for the emperor, since four years later he ordered the erection, at the heart of Constantinople, of a monumental radiate statue of himself, this time with angled rays. The statue continued to stand on its column throughout his reign and indeed adorned the city's main forum until 1106.[160] It is significant that it recalled the radiate statues of the Sun set up by the citizens of Rhodes, of Octavian on the Palatine, and of Nero beside the Colosseum, all of which can be interpreted as symbols of the emergence of a new Golden Age of prosperity, security, and freedom under the rule of the sun-god or his chosen representative.

Figure 47. Gold medallion showing Constantine wearing a radiate crown. Minted in Antioch in A.D. 326. Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques, Bibliothèque nationale de France (2033).

Divine Election, Protection, and Imitation

The idea that the king had been divinely chosen was known to Homer already in the late ninth century B.C. He described Agamemnon as "a sceptred king to whom Zeus giveth glory"[161] and had Odysseus praise the institution of divinely elected monarchy thus: "No good thing is a multitude of lords; let there be one lord, one king, to whom the son of crooked-counselling Cronos [i.e., Zeus] hath vouchsafed the sceptre and judgements, that he may take counsel for his people."[162] Among the Roman emperors, Domitian, Trajan, and Hadrian all embraced the idea that they were god-appointed rulers, as we can judge from their coins.[163] In literature, too, Dio Chrysostom, who wrote four orations on kingship under the emperor Trajan at the beginning of the second century A.D., quoted Homer's sentiment approvingly when describing the ideal ruler in the first of his *Orations on Kingship*.[164]

The concept of divine election became particularly popular as a method of sanctioning rule in the troubled period following the assassination of Alexander Severus.[165] As many as twenty-two emperors came and went in the forty-nine years from 235 to 284, during a crisis caused by a combination of massive barbarian invasions, the devastation of frontier towns, economic decline, and a serious plague that reduced the manpower available to tackle the external threat. In the unstable political climate, no emperor lived long enough to establish a dynasty, and it was the armies that tended to choose the emperor with the expectation that he would serve their purposes.[166] Emperors, however, preferred to believe that their authority was granted by a higher power.

Another reason for this increasing shift towards divine election is found in the decreasing credibility of the emperor as a recipient of worship. Augustus and his successors had not been deified until after death, but from A.D. 42 the state had recognized the emperor's *genius* (his vital spirit) as a member of Rome's pantheon. Although this recognition did not confer any divine status on the emperor himself (since all living men – and, indeed, gods – possessed a *genius*), municipalities and private individuals outside the state-organized cult often chose to worship the emperor's *numen* (divinity), thereby recognizing the man himself as a living god.[167] The lack of dynastic continuity in the mid-third century severely undermined the status of emperor worship. Since such worship had been a unifying force throughout the many provinces of an empire that had diverse polytheistic cults, its decline meant that an alternative religious focus needed to be found to fill the gap.[168] An emperor now commonly placed his destiny in the hands of a protective deity, his *comes*, and by so doing shifted the responsibility for his successes and failures from the fate of his personal astrological chart (which had been fixed on the day of his birth when he and his *genius* had become joined) to the control of a god who could be influenced. This was a wise move in a period of upheaval, when astrological predictions of an emperor's failure might bring about rebellion.[169] However, once an emperor had placed his military and political fate – and the prosperity of his citizens – in the hands of a particular god, it became imperative for the people of the Roman world to recognize and worship that god.

Elagabalus and Aurelian

The second and third centuries saw the rise of a cultural phenomenon scholars refer to as the "Second Sophistic," whereby the eastern provinces profoundly influenced the empire in terms of rhetoric, philosophy, iconography, mythology, and religion. With respect to religion, the deities of conquered provinces were frequently adopted by Rome and were often equated with or interpreted in the light of the traditional gods. Conversely, the deities of Rome were commonly given provincial dress and adopted in the periphery.[170] In the Greek East, from the time of Alexander to the reign of Augustus, there had been an increasing tendency to add rulers, their courtiers and mistresses, and even private citizens to the pantheon, a practice that led to a gradual loss of respect for the traditional Olympian deities.[171] Consequently exotic oriental cults – of Artemis (from Ephesus), of Isis (from Egypt), Dionysus (from Greece), Cybele (from Phrygia), Mithras (from Iran), and Jesus Christ (from Palestine) – had gained considerable popularity.[172] The political and economic insecurity of the second and third centuries seems to have further contributed to the decline in traditional religion. Many towns were abandoned as indefensible, perhaps causing the pagan worshippers to doubt the effectiveness of their gods. In the harsh economic climate, the aristocracy found it increasingly difficult to maintain the temples, the priesthood, and the religious festivals.[173] These factors may have strengthened the appeal of mystery religions, which provided the solidarity of sacred brotherhoods, hopes of divine protection and salvation, and more vibrant and emotive liturgies than the formal, traditional Roman cults.[174] It was at this time that philosophers began to debate the common ground shared by numerous polytheistic cults. Some of these thinkers adopted a henotheistic stance, claiming that there was just one Supreme God and that all others were embodied in him.[175]

Conservative rulers had sought to stabilize the empire in times of trouble by supporting traditional Rome-centred cults.[176] However, some of the later Roman emperors, such as Elagabalus, decided to look instead to the new eastern cults, not only in search of protective deities from whom they might claim legitimacy but also in the hope of injecting new life into traditional religion and of formulating a universal religion around which Romans in a diverse empire could unite. The god of an influential cult might attract to his or her cult-centre the shrines of lesser deities, creating a sacred site where worshippers could experience contact with all the gods of the universe who were embodied in one Supreme Deity.[177] The idea that the stability of the heavens lay in the hands of this unique god was to become an important argument in support of there being only one emperor on earth to ensure the maintenance of peace and security.

In Emesa in 218, Varius Avitus Bassianus was proclaimed emperor at the age of fourteen, taking the name Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.[178] By heredity, Antoninus was high priest of the local deity, El-Gabal, and on travelling to Rome he took with him the symbol of the god – a conical black stone (or *baitulos*), which was probably a meteorite. When he arrived in the city, the emperor demoted Jupiter from his position as Rome's foremost god and substituted El-Gabal, known in Rome as Elagabalus. He even took the name Elagabalus after his god[179] and added to his name the title "most magnificent priest of the invincible sun-god Elagabalus."[180] Two new temples were built in honour of the god. The first, located on the Palatine Hill, had many altars and was apparently modelled on the temple of El-Gabal at Emesa. The second was erected in the suburbs, in the quarter called *ad spem veterem*. Coins were minted showing the divine rock surmounted by an eagle, sometimes on a chariot, at other times in a temple (Figure 48). Legends identified the object as "The sacred god Sol Elagabalus" (SANCTVS DEVS SOL ELAGABAL) or "Protector of the Augustus" (CONSERVATOR AVGVSTI).[181] Each year, at the climax of Sirius, the Dog Star, the rock was transferred from the temple on the Palatine to the suburban sanctuary. The emperor held the reins of the six white horses that pulled the chariot and ran backwards on a path scattered with gilded grain, gazing up to the sacred rock. A procession of the statues of all the other gods, accompanied by the cavalry and Praetorian Guard, preceded the chariot, which suggests that El-Gabal was the Supreme Deity.[182] Some sources claim that Elagabalus wanted to abolish the traditional Roman cults and establish a monotheistic religion, although the details of of this procession suggest it is more likely that he promoted henotheism, believing El-Gabal to be the Supreme God incorporating all other deities.[183]

It is possible that Elagabalus made at least some attempt to associate the traditional Roman god Sol with his aniconic rock, since on one particular type of coin showing Sol the god was depicted not with his trademark whip and globe but with Jupiter's thunderbolt (Figure 49).[184] This demotion of Jupiter and the uncompromising imposition of the new solar god did not serve to uni.e the people in a common faith, rather it constituted a crisis in the traditional cult of the Roman state and alienated the emperor from his people.[185] Elagabalus was assassinated only four years later in 222, and his successor, Severus Alexander, condemned his predecessor's memory, expelled El-Gabal from the pantheon, and reconsecrated the temple on the Palatine to Jupiter.[186] Nevertheless, Elagabalus set a precedent for Aurelian.

Lacking any dynastic claim to power, Aurelian (270–275) was one of the later Roman emperors

Figure 48. *Aureus* minted in Antioch. A.D. 218–219. Obverse shows bust of Elagabalus. Reverse shows triumphal car carrying the conical black stone of El-Gabal and an eagle shaded by parasols. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1922,0909.4).

who felt a particular need to claim divine support. It is reported that he told his troops they were mistaken if they thought that the power to choose their ruler lay in their hands, since it was the divinity that had both appointed him to rule and determined the length of his reign.[187] Whatever Aurelian claimed, however, the importance of military support could not be underestimated by any emperor: Constantine, for instance, exempted veterans from compulsory public service as part of an attempt to win over the troops,[188] and Licinius secured the loyalty of his men before the war with Maximinus by granting the Balkan troops a massive reduction in their tax liabilities.[189] Even though Licinius personally adopted Jupiter as his protective deity, he was also acutely aware of the importance of supporting the cult of Sol, which was extremely popular among his troops. Thus, an inscription from a camp in Salsovia in Lower Moesia (Thrace) records an instruction from Licinius Augustus and Licinianus Caesar that the garrison should dedicate and make libations to a statue of the sun-god.[190] In 320–321, Constantine minted gold coins that referred to Sol as his *comes*. These were donative coins that would have been sent to a limited number of recipients in the armed forces, and they therefore demonstrate that Constantine acknowledged the respect in which the sun-god was held among the Danubian troops.[191]

In 272, Aurelian achieved his final victory over Zenobia, the queen of Palmyra who had invaded

Figure 49. Sol wielding Zeus' thunderbolt. Reverse of *aureus* of Elagabalus minted in Antioch. A.D. 218–219. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1896,0608.48).

Figure 50. Copper alloy radiate minted in Rome. Obverse shows Aurelian wearing radiate crown. Reverse shows Sol with his foot on the back of a captive. A.D. 274. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (R.1382).

Asia Minor and Egypt.[192] According to the *Augustan History*, the emperor was led to victory by a "divine form" (*divina forma*). After the battle he immediately went to the most important temple in nearby Emesa, that of El-Gabal, where "he recognized the form of the deity that had shown him favour in battle" (*eam formam numinis repperit, quam in bello sibi faventem vidit*). For this reason he founded temples there and consecrated a temple to Sol at Rome.[193] A similar experience would later be attributed to Constantine by the panegyrist of 310, who claimed that, after his defeat of Maximian, the emperor visited a shrine in Gaul where he saw a vision in which Apollo and Victory bestowed on him symbols of a long rule.

The story of Aurelian's vision has given rise to claims that the emperor was inspired by his experience to raise El-Gabal to the status of Supreme Deity at Rome. However, there is no reason to doubt Dio Cassius' assertion that El-Gabal had been ejected from Rome after Elagabalus' assassination. Therefore, Aurelian is unlikely to have been so foolhardy as to try to reintroduce the Deity that Elagabalus had foisted on the Roman people with so little sensitivity. Although it was in the temple of El-Gabal that Aurelian saw the "form of the divinity" who had led him to victory, there is no indication of the name of the god. It has been suggested that Aurelian in fact saw a statue of Sol in the precinct of El-Gabal's temple. This is not an unlikely proposal given the Syrian god's solar associations, and it would explain the fact that Aurelian exploited only the traditional image of Sol for his propaganda.[194]

On Aurelianic coins, neither the name nor the black stone of El-Gabal appeared. Rather, the old god Sol Invictus was depicted in his traditional Graeco-Roman iconographical form. These solar types were first struck in the early summer of 273 at Antioch and the Balkan mints, and soon after at the Italian mints. The reintroduction of Sol commemorated Aurelian's final conquest of Palmyra, rather as Septimius Severus' solar issues had served to mark his victories over Clodius Albinus and Pescennius Niger. However, Aurelian took promotion of the solar cult to a new extreme, and the sun-god appeared far more frequently than he had on the coins of any of his predecessors. Strikingly, Sol was shown in a new pose, with his foot on the neck or back of a defeated enemy, or kicking one or two captives. The legend referred to "The rising of the Augustus" (ORIENS AVGVSTI) (Figure 50). The implication was clearly that Sol, merely by his rising, defeated evil, and that the emperor shared in the Sun's dawn. The designation "Oriens" further alluded to the fact that Aurelian had won his victories in the East.[195] Other coins showed a new design in conjunction with the legend PROVIDENTIA DEORVM ("Providence

Figure 51. Fides handing two standards to Sol. Reverse of copper alloy radiate minted in Siscia. A.D. 274. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1978,0312.34).

of the Gods"): standing on the left, Fides (Fidelity) held out two standards towards Sol, who held a globe (Figure 51). The message was that Sol's support for the emperor inspired the loyalty of the legions.[196]

Upon his return from the East in 274, and in an effort to restore unity to the Roman world after the disasters of the 250s and 260s, Aurelian ordered a huge temple in honour of Sol Invictus to be constructed in Rome's Campus Agrippae, not far from Augustus' Altar of Peace and solar meridian. The consecration ceremony seems to have been held on the winter solstice, 25 December, which was thereafter known as the *dies Invicti natalis* (the "birthday of the Unconquered"). A new college of priests, the *pontifices Dei Solis*, was instituted, its members drawn from the senatorial and noble classes. In conjunction with the temple's consecration, the *Agones Solis* (solemn games and athletic competitions to be repeated every four years) were held for the first time.[197] Aurelian's decision not to impose a foreign god on the Roman people ensured that the cult survived his assassination in 275.[198]

Until Aurelian's day, Jupiter had always appeared as the dispenser of the globe on Roman coins, granting earthly power to his chosen ruler.[199] Indeed, from the summer of 271 to the summer of 273, Aurelian himself had held the traditional belief that he enjoyed a special relationship with Jupiter, who was regularly represented as the emperor's sponsor on coins. In those years, all the mints issued a large number of copper alloy coins bearing, on the obverse, a radiate portrait of the emperor and, on the reverse, an image of Jupiter handing the globe to his protégé with the legend IOVI CONSERVATORI or IOVI CONSER ("To Jupiter the protector"; Figure 52).[200] However, after his victory over Palmyra in the summer of 273, Aurelian radically broke with tradition. His extensive issues of coins featuring solar ideology included some issued by the mints at Siscia (modern Sisak in Croatia), Cyzicus (in Asia Minor), and Serdica (modern Sofia in Bulgaria) depicting the emperor receiving the globe from Sol (Figure 53).[201] This should not be taken to mean that Sol had replaced Jupiter as the Supreme Deity, but it nevertheless represents a profound change. The implication was that the emperor, through the sun-god, was Jupiter's chosen representative on earth. Some rare coins, perhaps minted in Serdica or Rome, showed on the obverse the bust of Sol accompanied by the legend SOL DOMINVS IMPERI ROMANI – "Sol, lord of the Roman empire" – applying to Sol the title usually applied to the emperor. On the reverse, an image of Aurelian sacrificing at an altar, wearing either a toga or military dress, was accompanied by the legend AVRELIANVS AVG CONS, the final abbreviation standing for *conservator*, applying the epithet usually given to the emperor's protective deity to Aurelian himself.[202]

It is significant that Aurelian was one of many emperors to be depicted on coins wearing the radiate crown (Figure 50). In his case, as in Constantine's, we should probably infer a particular message and connect the crown with the following concepts: victory and rule granted by the solar deity; the conquest of evil by the light of the sun; and the dawning of a new era. Indeed, Aurelian had deservedly taken the title "Restorer of the globe" (*restitutor orbis*; Figure 53), having secured the Danube frontier in 271, reclaimed Egypt, Asia Minor, and western Syria from Zenobia in 272, put down a revolt in Alexandria in 273, and overthrown Tetricus in Gaul in 274.[203]

Figure 52. Aurelian (left) receiving the globe from Jupiter. Reverse of copper alloy radiate minted in Serdica. A.D. 271–272. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (R.1712).

Figure 53. Aurelian (left) holding sceptre or spear and receiving globe from Sol holding whip. Reverse of copper alloy radiate minted in Cyzicus. A.D. 273–274. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1983,0825.11).

Aurelian was even hailed as a god in his own right on coins with legends such as, "To the emperor, god, and lord Aurelian Augustus" (IMP DEO ET DOMINO AVRELIANO AVG), or "To Aurelian Augustus, born god and lord" (DEO ET DOMINO NATO AVRELIANO AVG), which occurred on rare coins minted in Serdica.[204] This was the first time such sentiments had been expressed on coins while an emperor was still alive. One explanation for them is that they were composed on the initiative of workers at the mints and not imperially authorized.[205] It is much more likely that they are a true reflection of Aurelian's belief that, in the absence of dynastic continuity, legitimacy was to be sought not only in divine election but also in personal divinity. The claim that Aurelian was "born" a god not only conveyed the idea that he was a divinity incarnate among men – like the Hellenistic kings, a *deus praesens* – but also suggested that rulership and divine status were his birth-right.[206] Divine election and divinity were not incompatible, since it could reasonably be claimed that the emperor shared (to a greater or lesser extent) in the divinity of his divine protector.[207] Although we have noted the decline in emperor worship in this period, Aurelian may have felt that his military successes represented a historic turning point, and that, with the support of his heavenly protector, he could legitimately claim divine status even during his lifetime – something that earlier emperors, mindful of the fate of Julius Caesar, had avoided. The lead was followed by the Tetrarchic emperors.

Tetrarchic Theology: Jupiter and Hercules

On coming to power in 284, one of Diocletian's first decisions was to appoint a coruler to share responsibility for government. Such a decision was not unprecedented, but Diocletian's choice of colleague was surprising since, although Maximian had an impressive military record, he was not a relative. Maximian was appointed as Caesar early in the summer of 285, and as such he was clearly still junior to Diocletian. However, by April of the next year, when there was a need for an imperial presence on the Rhine frontier and in the eastern provinces, Diocletian decided to raise him to the rank of full, but junior, Augustus (Figure 54).[208]

Although a dyarchy now existed, Dio Cassius tried to argue that the government continued, in

Figure 54. Diocletian and Maximian as Augusti in consular dress. *Aureus* minted in Rome. A.D. 287. © bpk / Münzkabinett, SMB/Inv. no. 18200802.

effect, to be a monarchy, as it had been – even if it had not been so called – from the time of Augustus.[209] Indeed, the panegyrists of 289 and 291 marvelled at the unity in the division of power between Diocletian and Maximian. The former asserted:

> Both of you are now most bountiful, both most brave, and because of this very similarity in your characters the harmony between you is ever increasing, and you are brothers in virtue, which is a surer tie than any tie of blood. And so it happens that such a great empire is shared between you without any rivalry; nor do you suffer there to be any distinction between you but plainly hold an equal share in the State.

He later added:

> Your harmony has the result, invincible princes, that even Fortune responds to you with an equally great measure of success. For you rule the State with one mind, nor does the great distance which separates you hinder you from governing, so to speak, with right hands clasped. Thus, although your doubled divinity increases your royal majesty, by your unanimity you retain the advantage of an undivided empire.[210]

The panegyrist of 291 had similar things to say, asking rhetorically: "For what ages ever saw such harmony in the highest power? What full or twin brothers share an undivided inheritance so fairly as you share the Roman world?" He later observed that their concord went beyond that of brotherhood, overcoming the difference in their ages: "Neither favors his own nature more; each wishes to be what his brother is." Elsewhere the emperors are hailed as a "twin deity."[211]

Diocletian now adopted the title *Iovius* ("Jovian"), emphasizing his restoration of Jupiter to the position of Supreme God. Jupiter was hailed on coins as *conservator*, "protector" of both the emperor and the state,[212] and Diocletian was shown receiving the globe from him (Figure 45).[213] Although Maximian's junior status was at first conveyed by his use of the title *nobilissimus Caesar*, when he was later raised to the rank of *Augustus*, Diocletian bestowed on him the title of *Herculius* ("Herculian"), which succinctly expressed his inferior position.[214]

While the restoration of Jupiter was a return to tradition, the adoption of the unprecedented godly epithets (*signa*) indicated a much closer alliance between the Augusti and their respective protective gods than usual. The precise implication of these epithets is uncertain, but clearly the senior Augustus was somehow associated with Jupiter, and the junior with Jupiter's son, Hercules. The choice of adjectival forms ("Jovian," "Herculian") indicates that the Augusti were not claiming to be Jupiter and Hercules. However, they were claiming more than just divine protection and patronage: the emperors enjoyed an association with the gods verging on familial relationship, and their earthly government was modelled on that in the heavens.[215]

Although the epithets do not appear to have been used prominently in official propaganda (almost never appearing in laws or pronouncements), they were otherwise widely used and seem to have been publicized proudly.[216] In Rome, for instance, the porticoes of the Theatre of Pompey were renamed the *porticus Iovia* and the *porticus Herculia* and were dedicated to the *genii* of Diocletian and Maximian,

respectively. In similar fashion, the gates of Grenoble were named *porta Iovia* and *porta Herculia*.[217] Military units, too, could have such a label attached to them.[218] Furthermore, the panegyrists made use of the imperial epithets to emphasize the proximity of the emperors to the gods, comparing the deeds of the Augusti with the deeds of their divine patrons.

In the past, Hercules had been taken as a role model by Alexander the Great. Inspired by the Macedonian's precedent, several Roman emperors sought to imitate the labouring demi-god.[219] For instance, Gaius Caligula (A.D. 37–41) had cast himself as a divinity by adopting the dress and insignia of Dionysus, Hercules, and the Dioscuri. Philo commented that Caligula would have done far better if he had emulated their virtues, pointing out that Hercules had "purged the earth and the sea, undergoing trials of endurance most necessary and profitable for all mankind in order to destroy things which are mischievous and baneful to either form of life."[220]

The importance of Hercules as an exemplar for Roman rulers is well illustrated in Dio Chrysostom's *Orations on Kingship*, which were written under Trajan (A.D. 98–117). Dio told how Zeus, the supreme ruler, had entrusted his son with kingship over all mankind. Hercules was the ideal king, since on earth he had emulated his father, the supreme ruler in heaven, had crushed tyranny, and had become the saviour of the world and mankind. Dio implied that Trajan, like Hercules, would have Zeus' approval if he took care to model himself on Zeus.[221]

The great emphasis that Aurelian had placed on Sol had diminished Hercules' status, but Diocletian revived it. His new system of government had to take account of the existence of two Augusti, each of different status. The solution adopted, which is reflected in the epithets *Iovius* and *Herculius*, connected Diocletian, the senior Augustus, with Jupiter, the Supreme Deity, and linked his junior colleague, Maximian, with Hercules, Jupiter's son. Thus, the junior Augustus was not demoted with regard to those earlier emperors who had attempted to equate themselves with Hercules, but retained an equal status with them. By contrast, the senior Augustus was elevated to a higher status by being associated not with a hero who achieved divinity through his labours but with the supreme immortal deity.

Diocletian now turned his mind to the problem of imperial succession. If, on the death or retirement of an Augustus, the transfer of power was to be smooth and the empire was not to be plunged into another chaotic struggle for power, the succession needed to be clear.[222] Therefore, a decision was soon made that Diocletian and Maximian should each appoint a Caesar who would succeed him. However, Diocletian had no son he could appoint as Caesar, and Maximian's son, Maxentius, was only about ten years of age, so he was unable to bear the responsibility of the post. The panegyrist of 289 assumed that Maxentius would, when the time came, succeed his father as Augustus.[223] However, if Diocletian was to put realistic measures in place, he had no choice but to appoint Caesars who could, should an emergency require it, immediately assume the necessary responsibilities. Therefore, on 1 March 293, Galerius was appointed as Caesar to Diocletian, and Constantius as Caesar to Maximian. Constantius was the senior of the two, probably by reason of his age and experience.[224] While waiting for their elevation to the rank of Augustus, the new appointees were to travel wherever necessary to administer and secure the empire.[225] The imperial succession was now clear: Galerius was to succeed Diocletian, and Constantius was to succeed Maximian, leaving the latter's son to wait before being raised to imperial rank. He was perhaps expected to become Caesar to Galerius after Diocletian's death or retirement. Thus, the First Tetrarchy was created.

Although compelled to overlook Maxentius, Diocletian clearly still valued the tradition of heredity, since it is likely that in 289 each Caesar had become the son-in-law of his respective Augustus. In that year, Constantius wed Maximian's daughter or step-daughter, Theodora, and it is probable that, at about the same time, Galerius married Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian. Whether Constantius needed to divorce a previous wife, Helena, to make his union is uncertain: it is possible that he had never married Helena but taken her only as a concubine – in which case their son, the future emperor Constantine, was illegitimate. However, the sources suggesting the couple were unmarried are hostile to Constantine and their reliability must therefore be questioned.[226] After the creation of the Tetrarchy in

293, these marital ties and the unity of purpose of the four men were stressed by portraying the Tetrarchs as a family. While the two Augusti were referred to as "brothers" (*fratres*), the Caesars were called their "sons" (*filii*).[227] Even at the end of the fourth century, the church historian Orosius could write of the "great concord and common power" of this "association of many rulers serving at the same time."[228]

Although the epithets *Iovius* and *Herculius* had apparently been introduced to express the difference in status between Diocletian as the senior and Maximian as the junior Augustus, they seem to have lost this significance with the appointment of the Caesars. This is suggested by the fact that the Caesar Constantius, who naturally adopted the epithet *Herculius* from his father-in-law, was in fact senior in status to the Caesar Galerius, who adopted the Jovian label.[229] Apparently, the epithets now served as indicators of succession: in the eastern empire there was the Jovian line from Diocletian to Galerius, and in the West there was the Herculian line from Maximian to Constantius.[230]

The precise nature of the relationship between the emperors and their protective deities is not entirely clear. An inscription from Dyrrhachium (modern Durrës on the Adriatic coast) hailed Diocletian and Maximian as "born of gods and creators of gods" (*diis genitis et deorum creatoribus*).[231] Whether this is intended as a literal or metaphorical relationship between the Augusti and their tutelary gods is difficult to determine. Clearly the authors of this inscription considered the Augusti to be descended from Jupiter and Hercules and to have created gods by selecting and appointing their Caesars.[232]

Orations of the period give further insight into the Tetrarchic philosophy of rulership – although they each present a different perception of it. In a striking passage, the panegyrist of 297 compared the harmonious government of four on earth with the united rule of Jupiter and Hercules in heaven, perpetuating the idea (expressed by the likes of Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom) that the rulers on earth should imitate the rule of the gods in the firmament:

> that kindred majesty of Jupiter and Hercules also required a similarity between the entire world and heavenly affairs in the shape of Jovian and Herculian rulers. For indeed all the most important things depend upon and rejoice in the number of your divinity, for there are four elements and as many seasons of the year, a world divided fourfold by a double Ocean, the *lustra* which return after four revolutions of the sky, the Sun's team of four horses, and Vesper and Lucifer added to the two lamps of the sky.[233]

The author of the panegyric of 289 was inspired by the Tetrarchic epithets to return to the long-established theme of comparing a ruler with Hercules. In the context of the Tetrarchy, of course, the comparison could more logically be applied to members of the Herculian dynasty than to those of the Jovian. Addressing Maximian, the orator first draws attention to his familial connection with Hercules, who is said to be "the first of your family and name." He then points out that Hercules himself had been a guest in Evander's royal residence on Rome's Palatine Hill, so stressing Hercules' Roman and imperial connections.[234] Later, the panegyrist compares the earthly and heavenly governments, pointing out that, just as Hercules had once aided Jupiter by defeating the giants and pacifying the earth, Maximian had carried out Diocletian's wishes by defeating the barbarians.[235] Maximian is described as "victor indeed over the whole world" and is compared favourably with Hercules because he is "in the process of overcoming . . . not the hideous shepherd with triple head, but a much more frightening monster" – that is, Carausius, the usurper in Britain.[236] Diocletian and Maximian are hailed as the empire's "restorers" (*restitutores*), and Maximian's elevation to the rank of Augustus marks the beginning of Rome's return to health (*salus*).[237]

The panegyrist also does his best to flatter Maximian by arguing that he in fact shares equal status with Diocletian. He alleges that Diocletian relies on Maximian to maintain his realm, again making a comparison between the latter and Hercules, who "had not so much received heaven from the gods as restored it to them."[238] Observing that magistrates, pontiffs, and priests all worship Hercules, the orator argues that Maximian too should be worshipped as a "manifest god" because of his Herculean

achievements.[239] The temples of Jupiter Capitolinus and Hercules Victor are said to serve also as temples to the imperial divinities (*numini*).[240] Apparently the emperors of Late Antiquity did not object to such claims that they were divine, but other evidence from the panegyrics suggests that they were equally happy to let orators take a different approach and speak of their humanity or stress their dependence on a divine protector.[241]

The ideas that the Augusti had a familial connection with Jupiter and Hercules, and that the imperial government on earth mirrored the divine government in heaven, are both echoed in the oration delivered to Maximian in 291. The panegyrist addresses the emperors, referring to Jupiter and Hercules as "those parents of yours, who have given you both name and empire." He also explicitly describes the Augusti as "born of gods" (*dis geniti*), recalling the inscription from Dyrrhachium.[242] Maximian is said to imitate the gods, who are described as his parents (*parentes deos . . . imitari*), and to toil as hard as Jupiter had done to defeat the Titans and Giants, or as hard as Hercules had done to complete his labours and pacify land and sea.[243] The orator next claims that the emperors possess *numen*, a divine power perhaps derived from their immortal protective deities.[244] Having explained that Jupiter's *numen* had spread throughout the world, he adds:

> I now make bold to proclaim about each of you: wherever you are, even if you retire to one palace, your divinity (*divinitatem vestram*) abides everywhere, all lands and all seas are filled with you. For what is there to wonder at if, since this world can be filled with Jove, it can be filled as well with Hercules.[245]

Later in the speech, when describing the emperors' arrival in Milan, the orator claims that they are earthly manifestations of Jupiter and Hercules and that therefore these gods are no longer inaccessible to mortals. The crowds that greeted the Augusti are described as having "invoked not the god transmitted by conjecture but a visible and present Jupiter near at hand, they adored Hercules not as the stranger but as the Emperor."[246] The author evidently believed that the emperors had inherited some of the characteristics of their protective deities, Jupiter and Hercules, and goes so far as to claim that they are in fact one and the same as their chosen gods.

The orator's understanding of Tetrarchic rulership clearly reflects elements of traditional kingship theory, according to which kings were gods made manifest on earth and might therefore adopt the title *Epiphanēs* to suggest their accessibility to mortals.[247] Exactly how the Gallic orators inherited such ideas is uncertain, but we can be sure that they made good use of handbooks on rhetoric, which might have set out the ideal structure for a speech and given advice on content. The arrangement of panegyric X, for instance, has been shown to follow the structure advised by Menander Rhetor in his *Royal Speech*. Menander's treatise, which was written in the second half of the third century A.D., derived elements from older treatises on Hellenistic kingship, such as the standard list of virtues a ruler should display (courage, justice, temperance, and foresight).[248] His handbook is just one surviving example of many that may have been at hand in Late Antiquity, preserving elements of the traditional kingship philosophies.

The influence of these philosophical traditions on the Gallic speeches is clear from considering other characteristics of the emperors as they are portrayed by the panegyrists.[249] One important, traditional feature of the good king is his salvific power, which, according to the Gallic orators, manifested itself most clearly when the emperor was present among his citizens.[250] We have already noted this in the panegyric of 289, which hails Maximian as a new Hercules whose rise to power marks the beginning of Rome's restoration to health: "What god," asks the orator, "would have brought us such unhoped-for salvation had you not been present?"[251] The oration of 291 exploits similar themes. It claims that, as Diocletian and Maximian made their winter crossing of the Alps into Italy, the power of the latter's majesty (*maiestatis potentia*) ensured that he was protected in a microclimate of spring sunshine and gentle winds.[252] However, Maximian's cosmic power is presented not only as being capable of altering the weather for his own protection but also as having the ability to illuminate and, by implication, to save. As they descended the mountains, Maximian's *numen* shone out, and all Italy was bathed in a clearer light so that the people

wondered which gods were making their way from heaven.[253] The orator illustrates this further when he addresses the emperor:

> And truly, most sacred Emperor, we all know, before you restored soundness to the State, what great scarcity there was of crops and what a harvest of deaths, when hunger and diseases ranged everywhere. But from the time when you brought forth light for the nations a healthy atmosphere immediately spread about. No field fails its farmer's expectations unless its abundance exceeds his hope. The life expectancies and numbers of men increase. The harvest bursts the filled storehouses, and yet cultivation doubles. Where woods were is now wheat field: we are worn out with reaping grain and gathering grapes.[254]

The passage demonstrates particularly well the close connection between the luminosity of the ruler and his capacity to save his people. The idea that imperial luminosity spread security and fertility through the nations is repeated in a speech dating to December 307: Maximian's achievements are compared with Apollo's reinstatement of the sun to its rightful position in the heavens.[255] This salvific aspect of the emperor will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

The Tetrarchy in Art

In art, the political unity (*concordia*) of the four rulers was represented through the manufacture of group portraits. The most well-known examples are the porphyry sculptures in the Vatican Museums (Figures 55, 56) and outside the basilica of San Marco in Venice (Figures 57, 58).[256] In both cases, the Tetrarchic sculptures were carved as integral parts of monumental porphyry columns, and the four rulers are depicted as two pairs of embracing figures in military dress. The portraits are typical of Late Antiquity, expressed in simplified forms and having stiff, mask-like features.[257] More specifically, they are carved in the characteristic style of the Tetrarchic emperors, having square heads, short-cropped hair and beards,

Figure 55. Two of the porphyry Tetrarchs in the Vatican Museums. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. Faraglia, neg. D-DAI-ROM-5694.

and lacking carefully differentiated physiognomies. Their similarity in appearance (*similitudo*) was not an attempt to suggest nonexistent hereditary dynastic links; rather it was a method of expressing visually the Tetrarchs' unity of purpose.[258] This unity, which was crucially important given that the emperors were far apart and constantly on the move, was also reflected in the figures' embrace – a physical closeness suggested by the panegyrist of 289 when he described the Dyarchs "governing, so to speak, with right hands clasped."[259]

In the Vatican group, all four figures carry the globe in the left hand, whereas in the San Marco group they grasp the eagle-headed hilt of a sheathed sword. In both cases, the emphasis is on global security maintained by attention to military duty, and there is little indication of the rulers' relationship to the divine except for the prominent, wide eyes.[260] In the Vatican group, one pair, presumably the Augusti, have deeply furrowed brows and grimace, whereas the other pair, presumably the Caesars, less burdened

Figure 56. Two of the porphyry Tetrarchs in the Vatican Museums. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. Faraglia, neg. D-DAI-ROM-5695.

by their duties, smile benevolently. It would therefore appear that each embracing pair is meant to reflect the unity of the two halves of the empire. In the Venetian sculptures, by contrast, one figure in each pair has a short beard, whereas the other is clean-shaven, which would seem to suggest that a bearded Augustus has been paired with his respective Caesar (Figures 59, 60). However, the wispy hairs of the beards carved on these sculptures contrast with the firmly chiselled stubble on the Vatican figures, and may not, therefore, be an original feature.[261] If that were the case, all four figures would originally have appeared beardless and indistinguishable, except for their expressions.

Elsewhere, Tetrarchic group representations not only convey the relative status of the Tetrarchs, they also indicate their divine connections. The most important example is on the Arch of Galerius in Thessaloniki, which spanned the Via Egnatia. The monument originally consisted of a four-way arch with subsidiary passages attached to the north and south. The main archway was formed by four major piers standing at the corners of a square, and the subsidiary passages each required a pair of additional, smaller piers, making eight piers in total. Two of the major piers and one minor pier survive, and the major piers retain their relief-carved panels of marble, which are arranged in four registers on each side (Figures 61, 62). These sculptures show Galerius' victories over Narses, which culminated in the capture of the Persian king's harem in Armenia in the autumn of 297 and the taking of Ctesiphon in the winter.[262]

Typical of sculptures of this period, the figures are not in the high Classical tradition with detailed and careful modelling, proportions, and drapery, but are instead highly simplified and often reminiscent of puppets or cartoon characters.[263] Many of the twenty-eight surviving panels put Galerius prominently at the centre of the action. On the more northerly of the two surviving piers (Pier A), Galerius leads a Roman cavalry charge to rout Persian horsemen; he is present at the capture of Narses' harem; he forces a Persian elder into submission; he makes a victorious entrance into an unknown city; and he shows clemency to suppliant barbarians. On the more southerly pier (Pier B), he addresses his troops following the victory; in the presence of the goddess Roma he receives Narses' emissary to discuss terms for the release of the harem; with Diocletian he makes a sacrifice to the gods in the presence of personifications of Eternity, the Inhabited World, Concord, and Peace; he makes another victorious entrance; he is shown engaged in a fictional hand-to-hand mounted confrontation with Narses, who struggles to control his rearing horse; he is crowned by Victory as elephants pull a triumphal wagon towards him; and on horseback he tramples a fallen Persian.[264] Despite the documentary aspect of the panels, the intention was not merely to provide a narrative of Galerius' campaigns. Through the repeated depiction of Galerius, the reliefs are more generally and more significantly a statement of Tetrarchic ideology, emphasizing imperial omnipresence and omnipotence.[265]

At the centre of one of the surviving panels on the southern pier, Diocletian and Maximian are seated prominently on a sphere, which represents the cosmos and hence universal rule (Figure 63).[266]

Figure 57. Porphyry sculptures of the Tetrarchs. South side of San Marco, Venice. © Jonathan Bardill.

Diocletian's superiority is reflected by his position on the viewer's left hand, by his outstretched right arm, and by the long sceptre he carries in his left. Maximian, by contrast, has his right arm resting across his lap and holds only a short baton in his left. Both Augusti are being crowned by small winged Victories in recognition of the military successes of their junior colleague Galerius. The feet of the Augusti rest on veils billowing above the busts of two personifications. Diocletian's feet most probably rest above Ouranos-Caelus (Heaven) and Maximian's above Oikoumene (the Inhabited World). The image conveys the superior status of Diocletian as the ruler of the heavens, in contrast to Maximian, his deputy, who controls the earth. As for the Caesars, they are in positions inferior to the Augusti – Galerius standing

Figure 58. Two of the porphyry Tetrarchs on the south side of San Marco, Venice. © Jonathan Bardill.

beside Diocletian and Constantius standing beside Maximian. They are shown raising to their feet two female figures who personify subject regions of the empire, probably Syria and Britain. A now lost figure grovelling at Galerius' feet personified Persia, thereby alluding to the Caesar's recent victories.

All four imperial figures are shown frontally, in a manner that suggests their majesty and their separation from other mortals. All four are also positioned centrally, in the midst of other deities such as Serapis, Jupiter, the Dioscuri (the twins Castor and Pollux), Isis, and personifications of Virtus, Honos, and Fortuna. Beneath the gathering of gods, at either end of the panel, recline Oceanus (Ocean) and Tellus (Earth), suggesting that Tetrarchic rule stretches over the entire globe. Since the Augusti and the Caesars

Figure 59. Heads of two of the porphyry Tetrarchs on the south side of San Marco, Venice. © Jonathan Bardill.

are placed in the centre of the panel surrounded by deities, the viewer is left in no doubt that all four possess a substantial degree of divinity – although precisely how much is a matter for debate.

In Rome, the relationship between the Augusti, the Caesars, and the Supreme Deity was publicly demonstrated by the erection of the so-called Five-Column Monument on the Rostra in the Roman Forum (Figure 64).[267] Renaissance scholars recorded three of the bases of the five columns, and these were inscribed with the words VICENNALIA IMPERATORVM ("Twentieth anniversary of the emperors"), AVGVSTORVM VICENNALIA FELICITER ("Happy twentieth anniversary of the Augusti"), and CAESARVM DECENNALIA FELICITER ("Happy tenth anniversary of the Caesars").[268] The last of these bases survives today, and its carved decoration depicting a scene of sacrifice will be briefly discussed later.

The three recorded inscriptions reveal that the row of five columns was set up in 303 to commemorate the twentieth year of the rule of the Augusti Diocletian and Maximian and the tenth year of the Caesars Galerius and Constantius Chlorus. The monument was erected in anticipation of the four rulers visiting Rome for a triumphal procession on 20 November of that year, although it seems that Galerius never arrived because his presence was urgently required on the lower Danube frontier.[269] The central column, set on the largest base (that carrying the VICENNALIA IMPERATORVM text), would have been about 12.10 m high, carrying a statue of Jupiter. The four remaining columns, each bearing a statue of a Tetrarch or the *genius* of a Tetrarch, would have been more than 1.5 m shorter to judge by the size of their pedestals.[270] The monument emphasized the shared devotion of the Tetrarchs to Jupiter, and hence their harmonious government under the protection of the Supreme Deity.

Another important depiction of the Tetrarchic emperors comes from Upper Egypt. Between 300 and 308/9, the ancient Egyptian temple of Ammon at Thebes (modern Luxor) was converted into the headquarters of a Tetrarchic camp. An apsidal sanctuary was created for storing the imperial standards, and its walls were decorated with paintings (now very poorly preserved) showing military processions approaching the apse from either side of the chamber.[271] In the apse itself were painted four standing figures, each with a nimbus (Figure 65). The two central figures, about 10 cm taller than

Figure 60. Heads of two of the porphyry Tetrarchs on the south side of San Marco, Venice. © Jonathan Bardill.

those on either side, wore a *pallium* (mantle), and the figure in the senior position (that is, to the viewer's left) held a blue globe to represent worldwide (if not universal) power, and a long golden sceptre, an attribute of Jupiter. He is presumably to be identified as Diocletian. The other central figure is probably Maximian. By contrast, the shorter figures on either side of the central pair wore a *chlamys* (cloak). Since the unity of the four Tetrarchs was usually conveyed by depicting them in identical garb, it is possible that the apse painting showed not the two Augusti and their two Caesars but two pairs of successive Augusti, such as the retired Diocletian and Maximian in the centre, with their successors Constantius and Galerius, or Galerius and Licinius, on either side.[272] The semidome above the apse was filled by an eagle with outstretched wings carrying a golden wreath in its talons – a representation of the god Jupiter, again indicating the devotion of the Tetrarchs to the Supreme Deity from whom the senior Augustus had taken the epithet *Iovius*.

Naturally, the divine associations of the Tetrarchs were also reflected on coins. A fine example is a gold medallion showing Maximian wearing the lionskin of Hercules on the obverse. On the reverse, Diocletian and Maximian are seated side-by-side on *sellae curules* (curule chairs), each holding a globe, the former being crowned by Jupiter, the latter by Hercules (Figure 66). The accompanying legend is PERPETVA CONCORDIA AVGG ("Everlasting concord of the Augusti").[273] Thus, the joint (but unequal) government on earth is shown to imitate the joint (but unequal) government in heaven. The shared heavenly government was also illustrated by coins bearing images of Jupiter and Hercules together on the reverse.[274] Often, however, only one god appeared on the coins of the Augusti. As we might have expected, bearing in mind the epithet assigned to each Augustus, Jupiter appeared far more frequently on Diocletian's coins, and Hercules dominated Maximian's coinage. The other gods such as Sol and Mars continued to be associated with both Augusti on their coins, but in much smaller numbers.[275]

The Clash of Traditional Theology with Christianity

The Christian cult was considered by the Romans to be a *superstitio* rather than a proper religion. Accusations of incest, cannibalism, and murder were made

Figure 61. Arch of Galerius, Thessaloniki, southern pier (Pier B) from the east. Ca. A.D. 299–303. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens. Hermann Wagner, neg. D-DAI-ATH-THessaloniki 164.

against followers of the cult, and the faith was held to violate divine law and to upset the order established by the gods (*pax deorum*). At the end of the first century, the emperor Trajan stipulated that those accused and convicted of being Christian should be put to death. However, those who denied the charge could avoid martyrdom if they were prepared to make an offering to the traditional Roman gods. Such an offering would dispel any worries that the accused were repudiating ancestral customs and thereby compromising social order.[276] Despite the fact that the legal position of Christians remained much the same for another one-and-a-half centuries, adherence to Christianity came to be increasingly tolerated. By the end of the second century, Tertullian could claim that Christians were to be found in every stratum of Roman society, even in the imperial palace and the Senate.[277] After about 225, very

Figure 62. Arch of Galerius, Thessaloniki, northern pier (Pier A) from the east. Ca. A.D. 299–303. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens. Hermann Wagner, neg. D-DAI-ATH-THessaloniki 163.

few executions of professed believers took place, and Christian apologetic writing in the style of Tertullian, Clement, or Origen was no longer considered necessary.

In 249, however, during a period of great difficulty for the empire, the emperor Trajan Decius passed an edict that aimed to secure divine favour by requiring all inhabitants of the empire to sacrifice to the gods and thereby become united in religious observance.[278] Although not intended as a direct attack on believers in Christ, this decision exposed the irreconcilable opposition between monotheistic Christianity and the polytheistic state, and consequently the Christians suffered. By that time, the Christian population in Rome had increased to a considerable size. Bishop Cornelius (in a letter preserved by Eusebius) wrote of "forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons,

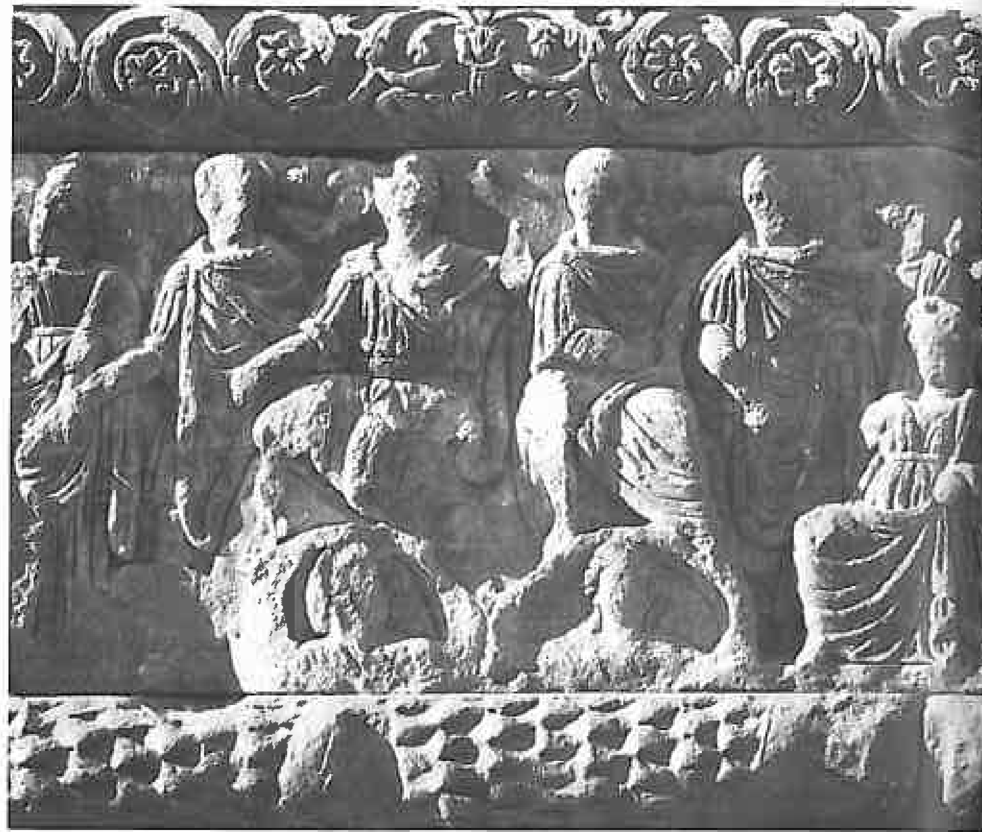


Figure 63. Detail of the frieze showing the Tetrarchs enthroned. Arch of Galerius, Thessaloniki, Pier B, north side. Ca. A.D. 299–303. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens. Hermann Wagner, neg. D-DAI-ATH-THessaloniki 387.

forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, readers, and doorkeepers, and more than fifteen hundred widows and distressed persons . . . a number by the providence of God both rich and growing, together with laymen too numerous to count."[279]

In 257–258 under Valerian, Christian martyrdom had resumed because of the believers' stubborn refusal to sacrifice to the traditional gods. However, after Valerian's ill-omened capture by the Persians in 260, his son and coemperor, Gallienus, had adopted a tolerant attitude towards the Christians, reversing his father's religious policies, giving Christians the right to assemble for worship without hindrance, and granting bishops' petitions for the return of churches and cemeteries that had been confiscated by the imperial fisc.[280] From that time on, the Christian Church, no longer under the threat of persecution, prospered and expanded.[281] By about 272, it had acquired enough respectability that it could appeal to the emperor Aurelian to expel the bishop of Antioch, who had refused to recognize a Church council's decision to depose him. Significantly, however, the emperor declined to intervene and referred the matter to the bishop of Rome.[282] Writing shortly before 300, Eusebius chose to end the first edition of his *Church History* around the year 280, believing that by that time the Church had triumphed.[283]

By the beginning of the fourth century, according to one theoretical model, Christian numbers are estimated to have increased to around six million, about 10% of the population. Whatever the precise figure, the numbers were such that it is probably not unreasonable to assert that "by 300 no emperor could rule securely without the acquiescence of his Christian subjects."[284] This left rulers with two choices: either accommodate the Christians or firmly suppress them – if the latter option was still possible. Accordingly, for some fifteen years from his accession in 284, Diocletian adopted the first course of action, permitting Christians to build a church on high ground in the heart of Nicomedia and in sight of the imperial palace,[285] allowing them freedom from sacrifice, and even appointing some to provincial governorships

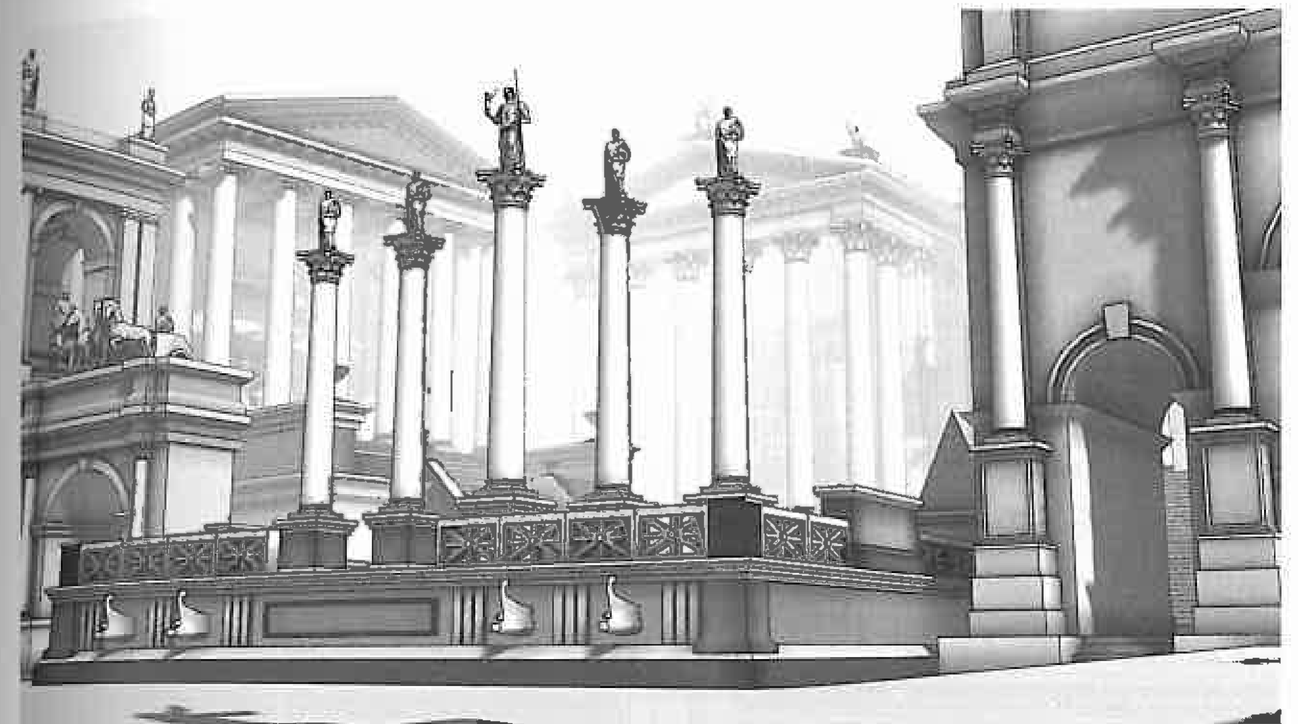


Figure 64. The Rostra and Five-Column Monument in the Roman Forum in Rome. Reconstruction drawing. A. Tayfun Öner.

and positions in the imperial household.[286] Lactantius even implies that Diocletian's wife and daughter were Christians.[287]

It was once proposed that the hierarchical Jovian and Herculian theology adopted by Diocletian and Maximian was introduced in the hope that it might offer to Christians an acceptable interpretation of paganism: they might associate God with Jupiter and Christ with Hercules, Jupiter's deputy on earth.[288] However, it is much more likely that Diocletian had given no thought to the Christians when formulating his theology but had simply adapted the existing tradition of rulers imitating Hercules. Certainly the staunchly monotheistic Christians were unmoved by the innovation and continued to refuse to sacrifice either to the traditional gods or to the image of the emperor.[289] For Christians, there could be only one god, and the supreme sacrifice – that of Christ on the cross – had already been made and needed only to be repeated in the form of the Eucharist.[290] Christians could therefore not accept Jupiter and Hercules as gods, nor Diocletian and Maximian as sons of gods (*diis geniti*), a description applicable only to Jesus Christ. Thus, other scholars more plausibly see in the Diocletianic theological system not an attempt to accommodate Christianity but a scheme completely incompatible with it.[291]

The year 299 marked the beginning of a change in Diocletian's religious policy, the reasons for which are not fully understood. Diocletian, Lactantius explains, was fond of making sacrifices for the purpose of divination. When in Antioch, he and Galerius made a sacrifice for precisely this purpose. The practitioners of the predictive arts, however, could not find the usual marks on the viscera. Further sacrifices were made, but the problem persisted. Soon after the failure of the auspices, Galerius seems to have visited the oracle of Apollo at nearby Daphne to discover the cause. From the inner shrine, the priest Theotecnus announced that "the righteous on earth" were preventing truthful oracles from being composed. Upon hearing the news, Diocletian's senior soothsayer laid the blame for the difficulties he had experienced on Christians in the imperial household who, to ward off demons, had made the sign of the cross at the moment the sacrifice was made. Diocletian was furious and ordered that all the court and all the army sacrifice to the

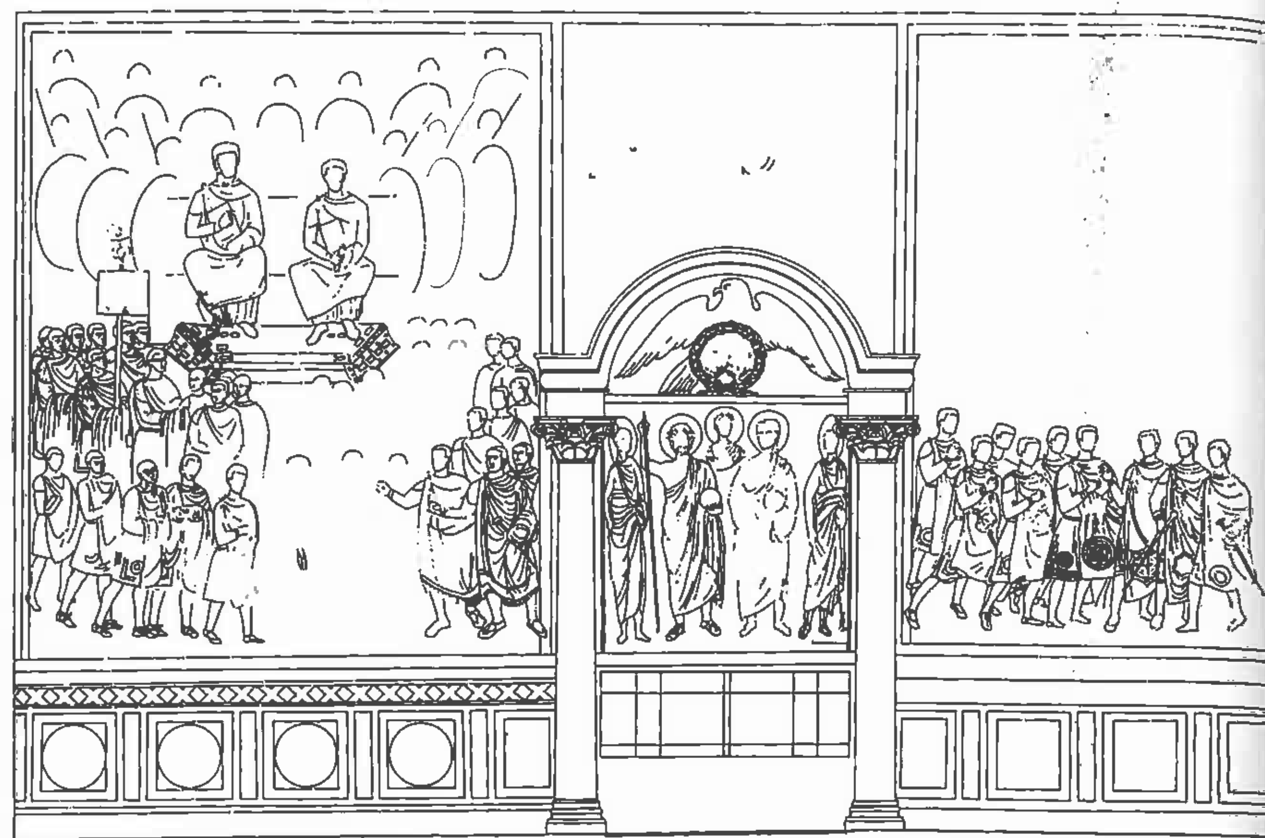


Figure 65. Line drawing of frescoes depicting the eagle of Jupiter above the four Tetrarchs. Apse of room dedicated to the cult of the emperors. Temple of Ammon, Luxor, Egypt. Ca. A.D. 308–309. Johannes Deckers (after a watercolour by Sir John Gardner Wilkinson, 1852–56).

traditional gods, exposing the Christians amongst them.[292]

These events did not, however, immediately spark more widespread suppression of Christianity, since Diocletian remained reluctant to execute Christians. In the autumn of 302, a deacon from Caesarea named Romanus interrupted a sacrifice at the governor's court to protest against pagan worship in the city, and the governor condemned him to be burned alive. Diocletian, however, commuted the sentence, ordering instead that his tongue be cut out.[293]

According to Lactantius, Galerius was dissatisfied with the extent of the action being taken by his senior colleague against the Christians and persuaded Diocletian in a number of private meetings that persecution was essential.[294] It is tempting to accept this account, since it would satisfactorily explain Augustus' decisive change of heart in 303.[295] Yet it is difficult to imagine that Lactantius could have received his information from any reliable informant, and it may well be that he was merely trying to cast Galerius in the stereotypical role of a bad emperor.[296] Indeed, Bill Leadbetter has observed that there is no need to imagine that Galerius influenced Diocletian in this matter. He suggests that Diocletian made the decision to initiate persecution because he was too conservative to accommodate the Christians, whose rejection of the traditional pantheon was also a rejection of his new "Jovian" and "Herculian" imperial ideology.[297]

Barnes has suggested that Galerius had personal reasons for wanting to persecute the Christians.[298] Diocletian had possibly already spoken of plans to resign and of his expectation that, when the time came for him to do so, Maximian would do the same. By planning his abdication rather than waiting for his natural death (which might occur at a politically inopportune moment), and by arranging the succession in good time, Diocletian could attempt to ensure a smooth transition of imperial power into younger hands and avoid a political crisis. The Caesars Galerius and Constantius would step into the shoes of the Augusti, and two new Caesars would need to be appointed. Barnes believes that Constantine (at Diocletian's court) and Maxentius (at his father's court in the West) had been groomed for these posts. Maxentius had already married Galerius' only legitimate daughter, Valeria Maximilla, and it is likely that Constantine was expected to marry Maximian's second daughter, Fausta (as he did in December 307).[299] Barnes proposes that Constantine and Maxentius were already openly sympathetic to Christianity and that Galerius tried to prevent their advancement to the rank of Caesar by persuading Diocletian to adopt a policy with which they could not agree.

Figure 66. Gold medallion of Maximian minted in Ticinum. Obverse shows Maximian Augustus wearing the lion-skin headdress of Hercules. Reverse shows the seated Diocletian being crowned by Jupiter (left) and the seated Maximian being crowned by Hercules (right). A.D. 286–305. © Hungarian National Museum.

Certainly, Constantine was quick to restore property and freedom to Christians in Britain, Gaul, and Spain when he was made emperor in 306.[300] Maxentius, when he came to power in Rome in the same year, ended persecution in Italy and Africa.[301] But it seems doubtful that this means either of them had already pinned their colours firmly to the Christian mast in 306, let alone in 303.[302] Nevertheless, in 303 Constantine and Maxentius may have understood far better than Galerius and Diocletian the importance of keeping the Christian community onside and the wisdom of adopting policies of religious freedom rather than suppression.

By initiating a persecution of the Christians, Diocletian and Galerius hoped to strengthen their hold on power. It had long been thought that peace and security (the *pax deorum*) might be maintained by enforcing participation in traditional religion. Thus, Caracalla's "Antonine Constitution" (*Constitutio Antoniniana*) of 212 had granted Roman citizenship to all free provincials, committing them to participation in the traditional cults.[303] But an emphasis on traditional worship would, as Lactantius' story of the disrupted sacrifice in Antioch illustrates, inevitably expose un-Roman practices, such as the refusal of Christians to sacrifice to the pagan gods and to the emperor.

Under Diocletian there was apparently a resurgence of the feeling that Christianity was incompatible with support for the state and its rulers.[304] The problem was explained in an edict of 302 against another rapidly spreading religion. Manichaeism, like Christianity, threatened traditional Roman religious

practice, and when the proconsul of Africa consulted Diocletian about the appropriate punishment for followers of the religion, the emperor replied that it was wrong for "the ancient religion to be censured by some new one, for it is the height of criminality to revise doctrines that were settled and defined once and for all by the ancients, and which still retain and possess their validity and status."[305] The same criticism was levelled at the behaviour of the Christians. Thus, when Galerius finally brought the persecution to an end, he justified its necessity in the following way: "through some perverse reasoning such arrogance and folly had seized and possessed them [i.e., the Christians] that they refused to follow the path trodden by earlier generations (and perhaps blazed long ago by their own ancestors), and made their own laws to suit their own ideas and individual tastes and observed these; and held various meetings in various places."[306] Such thinking persisted, for later (it is claimed) Constantine himself was accused in similar terms by Licinius. Eusebius says that, having firmly adopted the Christian God as his protector in battle, Constantine was condemned by his rival because he had "broken faith with the ancestral code and adopted godless belief."[307]

Whether or not Galerius had to persuade Diocletian of the need for Christian persecution, the fact that the latter did not adopt the policy until 303 may suggest that he had delayed its initiation, not wishing to lose the loyalty of the Christian community. But once the war with Persia had been won and a revolt in Egypt had been put down, he could afford to act if he so wished.[308] In the winter of 302–303, Diocletian sent soothsayers to Didyma to consult the oracle of Apollo for guidance. Lactantius writes that the oracle's response was as to be expected from enemies of Christianity.[309] If Diocletian still had doubts, he may have found persuasive arguments against Christianity in the writings of pagan intellectuals such as Celsus, Porphyry, and Hierocles, who were unable to tolerate what they saw as the worship of a human being. Celsus and Hierocles saw Jesus merely as a sorcerer. In Celsus' opinion, Jesus was unworthy of divine status, but the Christians worshipped him to such a degree that they were undermining the foundations of Roman society by diverting worship from the true God. In support of his condemnation of Christianity, Celsus quoted with approval Homer's thoughts on earthly monarchy and applied them to the divine sphere: "Let there be one king, him to whom the son of crafty Kronos gave the power."[310] Porphyry, by contrast, was prepared to acknowledge that Jesus deserved recognition as a wise man, but only on a par with a hero such as Hercules – because a human being or a human soul did not deserve the reverence owed to a god or to the Supreme Deity.[311] His *Against the Christians* and *Philosophy from Oracles*, in which he sanctioned the use of force against Christians, may have given additional impetus to the persecution. Indeed, it is possible that Porphyry wrote with the purpose of justifying the imminent action.[312]

Thus, on 23 February 303, Diocletian finally signed an edict of persecution that was posted the following day. It prohibited Christians from worshipping, ordered the destruction of their places of worship and their scriptures, confiscated all Church property, and, most significantly, compelled all officials to perform sacrifice before attending to their business.[313] This last provision had the effect of stripping social status and legal privilege from Christians who were not prepared to submit. By the spring of 303, Diocletian's edict had been posted in Palestine, and it was also promulgated by Maximian in Africa, Italy, and Spain, although its enforcement in the areas he controlled seems to have waned during the winter of 304–305.

The persecution continued throughout Diocletian's reign. In the summer of 303, possibly in response to disturbances in Syria and Melitene, a second edict was posted, ordering the arrest and imprisonment of clergymen, with the result that the prisons were filled to overflowing. A third edict, passed before 20 November 303, seems to have been related to an amnesty granted to criminals on the occasion of Diocletian's *vicennalia*. It ordered the clergy to sacrifice and be freed. Many clergy were released from prison, either having been forced to sacrifice or having been deemed to have sacrificed despite their protests to the contrary. A fourth persecution edict was promulgated early in 304. This was a general order to all citizens to make sacrifices and libations to the gods.[314]

Constantine Breaks from Tetrarchic Theology

It was planned that in the winter of 303 the Tetrarchs would jointly celebrate twenty years of rule by the Augusti and ten years of rule by the Caesars. Barnes has suggested that the four of them met in Milan in the autumn of that year with the intention of travelling to Rome together. If the Tetrarchs did assemble, Diocletian may have used the occasion to formally announce his intention to retire and his desire that Maximian should do the same so that their places could be taken by Galerius and Constantius Chlorus. If Diocletian did raise the issue, his colleagues would presumably have settled the matter of who, when the time came, would be elevated to become Caesars to the two new Augusti.[315] When the Tetrarchs (except Galerius, who was required on the lower Danube frontier) arrived in Rome in November, Maximian visited the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus to make a solemn but reluctant oath to stand down whenever Diocletian should choose to retire.[316]

It was in Nicomedia on 1 May 305 that Diocletian publicly announced his abdication and prepared to retire to his palace at Spalatum (modern Split in Croatia), where he had erected a mausoleum in anticipation of his death. In Milan, Maximian reluctantly honoured his vow and also resigned. Simultaneously, their Caesars, Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, were raised to the rank of Augustus in the East and West respectively, the latter being senior to the former. Diocletian's motivation in stepping down, and in holding Maximian to do the same, was doubtless an attempt to ensure a smooth succession to younger men. He could not have foreseen the sudden death of Constantius in 306, which would throw everything into confusion.[317]

According to Lactantius, when Diocletian announced the names of the new Caesars, he shocked everyone.[318] Maxentius, son of the retiring Augustus Maximian, and Constantine, son of the new Augustus Constantius, who were widely considered to be uncontested candidates, were passed over. Instead, Galerius' nephew, Maximinus Daza, was appointed to be Galerius' Caesar, and one Severus, a friend of Galerius, was chosen to serve as (senior) Caesar to Constantius. To explain this extraordinary turn of events, Lactantius alleged that Galerius, his prestige increased by his Persian victories, had bullied Diocletian into agreeing to these appointments.[319] Barnes accepts the truth of Lactantius' claim, observing that both choices were particularly advantageous to Galerius. He suggests that at the meeting of the Tetrarchs in the autumn of 303, it had been agreed that Constantine and Maxentius would become Caesars upon the retirement of Diocletian and Maximian, but that Galerius had later cajoled Diocletian into overturning the decision.[320] By contrast, Leadbetter claims that, during their negotiations in 303, the Tetrarchs agreed on the future appointments of Severus and Maximinus. Galerius, he argues, did not need to exert any pressure on Diocletian to reject Constantine and Maxentius, since the senior Augustus perceived the former as Constantius' bastard son and the latter as unsuitable because he did not respect Galerius.[321] Leadbetter's claim requires us both to believe that Constantius and Helena had not married, which is far from certain, and to reject Barnes' arguments that Constantine had been groomed to become Caesar and that his first wife, Minervina, was a close relative of Diocletian.[322]

Whether or not Diocletian was bullied regarding the selection of the Caesars, there can be no doubt that the two new appointments were of significant benefit to Galerius and are therefore likely to have been greatly influenced by him. His own son, Candidianus, who had been born of a concubine but adopted by Galerius' wife, was about nine years old in 305, and so too young to be elevated to the rank of Caesar. Galerius therefore endorsed his nearest male relation by blood, his nephew Maximinus, to be his Caesar. In the following year, a daughter was born to Maximinus, and she was engaged to Candidianus, presumably with the intention that the boy should, upon Galerius' death and Maximinus' promotion to Augustus, become Caesar to his father-in-law.[323] As for Severus, who was foisted on Constantius, we know nothing, but it is not unreasonable to suspect that he had had a long and perhaps distinguished military career, and that he too was related to Galerius, perhaps also being a nephew.[324] In whatever way it came about that Diocletian overlooked the sons of Maximian and Constantius in the

Tetrarchic succession, the act ensured the breakdown of the Tetrarchic scheme.[325]

Angered by the rejection, Maxentius and Constantine chose to distance themselves from the principles of the Tetrarchy and pursue their individual ambitions. Constantine now travelled to Gaul where Constantius was on campaign. This presumably reflects Constantine's realization that his only chance of promotion was to persuade his father or the army to support his cause. It is claimed by Lactantius, Eusebius, and the late fourth-century *Origin of Constantine* that Constantine was detained at the eastern court and had to escape to the West, killing the public post horses as he made his way across Europe to ensure he was not pursued. The tale is probably a dramatic invention, but reflects the concerns of Diocletian and Galerius about the consequences were this ambitious young man to depart to the West. However, if Constantius now wrote to Galerius asking for his son to join him, Galerius would not have been able to refuse.[326]

In 293, Constantius had successfully liberated the channel coastline of Gaul from Carausius, an officer of Maximian who had revolted in 286. He had followed this achievement in 296 with a successful invasion of Britain, which he had taken from Allectus, Carausius' second-in-command and murderer.[327] When Constantine reached his father at Bononia (modern Boulogne) in Gaul late in 305, they set sail to Britain, where together they marched north of Hadrian's Wall to win a victory over the Picts.[328] Thus, by the time Constantius died at Eburacum (modern York) on 25 July 306, Constantine had spent a sufficiently long period with his father and his army to establish a rapport with the troops and strengthen his position as the likely successor to his father as ruler over Britain, Gaul, and Spain.

Lactantius increased the drama of Constantine's flight from the East, claiming that when Constantine finally escaped from Galerius, he reached his father only as he lay dying. In his account, the fading Constantius "commended him [i.e., Constantine] to the troops and transmitted the imperial authority to him with his own hands."[329] In reality Constantius was to all appearances in good health when Constantine reached him, but it seems plausible (although not certain) that the father bestowed power on the son when death approached.[330] If he did, we cannot be sure whether he conferred on Constantine the rank of Caesar or Augustus.[331] It certainly would not be surprising to discover that Constantius was unhappy with the prospect of Severus' succession to the status of Augustus and therefore preferred to secure the advancement of the Flavian dynasty rather than adhere to Diocletian's plans.[332] If so, Constantius chose to elevate to the rank of Augustus the oldest of his four sons, Constantine, even though he had fathered him with a previous wife, Helena, whom some claimed to be his concubine. Constantius' three sons by his second wife, Theodora, were not yet adults, and in later years were loyal to their half-brother.[333]

The panegyrist of the year 310 claims that the dying Constantius "gazed upon him whom he was leaving as his heir," leaving no doubt that the son's succession had been approved by the father.[334] He also bolsters Constantine's legitimacy by alleging that Constantius Chlorus' grandfather had been the deified emperor Claudius II Gothicus.[335] Claudius, who had reigned for only two years before dying of the plague, probably in late August 270, had won victories over the Alamanni in the winter of 268–269 and over the Goths twice the following summer.[336] It is possible that in Constantine's day stories about Claudius' distinction were already circulating, such as one claiming he was descended from a king of Troy.[337] The alleged dynastic connection between Constantine and Claudius was not only referred to by orators but also publicized in official inscriptions. By contrast, Galerius, Severus, Maximinus, and Maxentius could make no claim to any such distant ancestral links. For the orator of 310, Constantine's imperial and divine descent is all-important: "so great is the nobility of your lineage that the attainment of imperial power has added nothing to your honor."[338] Nevertheless, the panegyrist mentions Constantine's election by the army, acknowledging that this occurred in advance of a positive decision being reached by the "senior rulers" to whom Constantine had allegedly referred the question of his appointment.[339]

Eusebius, writing decades later, provided an even more imaginative account of Constantine's accession,

calculated to establish his legitimacy beyond doubt. In his version, as in Lactantius', events were compressed for the sake of impact, and it was claimed that Constantine arrived from the East only as his father lay close to death in York. The dying emperor, Eusebius wrote, "gave instructions to his sons and daughters, who gathered round him like a choir, and in the palace itself, on the imperial couch, he handed over his part of the Empire by natural succession to the senior in age among his sons and expired." When Constantine, dressed in his father's purple robe, emerged from the palace to lead his father's funeral procession, the people and army "praised the accession of the son as a new life for the dead; and immediately from the first word in their cries of acclamation they proclaimed the new Emperor Imperator and Venerable Augustus. They lauded the deceased with their acclamations for the son, and they blessed the son as appointed to succeed such a father."[340] The events were a clear demonstration that the tradition of hereditary succession and the opinion of the legions were ultimately more potent than Diocletian's system of Augusti appointing Caesars who would succeed them. Moreover, Eusebius' account of these events reveals an emerging ritual of accession. The ceremony stressed the new ruler's acclamation by the army and the citizens, the bestowal upon him of the imperial purple, and the connection between the installation of the new ruler and the death and funeral of the preceding emperor.[341]

Constantine, who had already begun to assert his status as an Augustus by issuing laws,[342] now announced his appointment in traditional fashion by sending his laurel-crowned image to Galerius.[343] He put the Augustus of the East in an awkward position, since although Constantine had (probably) been appointed Augustus of the West by Galerius' senior partner, the Tetrarchic succession dictated that the legitimate successor should be Severus, who had been appointed as Caesar to Constantius by Diocletian in 305. After careful consideration, Galerius, no doubt reluctantly, sent a purple robe to Constantine but indicated that he was prepared to recognize him only as Caesar. Constantine wisely accepted the compromise for the time being, since the appointment constituted recognition of his legitimacy. It was inevitable that promotion to the rank of Augustus would follow.[344] In accordance with Tetrarchic succession, Galerius promoted Severus to the rank of Augustus in the West.[345]

In Rome, Maxentius was frustrated to hear that Constantine had been appointed Caesar whilst he remained unrecognized.[346] His chance to follow Constantine's lead and confront the Tetrarchic system came in the autumn of 306 when two unpopular decisions by Galerius caused an uprising. First, the Eastern Augustus decided to abolish Rome's traditional immunity from taxation, provoking the resentment of wealthy Roman senators, who, until then, had resided in a tax haven.[347] Second, he proposed to complete a process begun by Diocletian by finally disbanding the Praetorian Guard.[348] On 28 October 306, the discontented citizens of Rome together with the Praetorian Guard and the imperial cavalry contingent, the *Equites Singulares*, showed their disapproval of Galerius' actions by proclaiming Maxentius emperor. Prudently, Maxentius used only the title *princeps* on his coins, leaving it to Galerius to decide whether to approve his appointment. But Galerius could not possibly have considered dismissing Severus as Augustus to accommodate Maxentius, since bowing to external pressure would have cast doubt on his authority. When Galerius refused to recognize him, Maxentius sought the support of his father. Maximian was easily persuaded to come out of his reluctant retirement when his son sent him a purple robe and hailed him as "Augustus for the second time." Maxentius himself assumed the rank of Augustus in the spring of 307.[349]

During the third century, political circumstances forced emperors to abandon the luxury of Rome for extended stays on the empire's borders, and they set up various new residences in places such as Augusta Treverorum (Trier), Mediolanum (Milan), Serdica (Sofia), Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica), Thessalonica (Thessaloniki), Nicomedia (İzmit), and Antioch (Antakya). So little time did they spend in Rome that in 291 a panegyrist commented that "the seat of imperial power could then appear to be the place to which each Emperor had come."[350] Although the largely absent Tetrarchs bestowed monuments on Rome and celebrated triumphs there, Maxentius' permanent presence in the city was a welcome

change.[351] Considered a usurper by the Tetrarchs, Maxentius needed to be sure he had support from the people of Rome. To establish a degree of legitimacy and to curry the favour of the citizens, he demonstrated a commitment to Rome by instigating an impressive building programme, partly necessitated by a serious fire in 306.[352]

In the city itself, Maxentius' most grandiose project was rebuilding Hadrian's massive Greek-style temple of Venus and Roma, which stood between the Roman Forum and the Colosseum. Adjacent to the temple, on the limits of the Forum, he built the city's largest public basilica, which possibly functioned as the official seat of the City Prefect.[353] It was to be roofed not with wood and tiles, typical for such buildings, but with three massive concrete cross-vaults (Figure 67, right). In the Forum itself, he built a circular structure, believed to have been a temple in honour of his son, Romulus, who died in 309 (Figure 67, left). The deified Romulus may also have been commemorated by the rededication of Nero's radiate Colossus in his honour.[354] In addition, it seems likely that Maxentius made significant advances in building the huge imperial bath complex on the Quirinal Hill that was later completed by Constantine.[355] That Rome was to be Maxentius' prime residence was confirmed when he began construction of an extensive residential complex, consisting of villa, circus, and mausoleum, outside the city on the Via Appia.

When Maxentius claimed control of Rome in October 306, Galerius met with Severus, the legitimate Augustus in the West, and urged him to overthrow the usurper. However, many of Severus' troops had earlier served under Maximian, and when Rome was besieged, probably in April 307, Maxentius was able to buy off a good number of the attacking force who remained loyal to his father. Severus was compelled to retreat to Ravenna, taken hostage by Maximian, and imprisoned in Rome.[356] Galerius had no option but to march on Rome if he was to retain his authority, although he would have been acutely aware that by doing so he would be sacrificing Severus.[357] Besieged by Galerius in the late summer or autumn of 307, Maxentius refused to negotiate and murdered his captive. When Galerius' troops, like Severus' before them, began to desert, the eastern Augustus was forced to retreat, satisfying his men by allowing them to plunder central Italy as he marched northward.[358] In April 308, Maximian, who had come to envy his son's power, attempted to depose Maxentius. When Maximian stripped the purple from his son's shoulders before an assembly of troops and citizens, the Praetorians showed allegiance to Maxentius, and the father was forced to flee.[359] In Gaul, he sought the protection of Constantine, to whom, in December 307, shortly after Severus' murder, he had granted the rank of Augustus and the hand of his daughter Fausta as his second wife.[360]

Constantine's alliance with Maximian caused a rift with Galerius, who refused to recognize the rank of Augustus that Maximian had bestowed on him. From the autumn of 307, the mints in Galerius' territories ceased to show Constantine on their coins, and official documents in the East began to use dating formulas that recognized the legitimacy only of Galerius and his Caesar, Maximinus. Constantine, however, continued to promote himself as Augustus, although Galerius would not recognize the rank until 310.[361] In November 308 a crisis conference was convened at the military camp of Carnuntum in Pannonia (modern Petronell on the Danube).[362] There, Galerius, Maximian, and Diocletian (who had agreed to suspend his retirement briefly to attend) decided that Constantine should be recognized as a legitimate member of the imperial college, but only as holding the rank of Caesar to which Galerius had appointed him in 306. Licinius, a former commander of Galerius' forces, was appointed to replace Severus, and it was hoped that he would secure from Maxentius the territories of Italy and Africa over which he was now legitimate ruler.[363] Maximian, as the father of the usurper Maxentius, grudgingly agreed to go back into retirement. Thus, the new Tetrarchy established at Carnuntum consisted of Galerius and Licinius as Augusti, and Maximinus and Constantine as their respective Caesars.

Constantine Adopts a Solar Protector

In their quest for power, both Maxentius, utterly rejected by the Tetrarchy, and Constantine, insufficiently rewarded by it, abandoned the Tetrarchic principle of succession and the associated Tetrarchic

Figure 67. The Basilica of Maxentius (right) and the temple of Romulus (left) in the Roman Forum. © Jonathan Bardill.

religious philosophy, preferring to claim legitimacy from deities other than Jupiter and Hercules.[364] Maxentius severed his connection with the House of Hercules, and his coins now showed Mars more frequently than the labouring hero.[365] Some minted in Ostia between 308/9 and 312 showed the god of war handing Maxentius a globe topped by Victory, who in some cases crowned him (Figure 68).[366] The significance that Maxentius attached to Mars is conveyed by an inscription on a statue-base set up in the Roman Forum near the Lapis Niger, the black stone traditionally believed to mark the tomb of Rome's founder, Romulus. The text stated that the "unconquered Augustus" Maxentius dedicated the statue "To unconquered Mars, the Father, and to the founders [Romulus and Remus] of his eternal city."[367] It has been suggested that the base once carried the bronze sculpture of a she-wolf suckling the twin founders of Rome that is now in the Musei Capitolini in Rome. However, the casting technique used to make the sculpture is typical of the medieval period, and radiocarbon and thermoluminescence dating tests have indicated that the sculpture was manufactured between the eighth and the fourteenth centuries A.D. Nevertheless, it is possible that the sculpture is a copy of a lost original that once adorned the late antique base.[368] Significantly, this base, which was found in 1899, and another dedicated to Maxentius, found in 1852, were discovered on either side of the Five-Column Monument that had been set up on the Rostra in 303 in honour of the Tetrarchs. By erecting these two statues in this locality, Maxentius was clearly attempting to associate himself with the Tetrarchy and assert a claim to legitimate rule in Italy and Africa.[369]

Soon after acquiring imperial rank, Constantine permitted a panegyrist to stress his connections with the Herculian dynasty of the Tetrarchy.[370] But the refusal of Galerius to recognize him as Augustus appears to have caused him to distance himself from

Figure 68. *Aureus* minted in Ostia. Ca. A.D. 308/9–October 312. Obverse shows frontal bust of Maxentius. Reverse shows Mars handing Victory on globe to Maxentius. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1860,0329.44).

the Tetrarchic theology with its associated plan for succession and to make alternative arrangements for legitimizing his position. Maximinus, who had been a loyal Caesar to Galerius since 305, was also dissatisfied. According to the succession plan, he would be promoted to the rank of Augustus on Galerius' death.[371] But Maximinus had seen Licinius, who had not held the rank of Caesar, promoted straight to the rank of Augustus on Severus' death. When he wrote to Galerius in 309 asking for promotion, the eastern Augustus sought a compromise that would preserve Diocletian's system of two senior rulers and two junior successors. Galerius attempted to satisfy Maximinus and Constantine by acknowledging each as a "son of the Augusti" (*filius Augustorum*). To assure Maximinus that his promotion to the rank of Augustus was imminent, Galerius perhaps promised that on his twentieth anniversary in 312 he would retire, as Diocletian had done, to his palace at Romuliana (modern Gamzigrad in Serbia).[372] However, Maximinus appears to have declined the title, and when his troops raised him to the rank of Augustus in 310, Galerius had no choice but to recognize both him and Constantine in that rank.[373] The four Tetrarchs were now of equal status. However, the rifts between them could not be easily healed, nor could their individual ambitions be easily satisfied, and Constantine demonstrated his independence by declaring a new religious allegiance on his coins.

Being of low value and wide circulation, copper alloy coinage was an important instrument of propaganda, and from 310 to 317 all Constantine's mints commonly produced pieces showing Sol on the reverse. The sun-god was shown standing, naked except for a *chlamys* over his shoulder, holding a globe in his left hand and raising his right (Figure 69).[374] For the last thirty years Sol had hardly appeared on coins, although he had never completely vanished. Now the god appeared so frequently that almost all other types were completely displaced.[375] Only under Aurelian in 272–274 had there been a comparably extensive use of Sol.[376]

From 310, too, the legend SOLI INVICTO COMITI ("To the Unconquered Sun, the protector") began to appear on Constantine's coins.[377] The term *comes*, which means not merely "companion" but more specifically "protector," emphasized the emperor's reliance on the solar deity.[378] As for the epithet *invictus* ("unconquered"), it had long been applied to a range of deities, such as Jupiter, Mars, and Hercules, and had been adopted by the general Scipio Africanus, the dictator Julius Caesar,

Figure 69. Copper alloy *nummus* minted in London. Ca. A.D. 310. Obverse shows bust of Constantine with laurel wreath. Reverse shows Sol, naked except for a *chlamys*, with globe in left hand and right arm raised with open hand. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1982,1034.11).

and by emperors from Commodus onwards. The epithet had also been applied to Sol, and on coins the god had first appeared with the title "Unconquered" in the 260s. From 311, Constantine himself assumed the epithet as part of his personal titulature, the main reason being to suggest his close personal association with Sol. It is possible that it was also meant to evoke memories of Alexander, who had been hailed as "unconquered" (*anikētos*) by the Pythian priestess at Delphi in 336 B.C., and who had been honoured with a statue of "the Invincible God" in Athens in 324 B.C. Constantine may even have adopted the epithet to hint at his own divine status.[379]

The close connection between Constantine and Sol is illustrated by the legend that appeared on the reverse of gold *solidi* minted in Ticinum (modern Pavia in northern Italy) – SOLI INVICTO AETERNO AVG. The meaning is somewhat ambiguous, possibly meaning "To the Unconquered Sun [and] to the eternal Augustus" or "To the Unconquered Sun, the eternal Augustus." The identities of the god and the emperor were thus blurred. This was also the case with the accompanying image, which showed a triumphal chariot occupied not by the emperor, but by Sol with his trademark whip, and Victory (Figure 70).[380] Constantine's relationship to Sol, therefore, does not seem to have been very different from the close relationship Diocletian and Maximian shared with Jupiter and Hercules – a relationship that led some panegyrists to identify the Augusti with their chosen deities. But despite Sol's prominence on Constantinian coins, the other gods did not vanish: in Rome, gold *solidi* of Constantine carried Jupiter on the reverse, and copper alloy coins showed not only Sol but also Mars and Hercules.[381]

From 310, Constantine's connection with the sun-god was stressed not only on coins but also in literature. This is particularly evident in the panegyric of 310. The orator describes Constantine as a radiant emperor "whose eyes flash and whose awe-inspiring yet agreeable majesty dazzles us at the same time as it invites our gaze," and then adds, "Such a man I conceive that great king [Alexander] to have been." He continues by suggesting that Constantine's youthful beauty expresses his divine nature: "And so when your soldiers see you walking, they admire and love you; they follow you with their eyes; you are in their thoughts; they consider that they are submitting themselves to a god, whose form is as beautiful as his divinity is certain."[382] Having implied that the emperor had a dazzling appearance and a youthful, godly nature, the orator went on to assert that

Constantine had been privileged to see a vision of the solar god Apollo in which the god had granted him a long reign.[383]

The miracle had occurred, the orator claimed, as Constantine travelled to Trier following his defeat and capture of Maximian in Marseille. Despite the promise he had made at Carnuntum to retire, Maximian had attempted to seize power while Constantine was marching north to confront the Franks on the Rhine. He had announced Constantine's death and declared himself Augustus at Arles. Hearing of the return of Constantine's army, he took refuge behind the walls of Marseille. The citizens, however, opened the city gates to Constantine, and the disgraced Maximian was either executed or forced to commit suicide.[384]

On the return from Marseille, the panegyrist claims, Constantine's army turned off the main road towards a shrine of Apollo, presumably at Granum, modern Grand in the département of Vosges. There the emperor had a vision of "your Apollo, accompanied by Victory, offering you laurel wreaths, each one of which carries a portent of thirty years. For this is the number of human ages which are owed to you without fail – beyond the old age of a Nestor."[385] The imagery should be interpreted to mean that the sun-god, accompanied by a personification of Victory, had granted Constantine an extremely long reign and a lifespan beyond that of an ordinary mortal. The words "your Apollo" are quoted from the fourth *Eclogue* of Vergil, where they are addressed to Lucina, often identified with Apollo's sister, Diana.[386] In the oration they are used to indicate an intimate association between Apollo and Constantine.

We can believe that Constantine visited Apollo's shrine, but we cannot know whether he claimed to have experienced such a vision or whether the orator is simply flattering his emperor by comparing him to Apollo and suggesting that the god granted him a long rule.[387] If Constantine did claim to have experienced a vision, we cannot know how well-informed the panegyrist was of Constantine's account of the alleged event or if he shared the emperor's own interpretation of it.[388] Nevertheless, one thing is clear: already in 310 a belief had arisen that Constantine was a radiant ruler, having for a protector a solar deity who was responsible for his military success.

When describing Constantine's vision of Apollo, the orator claims that "you [i.e., Constantine] recognized yourself in the likeness of him [i.e., Apollo] to whom the divine songs of the bards had prophesied that rule over the whole world was due."[389] The reference is again to the fourth *Eclogue* of Vergil, in which the poet had predicted a Golden Age of peace and security ruled by Apollo.[390] The orator imagines the intimacy between the emperor and his protective deity to be so great that Constantine sees himself in Apollo and even takes on the attributes of the god: "since you are, O Emperor, like he, youthful, joyful, a bringer of health and very handsome."[391] Here we find an explanation for the new youthful, beardless portraits that began to appear on Constantinian coins at this time.

The author of the panegyric of 310 inherited the idea, frequently expressed in the works of earlier, Tetrarchic panegyrists, that the emperor shared in the divine force of his tutelary deity. In fact, the speech is dedicated to Constantine's *numen* (divine power), and the orator expresses concern about presenting his work to "such a great divinity."[392] Constantine apparently attended the reading and is referred to as "the one who is present" (*praesentem*) and "this most manifestly present god" (*praesentissimus hic deus*). These phrases – like the Hellenistic title *Epiphanēs* – suggest that the ruler is a god made manifest and accessible to his subjects.[393]

The orator describes Constantine arriving in Gaul to meet his father before setting sail for Britain in 305: he is a radiant deity, transported not by the public post but in a divine vehicle.[394] The panegyrist piously hopes the gods will allow Constantine to visit the temple of Apollo in his home town of Autun, where "You will certainly marvel at that seat of your divinity (*numen*) too."[395] Thus, it is clear that the orator believed Apollo's temple housed the divine forces of both Apollo and Constantine – just as, according to another panegyrist, the temples of Jupiter and Hercules were the seats of the *numini* of Diocletian and Maximian.

The panegyric of 310 not only illustrates the intimate association between Constantine and Apollo but also provides another excellent example of how an orator could present a Late Antique emperor as a living divinity.[396] Whether Constantine's own propaganda would stretch as far in claiming divine

Figure 70. *Aureus* minted in Ticinum. A.D. 312–313. Obverse shows bust of Constantine with laurel wreath. Reverse shows Victory crowning Sol as they both ride in a four-horse chariot. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1866,0721.14).

status (at least without some degree of ambiguity) is an issue to which we shall turn later.[397]

Constantius and Sol

We cannot be certain what inspired Constantine to choose a solar tutelary deity, although we may at least consider the possibility that he was influenced by the religious inclinations of his father, Constantius Chlorus. Some support for this suggestion may be found in Eusebius' allegation that Constantine chose to worship the same god as his father; but even if that claim is true, we cannot trust Eusebius' further assertion that Constantius had been a Christian, "condemning the polytheism of the godless."[398] The fact that one of Constantius' daughters was named Anastasia ("Resurrection") says nothing for certain about her father's faith, since our sources may preserve the name that she took of her own free will upon baptism.[399] Furthermore, there is evidence that might suggest Constantius was not a Christian: after Diocletian's First Persecution Edict was posted in Nicomedia on 24 February 303, Constantius permitted the destruction of churches. Admittedly, Lactantius adds that he did this reluctantly "to avoid appearing to disagree with the instructions of his seniors,"[400] and there may be some truth in this remark, since, when Constantius succeeded Maximian as Augustus in 305, persecution in the West came to an end.[401]

Whether or not he was a Christian, did Constantius exploit the imagery of Sol that would later be adopted by his son? He certainly did, although the evidence is insufficient to demonstrate a devotion to this one god.[402] For instance, on gold multiples minted at Trier in 305 to mark the fifth consulate of Constantius and Galerius, the two Caesars were shown nimbate, sacrificing at an altar in front of a temple. Since the mint of Trier was under Constantius' control, the use of the nimbus has been understood as an attempt by Constantius to imply his close affinity with the sun-god.[403] But while the nimbus may suggest radiance and sovereign status,[404] it does not necessarily mean that Constantius was devoted primarily to Sol. Certainly, some coins of Constantius featured Sol, but these were few in number, were minted only whilst he was Caesar, and their legends never hailed the god as *conservator* in their legends. In fact, most of Constantius' coins depicted the primary Tetrarchic deities, Hercules and Jupiter.[405]

Figure 71. Constantius Chlorus as Caesar wearing the lion-skin headdress of Hercules. Obverse of gold medallion (5 *aurei*) minted in Trier. A.D. 297. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1928,0208.2).

Constantius is shown on a gold medallion of 297 sporting the lion-skin headdress of Hercules (Figure 71); he was described as a descendant of Hercules in Eumenius' panegyric of 298;[406] and in an oration of 307 he was said to have demonstrated his descent from Hercules by matching the hero's prowess and to have passed on his Herculian epithet to his son, Constantine.[407] If, therefore, there is any truth in Eusebius' description of Constantius as "recognizing only the God over all" or in Constantine's own portrayal of his father as "calling upon the Saviour God in all his actions,"[408] we would have to conclude that Constantius was a henotheist who believed that the Supreme Deity embodied all the other known deities. Whether he equated the Supreme God with Sol is uncertain.

Exploitation of solar imagery in the age of Constantius is further illustrated by the panegyrics of 297 and 298. The first of these honoured Constantius when celebrating his fifth year as Caesar. The orator, recalling the spring day in 293 when Constantius had been raised to the position, commented that the sun "struggled not to seem less brilliant than Your Majesty."[409] In a later passage, the orator claimed that Constantius and his corulers emitted from their eyes and from their mind's eye a light more powerful than the sun's, a light that had the power to heal the provinces of the empire.[410] Elsewhere in the oration, the healing powers of Constantius' imperial light were mentioned again. Britain had defected "from the light of Rome,"[411] but when Constantius overcame Allectus in 296, the Britons "were free at last, at last Romans, at last restored to life by the true light of empire."[412] When Constantius made his triumphal entry into London, it is said that the Britons worshipped him as though he had fallen from the heavens.[413]

Writing in 298, another panegyrist, Eumenius, expressed similar sentiments about Britain's fortune: "freed from the deepest abyss of suffering it has raised itself up to the vision of Roman light. . . . Thus in actual fact that golden age, which once flourished briefly when Saturn was king, is now reborn under the eternal auspices of Jupiter and Hercules."[414]

Propaganda similar to that expressed in these passages is found in material evidence also. The gold medallion of Arras, minted in 297, for example, shows Constantius approaching the walls of London on horseback after his victory over Allectus the previous year (Figure 72). He receives the homage

Figure 72. Constantius on horseback approaches the fortified city of London, in front of which kneels a personification of Britannia. Reverse of electrotype copy of gold medallion (10 *aurei*) minted in Trier. A.D. 297. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (B.11477).

Figure 73. Sculptured frieze showing a Caesar making a libation. The radiate head of Sol and the headless body of Roma reclining appear to the right of the scene. Decennalia base of the Five-Column Monument in the Roman Forum. © Jonathan Bardill.

of a personification (or Tyche) of London, who has thrown open the city gates to greet him. The legend reads REDDITOR LVCIS AETERNAE ("Restorer of eternal light"), again connecting the ruler with light and salvation.[415]

Constantius may appear in connection with Sol in a relief sculpture on the surviving base of the Five-Column Monument in the Roman Forum. The so-called Decennalia Base (that which bears on its front face the inscription CAESARVM DECENNALIA FELICITER) shows preparations for the public sacrifice of a bull, sheep, and pig (*suovetaurilia*).[416] On one side of the base, a Caesar (whose face is lost) is being crowned by Victory and the *genius* of the Senate (Figure 73). His head veiled, he stands at a lustral basin pouring a libation of wine on to the fire in the presence of Mars (the helmeted figure to the left of the scene), the goddess Roma (reclining, headless to the right of the scene), and the god Sol (whose radiate head is visible in the zodiac wheel held by Roma). The scene clearly conveys the importance of maintaining cultic traditions to ensure the support of the gods (including the god of war), whose favour could secure military success, the safety of the state, and the stability of the universe. The presence of Roma suggests that the main figure is likely to have been the Caesar of the West, Constantius Chlorus.[417] But even if the sacrificant is Constantius, Sol's presence alongside Roma need not imply a close personal connection between Constantius and Sol.

We can infer from the evidence presented previously that, although Sol was not important in the official Tetrarchic theology, there was nevertheless in Late Antiquity – as there had been under Aurelian, Augustus, and the earlier Hellenistic kings – a continuing association between the ruler, the sun, and a Golden Age of security and prosperity. The exploitation of this association by Constantius does not imply that he had a particular devotion to the sun-god, but it does make it understandable that Constantine

Figure 74. Sculptured frieze showing Maxentius' troops drowning in the River Tiber. Detail from the south façade of the Arch of Constantine, Rome. Ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

drew on the same tradition by turning to the sun-god himself.

Sol and the Victory over Maxentius

Whatever Constantine's source of inspiration, it was with the sun-god as his guardian that he set out to liberate Rome in 312. Although Licinius had been charged with that task, events in the East had distracted him,[418] and Constantine seized the opportunity to add Italy to the territories he had inherited from his father.

Maxentius' grandiose building projects in Rome had proved costly, and his financial difficulties had been exacerbated by the expense of buying off the troops of Severus and Galerius. The usurper's relations with the Roman people had begun to decline after he decided to increase revenue by imposing a tax on gold, and relations worsened still when the grain supply from Africa ceased temporarily in 308 because of rebellion.[419] To bolster his régime, Maxentius tried to gain the support of Rome's Christian community. Probably in 308 he followed Constantine's lead in granting Christian toleration, and around 311 he restored confiscated Christian property.[420] He also courted a wider audience with new coin types, which stressed his relationships by blood and marriage with deceased Tetrarchs. They referred to his divine relative by both blood and marriage, Constantius (DIVO CONSTANTIO COGN(ato); DIVO CONSTANTIO ADFINI), his divine father, Maximian (DIVO MAXIMIANO PATRI), and his divine father-in-law, Galerius (DIVO MAXIMIANO SOCERO).[421]

Expecting an attack by Licinius from Pannonia, Maxentius stationed his army in the northeast of Italy, perhaps near Aquileia.[422] Constantine, however, rejecting the advice of soothsayers who had detected unfavourable omens in the sacrifices (so an orator claimed, perhaps truthfully),[423] and leaving troops behind him to guard the Rhine frontier, crossed the Alps and made an unexpected attack from the northwest. Maxentius' Praetorian Prefect marched an army to Verona, but Constantine captured the city after a short siege, forcing Maxentius' troops to retreat to Rome.[424] Although Maxentius had rebuffed the attacks of Severus and Galerius by remaining behind Rome's formidable Aurelianic walls, which he himself had further raised and strengthened,[425] he could no longer rely on the support of the populace. He therefore decided to engage Constantine's forces on the Via Flaminia as they approached the capital from their camp (probably located at Malborghetto).

When the two armies met at Saxa Rubra on the morning of 28 October, Maxentius' troops were quickly forced back as far as the River Tiber. The Milvian Bridge had been deliberately destroyed to slow Constantine's advance, so Maxentius and his mounted bodyguard, the *Equites Singulares*, retreated

over a temporary pontoon bridge.[426] Constantine's victory was sealed without difficulty when the boats broke apart and Maxentius' forces plunged to watery deaths. Eusebius memorably compared the destruction of Maxentius' army with the dramatic moment when the Red Sea, having parted for Moses and the Israelites to pass safely, overwhelmed Pharaoh and his charioteers. The comparison suggested not only that Constantine was another Moses, bringing liberation and salvation to his people, but also that these Old Testament events had prefigured Constantine's victory.[427] The bloody reality is conveyed both by the frieze carved on the south face of the Arch of Constantine (Figure 74) and by Nazarius, in a panegyric he delivered in 321:

> I shall not mention here the banks covered with an unbroken line of carnage, nor the Tiber filled with heaps of bodies, moving along with weakened effort among the high-piled cadavers, its waters barely forcing their way through, that not a manly death but a shameful flight betrayed the tyrant himself when the bloody billows slew him in a demise worthy of his cowardice and cruelty.[428]

Thus, on 29 October 312, with Maxentius' severed head going before it on a pike, Constantine's army staged an entrance (*adventus*) into Rome.[429]

Constantine now set about tainting and erasing Maxentius' memory, as exemplified by the allusion to him in the inscription on the triumphal arch – "tyrant." The process began by forcing Maxentius' mother to swear publicly that he had been conceived in adultery, and continued with the destruction or appropriation of everything connected with him.[430] In particular, Constantine completed the building projects that Maxentius had begun in Rome – such as the Basilica of Maxentius, the temple of Venus and Roma, and the baths on the Quirinal – and claimed the finished structures as his own.[431] As we shall see, Constantine seems also to have demonstrated his contempt for the *Equites Singulares*, who had fought for Maxentius, by constructing the church of the Lateran over their former barracks and later by building Sts. Marcellinus and Peter over their graveyard.[432]

Figure 75. Gold medallion minted in Ticinum in A.D. 313. Obverse shows bust of Constantine overlapping a bust of Sol wearing a radiate crown. Reverse shows Constantine on horseback raising his right hand as Victory walks ahead. Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques, Bibliothèque nationale de France (Beistigui 233).

Having thoroughly dissociated himself from Maxentius, Constantine was in a position to contemplate rehabilitating the memory of his father-in-law, Maximian, whom he had branded a traitor and forced to commit suicide in 310. By 317–318, Constantine was bolstering his legitimacy by minting

Figure 76. Arch of Constantine, Rome. South façade. Ca. A.D. 315. © Jonathan Bardill.

coins alluding not only to his descent from the divine Claudius Gothicus and the divine Constantius, but also to his connection (by marriage) with the divine Maximian (*divus Maximianus*).[433]

In 313, soon after the victory over Maxentius, the mint of Ticinum, now under Constantine's control, demonstrated the close relationship between the emperor and his protective god by striking a fine gold medallion (Figure 75). On its obverse, the medallion shows a bust of Constantine overlapping a bust of Sol wearing the radiate crown.[434] Here the imperial portrait is placid, lacking the dynamic heavenward gaze that would appear from 324, but it is nevertheless of the youthful, beardless, and handsome type associated with Augustus, Alexander, and Apollo. The emperor carries a shield with a frontal view of Sol rising from the ocean in his four-horse chariot, his right arm raised in the fashion that had become the god's trademark since the late second century.[435] The depiction meant to suggest that Constantine's rise to power recalled the daily rise of the sun-god and heralded a new era. The reverse of the medallion bears the legend FELIX ADVENTVS AVGG NN ("Happy entrance of our Augusti," the Augusti being Constantine and Licinius), and depicts Constantine according to the traditional iconography associated with the Late Antique *adventus*. He is mounted in military dress, holds a long sceptre in his left hand and raises his right hand, whilst his horse is guided by a winged Victory holding a laurel wreath.[436]

To commemorate Constantine's tenth year of rule (*decennalia*) in 315–316, and his earlier victory over Maxentius in 312, a triumphal arch was built by the Senate and people of Rome in the centre of the city, beside the Flavian Amphitheatre (known from the seventh century as the Colosseum) (Figures 76, 77).[437] The arch survives to this day as the most important monument of the Constantinian age. The inscription, identical on both façades of the arch, names the emperor as "Flavius Constantinus." Thus,

Figure 77. Arch of Constantine, Rome. North façade. Ca. A.D. 315. © Jonathan Bardill.

both the location of the monument and the inscription connected the new Flavian dynasty with the old, supporting Constantine's claim to legitimate rule.[438] The inscription also refers to Constantine as *Maximus Augustus*, a title that the Senate bestowed on him soon after the victory of 312 to affirm his seniority over his co-Augusti, Maximinus and Licinius.[439]

The narrative friezes on the arch are of Constantinian date and show, on the two sides (east and west) and on the façade facing away from the city (the south façade), various episodes in the emperor's campaign against Maxentius, including the departure (*profectio*) from Milan and march through northern Italy, the siege of Verona, scenes from the climactic battle at the Milvian Bridge, and the victorious entrance (*adventus*) into Rome.[440] In the frieze showing the siege of Verona (Figure 78), the emperor is shown much larger than the other figures, stretching out his right hand towards the besieged enemy inside the city walls.[441] This pose, as already noted, had long been associated with Sol in Roman art, and in this context the intention was apparently to assimilate Constantine with his protective deity and to suggest that the emperor overcame the enemy with some kind of supernatural or magical power.[442]

The scenes prominently located on the façade of the arch facing the city (the north façade) depict the emperor's civilian virtues: his standing address (*adlocutio*) from the Rostra and his enthroned distribution of largesse (*congiarium*) to the people in the Roman Forum.[443] In both of these friezes, in a manner familiar from the Arch of Galerius, the emperor is shown centrally and frontally to demonstrate his superior status above other mortals.[444] The *adlocutio* scene is striking since it shows the emperor (now headless) standing on the Rostra before the

Figure 78. Sculptured frieze showing Constantine and his troops at the siege of Verona. Detail from the south façade of the Arch of Constantine, Rome. Ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

Five-Column Monument of the Tetrarchs (Figure 79). The setting has been interpreted as a demonstration of Constantine's overthrow of the old régime and its ideology, although it is likely that while creating a distinctive image for himself, Constantine would have wanted to take whatever legitimacy he could get from his connections with the Tetrarchic establishment.[445] Constantine is shown between two seated statues of earlier "good" emperors – presumably Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius – perhaps to suggest that he shared their favourable characteristics.[446] The distinctive triple opening of Septimius Severus' triumphal arch (on which Constantine's own arch was modelled) is prominently shown to the right of the Rostra, and suggests an affinity between Constantine and another great ruler of the past.[447] As for the panel showing Constantine distributing coins (Figure 80), it depicts the emperor as the man who brought peace to Rome, for here he wears not military dress as elsewhere, but the civilian toga.[448]

Figure 79. Sculptured frieze showing Constantine (headless) standing on the Rostra in the Roman Forum. Detail from the north façade of the Arch of Constantine, Rome. Ca. A.D. 315. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. Faraglia, neg. D-DAI-ROM-32.10 (left); Faraglia, neg. D-DAI-ROM-32.9 (right).

Figure 80. Sculptured frieze showing Constantine (headless) enthroned distributing money. Detail from the north façade of the Arch of Constantine, Rome. Ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

The sculptures on the arch assimilate the emperor to Sol not only by showing him imitating the god's raised right hand, but also by indicating that he shares something of the god's radiant nature. Although Constantine is not represented on the arch wearing a radiate crown, he and his father are shown with another attribute – the nimbus (literally "cloud"), which was shown as a circle inscribed around the head.[449] Constantine can be seen with the attribute on two reworked roundels of Hadrianic date (one showing him hunting a boar, the other hunting a lion; Figure 81), and Constantius' head is clearly framed by a nimbus on roundels where he appears sacrificing to Apollo (Figure 150 on p. 231) and Hercules (Figure 158 on p. 237).

In his commentary on Vergil's *Aeneid*, Servius explained that "properly a nimbus is that which is formed to surround the heads of gods or rulers as if with a bright mist."[450] By the reign of Tiberius, when the historian Velleius Paterculus was writing, the nimbus was apparently interpreted as promising future imperial power, for Paterculus claims that when Octavian arrived in Rome after Caesar's murder, men saw the orb of the sun above his head like a crown, in a regular circle and in the colour of a rainbow.[451] Here the solar connotation of the nimbus is made perfectly clear, although it must be stressed that it was never an attribute of Sol unless it was accompanied by rays. The nimbus appeared for the first time around the head of an emperor on reverses of *aurei* and *sestertii* minted under Antoninus Pius.[452] However, the attribute was not commonly used until the Tetrarchic period. The panegyrist of 289 described the nimbus around the head of Maximian as "that light which surrounds your head with a shining orb";[453] at the temple in Luxor, four nimbate portraits of Tetrarchs were painted in the sanctuary (Figure 65);[454] in 297 a gold multiple was minted in Trier showing two enthroned, nimbate emperors, presumably to be identified as Diocletian (to the left) and Maximian (to the right);[455] and from 305, Trier minted gold multiples showing on the reverse the nimbate Caesars Constantius and Galerius sacrificing before a temple.[456] More striking, however, are the gold coins showing Constantine's nimbate bust that were minted in 315–317 in commemoration of the emperor's *decennalia* and of his victory over Maxentius in 312 (Figure 82). The timing of their issue may suggest that the nimbus was being used here, as on the contemporary arch in Rome, to

Figure 81. Head of Constantine with nimbus. Roundel showing a boar hunt on the north face of the Arch of Constantine. Hadrianic, reworked ca. A.D. 315. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. Neg. D-DAI-ROM-2007.0001.

indicate that the emperor shared the radiance of the sun-god, who was his protector and had granted him victory.[457]

On some of the sculpture that was newly carved for Constantine's arch, the sun-god appears in person. On the west side of the east passage, there is a bust of Sol radiating light from his head, raising his right hand, and carrying a globe in his left (Figure 83). The image is balanced on the east wall of the passage by a bust of the emperor being crowned by Victory, with his right hand raised, and probably originally with a globe in his left (Figure 84).[458] There could hardly be a more deliberate evocation of the similarity and intimate connection between the emperor and his chosen god. Sol features yet again in the historical frieze on the west side of the arch and in a relief on a column-base. Both of these carvings show soldiers in procession carrying poles

Figure 82. Frontal portrait of Constantine with nimbus. Obverse of gold *solidus* minted in Ticinum. A.D. 316. Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford (HCR 4854).

topped by small statues of the gods, including Sol (Figure 85).[459]

Unlike the eight roundels of the façades, which were reused antiquities, the two on the east and west sides of the arch were carved specifically for the project. That on the east side shows Sol ascending from the ocean in his four-horse chariot (Figure 86). It is balanced by the roundel on the west side, which depicts the descent of the chariot of the moon goddess, Luna (Figure 87).[460] The significance of the pairing of Sol and Luna has already been noted in the context of Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*, and it is demonstrated by coins on which Aeternitas (Eternity) is depicted. From the time of Vespasian onwards Aeternitas is regularly shown holding a bust of Sol in one hand and a bust of Luna in the other (Figure 88). Sol and Luna were therefore connected with the concept of the eternity of the emperor (*Aeternitas Augusti*), hence with the predictable cycle of death and rebirth, with light and darkness, and with the emergence of a new age.[461] The two roundels are carefully positioned so that Luna appears over a frieze showing Constantine setting out from Milan, whereas Sol appears above a frieze showing his entrance into Rome following his victory over Maxentius. Sol is present not only to suggest eternity but also in his capacity as the emperor's protective solar god. His position directly over a frieze showing the emperor entering Rome in a carriage after the defeat of Maxentius is apparently meant to imply a close relationship between the victory, the emperor, the sun-god, and the dawn of a new era (Figure 89). The former association of Constantine with Hercules is disregarded.[462]

The arch as a whole was further connected with Sol by being located in such a way that the central archway aligned with the front of Nero's colossal statue of the sun-god, which had been relocated by Hadrian to a position in front of the temple of Venus and Roma.[463] When standing at a distance of about 35 m to the south of the arch, the viewer would have been able to see the entire statue framed in its central opening (Figure 90).[464]

Whether this alignment was due to Constantine, however, is not entirely certain, since it is not impossible that an existing but unfinished arch was brought to completion in Constantine's honour. Some scholars claim that the haphazard way in which Constantine's workmen inserted the Trajanic frieze into the central passageway indicates that the arch had not been designed to accommodate it and must therefore have been started sometime before 312–315.[465] Yet the indiscriminate mixing of different types of white marble in the structure suggests that the arch is Late Antique rather than Classical.[466] Thus, if there is any truth in claims that an existing but incomplete arch was finished after the victory of 312, then it is most likely that the monument had been started under Maxentius, perhaps in celebration of his victories over Severus and Galerius, or perhaps daringly in anticipation of future victories over Constantine and Licinius.[467]

It seems likely that under Maxentius, the Colossus had been rededicated to Romulus, the usurper's eldest son, who had died and been appointed a god in 309. Whether the rededication involved substituting the head of the statue for a likeness of Romulus we do not know, although a reference in Nazarius' panegyric of 321 to Maxentius' "ugly erasure of the divine visage" has been taken to indicate that it did.[468] The massive marble inscription that is our only evidence for Maxentius' rededication of the Colossus was discovered in fragments in the roof of the attic

Figure 83. Sol wearing *chlamys* and radiate crown, with right arm raised. West side of the east passage of the Arch of Constantine. Ca. A.D. 315. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. Felbermeyer, neg. D-DAI-ROM-35.605.

of Constantine's triumphal arch, and this suggests that Constantine undid Maxentius' reattribution of the statue as part of a general condemnation of the memory of Maxentius and his son after the victory of 312.[469] If Maxentius had begun construction of the arch intending to create an architectural frame for the statue of Romulus, then Constantine robbed him not only of the Colossus but also of the arch itself, which he completed, incorporating in its attic the Maxentian inscription from the Colossus. We can only assume that under Constantine the Colossus was rededicated to the solar deity, whom he had chosen as his protective god. We know that there was a fourth-century ceremony in honour of Sol that commemorated the crowning of the Colossus.[470]

Constantine's Luminosity and Relationship to Sol

The nature of the intimate relationship between Constantine and his god was expressed clearly on gold *solidi* struck at Ticinum, Arles, Thessaloniki, Aquileia, Sirmium, and Antioch between mid- or late 316 and late 324 or early 325. On the reverse, the *solidi* bore the legends, "To Sol, protector of our Augustus" (SOLI COMITI AVG N), "To Sol, protector of Constantine Augustus" (SOLI COMITI CONSTANTINI AVG) or "Perpetual happiness of the age" (FELICITAS PERPETVA SAECVLI), and showed Sol Invictus presenting the globe, surmounted by a figure of Victory, to Constantine (Figure 91).[471] Other *solidi* from Ticinum and Sirmium

Figure 84. Constantine, with right arm raised in imitation of Sol, is crowned by Victory. East side of the east passage of the Arch of Constantine. Ca. A.D. 315. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. Felbermeyer, neg. D-DAI-ROM-35.609.

Figure 85. Column-base relief from the Arch of Constantine showing soldiers carrying poles topped by small statues of the gods. The god held by the soldier on the right is Sol. Ca. A.D. 315. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. Felbermeyer, neg. D-DAI-ROM-35.622.

carried the reverse legend, "To the Unconquered Sol, the protector" (SOLI INVICTO COMITI) and showed Constantine being crowned by the Unconquered Sun (Figure 92).[472] Neither reverse type was completely new, although they had not been used for decades. Aurelian, as we have seen, had been shown receiving the globe from Sol, but not since the reign of Probus over forty years earlier had an emperor been shown being crowned by Sol.[473] The images and legends on Constantine's coins gave a clear indication that the emperor believed it was the solar deity who had granted him his victories over Maxentius in 312 and Licinius in 324, and the consequent unrivalled control of the Roman world.[474]

Constantine declared his belief in divine election in a letter addressed to Aelafius (who was perhaps *vicarius* of Africa) in about 314. He asserted that his god had "by his celestial nod committed the regulation of all things earthly to him."[475] Writing a decade later to the eastern provincials, Constantine explained his election on the grounds that his god "examined my service and approved it as fit for his own purposes."[476] Eusebius, taking his usual Christian viewpoint, commented on the importance of such heavenly approval thus: "In such a way then did God, the President of the whole world, of his own will select Constantine, sprung from such a father [i.e., Constantius], as universal ruler and governor, that no man could claim the precedence which he alone possessed, since the rest owed the rank they held to election by others."[477] In short, no one, whether selected by an emperor or by the army, could have more right to rule than a man who was not only the son of an emperor but also elected by the Supreme Deity.

In inscriptions and texts of various dates, Constantine was described, like the Tetrarchs, as possessing a salvific luminosity. In particular we may note an inscription on the base of an imperial statue erected in Leptis Magna in North Africa between 324 and 326. The text refers to Constantine's "marble statue radiating with his divinity" (*statua[m] marmoream suo numine radiantem*).[478] It would appear from this text that because Constantine had adopted a solar deity as his protector, he was perceived as having derived from that god a certain degree of divine power (*numen*), which he then emanated. It has been assumed that this statue showed the emperor wearing a radiate crown. Be that as it may, the inscription

Figure 86. Sol ascending from the ocean in a four-horse chariot. Roundel, east side of Arch of Constantine. Ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

evokes luminous divinity, a concept that is relevant in interpreting the bronze radiate statue of Constantine erected in 330 in Constantinople.[479]

Eusebius closely associates the emperor's brilliance with his belief in the Christian God.[480] When describing the changes that Constantine made after his victory of 312, the bishop of Caesarea wrote in the *Life of Constantine*: "Just as the sun rises and spreads its beams of light over all, so also Constantine shone forth with the rising sun from the imperial palace, as though ascending with the heavenly luminary, and shed upon all who came before his face the sunbeams of his own generous goodness."[481] Later in the same work, Eusebius claimed that Licinius had considered launching a persecution of the Christians, and that "there would have been nothing to prevent his putting it into immediate effect, had not the Champion of his own people [i.e., God] anticipated the event, and lit a great lantern in the darkness and blackest night, when he guided to these parts his servant Constantine."[482] Eusebius then pondered the consequences of Constantine's overthrow of Licinius:

> Now that the evil men were removed, the sunlight shone, purified at last of dictatorial tyranny. The whole Roman dominion was joined together, the peoples of the east being united with the other half, and the whole body was orderly disposed by the single universal government acting as its head, the authority of a single ruler reaching every part. Bright beams of the light of true religion brought shining days to those who before had "sat in darkness and the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79/Isaiah 9:1).[483]

Figure 87. Luna descending in two-horse chariot. Roundel, west side of Arch of Constantine. Ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

Similar sentiments suggesting the dawning of a new Golden Age are found in the climactic passages of the final edition of the *Church History*, added soon after the victory over Licinius:

> Men had now lost all fear of their former oppressors; day after day they kept dazzling festival; light was everywhere, and men who once dared not look up greeted each other with smiling faces and shining eyes. They danced and sang in city and country alike, giving honour first of all to God our Sovereign Lord, as they had been instructed, and then to the pious emperor with his sons, so dear to God. Old troubles were forgotten, and all irreligion passed into oblivion; good things present were enjoyed, those yet to come eagerly awaited. In every city the victorious emperor published decrees full of humanity and laws that gave proof of munificence and true piety. Thus all tyranny had been purged away, and the kingdom that

was theirs was preserved securely and without question for Constantine and his sons alone.[484]

The following year (325) was the occasion of the Council of Nicaea, and Eusebius describes Constantine entering the synod "like some heavenly angel, his bright mantle shedding lustre like beams of light, shining with the fiery radiance of a purple robe, and decorated with the brilliance of gold and precious stones."[485] Later, upon his baptism, the emperor is said to have been "renewed and filled with divine light" and to have "put on bright imperial clothes which shone like light" as if reflecting the light of the faith into which he had been initiated.[486] Elsewhere, in his oration *In Praise of Constantine*, Eusebius describes the emperor's brilliant light being transmitted to the provinces by the four Caesars who were yoked to his solar chariot.[487] A similar view is expressed at the beginning of the *Life of Constantine*, where Eusebius speaks of the light of the deceased emperor being spread through the world by his three sons.[488] A little later in the *Life*, Eusebius describes Constantine as "the only one of the widely renowned Emperors of all time whom God set up as a huge luminary (*phōstēra*) and loud-voiced herald of unerring godliness."[489]

Comparable claims about Constantine's radiant nature were made by other authors. Writing in 321, the orator Nazarius observed that confronting an emperor would normally result in blindness, as when the eyes are turned towards the sun. Here we are reminded of the warning of Ecphantus that usurpers would be blinded by the power of pure royal light: the echo is another illustration of the persistence into Late Antiquity of traditional theories on kingship. However, Nazarius went on to observe with surprise that Constantine emitted a serene light that did not avert the onlooker.[490] The Christian poet Publilius Optatianus Porfyrius also emphasized Constantine's role as a bringer of light, describing him as "the golden light of the world" (*lux aurea mundi*), "the unique light of the world" (*lux unica mundi*), "the dutiful light of the world" (*lux pia terrarum*), or "the golden light of the age" (*lux aurea saecli*).[491] However, such imagery was turned against the emperor following the terrible events of 326, when

Figure 88. A personification of the emperor's eternity (*Aeternitas Augusti*) holds a bust of Sol in her right hand and a bust of Luna in her left. Silver *denarius* minted in Rome under Hadrian. A.D. 118. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1912,0710.84).

Crispus, Constantine's first son, was executed and Fausta, Constantine's second wife, died in strange circumstances. According to Sidonius Apollinaris, writing around 477, the following verses were pinned to the gates of the imperial palace: "Who would now want the golden age of Saturn? Ours is a diamond age – of Nero's pattern."[492] The Golden Age that Constantine's reign had promised now seemed to be as tarnished as that over which the insane emperor Nero had claimed to preside.

Whilst such claims of imperial luminosity were commonplace in Late Antique panegyric and were in fact prescribed as a component of ruler praise by Menander Rhetor in the late third century,[493] they had added force in the context of an emperor who had adopted a solar protector as early as 310 and who would erect a prominent radiate statue in 330.

The Import of Constantine's Radiate Statue

Let us return to the radiate statue of Constantine erected in Constantinople in 330, and to the bronze statue of either Constantine or Constantius II erected

Figure 89. Roundel showing Sol ascending from the ocean in a four-horse chariot above frieze of Constantine's entry into Rome. East side of Arch of Constantine. Ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

Figure 90. Nero's colossal radiate statue viewed from the south through the Arch of Constantine. A. Tayfun Öner.

Figure 91. Sol Invictus presenting the globe to Constantine. Reverse of gold coin minted in Arles. A.D. 317. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (R.154).

Figure 92. Sol Invictus crowning Constantine. Reverse of gold coin minted in Sirmium. A.D. 321. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (R.160).

in Rome (which, judging by the hairstyle, appears to have been made after 330). It seems that both the former statue, which was radiate, and possibly the latter, if it too were radiate, are best understood in the light of the coins and texts we have been discussing. With the crown of rays on his head, Constantine was demonstrating that he shared the luminosity of the Supreme Deity under whose protection he ruled. With the globe in one hand and the spear in the other, Constantine was indicating that military victory and world rule were the rewards granted by his solar protector. Taken together, his youthful coin portraits, his heavenward gaze, his adoption of the diadem, and his sporting of the radiate crown suggest that Constantine saw his solar election in terms of the philosophies of kingship set out by the likes of Ecphantus, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom, according to which the ruler was brought down from heaven as a light-stream from the sun, looked to heaven for guidance, imitated on earth the heavenly government, reflected the sun's light on his people, and brought them liberty and salvation. As we have seen, the persistence of such thinking can be traced in the works of Late Antique writers when they describe the emperor as participating in the divine force (*numen*) emanating from his protective deity and as generating a salvific light.[494] Indeed, Constantine himself, when writing to the king of Persia after 324, could claim, "I participate in the light of truth. Led by the light of truth I recognize the divine faith."[495]

A further indication that Constantine's statue signified freedom, salvation, and the dawn of a brilliant new age is its similarity to the colossal radiate statues in Rhodes and Rome, the former heralding a new era of peace on land and sea under the protection of the sun-god, the latter intimately connected with the idea of a Neronian Golden Age. A third precedent for Constantine's statue was that of Octavian erected on the Palatine. Set up after the victory at Actium, the monument is likely to have been closely associated with the Augustan Golden Age, and it was given a radiate crown after Augustus' posthumous divinization.

However, we do not have to rely completely on inferences from philosophical texts and comparable monuments to gain insight into the meaning of Constantine's statue. Writing in the sixth century A.D., Hesychius wrote of "the notable porphyry column on which we see Constantine set up, shining forth to his citizens in the manner of the sun" (καὶ ὁ πορφυροῦς καὶ περίβλεπτος κίων, ἐφ᾽ οὗπερ ἱδρῦσθαι Κωνσταντῖνον ὁρῶμεν δίκην ἡλίου προλάμποντα τοῖς πολίταις).[496] Hesychius does not claim that the radiate statue represents a pagan solar deity, such as Sol or Apollo, nor does he assert that the statue represents Constantine claiming to be a solar deity. Rather, he explains that the statue represents the emperor himself casting a beneficial light on his subjects in imitation of the sun – an interpretation of the statue that accords with the suggestion that Constantine styled himself not as a ruler appointed by men but as a king appointed by the solar deity to represent that deity on earth.

It is conceivable that Hesychius' interpretation of the statue was not his own but was suggested to him by an inscription on the base of the column, since, according to Leo Grammaticus, who wrote in the mid-tenth century, the column bore an inscription reading, "To Constantine, shining in the manner of the sun" (Κωνσταντίνῳ λάμποντι ἡλίου δίκην).[497] An inscription was seen on the column base by Hans Dernschwam in the mid-sixteenth century, although we cannot be certain that it read as Leo claims.[498] It is, however, plausible that a text referring to the emperor's luminosity existed – especially given the evidence of the statue base from Leptis Magna with a text referring to Constantine "radiating with his divinity" (*suo numine radiantem*), and the evidence of an inscription hailing Nero as "the New Helios lighting the Hellenes" (νέος Ἥλιος ἐπιλάμψας τοῖς Ἕλλησιν).[499] The latter text may suggest that the inscription on the base of the porphyry column was longer than Leo indicates, and that it stated, as Hesychius claimed in his interpretation of the monument, that Constantine cast light on his citizens.

In the Constantinian period, an official inscription would have been in Latin, not Greek, but it is likely that Leo has provided a (partial) translation of the original Latin text.[500] Theodor Preger concluded that such an inscription existed,[501] whereas Anatole Frolow claimed that it was a late invention (possibly of Leo himself) based on the wording of Hesychius.[502] Frolow's claim, however, is not highly convincing, since it is difficult to imagine why Leo would have wanted to invent such an inscription. A more plausible explanation is that there was indeed an inscription on the base of the column, that the source Hesychius consulted quoted it in full, that Hesychius himself chose to paraphrase the inscription given by his source as if it were his own interpretation of the statue, and that Leo referred directly or indirectly to the same source but, unlike Hesychius, made it clear that the words had been quoted from an inscription and possibly truncated the text.

An honorific inscription on the base of a column such as Constantine's would not have been remarkable – its absence would have been.[503] The Latin text, as Hesychius' Greek translation suggests, is likely to have been in the dative case, suggesting that the monument was dedicated to the emperor by the Senate and people of Constantinople.[504] It is possible that an inscription was considered necessary to prevent misinterpretations of the monument, since, however good the likeness of the emperor may have been, Constantine's radiate statue (like Nero's radiate statue in Rome) would have been susceptible to both a solar and an imperial interpretation from the time of its erection – particularly if it was naked, as the Peutinger Map suggests.[505]

On the Peutinger Map (Figure 24), the statue of the emperor is shown without the radiate crown known from our literary sources, raising the issue of the picture's reliability. However, traces of ink indicate that the column itself was originally, and correctly, coloured purple. Furthermore, the depiction of the statue accords with our textual descriptions in two respects: it shows Constantine holding a spear in one hand and a globe in the other (although admittedly not in the hands indicated by Anna Comnena – although she may have been mistaken).[506] The depiction may, therefore, be accurate in showing the emperor as naked, and we should consider this possibility alongside the option that the statue wore a military costume.[507] Indeed, had the statue been naked, it would be easy to understand how in the tenth century the author of the *Patria* could claim that Constantine had erected a statue of Apollo in his own name.[508] It is also not insignificant that surviving depictions of Nero's comparable colossal statue in Rome show it radiate and naked (Figure 40), given that the Roman statue may have provided Constantine with inspiration.[509]

In the fourth century B.C., Greek artists represented the great heroes of Classical mythology naked, with a cloak (*chlamys*) over the left arm or around the shoulders, and with a sword or spear. Because nudity was connected with athletics, it was associated in the Greek mind with youthful vigour, beauty, strength, virility, courage, and victory. Even at that time, the iconography could be applied to representations of real men, and it was used for the statues of victorious athletes and on the funerary monuments of those who had made heroic contributions during their lives. Later, naked statues with powerful musculature were used to represent Hellenistic kings and to suggest their dynamic, charismatic leadership – that is, to suggest that the leaders had been elected to a large degree because of their personal qualities.[510] It was believed that, unlike ordinary mortals, the naked kings possessed the abilities essential to maintain the welfare of their subjects.[511]

In the second century B.C., native Roman gods came to be identified with Greek deities, and so the Roman pantheon became "Hellenized." As Rome extended its power, large numbers of statues of Greek gods came to Rome as plunder, and many would have been nude in the traditional Greek fashion. Furthermore, Greek sculptors working in Rome are likely to have styled the Roman cult images that they had been commissioned to make in the naked style with which they were familiar. Thus, Romans became accustomed to the Greek tradition, and Roman gods were often represented nude.[512]

As Rome's territories expanded in the East, the role of the former Hellenistic kings was assumed by Roman generals and governors, to whom the Greek cities quickly set up monuments as if they were heroes or kings. Grandiose royal titles formerly used by Hellenistic monarchs, such as *sōtēr* (saviour), *ktistēs* (founder), and *euergetēs* (benefactor), were bestowed on them.[513] As heroes, they were also granted statues in the nude, and to meet the demand statues of Hellenistic rulers were regularly rededicated in honour of powerful Romans.[514] Greeks in Rome in the early second century B.C. set up nude portraits in honour of prominent Romans, such as generals who had triumphed over the most powerful Hellenistic kings of the day.[515] However, it was not until the time of the Civil Wars and the Triumvirate that the Romans themselves adopted this type of portrait.[516] There emerged a number of charismatic leaders – such as Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Caesar, Antony, and Octavian – whose extraordinary achievements caused them to be portrayed in Rome in the nude.[517] For the Romans, as for the Greeks, the naked portrait was standard for the heroes of mythology, and when a Roman was represented in the nude, he was being styled not specifically as a Hellenistic king but more generally as a hero. Unlike statues clothed in togas or armour, those in the nude shifted the individual represented into the realm of myth and connected him with the likes of Achilles and Hercules, who represented strength, courage, and charisma.[518]

In Roman portraiture, there were essentially two variants of the nude statue.[519] One was the "hip-mantle" statue, which we will examine in Chapter 6 in the context of Constantine's colossal, enthroned statue in Rome. The other was a "fully nude" statue (that is, with the genitals exposed) in which the cloak, if present at all, was bunched on the left shoulder. This fully nude type was employed for Nero's Colossus, and the Peutinger Map would appear to indicate that it was also used for Constantine's statue on the porphyry column. This would not have been unparalleled in the period: in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums there are fragments of an over life-size, naked bronze statue of a Tetrarch, which was found in Adana (Figure 12).[520] Other naked statues of Tetrarchs, made of stone, have been found in Side and Perge. They were recut from statues of the early empire.[521] If the radiate statue in Constantinople had indeed been naked, it would have conferred a heroic status on the emperor, evoking the power of mythological heroes such as Hercules, of the renowned general Alexander the Great, and of the Hellenistic kings who succeeded him.[522]

The statue of Constantine that was placed on top of the porphyry column may have been looted from elsewhere, as some of our sources claim; and if the radiate crown was a part of the original sculpture it is possible that an imperial statue, a statue of a Hellenistic king, or a statue of a solar deity was reemployed.[523] Nevertheless, it is clear from our earliest texts concerning the statue that none of the authors had doubts about whom it was meant to represent. Every one – although they may have wondered about the statue's origin and original identification – knew that the statue was intended to be the emperor Constantine.[524] It is not until about 800 that the *Parastaseis* suggests that a story was circulating that the statue did not represent Constantine at all, but an unnamed "pagan"; that claim is firmly denied.[525] The presence on the base of the column of an inscription naming Constantine, such as that preserved in Hesychius and Leo Grammaticus, might help explain the consensus of earlier sources regarding the imperial identification.[526]

Since the inscription appears simply to compare rather than identify Constantine with the sun-god, we should reject Preger's claim that the radiate statue represented Helios and that Constantine was identifying himself with the god.[527] A further indication that the statue did not represent the Sun is that it wore neither the *chlamys* nor *chitōn* associated with the sun-god, and held a spear, which was not an attribute of Sol. This was, therefore, a statue of Constantine sporting certain attributes of Sol, not a statue of Constantine as Sol. However, it would be too simplistic to assert that Constantine's statue neither showed nor was understood as showing the emperor as a god. Because Constantine shared in the divine light and divine power (*numen*) of his protective deity, viewers of his statue might (like the panegyrists) have perceived the emperor as divine in his own right, even though that was not something unequivocally indicated by the statue's iconography or by the inscription on its base. Constantine's close association with the sun-god is likely – from the perspective of a pagan viewer at least – to have conferred on him a degree of divinity. Indeed, the pagan citizens of Termessos in Pisidia did not hesitate to dedicate a statue "to Constantine Augustus the all-seeing sun" (Κωνσταντείνῳ Σεβ(αστῷ) Ἡλίῳ παντεπόπτῃ).[528] Although from a Christian viewpoint there could be only one superhuman God, from a pagan perspective divine honours of varying degree could be conferred upon a man (especially the emperor) to express his status above the masses.[529] Therefore, the pagan viewer of the radiate and possibly naked statue of Constantine in Constantinople is likely to have inferred a degree of divinity – divinity derived from the solar deity whose rays the emperor reflected on earth. The precise nature of the solar deity whose light Constantine claimed to be reflecting upon his citizens cannot and could not be assessed from the statue alone. Some Christians might therefore have accepted this statue as a representation of the emperor radiating the light of the Christian God. As we shall see later, other Christians, like the pagans of Termessos, may have gone much further in assigning divinity to Constantine himself.

Notes

1 Philostorgius, *Church History* 2.9, ed. Bidez and Winkelmann 1981, 20–21, trans. Walford 1855, 438, trans. Amidon 2007, 25; Dagron 1984b, 31–32; La Rocca 1993, 564–65.

2 On the events of 11 May 330, see Dagron 1984b, 37–42. Wortley 2001, 366 discusses the coincidence of the dedication with the feast of St. Mokios. La Rocca 1993, 561–62, points out that the *ludi florales* occupied the days between 21 April and 11 May, and suggests this, rather than the feast of St. Mokios, determined the date of dedication.

3 For the date, see Cameron and Herrin 1984, 17–29 with the revisions of Berger 1988, 40–49.

4 In particular, doubts have been expressed about the claim that the statue was acclaimed with one hundred cries of "*Kyrie eleison*." Cameron and Herrin 1984, 244–45, have suggested that the claim is the work of a Christianizing editor of the seventh century who substituted the cry for what had been imperial acclamations.

5 *Parastaseis* 56, ed. and trans. in Cameron and Herrin 1984, 130–34, 242–45. Theophanes, *Chronicle* ascribes the erection of the statue to A.M. 5821 (= A.D. 328/9) (ed. de Boor 1883–1885, 28, trans. Mango and Scott 1997, 46), but this date is evidently incorrect, since Theophanes, like the author of the *Parastaseis*, links the event with the dedication of Constantinople, which is known to have taken place on 11 May 330. Work on the column and statue may have begun in 328 when Constantine "made visitations for a long time to Byzantium," according to the *Chronicon Paschale*, A.D. 328, ed. Dindorf 1832, I, 527–28, trans. Whitby and

Whitby 1989, 15–16. We need not accept the speculative claim of Speck 1995, 148, 160–68, that the statue of Constantine was only erected under Constantius, the column having originally carried a cross: compare also Bauer 2001, 33 with n. 22. As to the statue being praised as the *tychē* of Constantinople, see Dagron 1984b, 43–45; Bühl 1995, 27–29.

6 Fowden 1991, 124 (followed by Potter 2004, 386) accepts claims that the drums of the porphyry column were reused and had been brought from Rome (as asserted by *Patria* 3.132, ed. Preger 1901–1907, 257; *Diegesis* 2, ed. Preger 1901–1907, 76; Georgius Monachus, ed. de Boor and Wirth 1978, 500–501). Others have expressed doubts, since such claims are typical of the patriographic tradition (Mango 1993, art. III, 5–6). In the seventh and eighth centuries, when there were few resources for major artistic and architectural undertakings, it was commonly assumed and asserted that monuments from earlier periods, too, had been made by reusing salvaged materials. Therefore, we cannot be certain as to the reliability of our texts when they suggest that the column drums were not newly quarried for the purpose. Compare also Bassett 2004, 201.

7 See the comments of Mango 1965, 310–13, observing that no porphyry drums are said to have fallen when the statue was blown down in 1106, and that the proportions of the shaft are normal.

8 Hallett 2005, 268, wrongly states, "The column collapsed in 1106"; only the statue fell at that date.

9 Robert Ousterhout, among others, inspected the summit of the column during the recent restoration (2003–2009), and we await the publication of his observations.

10 On the album containing this drawing and the drawing itself, see Mango 1965, 305–13 with fig. 1.

11 The excavations were regrettably never published by the Danish project leader Carl Vett. However, a short account was published by his technical advisor Ernest Mamboury (1955), whose article should be supplemented with his important drawings, which were published in Mango 1981, pl. 18, with commentary.

12 See Mango 1965, 306–13; Mango 1993, art. III; Fowden 1991, 125–31; Leeb 1992, 12–17, who rightly argues against Karayannopoulos' claim that the statue had not a radiate crown but a bejewelled diadem (Karayannopoulos 1956); Bauer 1996, 173–77; Bergmann 1998, 284–87; Tantillo 2003, 1039–1045; Bassett 2004, 192–204 (no. 109); Barnes 2011, 23–25.

13 The reconstruction follows Anna Comnena's description in placing the globe in the left hand. While it is certainly possible (as Barnes 2011, 24 asserts) that Anna was mistaken and that the Peutinger Map is correct in showing the spear in the left hand and the globe in the right, the monumental bronze in the Musei Capitolini has a left hand cupped to hold a globe, and it is possible that the Roman statue is indicative of the appearance of that in Constantinople.

14 Barnes 2011, 23–25.

15 Mango 1965, 308–11 with fig. 3, and, on the reliability of the drawing, Mango 1993, art. III, 1–2; Stichel 1994, 324–25, who observes that Hans Dernschwam, writing between 1553 and 1555, refers to decoration and an inscription on the base. Bergmann 1998, 287, points out that frontal portraits with radiate crowns generally show the rays not rising vertically but radiating around the head. She suspects Lorck misunderstood another attribute, although she does not suggest what that may have been.

16 On the Peutinger Map, see Weber 1976; Salway 2005.

17 Hijmans 2009, 543, argues for a crown with vertical rays and ribbons hanging behind on the speculative grounds that Constantine, having united the empire, would have wanted to draw a comparison with Augustus. A sixteenth-century drawing of the relief carvings on the column of Arcadius in the Freshfield Album (Bauer 1996, 179–82), shows a circular porticoed space with a central column, which may represent the forum and column of Constantine (although the porticoed area is curiously merged with the hippodrome). The depiction is too inaccurate to be of any use in establishing the appearance of Constantine's statue.

18 Hesychius, ed. Preger 1901–1907, 17; *Patria* 2.45, ed. Preger 1901–1907, 174; Anna Comnena, *Alexiad* 12.4, trans. Sewter 1969, 380. Hijmans 2009, 544, unconvincingly tries to explain away this evidence as a reflection of "Byzantine ignorance of Roman iconographic conventions," claiming to the contrary that Constantine was portrayed wearing a typically Roman radiate crown with vertical rays.

19 The claim that the statue was reused goes back to the sixth century. Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.7, ed. Dindorf 1831, 320, ed. Thurn 2000, 246, trans. Jeffreys and others 1986, 174, says that the statue had been brought to Constantinople from Ilion (Troy). The author of the *Chronicon Paschale*, A.D. 328, ed. Dindorf 1832, I, 528 (note also 573), trans. Whitby and Whitby 1989, 16, says that it came from Phrygia. The *Patria* 2.45, ed. Preger 1901–1907, 174 states the statue was one of Apollo erected in Constantine's own name. The claim that the statue had been reused is further elaborated by later authors, such as Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia*, ed. Bekker 1842, 87 and Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*, ed. Bekker 1838–1839, I, 518, who allege that it was a work of Pheidias from Athens. A reused statue is assumed by Mango 1963, 57; Fowden 1991, 125–26; Bergmann 1998, 286; Chuvin 2004, 36; Bassett 2004, 203–204.

20 Malalas, *Chronicle*, 12.20 ed. Dindorf 1831, 291–92, ed. Thurn 2000, 221–22, trans. Jeffreys and others 1986, 155; *Chronicon Paschale* ed. Dindorf 1832, I, 494–95.

21 Jucker 1983, 51 (Constantine); L'Orange and Unger 1984, 85, 135 (Constantius II); Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 152–55 (no. 123), pls. 153–54 (Constantine). Also Kleiner 1992, 440–41 with fig. 402; Ensoli 2000, 77; Presicce 2005, 150–53; Walter 2006, 16, figs. 163 and 164; Ruck 2007, 248–50.

22 Presicce 2005, 152–53, Marlowe 2006, 239 n. 39, and Ruck 2007, 248–50, rightly reject the suggestion of Ensoli 2000 that the head was once attached to the Colossus of Nero, on the grounds that it is far too small.

23 On Constantine's lengthening hair and heavier jowls, see Harrison 1967, 90–91; Wright 1987, 506–507. L'Orange 1947, 94, suggested that the longer hair was to be connected, ultimately, with the lion's mane of hair sported by Alexander, suggesting a divine connection. See, however, the remarks of Toynbee 1948, 161–62.

24 Ensoli 2000, 71, 78.

25 Fowden 1991, 127.

26 A useful catalogue of the attributes of Hellenistic kings is Svenson 1995. For radiate crowns, see pp. 19–23, 27, 70–73. The coins referred to appear in Svenson's catalogue as nos. 43 (Ptolemy III; see also Svoronos 1904, nos. 1117–19; Mørkholm 1991, no. 316 with p. 108; Smith 1988, pl. 75.9); 268 (Ptolemy V) (see also Svoronos 1904, nos. 1254, 1257, 1257; Mørkholm 1991, no. 323 with p. 110; Smith 1988, pl. 75.11); 273 (possibly Antiochus III); 275, 276 (Antiochus IV); 279 (Timarchus); 277 (Okkonapses); 280–81 (Demetrius I); 283 (Alexander Balas); 41 (Ptolemy VIII; see also Smith 1988, pl. 75.17); 284, 296–97 (Antiochus VI) (see also Mørkholm 1991, nos. 631–32 with p. 177; Smith 1988, pl. 76.16); 295 (Samos II); 278 (Alexander II); 285 (Antiochus VIII); 293 (Amyntas); 294 (Hermaios). Hijmans 2009, 519 incorrectly claims that "only five or six Hellenistic kings were actually portrayed radiate."

27 Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 28.

28 Nikomedes II of Bithynia (149–127), Ariarathes VI of Cappadocia (120–111), Seleukos VI (96–95), Antiochus XI (94), Philip I (94–83), Antiochus XII (87–84). On the title Epiphanes, see Smith 1988, 50 with n. 33; 42 with n. 91.

29 Stobaeus 4.7.27, ed. Hense 1909, 255; Dvornik 1966, 241.

30 Goodenough 1928, 75; Walbank 1984, 77–81.

31 Delatte 1942, 59–119.

32 Thesleff 1961, 45–116. See also Dvornik 1966, 246 (Archytas), 253 (Sthenidas), 260 n. 184 (Diotogenes and Ecphantus).

33 Stobaeus 4.7.64, ed. Hense 1909, 272.9–14, trans. Delatte 1942, 48, trans. Chesnut 1978, 1318–19 nn. 33, 34.

34 Stobaeus 4.7.64, ed. Hense 1909, 275.1–3, trans. Delatte 1942, 49, trans. Chesnut 1978, 1319 n. 35.

35 Stobaeus 4.7.64, ed. Hense 1909, 272.14–273.16, trans. Delatte 1942, 48, trans. Goodenough 1928, 76–77, trans. Chesnut 1978, 1319–20 n. 43.

36 Plutarch, *To the Untutored Ruler*, 5, ed. and trans. Fowler 1936, 64–67, trans. Goodenough 1928, 96–97.

37 Plutarch, *Aristides* 6, ed. and trans. Perrin 1914–1926, II, 228–31; Plutarch, *To the Untutored Ruler* 780e–781a, ed. and trans. Fowler 1936, 58–59; Chesnut 1978, 1323–24. Briefly on Plutarch's kingship theory, see Dvornik 1966, 542–49.

38 Dio Chrysostom, *Third Kingship Oration* 73–81, ed. and trans. Cohoon 1932, 138–43.

39 On the assimilation of the Ptolemaic ruler cult to the Pharaonic cult, see Dvornik 1966, 229–31.

40 Trans. Bevan 1927, 28, 30.

41 Trans. Bevan 1927, 263.

42 Tarn 1932.

43 Smith 1988, 42, is right to suggest a relationship between rays and the epithet Epiphanes, and in stating that rays do not indicate an assimilation of the king to Helios. He suggests that the rays "denoted the king's godlike brilliance" (p. 42) and "represent the radiance of royal-divine epiphany" (p. 44). Also, however, the king's relationship to the Supreme Deity needs to be recognized.

44 *Palatine Anthology* 6.171, ed. and trans. Paton 1916–1918, I, 386–87.

45 The most recent attempt to imagine the form of the statue is Hoepfner 2003, who argues for a youthful Helios in a running pose, naked except for a *chlamys*, with a whip in the left hand, a raised right arm with open hand, and a radiate crown. The head of the Colossus may be depicted on Rhodian coins: Mørkholm 1991, 90 (no. 239), 156 (no. 548); note also 163 (no. 586, probably inspired by Rhodian coins). Pollitt 1986, 55 with fig. 48 suggests that a marble head from Rhodes might have been modelled on the head of the Colossus. On the theory that the Colossus had a raised right arm, see also Hijmans 2009, 98–100. For a more general discussion of the statue, see Romer and Romer 1995, 25–47.

46 Alföldi 1935, 142–43.

47 Bergmann 1998, 118–21.

48 Hijmans 2009, 547–48.

49 Alföldi 1935, 142, accepts (contrary to Mommsen) the testimony of Florus 2.13.91, ed. and trans. Forster 1929, 296–97: "in the theatre he wore a crown adorned with rays." Weinstock 1971, 382, argues that Florus knew of a decree honouring Caesar with the radiate crown,

but that he confused it with the decree that Caesar's golden crown should be carried to the theatres. Note also Bastien 1992–1994, I, 104.

50 Weinstock 1971, 8–15; Liebeschuetz 1979, 83; Gosling 1986, 587.

51 The star of Venus had allegedly led Aeneas from Troy to Italy: Servius, *Commentary, Aeneid* 1.382, ed. Thilo 1878–1887, I, 129.

52 Weinstock 1971, 377 with pl. 25.16.

53 Weinstock 1971, 377–78.

54 Weinstock 1971, 378.

55 Clauss 1999, 46–53; Gradel 2002, 69–72; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 62–67 (esp. 66–67).

56 Price 1984, 25–40 (kings), 47–52 (private citizens); Fishwisk 1987–2005, I.1, 6–45.

57 Bowersock 1965, 12–13, 112–21; Price 1984, 42–47, 51; Beard, North, and Price 1998, I, 145–47. Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 46–51; Hallett 2005, 138.

58 Dvornik 1966, 488–90; MacCormack 1981, 95; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 51–55.

59 Weinstock 1971, 382–83 with n. 1.

60 Pliny, *Natural History* 2.23, ed. and trans. Rackham and Eichholz 1938–1962, I, 236–37; Dio Cassius 45.7.1, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, IV, 418–19; Servius, *Commentary, Aeneid* 8.681, ed. Thilo 1878–1887, II, 299–300; Scott 1941, 257–59; Weinstock 1971, 370–71; Clauss 1999, 57; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 74.

61 Pliny, *Natural History* 2.23, ed. and trans. Rackham and Eichholz 1938–1962, I, 236–37; Suetonius, *Caesar* 88, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 146–47; Servius, *Commentary, Eclogues* 9.46, ed. Thilo 1878–1887, III, 115–16; *RIC* I, Augustus no. 415; *BMC* I, Augustus no. 124; Bergmann 1998, pl. 19.9; Clauss 1999, 58; Hallett 2005, 229–30. For coins showing the bust of Caesar wearing the "comet-diadem" see L'Orange 1947, 53 with fig. 29i; Bergmann 1988, pl. 19.8.

62 Servius, *Commentary, Aeneid* 8.681, ed. Thilo 1878–1887, II, 299–300; Scott 1941, 257–59; Alföldi 1935, 149 n. 2, suggests a connection between Augustus' use of the star on his helmet and Constantine's similar use of the Christogram. In general on Octavian's use of the star, see Zanker 1988, 34–36.

63 Gosling 1986; Pollini 1990. For a general discussion of Augustus' association with Apollo, see Liebeschuetz 1979, 83–90; Fears 1981, 56–66; Galinsky 1996, 213–24; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 80–82 (Octavian), 87–88 (Augustus).

64 Pliny, *Natural History* 37.10, ed. and trans. Rackham and Eichholz 1938–1962, X, 170–71.

65 Suetonius, *Augustus* 70, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 254–57; Gurval 1995, 94–98.

66 Velleius Paterculus 2.81.3, ed. and trans. Shipley 1924, 222–23; Dio Cassius 49.15.5 and 53.1.3, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, V, 372–73 and VI, 194–95; Suetonius, *Augustus* 29.1–3, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 192–95; Propertius, *Elegies* 2.31.5–6 and 15–16, ed. and trans. Goold 1990, 226–29 (on the cult statue). On the circumstances of the temple's construction, see Gurval 1995, 111–31; Hekster and Rich 2006.

67 Suetonius, *Augustus* 18, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 174–75.

68 *BMC* I, Augustus no. 95; Zanker 1988, 85 with fig. 68.

69 Pliny, *Natural History* 36.4.36, ed. and trans. Rackham and Eichholz 1938–1962, X, 28–29.

70 Statue of Apollo: Pliny, *Natural History* 34.18.43, ed. and trans. Rackham and Eichholz 1938–1962, IX, 158–59. Statue of Augustus: Servius, *Commentary, Eclogues* 4.10, ed. Thilo 1878–1887, III, 46; Scholion on Horace, *Epistles* 1.3.15, ed. Botschuyver 1935–1942, IV, 338. Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 81–83, considers the statue to have been one of Augustus and suggests that it was not placed in the temple itself so as to avoid claims that Augustus aspired to divinity whilst alive. Champlin 2003, 142, thinks the statue must have shown Apollo playing the cithara. Hallett 2005, 247.

71 Zanker 1988, 50 with details on 98–100.

72 On the so-called Actium or Octavian portrait type (which in fact appeared several years before Actium), see Galinsky 1996, 169–73. Also Kleiner 1992, 63; Smith 1988, 137–39.

73 Dio Cassius 45.1.2–3, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, IV, 406–409; Suetonius, *Augustus* 94.4, 94.6, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 286–89; Weinstock 1971, 14; Zanker 1988, 67–69, 89, 94, 242; Gurval 1995, 100–102; Galinsky 1996, 332, 346–49, 383–84; Wildfang 2000; Champlin 2003, 140–41.

74 Ferguson 1975, 169–70; Zanker 1988, 169–72; Galinsky 1996, 102–105; Hijmans 2009, 549–66.

75 Propertius, *Elegies* 2.31.9–11, ed. and trans. Goold 1990, 227–29.

76 Weinstock 1971, 379 with pl. 28.8–9.

77 Brent 1999, 64–66.

78 On the monument, see briefly Claridge 2010, 207–13. On the iconography, see briefly Zanker 1988, 172–83.

79 Pollini 1993, 201; Castriota 1995, 6, 21, 122, 134.

80 Pollini 1993, 197–99; Castriota 1995, 134.

81 Pollini 1993, 206 n. 149; Castriota 1995, 5–6, 27, 63–66, 73, 110–11, 134, 139, 168 (stressing that swans were symbols of Venus also).

82 Briefly, Claridge 2010, 214–16.

83 Davies 2000, 13–19, 76–78, 93–101; Rehak 2006, 62–95; Heslin 2007, 16.

84 Humphrey 1986, 269–72.

85 Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 72; Gradel 2002, 112, 143.

86 Vergil, *Georgics* 1.24–42, ed. and trans. Fairclough 1934–1935, I, 82–83; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 79; Brent 1999, 57–58.

87 Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 83–93. On the *pulvinar* in the Circus Maximus, see Humphrey 1986, 78–83 and Rodríguez 2005. Gradel 2000, 8–13 (on the distinction between state cults and private worship) and 234–50 (on the meaning of *numen*).

88 Dvornik 1966, 493–94; Price 1984, 226–27; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 90–93; Gradel 2002, 110–12.

89 Clauss 1999, 73–75; Gradel 2002, 271–82.

90 Manilius, *Astronomica* 4.932–35, ed. and trans. Goold 1977, 296–97.

91 *RIC* I, Tiberius nos. 74–83. The depiction on coins of Roman rulers wearing the radiate crown is well discussed by Bastien 1982.

92 Weinstock 1971, 384. *RIC* I, Tiberius nos. 23 (bare headed with star), 70–73 (crown and star).

93 *RIC* II, 6, 114 and Vespasian nos. 119–20, Titus nos. 4, 10, 16. Without the crown on silver *denarii* minted in Brundisium or Rome between 32 and 29 B.C.: *RIC* I, Augustus 271. See also Bergmann 1998, 110 with n. 683; Hijmans 2009, 540, contrary to Zanker 1988, 41–42, who wrongly connects the monument with the victory at Naulochus.

94 *RIC* I, Tiberius no. 49; *BMC* I, Tiberius nos. 74–75; Bergmann 1998, pl. 20.3; Hallett 2005, pl. 133. On the statue at the Theatre of Marcellus dedicated by Julia and Tiberius, see Tacitus *Annals* 3.64, ed. and trans. Jackson 1931–1937, III, 622–25. Objecting to the identification with that statue, Hijmans 2009, 528–29.

95 Hijmans 2009, 81–82.

96 Hijmans 2009, 519–36.

97 Hijmans 2009, 542.

98 Hijmans 2009, 534.

99 Hijmans 2009, 82. Something similar to a tangible crown appears on the profile busts of Sol on the following Republican coins: Crawford 1974 nos. 303/1, 390/1, 437/1a, 463/4b, 474/5, 494/20a, 496/3, 533/2 (also Bergmann 1998, pl. 6.4a–b).

100 Dio Cassius 61.20, ed. and trans. Carey 1914–1927, VIII, 80–81.

101 *RIC* I, Nero nos. 73–82, 121–23, 205–12, 380–81, 384–85, 414–17, 451–55; Bergmann 1998, pl. 36.1–5.

102 Suetonius, *Nero* 25.2 and 53, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, II, 122–23, 176–77.

103 Lucan, *Civil War* (*Pharsalia*) 1.45–66, ed. and trans. Duff 1928, 6–7; Champlin 2003, 114–15, 134–35.

104 Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 4, ed. and trans. Rouse 1969, 444–47; Champlin 2003, 116.

105 Suetonius, *Nero* 21.2, 39.2, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, II, 112–13; Champlin 2003, 116.

106 Dio Cassius 63.6, ed. and trans. Carey 1914–1927, VIII, 144–45; Champlin 2003, 126–27. An alleged depiction in Althaus and Sutcliffe 2006, 140 no. 35.

107 *RIC* I, Nero nos. 109, 111–16, 119, 184–204, 284–91, 293–98, 337–46, 362–65, 373–79. *BMC* I, Nero nos. 203, 206, 215, 221, 222 (pl. 43 nos. 9–10, pl. 44 nos. 2–4). Bastien 1992–1994, I, 105–107.

108 *RIC* I, Nero no. 44, 45.

109 Champlin 2003, 142–43.

110 As stressed by Hijmans 2009, 533–34.

111 *RPC* I, 1275.

112 *RPC* I, 1371–72, 1376.

113 *SIG*[3] II, 814 lines 34–35.

114 *AE* 1929, no. 75; 1971, no. 435, 1994, no. 1617.

115 *IGR* III, no. 345; *AE* 1961, no. 22.

116 On the structure of the palace, see Ward-Perkins 1981, 59–61, 100–101; Ball 2003. On its interpretation, see Hemsoll 1990; Champlin 2003, 127–32, 200–209.

117 Suetonius, *Nero* 31, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, II, 130–31.

118 Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 115.8–13, ed. and trans. Gummere 1917–1925, III, 324–27. Champlin 2003, 127–29.

119 See Bergmann 1994 with Albertson 1996; Bergmann 1998, 190; Clauss 1999, 107–108; Smith 2000, 536–38; Albertson 2001; Champlin 2003, 129–32; Carey 2003, 156–78; Hallett 2005, 178–79, 251; Claridge 2010, 306.

120 Pliny, *Natural History* 34.18.45–47, ed. and trans. Rackham and Eichholz 1938–1962, IX, 160–61; Dio Cassius 65.15.1, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, VIII, 288–89; Suetonius, *Vespasian* 18, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, II, 294–95; Martial, *De Spectaculis* 2.1, ed. and trans. Shackleton Bailey 1993, I, 12–15; ed. and trans. Coleman 2006, 16 with commentary on 19–22. Coins of Vespasian showing Sol (the first since Mark Antony and the last until Trajan) are (as Hijmans 1996, 135 n. 103 suggests) perhaps to be linked with the completion of the Colossus: *RIC* II, Vespasian no. 28 with pl. I.2. Albertson 2001, 96–103 suggests the statue took many years to complete because it was cast *in situ*, parts being progressively fused to each other without rivets.

121 Carey 2003, 163 and 174 considers that, by the rededication, Vespasian "could reinstitute the 'proper' relationship between the imperial and the divine . . . and remind the viewer of Nero's failure to observe that boundary." That assumes that the Colossus was originally meant to be a statue of Nero as a god.

122 Bergmann 1998, pl. 37.3.

123 Bergmann 1998, pl. 37.4.

124 Bastien 1982, 264–65. Bastien 1992–1994, I, 107, on Nero's philhellenism; II, 358–65, arguing that the aegis is to be associated with Zeus and Jupiter rather than with Apollo.

125 See Diotogenes in Stobaeus 4.7.61 ed. Hense 1909, 264, trans. Delatte 1942, 52.

126 Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 28–31; Hallett 2005, 231–32.

127 As stressed by Hijmans 2009, 536–39. On Sol's trademark attributes, see Hijmans 2009, 71–102.
128 Albertson 2001, 110–11.
129 Hallett 2005, 254; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 28–31.
130 Hallett 2005, 248–54.
131 Dvornik 1966, 526–30.
132 Tacitus, *Annals* 15.74, ed. and trans. Jackson 1931–1937, V, 334–35; Champlin 2003, 132; Hallett 2005, 250.
133 *Einsiedeln Eclogues* 2, ed. and trans. Duff and Duff 1935, I, 331–35; Ferguson 1975, 171. Also connecting the statue with the Golden Age: Bergmann 1994, 5–6; Bergmann 1998, 123–26, 229–30; Albertson 2001, 110–12.
134 Heslin 2007, 18–19.
135 See Bastien 1982.
136 Bastien 1982, 265.
137 On Caracalla's solar connections, see Bergmann 1998, 272–74; Bastien 1992–1994, I, 108, sees Caracalla's solar crown in the context of the development of Sol's cult in Rome from the time of Septimius Severus.
138 Alföldi 1935, 140.
139 For claims that El-Gabal had a solar nature, see Herodian 5.6.3–5, ed. and trans. Whittaker 1969–1970, II, 48–51 (on the marriage of the god to the moon goddess Urania); Dio Cassius 78.31.1, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, IX, 410–11. For doubts about his precise nature, and for the concept of Ba'alim being solar deities emerging in the West in the third century, see Hijmans 1996, 120 n. 38, 119, 138.
140 *BMC* V, Septimius Severus no. 226; *RIC* IV.1, Septimius Severus no. 102 with pl. VI.2 (not, as described, "Sol in quadriga"); Kantorowicz 1961, 382–83. On the gesture of the raised right arm see L'Orange 1935; Bastien 1992–1994, II, 559–72; Hijmans 2009, 20–21, 73–74, 90–96.
141 *RIC* IV.1, Septimius Severus no. 522. On Septimius Severus and Sol, see Bergmann 1998, 269–72; Berrens 2004, 39–47.
142 Bastien 1982, 265–66. Hijmans 2009, 546–47, attempts to argue that when the symbols of Sol and Luna appear together they can only be read jointly, so connoting *aeternitas*, and that they have no independent meaning.
143 *RIC* VI, Ticinum 36–42; Rome 47, 68–70, 74–89; Siscia 91–92; Heraclea 13–16, 21–22; Cyzicus 13–19; Antioch 60–63; Alexandria 46–48.
144 Hendy 1985, 456.
145 Sutherland 1961, 96–97; *RIC* VI, 93–100; King 1993, 18–19.
146 Corcoran 2000, 134–35 (no. 36), 177–78 (no. 10); King 1993, 20–21; Hendy 1985, 449–58.
147 *RIC* VI, 41–43, 100–103; Hendy 1985, 462; King 1993, 21–22.
148 *RIC* VI, Londinium 145, 156, 168, 198, 204.
149 Bastien 1982, 270; Bastien 1992–1994, I, 111. Note that Bastien uses the term *follis* to refer to what is more commonly called the *nummus*, and the term *nummus* to refer to coins in general or coins of uncertain denomination.
150 *RIC* VI, 42–43; Bastien 1982, 270.
151 *RIC* VII, Ticinum 131 (Constantine), 133 (Licinius).
152 Constantine Junior: *RIC* VII, London 181–82, 184, 190, 197–98, 216, 219, 236, 253–57, 284–85; Trier 253, 257, 265, 273, 276–77, 290, 301–302, 315, 355; Ticinum 139. Crispus: *RIC* VII Ticinum 149. Licinius Junior: *RIC* VII, Trier 252, 256, 263–64, 271–72, 288, 299, 311; Arles 203, 206; Ticinum 137. See Bastien 1982, 270; 1992–1994, I, 111.
153 Bastien 1982, 271; 1992–1994, I, 111–12.
154 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 3.4, ed. Heikel 1902, 201, trans. Drake 1976, 87; Eusebius, *Life* 4.64.2, ed. p. 147, trans. p. 179.
155 Bastien 1982, 271–72; Hendy 1985, 463–65. Bastien 1992–1994, I, 112. *RIC* VII, Heraclea 51, 52; Nicomedia 43–47; Cyzicus 14–16; Antioch 34–35; Alexandria 27, 28, 32.
156 On Constantine's reform of gold coinage, see *RIC* VI, 40, 89, 100; Hendy 1985, 466–67; King 1993, 3–4.
157 *RIC* VI, Trier 802 (310); *RIC* VII, Nicomedia nos. 53 (late 324), 68 (324–25), 69 (324–25); Antioch 37 (324, 2 *solidi*), 70 (326, 1½ *solidi*); Bastien 1982, 269–70.
158 Bruun (*RIC* VII, 42) concluded that "the third-century notion of the radiate crown marking a multiple (a double) is entirely absent from the Constantinian coinage."
159 *RIC* VII, 42 with n. 2, Antioch 70.
160 Bastien 1992–1994, I, 115–16, also stresses the continued importance of the radiate crown after its disappearance from Constantine's coins.
161 Homer, *Iliad* 1.279, ed. and trans. Murray 1924–1925, I, 24–25.
162 Homer, *Iliad* 2.204–206, ed. and trans. Murray 1924–1925, I, 64–65.
163 Fears 1977, 189–252; Hallett 2005, 252–53.
164 Dio Chrysostom, *First Kingship Oration* 11–15, ed. and trans. Cohoon 1932, 6–11. See further Whitmarsh 2001, 212.
165 Fears 1977, 305; Van Dam 2007, 231–32; Smith, R. 2007, 175.
166 On the third-century crisis, see generally Brauer 1975, and briefly Williams 1985, 15–23; Watson 1999, 1–20; Odahl 2005, 17–27; Leadbetter 2009, 26–41.
167 Gradel 2000, 8–13, and, on the meaning of *numen*, 234–50.
168 Fowden 1993, 37–38, 51, 58–59, 81–82.
169 See the discussion of MacCormack 1975, esp. 137–39, 145–47. No doubt the danger of such predictions was the reason for bans on private sacrifices: Delmaire 2004, esp. 320.
170 Turcan 1996, 12–15; Fowden 1993, 37–38.
171 Price 1984, 47–51.
172 Dvornik 1966, 243–44. On p. 276, Dvornik presents the causation the other way around: the loss of belief in the Olympians led to the spread of divinization of kings. Price 1984, 37–38, rejects a deliberate downgrading of the traditional cults by the kings.
173 Williams 1985, 19–21; Odahl 2005, 27.
174 Williams 1985, 156–59; Turcan 1996, 12–22; Beard, North, and Price 1998, I, 278–91; Stephenson 2009, 27–37.
175 Williams 1985, 159–60; Fowden 1993, 38–40; Odahl 2005, 27–28.
176 Fowden 2005b, 557 with references in n. 21.
177 Fowden 1993, 41–50; Elsner 1998, 199–235.
178 On Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (also known as Elagabalus), see Turcan 1978, 1066–69; Turcan 1996, 176–83; Halsberghe 1984; Frey 1989; Beard, North, and Price 1998, I, 255–56; Curran 2000, 11–14; Mattern 2002, 30–35; Fowden 2005b, 555; Berrens 2004, 51–55; Potter 2004, 151–57; Hijmans 2009, 12–13.
179 Herodian 5.5.7, ed. and trans. Whittaker 1969–1970, II, 42–43; Dio Cassius 80.11.1, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, IX, 456–57; *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Heliogabalus* 1.6, ed. and trans. Magie 1921–1932, II, 106–107; Zonaras, *Annals* 12.14, ed. Pinder 1841–1844, II, 567.
180 Potter 2004, 154 with references on p. 615 n. 147.
181 *RIC* IV.2, Elagabalus nos. 61, 143–44; Thirion 1968 nos. 243–45, 358a–365; Augé 1986.
182 Herodian 5.6.6–9, ed. and trans. Whittaker 1969–1970, II, 50–57.
183 *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Heliogabalus* 3.4, 6.7 (both suggesting suppression), and 7.4 (suggesting henotheism), ed. and trans. Magie 1921–1932, II, 110–11, 116–17, 120–21. See also the discussion of Frey 1989, 64–71, who argues for El-gabal as the Supreme Deity to which others were subordinated.
184 *RIC* IV.2, Elagabalus no. 198; Hijmans 1996, 136.
185 Potter 2004, 157 observes that "the distinction between henotheism and impiety may have been lost on many."
186 Herodian 6.1.3, ed. and trans. Whittaker 1969–1970, II, 80–81; Dio Cassius 80.21.2, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1917, IX, 478–79.
187 *FHG* 4.197; Nock 1930, 263–64; Baynes 1935, 83.
188 *Theodosian Code* 7.20.2, ed. pp. 350–51, trans. pp. 179–80; Connolly 2010, who explains the uncertainty about the date of the law (suggestions being 307, 312, 313, 320 [the transmitted date], and 326).
189 The evidence comes from an inscription discovered in 1930 known as the Brigetio Table. See Barnes 1982, 232–33; Connolly 2010, 98.
190 *ILS* no. 8940; Berrens 2004, 166; Mitchell 2007, 242.
191 Berrens 2004, 167.
192 See, for example, Brauer 1975, 198–217, 225–29; Potter 2004, 270–72.
193 *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Aurelian* 25.3–6, ed. and trans. Magie 1921–1932, III, 244–45 (also trans. in Dodgeon and Lieu 1991, 92–93 (no. 4.8.2)).
194 See Hijmans 1996, 126 with Hijmans 2009, 8–12; Turcan 1996, 183; Watson 1999, 193–96; Mattern 2002, 35–39. On the chief god or goddess sharing the sanctuary with other gods, see Price 1984, 146–47.
195 On Aurelian's coins featuring Sol, see Bergmann 1998, 275–76. For the legend *Oriens Augusti*, see *RIC* V.1, Aurelian nos. 17–18, 61–65, 134–37, 150–51, 187–88, 246–55, 276–83, 360–65, 413–16 and the comments of Fears 1977, 286–87; Kantorowicz 1963, 123, 126.
196 *RIC* V.1, Aurelian nos. 19, 152–53, 189, 256, 284–86; Nock 1930, 267–68; Baynes 1935, 83.
197 Halsberghe 1984, 2195–99; Watson 1999, 191–93; Beard, North, and Price 1998, I, 259; Curran 2000, 16–17; Mattern 2002, 43–45; Fowden 2005b, 557–58. On the temple, Ward-Perkins 1981, 417 with fig. 281.
198 For two views of the nature of Aurelian's cult, see Brauer 1975, 229–32; Watson 1999, 196–98.
199 Turcan 1978, 1028–30; Bastien 1992–1994, II, 493–97, argues that the globe in fact represented universal, not merely terrestrial power.
200 *RIC* V.1, Aurelian nos. 48, 129–32, 174, 225–28, 259–66, 346, 394–95; Watson 1999, 186–87.
201 *RIC* V.1, Aurelian nos. 274–75, 282, 312–17, 353 (Sol gives globe to emperor); Baynes 1935, 83; Fears 1977, 285–86, 289; Fears 1981, 117–18; Hijmans 2009, 600–601. In general on Aurelian and Sol, see Berrens 2004, 89–126.
202 *RIC* V.1, Aurelian nos. 319–22; Watson 1999, 190–91.
203 On Aurelian's campaigns, see Watson 1999, 48–98.
204 *RIC* V.1, Aurelian nos. 305–306. Halsberghe 1984, 2200. Similar legends were used by Probus and Carus: *RIC* V.2, Probus nos. 841, 885; Carus nos. 96, 99–100.
205 Kubitschek 1915, 170–71.
206 Turcan 1978, 1032–33, 1055; Watson 1999, 187–88; Clauss 1999, 186; Fowden 2005b, 558.
207 Baynes 1935, 83–84, however, firmly opposes divine kingship and divine election.
208 Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 47–48; Barnes 1996, 539; Leadbetter 1998a; Rees 2004, 6; Potter 2004, 280–83; Bowman 2005, 69; Leadbetter 2009, 53–56.
209 Dio Cassius 53.17.1, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, VI, 234–37.
210 *Pan. Lat.* X. 9.3–4 and 11.1–2, ed. and trans. pp. 67, 69, 528–29.
211 *Pan. Lat.* XI. 6.3, 7.1–7, and 11.1–3, ed. and trans. pp. 91, 92–93, 95–96, 535, 536, 538. Further discussion in L'Orange 1965, 46–47; Kolb 2001, 31.

212 *RIC* VI, 701–702; VII, 741–42.

213 Fears 1981, 118–19; Williams 1985, 161–62. See *RIC* V.2, Diocletian nos. 252–58, 284, 306, 321, 322, 324, 325.

214 The precise date of the adoption of these *signa* is uncertain: Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 48–50; Rees 2005, 225.

215 Baynes 1935, 84; Barnes 1981, 11–12; Leadbetter 1998a, 224; Hekster 1999, 718–20; Kolb 1987, 88–114; Kolb 2004, 30; Bowman 2005, 70–71, 77–78, 88; Fowden 2005b, 558–59; Rees 2005; Van Dam 2007, 233; Leadbetter 2009, 55, 121; Canepa 2009, 104–105. Deckers 2001a, 7, goes too far in stating categorically "Sie waren Dii praesentes, in Diokletian war Jupiter inkarniert, Maximian der Halbgott Herkules."

216 Rees 2005, 225 (urging "caution in assuming that the *signa* ever enjoyed high profile in official Dyarchic and Tetrarchic ideology"), 226 ("there is the sense that the *signa* had been proudly publicized").

217 *ILS* nos. 620, 620a, 621, 622.

218 Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 39.18, ed. Dufraigne 1975, 50, trans. Bird 1994, 43.

219 On Hercules as a model for rulers, see Anderson 1928; Simon 1955, 130–40. These important precedents are not discussed by Rees 2005.

220 Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 81, ed. and trans. Colson and Whitaker 1929–1962, X, 44–45.

221 Dio Chrysostom, *First Kingship Oration* 84, ed. and trans. Cohoon 1932, 44–47. On Trajan and Hercules, see Moles 1990, 330–31; Shotter 1979, 51. Briefly on Dio Chrysostom's kingship theory, see Dvornik 1966, 537–42; and on the kingship orations, see Whitmarsh 2001, 181–246, 325–27.

222 Leadbetter 2009, 64–65.

223 *Pan. Lat.* X.14.1–2, ed. and trans. pp. 75 (with n. 50), 530; Cullhed 1994, 14–15.

224 Constantius' superiority: Leadbetter 2009, 64.

225 Role of the Caesars: Leadbetter 2009, 71–73.

226 Drijvers 1992, 17–19, and Leadbetter 1998b, 77; 2009, 60–62, argue for concubinage. See by contrast Barnes 1982, 36; 2011, 33–35 arguing for marriage.

227 Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 45. Kolb 2001, 27–29; Van Dam 2007, 235–38.

228 *et magna concordia potestasque communis; multorum simul regum patiens consortium*: Orosius, *Against the Pagans* 7.26.6, ed. Zangemeister 1882, 494, trans. Deferrari 1964, 324. Kolb 2001, 32.

229 Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 50–51; Kolb 2001, 33.

230 Barnes 1981, 12; Rees 2004, 7; Bowman 2005, 71, 74–75, 77–78.

231 *ILS* no. 629.

232 Kolb 2004, 30–31.

233 *Pan. Lat.* VIII.4.1–2, ed. and trans. pp. 114, 545.

234 *Pan. Lat.* X.1.3, ed. and trans. pp. 54, 523.

235 *Pan. Lat.* X.11.6, ed. and trans. pp. 71, 529. Rees 2005, 229.

236 *Pan. Lat.* X.2.1, ed. and trans. pp. 55, 524.

237 *Pan. Lat.* X.1.5, ed. and trans. pp. 55, 523–24.

238 *Pan. Lat.* X.4.1–2, 9.4 and 11.5–6, ed. and trans. pp. 59–60 with n. 18, 525, 67, 528, and 71–72 with n. 40, 529; Liebeschuetz 1979, 240. As Leadbetter 1998a, 224–25 points out, panegyrics are "not constitutional treatises" and in reality Maximian certainly did not share equal status with Diocletian.

239 *Pan. Lat.* X.2.1, ed. and trans. pp. 55, 524.

240 *aedes vestrorum numinum*: *Pan. Lat.* X.13.4, ed. and trans. pp. 74, 530. The thinking reflects the Hellenistic practice of placing the cult image of a ruler in the temple of a Deity. See Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 22–23.

241 See Saylor Rodgers 1986, esp. her conclusions on 96–99.

242 *Pan. Lat.* XI.2.3–4, ed. and trans. pp. 83, 533.

243 *Pan. Lat.* XI.3, ed. and trans. pp. 83–86, 533–34 (quotes from XI.3.3 and 8, ed. and trans. pp. 84, 85, 533, 534).

244 Liebeschuetz 1979, 237–44; Rees 2005, 231–33.

245 *Pan. Lat.* XI.14.2–4, ed. and trans. pp. 98, 540. On the *numen*, see Tantillo 2003, 997–1009.

246 *Pan. Lat.* XI.10.5, ed. and trans. pp. 95, 538; Price 1984, 246–47.

247 Fishwisk 1987–2005, I.1, 28.

248 Morton Braund 1998, 56–58; Nixon and Rodgers 1994, 10–14, 23–24.

249 Thus, I cannot agree with MacCormack 1981, 32, who writes, "What the pre-Tetrarchic period lacked was a precise vocabulary for defining the emperor's relationship to the gods, and to his subjects. Such a vocabulary was created by the Tetrarchic panegyrists."

250 On the importance of *praesentia* (presence) in the panegyrics, see Rees 2002, 6–19.

251 *Pan. Lat.* X.5.1, ed. and trans. pp. 61–62, 525.

252 *Pan. Lat.* XI.9.2, ed. and trans. pp. 94, 537.

253 *vestrum numen effulsit, tota Italia clarior lux diffusa*: *Pan. Lat.* XI.14.2–4, ed. and trans. pp. 95, 538.

254 *Pan. Lat.* XI.15.3–4, ed. and trans. pp. 99, 540.

255 *Pan. Lat.* VII.12.3, ed. and trans. pp. 207, 570.

256 Generally on the porphyry groups, see L'Orange 1965, 47–55; Kitzinger 1977, 9, 12–13; L'Orange and Unger 1984, 6–10; Hannestad 1988, 305–309; Kleiner 1992, 401–404; Rees 1993; Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 180, 183; Hekster 1999, 720; Kolb 2001, 32, 146–53 (M3); Rees 2004, 49, 74–75; Bassett 2004, 242 (no. 165); Leadbetter 2009, 65. Note that Kleiner errs in stating that the San Marco group originally came from the imperial palace in Constantinople. The findspot of the missing foot near the Bodrum Camii in Istanbul shows that it in fact came from the public square called the Philadelphion at Constantinople.

257 Briefly on the changes in portrait sculpture from the mid-third century, see L'Orange 1965, 105–25; Kitzinger 1977, 7–21; Kleiner 1992, 357–97 with general comments on 394; Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 179–83.

258 Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 181; Rees 2002, 56–59.

259 Rees 2002, 60–63.

260 Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 181, sees in the porphyry sculptures a "visual representation of the tetrarchs' radical political morality – the physiognomical expressions of the need for order, discipline, moral behaviour, correct observance, and the rule of law in accordance with old Roman traditions (*disciplina iuris veteris, disciplina legesque Romanae*) that so concerned the emperors of this period." On the eyes, see L'Orange 1947, 112; Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 198–200.

261 Cagiano de Azevedo 1962, 161–62.

262 Campaign: Williams 1985, 84–87; Potter 2004, 292–93; Leadbetter 2009, 88–97. Sources on the campaign and the subsequent settlement: Dodgeon and Lieu 1991, 125–35 (nos. 5.3.5–5.5.2). Arch and its decoration: Laubscher 1975; Pond Rothman 1977; Meyer 1980; Hannestad 1988, 313–18; Kleiner 1992, 418–25; Canepa 2009, 84–96.

263 On the emergence of the Late Antique style of relief sculpture, see briefly L'Orange 1965, 85–104; for more detail Kitzinger 1977, 7–21 (writing of a resurgence in late antiquity of a "sub-antique" style that had long been present both on the fringes of the ancient world and within the Roman empire); Brendel 1979, 86–92; Strong 1988, 264–65, 273–74. See also Leithart 2010, 114–19.

264 For a useful description of the panels and their arrangement see Pond Rothman 1977; Meyer 1980.

265 The point is stressed by Pond Rothman 1975 and Pond Rothman 1977, 454, both with references to earlier literature.

266 Laubscher 1975, 69–80 with pls. 45.1, 51, 58–60.1. For the interpretation of this panel, I follow Pond Rothman 1975, 22–28. See also Kolb 1987, 159–76 with pls. 39–40. More briefly, L'Orange 1965, 92–93 with fig. 40; Turcan 1978, 1027–28; Hannestad 1988, 316–17 with fig. 192; Kleiner 1992, 422 with fig. 390; Kolb 2001, 158–62 (M5); Kolb 2004, 31–32; Rees 2004, 49–50; Leadbetter 2009, 236; Canepa 2009, 91–93, 101–102.

267 On this monument, see L'Orange 1938; Kähler 1964; Kalavrezou-Maxeiner 1975, 247–48; Wrede, 1981, 121–40; L'Orange and Unger 1984, 10–11; Hannestad 1988, 309–11; Kleiner 1992, 413–17; Brandt 1998, 64–68 (M3). More briefly, see Bruggisser 2002, 78–80; Rees 2004, 57–58, 73–74; Van Dam 2007, 238; Claridge 2010, 86–87. Other Tetrarchic columnar monuments are noted by Lacau 1934, 22–23; Kalavrezou-Maxeiner 1975, 228–30, 246–48; Deckers 1979, 604–606 n. 16; Rees 1993, 193; Van Dam 2007, 241–42.

268 Kähler 1964, 8.

269 Barnes 1996, 544–45. Leadbetter 2009, 101, does not respond to Barnes' proposed reconstruction of events, asserting the likelihood of Galerius' presence in Rome.

270 Kähler 1964, 9; Wrede 1981.

271 See Kalavrezou-Maxeiner 1975; Deckers 1979; Elsner 1995, 173–76; Kolb 2001, 175–86 (M9); Rees 2004, 46–47.

272 Kolb 2001, 184–85. Contrast Deckers 1979, 640–47.

273 Gnecchi 1912, 13 no. 6, pl. 5.7; Kalavrezou-Maxeiner 1975, fig. 24; Bastien 1992–1994, II, 505; Kolb 2001, 170–71.

274 *RIC* V.2 index p. 631, e.g., *antoniniani* in *RIC* V.2: Diocletian 93–96 [date: 287–288], 275 [293–295], 323 [285], 327 [285]; Maximian 432–36 [285–288], 584 [293–295], 622 [285–295], 624 [285–290]; Constantius I Caesar 673; Galerius Caesar 719; Engemann 2007, 204 with fig. 13.

275 *RIC* VI, 144, 412; Smith, M. 1997, 204–205.

276 Petropoulou 2008, 257–62. On the legal basis for the condemnation of Christians before 249, see de Ste Croix 1963, 9–10 (= 2006, 110–13); Barnes 1968 explains there was no general law against Christians until Trajan Decius. On the scholarly discussion about this issue, see Streeter 2006, 12–18.

277 Tertullian, *Apology* 37.4, ed. Hoppe 1939, 88, trans. Holmes and others 1869–1870, I, 116–17. Compare Terullian, *To Scapula* 4–5, ed. Bulhart and Borleffs 1957, 13–16, trans. Holmes and others 1869–1870, I, 49–52; Barnes 1991, 236.

278 Rives 1999 with Petropoulou 2008, 261–62; Leadbetter 1996, 246–49.

279 Eusebius, *Church History* 6.43.11–12, ed. p. 618, trans. p. 216.

280 Eusebius, *Church History* 7.13, ed. p. 666, trans. p. 231; Barnes 1992, 638; Leadbetter 1996, 252–53; Barnes 1998a, 278–79; DePalma Digeser 2000, 2; Barnes 2011, 97.

281 Stark 1996, 7–8, models a "miraculous-seeming" growth in absolute numbers of Christians between around one million in 250 to around six million in 300. However, the model is called into question by Barnes 2007, 200–201, who considers the proposed rate of growth in Christian numbers too high, and the assumed numbers for the late second and early third centuries too low.

282 Eusebius, *Church History* 7.30.19–20, ed. p. 714, trans. p. 248; Leadbetter 1996, 253–54.

283 Barnes 1981, 128–29. Barnes 1989, 310; Beard, North, and Price 1998, I, 267.

284 Six million: Stark 1996, 3–13, esp. 6 and Table 1.1; Hopkins 1998, 198; Streeter 2006, 22; but the model is questioned by Barnes 2007, 200–201. Quotation: Barnes 1989, 308, compare Barnes 1981, 191 and Stark 1996, 10–11 (quoting S. J. Case). See also Potter 2004, 314–15. Contrast the opposing view of MacMullen 1984, 48 with n. 24.

285 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 12.3, ed. and trans. pp. 20–21.

286 Eusebius, *Church History* 8.1.2; 8.6.2–4 (on the martyrdom of a Christian imperial domestic); 8.9.6–7 (on the martyrdom of a wealthy high-ranking Christian in Alexandria); 8.11.2 (on the martyrdom of an Italian Christian nobleman), ed. pp. 736, 748–50, 758, 764–66, trans. pp. 256, 261–62, 265–66, 268. Keresztes 1983, 379.

287 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 15.1, ed. and trans. pp. 22–23.

288 Mattingly 1952.

289 Price 1980, 36–37; Price 1984, 220–22; Bradbury 1995, 333.

290 On Christian criticism of sacrifice from the second century, see Petropoulou 2008, 246–74.

291 Kolb 2001, 37: "Die Tetrarchie war mithin eine *domus divina* von fleischgewordenen Göttersöhnen und somit natürlicher Rivale des christlichen Gottessohnes." Kolb 2004, 33: "eine Konkurrenz zum Christentum und eine Kampfansage an dieses." Note also the doubts about Mattingly's proposal in Simon 1955, 139–40 and Kolb 1987, 112–13. Fowden 1993, 52 suggests: "It may even be that Jupiter and his son Hercules were calculated to steal some of the Christians' thunder."

292 Sacrifice: Lactantius, *Persecutors* 10.1–5, ed. and trans. pp. 16–17; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 4.27.3–5, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 385, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 273–74. The date 299 is more generally accepted: Barnes 1981, 18–19; Burgess 1996. However, Leadbetter 2009, 129, prefers the winter of 296/7. Also on the persecution of Christians in the army: Eusebius, *Church History* 8.1.7, ed. p. 738 trans. p. 257. For the consultation of the oracle: Eusebius, *Life* 2.50–51, ed. p. 69, trans. p. 112. DePalma Digeser 2004 argues for the oracle's location at Daphne and for its consultation in 299 (contrary to Barnes 2002a, 202–203, who argues for Delphi in the winter of 302–303). See also Davies 1989, 77–80.

293 Eusebius, *Martyrs of Palestine* 2 (S and L), ed. Schwartz 1999, 909, trans. Lawlor and Oulton 1927–1928, I, 336–39; Barnes 1992, 639. Carotenuto 2003 explains that the miracle of Romanus' talking disembodied tongue was added to Eusebius' narrative by the Syriac translator.

294 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 11.1–4, ed. and trans. pp. 18–19.

295 Barnes 1992, 635–36, 639; Barnes 1998a, 285; Clarke 2005, 650.

296 Davies 1989, 66–89. By contrast, Potter 2004, 338, says: "Conversations between important men, even in camera, have a way of becoming public knowledge." Streeter 2006, 21 with nn. 69–71 and references.

297 Leadbetter 2009, 123–34.

298 Barnes 1992, 636; Barnes 1998a, 284–85.

299 Humphries 2008, 89–90; Barnes 2011, 55–56. For the date of the wedding, see Stefan 2006, 202–203.

300 Barnes 2011, 65–66, 67.

301 Barnes 2011, 67–68.

302 Barnes (1989, 309) argues "Constantius, Constantine and Helen[a] were sympathetic to Christianity long before 312," but admits (1992, 640, 643) that although "Constantius contented himself with pro forma enforcement [of persecution] in Britain and Gaul, avoiding any bloodshed," Eusebius nevertheless "exaggerated the sympathy that Constantius showed for the Christians." Lane Fox 1986, 611, observes that the restoration of 306 "implies nothing about Constantine's own Christian beliefs: the pagan Gallienus had done as much."

303 DePalma Digeser 2000, 4, 119–20.

304 DePalma Digeser 2000, 55–56.

305 *Comparison of Mosaic and Roman Law* 15.3 (here quoted 15.3.2, lines 13–16), ed. and trans. Hyamson 1913, 130–33, trans. Dodgeon and Lieu 1991, 135 (no. 5.5.3), trans. Rees 2004, 174–75. See also Barnes 1981, 20; Rees 2004, 58–59; Bowman 2005, 85; Clarke 2005, 648; Mitchell 2007, 64; Van Dam 2007, 145–46.

306 Eusebius, *Church History* 8.17.7, ed. pp. 792–94, trans. pp. 278–80. Compare Lactantius, *Persecutors* 34, ed. and trans. pp. 52–53.

307 Eusebius, *Life* 2.5.2, ed. p. 50, trans. p. 97.

308 Davies 1989, 92–94.

309 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 11.7, ed. and trans. pp. 18–19. Barnes 2002a, 202–203 believes that the oracle at Delphi was also consulted at the same time (Eusebius, *Life* 2.50–51, ed. p. 69, trans. p. 112). DePalma Digeser 2004, however, argues that Eusebius refers to the consultation of the oracle of Apollo at Antioch in 299.

310 Origen, *Against Celsus* 8.68, ed. Koetschau 1899, II, 284–85, trans. Crombie 1872–1878, II, 552; Wilken 2003, 105–108.

311 Wilken 2003, 108–12 (Celsus); 151–54, 159–60 (Porphyry); DePalma Digeser 2000, 5–7, 99–100 (Hierocles and Porphyry); Potter 2004, 205–206 (Celsus), 323–32 (Porphyry); Schott 2008, 52–78 (Porphyry).

312 Barnes 1991, 238–40; Barnes 1994b; DePalma Digeser 1998, 135–38, 142, 146; DePalma Digeser 2000, 8, 141–42; Barnes 2001b, 155–59; Goulet 2004, 100–104 (arguing, contrary to DePalma Digeser, that the work in three books read by a pagan philosopher at Nicomedia before the persecution cannot have been Porphyry's *Against the Christians* or *Philosophy from Oracles*); Schott 2008, 76–78 (arguing on pp. 179–85 that Lactantius' pagan philosopher is indeed Porphyry); Leadbetter 2009, 131–32. The importance of philosophical works in supporting the persecution is indicated by Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 5.2, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 403–406, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 284–86.

313 Eusebius, *Martyrs of Palestine* preface, ed. Schwartz 1999, 907, trans. Lawlor and Oulton 1927–1928, I, 329–31; Eusebius, *Church History* 8.2.4; 8.5, ed. pp. 742, 746–48, trans. pp. 258–59, 261; Lactantius, *Persecutors* 13.1, ed. and trans. pp. 20–21; Corcoran 2000, 179–81 no. 12; De Ste Croix 1954, 77–83 (= 2006, 38–45); Barnes 1981, 20–24; Keresztes 1983, 382; Barnes 1992, 639–40; Barnes 2002a, 192–93; Bowman 2005, 85–86; Potter 2004, 337–39; Clarke 2005, 650–51.

314 Corcoran 2000, 181–82 no. 13–15; De Ste Croix 1954; Barnes 1981, 23–24, 150–51; Keresztes 1983, 382–84; Davies 1989, 74–75; Barnes 1992, 639–40; Williams 1997, 173–85; Potter 2004, 339–40; Bowman 2005, 87; Clarke 2005, 654; Odahl 2005, 67–69; Streeter 2006, 20 with n. 66 and references.

315 Barnes 1996, 544–46; 2011, 54, 58–59.

316 *Pan. Lat.* VII.9.2 and VI.15.4–6, ed. and trans. pp. 202–203, 568 and 240–41, 580 with commentary on pp. 203, 241. Potter 2004, 340–41, however, prefers a sudden abdication. Stephenson 2009, 114–15, 330, has suggested that in the original agreement made in northern Italy in the autumn of 303, the date of the resignations was set to allow Maximian to celebrate his twentieth year in 305–306 before retiring, and that Galerius later forced Diocletian to bring forward the resignations by one year. This is unacceptable since the celebrations in Rome in November 303 were hailed as marking the joint *vicennalia* of Diocletian and Maximian (Barnes 1996, 544–45; 2011, 58).

317 Leadbetter 2009, 134–40.

318 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 19.3–5, ed. and trans. pp. 30–31: *obstupefiunt omnes*. Potter 2004, 342 sees fit to excise this "Constantinian propaganda."

319 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 18.1–19.5, ed. and trans. pp. 26–31.

320 Barnes 1998a, 284–85; 2011, 58–60.

321 Leadbetter 2009, 140–44. In return for consenting to Severus' future appointment as his Caesar, Constantius, it is suggested, insisted on the important concession that, when he and Galerius became Augusti, the territory of the empire would be formally divided between the four Tetrarchs. In this way he would maintain his authority, despite Galerius' growing control (Leadbetter 2009, 160–64, 217).

322 Barnes 2011, 48–49.

323 Mackay 1999, 200–207. Barnes 1999, 460 hypothesizes that "the wife of Maximinus was the daughter (or possibly granddaughter) of a sibling of Galerius."

324 Barnes 1999, 460.

325 Barnes 1981, 25–26; Cullhed 1994, 15–31; Hekster 1999, 717; Bowman 2005, 87–88.

326 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 24, ed. and trans. pp. 38–39; Eusebius, *Life* 1.20, ed. p. 26, trans. p. 77; *Origin of Constantine* 2, ed. Mommsen 1892, I, 7, trans. Stevenson in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 43. Leadbetter 2009, 142–43, 158, expresses doubt about the story and Barnes 2011, 54, 61–63, argues against it. Stephenson 2009, 116, 330, suggests that before Constantine departed for Gaul he agreed with Galerius that, upon his father's death, he would accept the rank of Caesar to Severus.

327 Barnes 1981, 15–16; Potter 2004, 284–88, 292; Bowman 2005, 78–79.

328 *Origin of Constantine* 4, ed. Mommsen 1892, I, 7, trans. Stevenson in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 43; *Pan. Lat.* VI.7.5, ed. and trans. pp. 228, 575–76; Barnes 1981, 27; 2011, 62.

329 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 24.8, ed. and trans. pp. 38–39; Potter 2004, 344–46.

330 Kolb 2001, 59, rightly observes that there is no reliable indication that Constantius in reality transferred power to his son on his deathbed. On Constantius' apparent health, see Leadbetter 2009, 138, 156–58.

331 Compare Humphries 2008, 87; Barnes 2009, 381–82 n. 25, argues in favour of Constantine having been appointed Augustus. Compare Barnes 2011, 63, 89.

332 Van Dam 2007, 93. Leadbetter 2009, 141, 165, suggests that Constantius was at first willing to accept Severus as his Caesar, but that "when the time came for him to make a choice, he preferred the son of his loins to one thrust upon him through negotiation" (p. 141).

333 Van Dam 2007, 108–109. On the children of Constantius and Theodora, see Barnes 2011, 41.

334 *Pan. Lat.* VI.8.2, ed. and trans. pp. 229, 576.

335 *Pan. Lat.* VI.2.2, ed. and trans. pp. 219, 573. For discussion of the connection, see Syme 1974; Barnes 1981, 35; Grünewald 1990, 46–50; Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 68–70; Bird 1997; Bruggisser 2002, 88–91; Odahl 2005, 314–15 n. 31; Potter 2004, 352–53; Van Dam 2007, 98–101; Barnes 2011, 72–73.

336 Brauer 1975, 177–87; Potter 2004, 263–68.

337 On these claims, see Van Dam 2007, 98–99.

338 *Pan. Lat.* VI.2.5, ed. and trans. pp. 221, 573.

339 *Pan. Lat.* VI.8.2–3, ed. and trans. pp. 229–30, 576; MacCormack 1981, 180–81; Kolb 2001, 59.

340 Eusebius, *Life* 1.21.2, 1.22.1–2, ed. p. 27, trans. p. 78. On the picture painted by Eusebius, see Cameron 2006a, 20.

341 MacCormack 1981, 179–85.

342 Barnes 2011, 64–66.

343 On the transfer of such images, Bruun 1976, 6–7.

344 Humphries 2008, 87–88; Barnes 2009, 381 n. 25; Leadbetter 2009, 166; Barnes 2011, 64.

345 Barnes 1981, 27–29.

346 Zosimus, *New History* 2.9.2, ed. Paschoud 2000, 79, trans. Ridley 1982, 29. Leadbetter 2009, 177–78.

347 Leadbetter 2009, 170–77; Barnes 2011, 67. Potter 2004, 343–44, 370, assumes Galerius was exceeding his authority as junior Augustus (and thereby showing pointed disregard for Constantius) by extending the census to Rome in 305. Leadbetter 2009, 175 sees Constantius as working with Galerius to implement Diocletian's plans.

348 Leadbetter 2009, 179–80.

349 Cullhed 1994, 33–44; Curran 2000, 50–53; Barnes 1981, 30; Kolb 2001, 60; Potter 2004, 346–47; Leadbetter 2009, 181–87; Barnes 2011, 68.

350 *Pan. Lat.* XI.12.2, ed. and trans. pp. 97, 539. On imperial residences, see briefly Corcoran 2006, 42–43; Smith, R. 2007, 188–89.

351 See the comments of Hekster 1999, 721–24; Van Dam 2007, 39–45.

352 Generally, Peirce 1989, 391–405; Cullhed 1994, 45–67; Hekster 1999, 724–31; Hunt 2003, 105–107; Curran 2000, 57–63; Van Dam 2007, 81–83; Lenski 2008, 208–209. On the architecture, see Ward-Perkins 1981, 421–28.

353 *LTUR* I, 172 (F. Coarelli, "Basilica Constantiniana, B. Nova") and *LTUR* IV, 159–60 (F. Coarelli, "Praefectura urbana"); Ward-Perkins 1981, 426–28; Brandt 1998, 69–72 (M4).

354 Peirce 1989, 404–405; Curran 2000, 61–62; Ensoli 2000, 86–87; Marlowe 2006, 228–29.

355 Steinby 1986, 142.

356 Barnes 1981, 30; Leadbetter 2009, 187–88; Barnes 2011, 68–69.

357 Leadbetter 2009, 188–89.

358 Barnes 1981, 31; Leadbetter 2009, 193–96; Barnes 2011, 69–70.

359 Barnes 2011, 70.

360 It is uncertain whether Minervina, Constantine's first wife, had died or if Constantine had divorced or separated from her. See Barnes 1981, 31, 32; Pohlsander 1984, 80; Potter 2004, 347–48; Barnes 2011, 48–49, 69. For the date of Constantine's elevation to the rank of Augustus and his marriage, see Stefan 2006, 202–203.

361 Barnes 1981, 31–32; Stefan 2006, 209–14; Barnes 2009, 381–82 n. 25; Leadbetter 2009, 196; Barnes 2011, 69.

362 Barnes 1981, 32; Potter 2004, 349–50; Humphries 2008, 90–91; Leadbetter 2009, 200–205; Barnes 2011, 70.

363 On Licinius: *Origin of Constantine* 13, ed. Mommsen 1892, I, 8, trans. Stevenson in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 45.

364 Fears 1977, 287; Fowden 2005b, 560–61.

365 Hekster 1999, 731–33.

366 *RIC* VI, 395, Ostia nos. 3, 6, 12; Fears 1977, 299–300.

367 *CIL* VI, no. 33856 = *ILS* no. 8935.

368 Pending scholarly publication of the results, a newspaper announcement was made by A. La Regina, "La lupa del Campidoglio è medievale la prova è nel test al carbonio," *La Repubblica* 9 July 2008.

369 Wrede 1981, 140–42; Hekster 1999, 727; Curran 2000, 60–61; Bruggisser 2002, 81–86.

370 *Pan. Lat.* VII 2.5 and 8.1–6 ed. and trans. pp. 193, 200–201, 565, 568 and 186–87 for discussion.

371 Barnes 2011, 49–51.

372 Leadbetter 2009, 236–41.

373 Barnes 1981, 32–33; Davies 1989, 72–74; Humphries 2008, 92; Leadbetter 2009, 219–21; Barnes 2011, 70.

374 See the frequent entries in *RIC* VI (index p. 714) and VII (index p. 751).

375 Smith, M. 1997, 206–207; Christodoulou 1998, 56.

376 Berrens 2004, 161.

377 *RIC* VI index p. 704.

378 *RIC* VI, 42–43, 111, 132, 133, 137, 140, 226–27, 265, 298, 328, 388–92, 409. Kolb 2001, 196–200 (M 13). On the term *comes* see Nock 1947; Turcan 1978, 1022–25. Alföldi's claim (Alföldi 1948, 59) that the legend COMES AVG presents the sun-god as only "the lackey of the Emperor" is wholly unacceptable (see Chapter 8).

379 On the epithet *invictus*, see Weinstock 1957 (p. 212 on Alexander). Hijmans 1996, 124; 2009, 17–20 argues, against Cumont, that the term was not oriental in origin. On Constantine's adoption of the epithet, see Grünewald 1990, 54–58 with the index to inscriptions on pp. 265–70; also Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 230–31 n. 36.

380 *RIC* VI, Ticinum no. 113; Berrens 2004, 156.

381 *RIC* VI, Rome nos. 282, 298–302, 305–11, 364–67.

382 *Pan. Lat.* VI.17.1–4, ed. and trans. pp. 243, 581. Further comment in L'Orange 1947, 29.

383 Veyne 2007, 117 n. 1 (= 2010, 58 n. 1), claims that the Apollo of the panegyric has no solar aspect and (unlike the Christian God) no role in legitimizing Constantine's regime. But the references to Constantine's dazzling appearance, to his similarity to Apollo, and to the presentation of wreaths contradict Veyne's view. Moreau 1953, 314–15, suggests, not very convincingly, that the panegyrist's story was inspired by a tale in the *Augustan History*, according to which the emperor Aurelian, who was thinking of destroying the city of Tyana, had an awe-inspiring vision of the city's philosopher and wonder-worker Apollonius, who advised him that if he was to conquer, to rule, and to live, he should be merciful and abstain from shedding innocent blood. See *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Aurelian* 24.2–8, ed. and trans. Magie 1921–1932, III, 240–43, trans. Dodgeon and Lieu 1991, 90–91 (no. 4.7.4).

384 Barnes 1981, 34–35; Stephenson 2009, 122–23, 330–31; Barnes 2011, 4, 72–74.

385 *Pan. Lat.* VI.21.4–5, ed. and trans. pp. 248–50, 583.

386 Vergil, *Eclogues* 4.10, ed. and trans. Fairclough 1934–1935, I, 28–29: *tuus iam regnat Apollo.*

387 Saylor Rogers 1980, 265, has written that "the claim to a vision must have originated with Constantine himself." Potter 2004, 354, thinks "it is entirely likely that Constantine had experienced a vision of the god, quite possibly having sought it by sleeping in the sanctuary." By contrast, Barnes 1981, 36, stated, "It is not necessary to believe that Constantine ever saw such a vision," although he has now been converted to Weiss' view that the vision was a solar halo (2011, 74–80).

388 I am less categorical than Liebeschuetz 1979, 237–38, who claims that "The *panegyrici Latini* represent the point of view from which the ruler wanted his actions to be seen . . . the tone was chosen by the prince." The author should be granted some licence, even though he was working within a traditional structure and with traditional themes.

389 *teque in illius specie recognovisti, cui totius mundi regna deberi vatum carmina divina cecinerunt*: *Pan. Lat.* VI.21.4–5, ed. and trans. pp. 248–50, 583. Saylor Rodgers 1980 (accepted by Barnes 2011, 79) has argued that Constantine saw himself in the likeness not of Apollo but of Augustus. I am not convinced. Augustus has not been mentioned and it is natural to understand *in illius specie* to mean "in the vision of him" or "in the apparition of him," and to refer back to the manifestation of "your Apollo." If the description of Apollo as prophesied ruler over the whole world seems slightly inappropriate, this is because the panegyrist intended that the listener, hearing that the emperor had recognized himself in the god, should apply this same prediction to Constantine. The point of *tuus Apollo* is not that Constantine sees himself as one and the same as Apollo, but that he recognized something of himself in his chosen protective deity, as if Apollo were a close relative. See also the comments in MacCormack 1981, 35–36; Weber 2000, 278–82; Kolb 2001, 64. Ligota 1963, 182, claims that "Constantine's vision was (or was construed by the panegyrist to have been) the sight of a statue of himself as Apollo or else of a statue of Apollo with the head of the Emperor substituted for that of the god." If Constantine's vision is indeed somehow to be connected with a cult statue of Apollo in the shrine, then that statue may or may not have been made to resemble Constantine. What is important is that the panegyrist claims that there was a resemblance.

390 Vergil, *Eclogues* 4.10, ed. and trans. Fairclough 1934–1935, I, 28–29.

391 *cum tu sis, ut ille, iuvenis et laetus et salutifer et pulcherrimus, imperator*. *Pan. Lat.* VI.21.6, ed. and trans. pp. 251, 583.

392 *Pan. Lat.* VI.1.4 and VI.1.1, ed. and trans. pp. 218, 572: *tuo modo, Constantine, numini dicabo sermonem*; *ad aures tanti numinis . . . adferri oportere.*

393 *Pan. Lat.* VI.1.5 and 22.1, ed. and trans. pp. 219, 251, 573, 583. For *praesens=epiphanēs*, see Galinsky 1996, 314, 317.

394 *Pan. Lat.* VI.7.5, ed. and trans. pp. 228, 575–76.

395 *Miraberis profecto illam quoque numinis tui sedem*: *Pan. Lat.* VI.22.2, ed. and trans. pp. 251, 583. Saylor Rodgers 1986, 85, asks "is the *numen* therefore Constantine or Apollo? In the context, ambiguity may be deliberate." I do not see any ambiguity.

396 See briefly Saylor Rodgers 1986, 83–85.

397 In general on Constantine as a god, see Clauss 1999, 196–207.

398 Eusebius, *Life* 1.27 and 1.16–17, ed. pp. 28–29, 23–25, trans. pp. 79–80 and 75–76. Compare Eusebius, *Church History* 8.13.12–13, ed. p. 776, trans. p. 273.

399 Piganiol 1932, 34 (who observes that the name was given to Jews); Lane Fox 1986, 611. Contrast Alföldi 1948, 6.

400 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 15.6–7, ed. and trans. pp. 22–23. His demolition of churches is denied in Eusebius, *Church History* 8.13.12–13, ed. p. 776, trans. p. 273, and in Eusebius, *Life* 1.13.2, ed. p. 22, trans. p. 74. See Barnes 2002a, 193; Clarke 2005, 651.

401 Clarke 2005, 652; Barnes 1981, 24; Barnes 1992, 640.

402 Liebeschuetz 1979, 241 n. 9, however, claims, "Sol was not part of the official theology of the tetrarchy but rather an object of personal piety of Constantius." Barnes 2011, 18, 57, asserts that a lost inscription from Thamugadi dedicated in 303 would have connected Constantius with Sol, since others link Diocletian with Jupiter, Maximian with Hercules, and Galerius with Mars. The emperor Julian's claim that three generations of his family had worshipped Sol may reflect early propaganda that emerged from Constantine's court (Berrens 2004, 148).

403 *RIC* VI, Trier no. 35; Bastien 1992–1994, I, 172; Bruun 1992, 220 with figs. 2–3.

404 Ahlqvist 2001, 215–222, explains the main motives for using the nimbus, which, in the case of the emperor, include demonstrating sovereignty, apotheosis, or victory.

405 Smith, M. 1997, 204–207.

406 *Pan. Lat.* IX.8.1, ed. and trans. pp. 160, 557; Rees 2005, 233–34.

407 *Pan. Lat.* VII.8.1–6, ed. and trans. pp. 200–201, 568.

408 Eusebius, *Life* 1.17.2, 2.29.1 ed. pp. 24, 69, trans. pp. 76, 112.

409 *Pan. Lat.* VIII.2.2, ed. and trans. pp. 111, 544.

410 *Pan. Lat.* VIII.4.3, ed. and trans. pp. 114, 545.

411 *Pan. Lat.* VIII.10.1, ed. and trans. pp. 122, 547.
412 *Pan. Lat.* VIII.19.2, ed. and trans. pp. 140, 552.
413 *quem ut caelo delapsum intuebantur. Pan. Lat.* VIII.19.1, ed. and trans. pp. 140, 552.
414 *Pan. Lat.* IX.18.3, 5, ed. and trans. pp. 169, 170, 562.
415 *RIC* VI, Trier no. 34; MacCormack 1981, 29–31; Hannestad 1988, 311–13; Kolb 2001, 191–93 (M11); Rees 2004, 48–49; Walter 2006, 26–27, fig. 28. Baynes 1972, 97 with n. 1 goes too far in deducing from this medallion that Constantius was a worshipper of Sol Invictus.
416 L'Orange 1938, 145–46; Kähler 1964, 8 with pls. 2–7; Wrede 1981, pls. 1–2, 7–8; Kleiner 1992, 416–17.
417 Barnes 1996, 544–46; 2011, 58, argues that Galerius did not attend the ceremony, but nevertheless (1996, 545 n. 76) prefers to identify the Caesar on the column base as Galerius "on iconographic grounds." Hannestad 1988, 310, and Rees 2004, 57–58, are noncommittal about the Caesar's identity.
418 Barnes 2011, 71–72.
419 Leadbetter 2009, 198–200, 218; Barnes 2011, 71
420 Toleration: Eusebius, *Church History* 8.14.1, ed. p. 778, trans. p. 274; Optatus, *Against the Donatists* 1.18, ed. Ziwsa 1893, 19–20, trans. Edwards 1997, 17; Hekster 1999, 746–47; Corcoran 2000, 185 no. 21b. Restoration: Augustine, *Breviculus Collationis cum Donatistis* 3.18.34, ed. Petschenig 1908–1910, III, 84; *Contra partem Donati post gesta* 13.17, ed. Petschenig 1908–1910, III, 113–14; Corcoran 2000, 144–45 no. 52. Date: Barnes 2011, 68.
421 Mackay 1999, 202–203; MacCormack 1981, 112–13.
422 Barnes 1998a, 286; 2011, 81.
423 *Pan. Lat.* XII.2.4, ed. and trans. pp. 295–96, 595.
424 Barnes 1981, 42; Potter 2004, 357.
425 In general on the walls, see Ward-Perkins 1981, 415–17. On Maxentius' reorganization of them, see Todd 1978, 46–59.
426 On the involvement of the *Equites Singulares*, see Speidel 1986; Hekster 1999, 736–37.
427 Narrative: Barnes 1981, 42–43; Curran 2000, 66–68; Potter 2004, 357–58; Barnes 2011, 82–83. Moses: Eusebius, *Life* 1.38, ed. pp. 34–35, trans. pp. 84–85; Cameron and Hall 1999, 35–39; MacCormack 1981, 37–39; Hollerich 1989; Rapp 1998a; Rapp 1998b; Rapp 2005, 129–31.
428 *Pan. Lat.* IV.30.1, ed. and trans. pp. 375, 623.
429 On the nature of the procession, see Curran 2000, 71–75.
430 *Origin of Constantine* 12, ed. Mommsen 1892, I, 8, trans. Stevenson 1996, 45. *Pan. Lat.* 12.3.4, 4.3, ed. and trans. pp. 298, 300–301, 595, 596. [Aurelius Victor], *Epitome De Caesaribus* 40.13, ed. and trans. Festy 1999, 42. Generally on the *damnatio memoriae* of Maxentius, see Drijvers 2007, 23–27; Barnes 2011, 4–5, 82.
431 For Constantine's completion of the basilica and temple, see Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40.26, ed. Dufraigne 1975, 57, trans. Bird 1994, 49. In general on Constantine's hijacking of Maxentius' monuments, see Hekster 1999, 737–40; Hunt 2003, 106–107; Van Dam 2007, 85–88; Drijvers 2007, 24–26; Marlowe 2010, 202–205.
432 Speidel 1986, 255; Hekster 1999, 740–41; Curran 2000, 93–96, 99–102.
433 Barnes 1981, 47; Humphries 2007, 93; Barnes 2011, 4.
434 For the medallion, see Gnecchi 1912, I, 16 no. 16; Toynbee 1944, 108–109, pl. XVII no. 11; *RIC* VI, 277–78, Ticinum no. 111; Bergmann 1998, pl. 55.5; Donati and Gentili 2005 237 no. 54; Walter 2006, 24 fig. 24. Compare also the coin discussed by Kolb 2001, 196–98 (M13) and Walter 2006, 24 fig. 26.
435 L'Orange 1935; L'Orange 1953, 139–70. However, we must reject the claim (originally made by Cumont) that the gesture was an oriental one and also L'Orange's claim that the introduction of the gesture under the Severi coincided with the introduction of an oriental Sol named Invictus: see Hijmans 1996, 124–25.
436 *RIC* VI, 277–78, Ticinum no. 111; MacCormack 1981, 36; Walter 2006, 26, fig. 25; Engemann 2007, 205 with fig. 14.
437 The imminent *decennalia* and the anticipated *vicennalia* are clearly indicated by the inscriptions VOTIS X VOTIS XX on the east side, and SIC X SIC XX on the west. See Frothingham 1912, 375–76; Buttrey 1983, 375–78; Kleiner 1992, 444.
438 Van Dam 2007, 94–96.
439 Humphries 2008, 96.
440 L'Orange and von Gerkan 1939, pls. 6–17; Speidel 1986, 257–62; Hannestad 1988, 323–25; Kleiner 1992, 447–50 with figs. 408–11.
441 L'Orange and von Gerkan 1939, pls. 8–9.
442 L'Orange 1935, 335, 340–41, fig. 3; L'Orange 1953, 145–47; Peirce 1989, 407; Marlowe 2006, 235–36. There is perhaps a reference to this iconographic type in Eusebius' statement that Constantine ruled by stretching out a saving right hand to all in need: Eusebius, *Church History* 10.9.4, ed. p. 900, trans. p. 332. On the emperor with raised right hand as a reference to Sol, see Bastien 1992–1994, II, 559–72 (esp. 560–61, although his reference to the Severan cult of Sol being oriental is incorrect). On the meaning of Sol's raised right hand: Hijmans 2009, 95–96.
443 L'Orange and von Gerkan 1939, pls. 14–17; L'Orange 1965, 89–91, 94–98 with figs. 35, 36, 42–44; MacCormack 1981, 37; Hannestad 1988, 325; Kleiner 1992, 450–52; Peirce 1989, 415.
444 MacCormack 1981, 183; Pierce 1989, 416; Stewart 2003, 115.

445 Bruggisser 2002, 86–91, who observes that the Rostra were also adorned with a statue of Claudius Gothicus, whom Constantine had claimed as his ancestor. Van Dam 2007, 97.
446 Hannestad 1988, 325; Peirce 1989, 406.
447 Peirce 1989, 413–14, 415.
448 Van Dam 2007, 47 with n. 16.
449 For Constantine's nimbate portrait, see L'Orange and Unger 1984, pl. 32a–b; Canepa 2009, 159 (suggesting that the use of the nimbus in hunting contexts on the roundels of the Arch of Constantine parallels Sasanian representations of royal hunters). Generally on the nimbus, see Bruun 1992; Bastien 1992–1994, I, 167–80; Ahlqvist 2001; Henig 2006, 65–66; Hijmans 2009, 80–81; Canepa 2009, 192–96.
450 Servius, *Commentary, Aeneid* 3.587, ed. Thilo 1878–1887, I, 441.
451 Velleius Paterculus 2.59.6, ed. and trans. Shipley 1924, 178–79.
452 Bastien 1992–1994, I, 170; Ahlqvist 2001, 208.
453 *Pan. Lat.* X.3.2, ed. and trans. pp. 58, 524. Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 58 n. 15 claim that a radiate crown is meant, but the reference to an orb of light rather than to rays would seem to suggest otherwise.
454 See above pp. 72–73 and also Bruun 1992, 220–21 with figs. 5–7.
455 Bastien 1992–1994, I, 171–72; Bruun 1992, 220 with fig. 1.
456 Bastien 1992–1994, I, 172; Bruun 1992, 220 with figs. 2–3.
457 *RIC* VII, Ticinum nos. 37, 38, 41, 59, Siscia no. 25; Bastien 1992–1994, I, 174–75; Bruun 1992, 221–23 with figs. 8–10 and 12.
458 L'Orange 1935, 325 with figs. 1 and 12; L'Orange and von Gerkan 1939, 138–39 with pl. 33; L'Orange 1953, figs. 102, 108.
459 L'Orange 1935, 338–39 with figs. 9–11; L'Orange and von Gerkan 1939, 55 with pl. 7b; 127–28 with pls. 30a, 32 c.
460 L'Orange and von Gerkan 1939, 162–65 with pl. 38; L'Orange 1953 fig. 107; Kleiner 1992, 454; Walter 2006, 18, figs. 15–16.
461 Belloni 1981, cat. nos. 2–10 with fig. 5; *RIC* II, index p. 490; Hijmans 1996, 143; Hijmans 2009, 549–66. It is claimed (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Hadrian* 19.12–13, ed. and trans. Magie 1921–1932, I, 61) that Hadrian planned a colossal statue of the Moon as a companion for Nero's statue of Sol. Together the two statues, standing before Hadrian's temple of Roma Aeterna and Venus Felix, would have evoked the concept of *aeternitas*.
462 Liebeschuetz 1979, 285; MacCormack 1981, 36; Lindros Wohl 2001, 101–102; Marlowe 2006, 235 with fig. 19; Van Dam 2007, 38. Hijmans 2009, 615 is prepared only to interpret Sol and Luna together as evoking the concept of *aeternitas*. See also n. 142.
463 Bergmann 1997, 118–21. The *meta sudans* would have been sufficiently far west so as not to obscure the view of the Colossus, which was, at any rate, much taller than the *meta*. Bergmann's arguments have also been explored by Tantillo 2003, 1011–12 and Marlowe 2006.
464 Marlowe 2006, 231 and fig. 16.
465 Holloway 2004, 52. Wilson Jones 2000, 73 n. 16, is unconvinced.
466 Pensabene and Panella 1999, 37–39, 48–51, 101–15, 143–56, 165–67, 171–84. Pensabene and Panella's arguments for a fourth-century date have been conveniently summarized by Kleiner 2001.
467 Holloway 2004, 50–52, following a suggestion of S. E. Knudsen, claims that Maxentius was responsible for beginning the arch.
468 *Pan. Lat.* IV.12.2, ed. and trans. pp. 356, 614 with Marlowe 2006, 228–29. It has been claimed that the head had earlier been altered by Hadrian and Commodus: see Bergmann 1998, 189–94.
469 Peirce 1989, 404–405; Curran 2000, 61–62; Ensoli 2000, 86–87; Marlowe 2006, 228–29.
470 Salzman 1990, 151; Ensoli 2000, 88–90. Others have suggested Constantine had the head of the statue substituted with his own: Stephenson 2009, 151–52, 156.
471 *RIC* VII, index pp. 737, 752 under the legends mentioned in the text.
472 *RIC* VII, Ticinum nos. 98–99 (320–21), Sirmium nos. 3, 21–22 (321), 31 (322–23).
473 *RIC* V.2, Probus nos. 404–406, 456.
474 Fears 1977, 301–302. Curiously, Veyne 2007, 164 (= 2010, 86–87), denies that Constantine believed that he ruled by Sol's grace, stressing that Sol was only a "companion" of the emperor, the god and the ruler being reflections of each other. This is to understate the importance of the term *comes* and the significance of images showing Sol crowning or presenting the globe to Constantine.
475 Optatus, *Epistula Constantini ad Aelafium*, ed. Ziwsa 1893, 206, appendix 3, trans. Edwards 1997, 183–84 (and xxviii on its possible inauthenticity). See Baynes, 1972, 12–13 (and pp. 75–79, claiming the authenticity of all the letters in Optatus' appendix); Jones 1948, 110–11 (= 1962, 96–7); Straub 1967, 48.
476 Eusebius, *Life* 2.28.2, ed. p. 60, trans. p. 105. See Baynes 1972, 17.
477 Eusebius, *Life* 1.24, ed. p. 27, trans. pp. 78–79.
478 Tantillo 2003, 988 with fig. 1.
479 Tantillo 2003, 996.
480 Farina 1966, 199–200; Tantillo 2003, 1030–35.
481 Eusebius, *Life* 1.43.3, ed. p. 38, trans. p. 87.
482 Eusebius, *Life* 2.2.3, ed. p. 48, trans. p. 95.
483 Eusebius, *Life* 2.19.1, ed. pp. 55–56, trans. pp. 101–102.

484 Eusebius, *Church History* 10.9.7–9, ed. pp. 900–902, trans. pp. 332–33.
485 Eusebius, *Life* 3.10.3, ed. p. 86, trans. p. 125.
486 Eusebius, *Life* 4.62.4, ed. p. 146, trans. p. 178.
487 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 3.4, ed. Heikel 1902, 201, trans. Drake 1976, 87.
488 Eusebius, *Life* 1.1.3, trans. p. 67.
489 Eusebius, *Life* 1.4, ed. p. 17 trans. p. 69.
490 *Pan. Lat.* IV.5.1–4, ed. and trans. pp. 348–49, 610–11. See also the comments of Saylor Rodgers 1986: 87; Smith, M. 1997, 200–201.
491 Porphyrius, *Carmina* 8.1; 11.13; 14.2; 19.2, ed. Polara 1973, 35, 48, 59, 74; Tissoni 2003, 1028–30.
492 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Letters* 5.8, ed. and trans. Anderson 1936–1965, II, 197; Barnes 2011, 144–45.
493 Menander Rhetor 378, 381, ed. and trans. Russell and Wilson 1981, 94–95, 100–101, who writes of the arrival of a governor: "When night and darkness covered the world, you were seen like the sun, and at once dissolved all the difficulties"; "Now the sun shines brighter, now we seem to behold a happy day dawn out of darkness."
494 See above, pp. 67–68, 100–104.
495 Eusebius, *Life* 4.9 ed. p. 123, trans. pp. 156–57.
496 Hesychius, ed. Preger 1901–1907, 17.
497 Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia*, ed. Bekker 1842, 87. Compare Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*, ed. Bekker 1838–1839, I, 518.
498 Babinger 1923, 32–33.
499 *SIG*[3] II, 814 lines 34–35.
500 Bauer 1996, 177, however, points to later monuments that carry bilingual inscriptions, such as the base of the obelisk of Theodosius I (A.D. 390) in the hippodrome at Constantinople, and the base of Eudoxia's statue (A.D. 403) in the Ayasofya Museum.
501 Preger 1901, 462–63.
502 Frolow 1944, 66–67. Dagron 1984b, 38–39, also thinks the inscription an invention. Compare Fowden 1991, 127 n. 84; Bauer 1996, 176–77.
503 Roueché 2006, 245, observes that passages in Dio Chrysostom imply that "a statue is damaged, or incomplete, without a text."
504 As noted by Bergmann 1997, 128.
505 Hallett 2005, 240–42 stresses the importance of inscriptions for explaining to the viewer the significance of otherwise ambiguous statues with divine attributes. The statue possibly had long locks at the back of the neck (LaRocca 1993, 561), since this is typical of Constantine's later portraits (Harrison 1967, 90–91; Wright 1987, 506–507). L'Orange 1947, 94 suggested these long locks were to be connected, ultimately, with the lion's mane of hair sported by Alexander, suggesting a divine connection. See, however, the doubting remarks of Toynbee 1948, 161–62.
506 Mango 1963, 74, notes that such depictions of Constantine's statue may have inspired the later manuscript illustrations of ancient statuary in the Menologium of Basil II.
507 Naked statue: Leeb 1992, 18; Bergmann 1998, 285–86; Bassett 2004, 69, 201–204; Hallett 2005, 265–68; Barnes 2011, 24. Speck 1995, 167, is not convinced. Military costume: Fowden 1991, 127; Mango 1993, art. III, 3; Lightfoot 2002, 30.
508 *Patria* 2.45, ed. Preger 1901–1907, 174. Compare Hallett 2005, 268 n. 100.
509 See Bergmann 1993, 10–11 with pls. 2.1–3.
510 Hallett 2005, 57.
511 Hallett 2005, 254–55.
512 Hallett 2005, 89–93.
513 Bowersock 1965, 12–13, 112–21; Price 1984, 42–47, 51; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 11, 27–28 (on *ktistēs*, *euergetēs* and *sōtēr*), 46–48; Hallett 2005, 138.
514 Hallett 2005, 139–44.
515 Hallett 2005, 148–53.
516 Hallett 2005, 153–58.
517 Hallett 2005, 254–55. On the honours bestowed on such men, see Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 54–55.
518 Hallett 2005, 215–22.
519 Hallett 2005, 102.
520 Hallett 2005, 323 no. 170; Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 182 with pl. IX.2.
521 Hallett 2005, 264, 323 nos. 171–74.
522 Smith 1988, 33.
523 See above p. 34.
524 Philostorgius, *Church History* 2.17, ed. Bidez and Winkelmann 1981, 28, trans. Walford 1855, 442, trans. Amidon 2007, 35; Socrates, *Church History* 1.17.8, ed. Hansen 1995, 57, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 21; Theodoret, *Church History* 1.32.3, ed. Parmentier and Hansen 1998, 90, trans. Jackson 1892, 64; and Hesychius, 41, ed. Preger 1901–1907, 17, make it quite clear that the statue represented Constantine. Although Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.7 (ed. Dindorf 1831, 320, ed. Thurn 2000, 245–46, trans. Jeffreys and others 1986, 174) and the author of the *Chronicon Paschale*, A.D. 328 (ed. Dindorf 1832, I, 528, trans. Whitby and Whitby 1989, 16) say that the statue was reused, neither suggests that it was meant to represent anything other than Constantine himself.
525 *Parastaseis* 68 (ed. and trans. in Cameron and Herrin 1984, 148–51).
526 An inscription, like the reliefs recorded by Melchior Lorck (Mango 1965, 308–11; Mango 1993, art. III, 1), may have been somehow obscured until finally permanently hidden by the addition of Turkish stonework around the base and the lowest drum of the shaft in 1779. It may be noted that the chapel of St. Constantine, which was probably built to the north of

the pedestal before the late ninth century (Mango 1981, 107; Mango 1993, art. III, 2) would presumably have obstructed any relief or inscription on that face.
527 Preger 1901, 459 ("Weltkugel und Strahlenkranz charakterisiren die Figur deutlich genug: es ist Helios"), 462 ("er identificirte sich mit der darstellen Figur, mit Helios"). Wallraff 2001a, 133: "sich Konstantin hier als Helios stilisieren ließ" (cf. p. 146); Wallraff 2001b, 261–62. Note, by contrast, Kraft 1955, 158: "Es ist nicht der Sonnengott, der auf der verbrannten Säule steht; das Bild trägt Konstantin Züge, und die Unterschrift schließt jede Identität aus. Aber der Kaiser ist Abbild der Sonne, der Mittlerin zwischen Gott und der Welt"; and Bergmann 1998, 286: "Konstantin wäre durch eine solche Statue nicht mit dem Sonnengott "identifiziert" worden, die Statue hätte nicht Herrscherkult impliziert . . . Konstantin der Welt wie eine neue Sonne erschienen sei." Hijmans 1996, 147, commenting in general on imperial representations, writes, "To the best of my knowledge, no emperor was ever represented as *identical* with Sol, for in all cases he carries attributes which show clearly that he is not Sol." The spear that Constantine's statue bore in its hand was not a usual attribute of Sol.
528 Baynes 1972, 96; Fowden 1991, 129; Barnes 2011, 203 n. 23.
529 Gradel 2002, 29–32; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 28–31.

3

THE SAVING RULER AND THE LOGOS-NOMOS

In the first two chapters it was shown that Constantine's diadem, heavenward gaze, and radiate statue can be satisfactorily explained by assuming they were adopted or designed under the influence of the iconography and philosophy of kingship. It is therefore natural to wonder whether other aspects of kingship philosophy can be detected in Constantine's imperial ideology. Two such aspects will be addressed in this chapter: the concept of the ruler imitating a heavenly model and leading his people to salvation (a topic we have already touched upon) and the concept of the ruler being guided by the Logos-Nomos.

The Saving Ruler, Imitator of God

In Chapter 2, we saw that the radiate crown, the title *Epiphanēs*, and pharaonic titles such as "chosen of the sun, son of the sun" were adopted by Hellenistic kings, and that they reflected a fundamental solar aspect of kingship. A closely related characteristic of the Hellenistic king was his role as saviour, and this aspect was also exploited by Constantine, his advisors, and his panegyrists when promoting Constantine's rule.

The title *Sōtēr* (saviour) was first adopted by Ptolemy I (305–282 B.C.). This title was bestowed upon him by the people of Rhodes, who established a cult honouring Ptolemy as a god in recognition of the support he had provided during the siege of their island by Demetrius, son of Antigonus I, in 305 B.C. The Rhodians commemorated the siege's failure by commissioning a colossal statue, about 40 m high, of the solar deity Helios. The monument was doubtless meant to suggest that their victory heralded the beginning of the rule of the sun.[1] Together, the bestowal of the title "Saviour" on Ptolemy I and the construction of the statue of Helios demonstrate the close relationship between the saviour-king, the supreme solar deity, and the concept of a new age of peace and security. Following Ptolemy's example, a number of other Hellenistic rulers adopted the title *Sōtēr*, and we may reasonably suggest that they shared a philosophy of kingship according to which the king had been sent by the solar deity to be the saviour of his people.[2]

In their kingship philosophies, Diotogenes, Sthenidas, Ecphantus, and others reveal their thinking on the king's role in salvation: the ruler could achieve it only by imitating God. The idea that the earthly ruler should imitate the heavenly government of the Supreme Deity was mentioned in Chapter 2. Here, however, I wish to emphasize the power of salvation that the ruler acquired as a result of this mimicry.

Diotogenes states that the king must protect his subjects, guiding the state like a helmsman or charioteer, and must care for his people as a doctor for his patients.[3] He should imitate Zeus and draw close to the gods in his virtues, since by doing so he will influence the souls of his subjects.[4] He should rule the state just as God rules the world, since "The King bears the same relation to the state (*polis*) as God to the world; and the state is in the same ratio

to the world as the king is to God."[5] The kingdom of the good ruler is "a god-imitating state" (*theomimon pragma*).[6]

Like Diotogenes, Sthenidas states that "The king must be a wise man, for so he will be a copy and imitator of the first God. . . . The king should imitate God by his generosity and mercy and by being like a father of his subjects."[7]

Ecphantus introduced into his kingship philosophy the notion of the Logos. In earlier Stoic thought the Logos had been a generative principle, but Ecphantus associated it with the king. He explains that the king's Logos is an image of God implanted in the king's mind, and that it leads the king to a virtuous life.[8] Guided by the Logos, the king works on the minds of his people and transforms them for the better.[9] According to Ecphantus, a pure king offers his citizens the possibility of cleansing themselves of sin by imitating him, and he alone is capable of putting good into human nature.[10]

A second-century B.C. letter written in Alexandria by a Hellenized Jew who called himself Aristeas claims to provide an account of a banquet given by Ptolemy II at which seventy-two Jewish sages were asked numerous questions, many of which concerned the nature of kingship. Their responses throw light on Hellenistic views on kingship. For example, in reply to the king's query about how he could best secure the state, the following response was given: "You could best establish its security if you were to imitate the unceasing benignity of God. For if you exhibit clemency and inflict mild punishments upon those who deserve them in accordance with their deserts, you will turn them from evil and lead them to repentance."[11]

It is clear from the preceding examples that philosophers thought that the king's capacity to lead his people from evil to salvation depended on his imitation of God under the guidance of the Logos. Ultimately, these intimately related concepts of imitation and salvation may have been derived from pharaonic kingship theory and the closely connected mythology surrounding the sun-god Horus. The Egyptian myth told of a battle between the dragon Seth-Typhon and the god Osiris, which resulted in the latter being slain. Osiris' death provoked later battles between Seth-Typhon and Horus, who sought to avenge his father's murder.[12] A deceased pharaoh was equated with Osiris of the myth, whereas the living pharaoh was understood to be the incarnation of Horus and was imagined as repeating both the destruction of Seth-Typhon and the creative act, thereby establishing *ma'at* (equity and justice) and ensuring his country's prosperity.[13] The pharaoh's role as creator was praised in Egyptian hymns, and his kingship was sanctioned by alleging that ancient prophecies had foretold he would be victorious and bring peace and order.[14]

The continuing power of this ancient Egyptian myth is demonstrated in Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris*, written in the late first century A.D. There, Plutarch presented Osiris as the First Principle (*archē*) of universal order, describing him as Mind, Reason (*logos*), and both Ruler and Lord of all that is good. The order of the world was explained as being a reflected image (*eikōn*) of Osiris and as an efflux (*aporroē*) from him. The worldly reflection of Osiris' heavenly power could therefore logically be identified with Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis.[15] Horus, then, was not only the adversary of Seth-Typhon, and hence the saviour of the world, but also the image of God, his father in heaven.

Pharaonic, Babylonian, and Persian ideas of kingship influenced thinking in other cultures, including the Jewish world, where the concept of a saviour-king also emerged. From an early period, the Hebrews believed that a day would come when their God would crush their enemies. At that time, there would emerge a prince elected by God to mediate between Him and His people. This messiah would rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem (which had been destroyed when the Babylonians captured the city in about 587 B.C.) and inaugurate a new age flowing with wine and milk.[16] These messianic expectations were naturally transferred to the king of Israel when a monarchy was established there. Like the Egyptians and Babylonians, the Jews sought an ideal king who would be their saviour, protecting them from danger and ensuring prosperity. Particular claimants were king Cyrus of Persia, whose conquest of Babylon ended the Jewish exile, and Zerubbabel, who led the first band of captives out of Babylon and built the Second Temple in Jerusalem.[17]

Buried in the *Third Sibylline Oracle* is an anti-Roman prophecy by a Hellenized Jew that refers to a king sent "from the sun" or "from the East," a king who would bring wealth back to the Temple and transform the world as a prelude to God establishing an "eternal kingdom." It is doubtful that the author had a specific ruler in mind, although it has been proposed that the text was written by an Egyptian and that the king was to be identified as Ptolemy VI Philometor, who permitted the Jewish high-priest Onias to build a temple at Leontopolis.[18] Another anti-Roman prophecy, possibly but not certainly written by a Jew,[19] and again in the *Third Sibylline Oracle*, describes a conflict between Asia and Rome. It predicts that a *despoina* (mistress) will enslave Rome, shear its head, cast it down, and raise it up again before establishing an era of harmony in Europe and Asia. It is sometimes suggested that the *despoina* symbolizes Cleopatra VII and that the author hoped that the Egyptian queen would conquer Rome and raise it up again to unite Europe and Asia in a common peace. However, it is also possible that no specific individual is meant and that the mistress is simply a personification of Asia.[20]

In the West, similar predictions of a salvific ruler were made. Shortly after the treaty of Brundisium was signed on 5 or 6 October 40 B.C., Vergil published his fourth *Eclogue*. The poet's deliberate references to Catullus' sixty-fourth poem about the marriage of Peleus and Thetis (the future parents of the mythical hero Achilles) suggest that it was written for an approaching wedding, and, if so, the occasion was perhaps the marriage of Antony and Octavia. In it, Vergil prophesied the birth of a child from a virgin – possibly a child to be born of their union, although there can be no certainty of this, since Vergil may have been writing in purely allegorical terms.[21] The child, who is described as "dear offspring of the gods," would "receive divine life" and would inaugurate a new era.[22] Vergil claimed that the prophecy of the Cumaean Sibyl was being fulfilled and that "the great cycle of centuries is born anew." This alludes to the Stoic idea of a Great Year, a vast period of time that would end when the planets reached the positions they had occupied at the beginning of the world. At that time, there would be a great conflagration and destruction of everything, followed by a complete renewal and restoration of the cosmos to its original pristine state. Upon the birth of the child, Vergil imagines that the "Saturnian reign returns" and that "Apollo now reigns." As in the myth of Typhon-Seth, the new age will be marked by the death of the serpent, and thereafter nature will provide for mankind without cultivation, and even the oaks would exude honey.[23]

Despite Vergil's prophecy, Antony and Cleopatra were defeated by Octavian at the battle of Actium in 31 B.C., and both committed suicide the next year when Octavian captured Alexandria. It was therefore Octavian who could claim to have emerged as the ruler over a new Golden Age of peace and stability. Octavian reorganized the College of Priests and, in 13 B.C., subsumed the role of Pontifex Maximus (Highest Priest) into the imperial office. As Pontifex Maximus, he gained control not only of the act of sacrament but also of the act of divination (the *ius augurium*), and he reflected this in his choice of a new name, Augustus.[24] Divination or augury involved deducing the will of the gods from bird flight and then responding to the omens with rites of expiation that would secure the *pax deorum* (the peace of the gods). It was believed that because of the civil wars these rites had failed, and that consequently the anger of the gods had increased. However, Augustus successfully restored the *pax deorum* by performing an act of augury with a favourable outcome, and the Senate ordered the closure of the gates of the temple of Janus to indicate that wars had ceased.[25]

Augustus' reform of the priesthood had the effect of shifting responsibility for the peace and security of the Roman state from the priestly colleges to the hands of the emperor. Thus, the stability that Augustus established became known as the Augustan Peace (*Pax Augusta*), suggesting that the virtue of peace was incarnate in Augustus himself.[26] The frieze on the enclosure wall of the Altar of Augustan Peace, a monument decreed by the Senate in thanks for Augustus' safe return from victories in Spain and Gaul, showed Augustus as Pontifex Maximus participating in a sacrifice and surrounded by priests, augurs, and *flamines*. Thus, it established visually the intimate connection between the emperor in his role as High Priest, the preservation of the *pax deorum* through augury and sacrifice, and the beginning of the Golden Age.[27]

In 9 B.C., the Assembly of the province of Asia accepted a proposal made by the Roman governor that the new year begin on Augustus' birthday. The governor explained his proposal on the grounds that Augustus' birthday could

> be considered to be the beginning of all things, and he has restored at least to serviceability, if not to its natural state, every form that had become imperfect and fallen into misfortune; and he has given a different aspect to the whole world, which blithely would have embraced its own destruction if Caesar [i.e., Augustus] had not been born for the common benefit of all. Therefore people would be right to consider this to have been the beginning of the breath of life for them, which has set a limit to regrets for having been born.[28]

Although the governor expressed uncertainty as to whether Augustus had significantly improved the world or had achieved a complete restoration of the cosmos to its natural state (effectively heralding the beginning of a new Great Year), the Assembly accepted his proposal, explaining its reasons in similar terms. It claimed that Providence had "created with zeal and munificence the most perfect good for our lives by producing Augustus and filling him with virtue for the benefaction of mankind, sending us and those after us a saviour (*sōtēr*) who put an end to war and established all things." It added that Augustus "exceeded the hopes of all who had anticipated good tidings, not only surpassing the benefactors born before him, but not even leaving those to come any hope of surpassing him."[29]

The concept of the ruler as saviour is found again in the *Orations on Kingship* written by Dio Chrysostom as advice to the emperor Trajan at the beginning of the second century. Dio explained in his third oration that a good king, being a god-loving man, would strive to imitate the sun, the highest god, and by labouring to do so would bring about salvation (*sōtēria*).[30] In his first oration, he likened Trajan, whose reign brought intense relief after the terror of Domitian's tyranny, to Hercules, who had become the saviour of mankind by destroying tyrants.[31] A similar suggestion was made at the climax of his fourth oration, where Dio suggested that Trajan was "the good and wise guardian spirit or god" sent to give the world education and reason, allowing mankind to "attain a pure harmony, better than that we enjoyed before" under the tyranny of Domitian.[32]

Of the same date is a panegyric in honour of Trajan written by Pliny the Younger. This, too, is influenced by traditional philosophy on the nature of kingship, since it presents Trajan as Jupiter's chosen deputy on earth and describes his kingship as a replica of Jupiter's in heaven. The emperor is described as the saviour of the empire and as having the security of mankind in his hands. According to Pliny, however, the emperor should not allow himself to be flattered as a divinity and should never forget that, although he rules over men, he is a man himself.[33]

It was noted in Chapter 2 that the Gallic panegyrists of Late Antiquity were influenced by this traditional portrayal of the ruler as saviour.[34] For instance, the orator of 289 presented Maximian as a new Hercules, restorer of Rome's health, and "victor indeed over the whole world." The panegyrist of 291 described Maximian as a luminous ruler bringing salvation to Italy. In the *Augustan History*, Diocletian was portrayed as "the father of the Golden Age,"[35] and a panegyrist writing in 297 addressed Constantius with the words, "the whole world has been reclaimed through your courage."[36] It is not surprising, therefore, that orators who wanted to praise Constantine drew similarly on this tradition and chose to represent the emperor as the god-sent saviour of his people. Constantine no doubt approved of this portrayal. By 324, his claim to be his people's saviour was not unjustifiable, since he had risen to unrivalled power through military victories won under the sign of his chosen Deity, and he had brought peace to the Roman world after years of strife.

Already in 310, a panegyrist describing Constantine's arrival in Gaul could claim that the Caesar had been "summoned even then to the rescue of the State by the votes of the immortals."[37] Soon after, on 25 July 311, another Gallic orator hailed

Figure 93. Frieze on the west side of the central passage of the Arch of Constantine. The emperor on horseback crushes barbarians. Trajanic, reworked ca. A.D. 315. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome; Faraglia, neg. D-DAI-ROM-37.329.

Constantine as "the protector of us all," adding that he was accompanied by "he who is like a comrade and ally of your majesty" – the god Sol.[38] The panegyrist recalled the occasion on which his home town of Autun was visited by Constantine. He portrayed the emperor as the people's luminous saviour for granting a desperately needed remission of taxes: "Immortal gods, what a day shone upon us . . . when you entered the gates of this city, which was the first token of our salvation (*signum salutis*)."[39] Somewhat similar is Eusebius' description of Constantine's entrance into Rome following his victory over Maxentius in 312. The Senate and people, it is stated, hailed the conqueror as "saviour" (*sōtēr*) and "benefactor" (*euergetēs*), labels intimately associated with the worship of the ruler. Exploiting the solar imagery of the Golden Age, Eusebius further commented: "All the city's population together, including the Senate and all the people, as they recovered from bitter tyrannical repression, seemed to be enjoying beams of purer light and to be participating in rebirth to a fresh new life."[40] Lactantius, too, at the opening of his *Divine Institutes*, hailed Constantine as the saviour of the state by virtue of his recognition of the Christian God:

> This work I now commence under the auspices of your name, Constantine, emperor most great: you were the first of the Roman emperors to repudiate falsehood and first to know and honour the greatness of the one true God. Ever since that day, the happiest to dawn upon the earth, when God most high raised you to the blessed peak of power, you inaugurated a reign that was healing for and desired by all, and you began it outstandingly when you made amends for the abominable crime of others and brought back justice from her overthrow and exile. For this, God will grant you happiness, virtue and long life, so that in your old age you may still keep the helm of state with the justice that you began with in your youth, and hand on the guardianship of the name of Rome to your children as you received it from your father.[41]

Figure 94. Frieze on the east side of the central passage of the Arch of Constantine. The emperor, standing with Roma to his right, is crowned by Victory. Trajanic, reworked ca. A.D. 315. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome; Faraglia, neg. D-DAI-ROM-37.328.

Similar sentiments were expressed towards the end of Constantine's life by the pagan Firmicus Maternus in a handbook on astrology written in Italy and dedicated to the consul-elect for 338.[42]

The Gallic panegyrists, Eusebius, Lactantius, and Maternus were, however, not alone in exploiting the imagery of salvation. The emperor did so, too. Soon after the victory of 312 he ordered that a public statue of himself in Rome be inscribed with words characterizing him as the saviour of his people:

> By this salutary sign, the true proof of valour, I liberated your city, saved from the tyrant's yoke; moreover the Senate and People of Rome I liberated and restored to their ancient splendour and brilliance.[43]

The theme of liberation also occurs in inscriptions above the huge, Trajanic friezes in the central opening of Constantine's triumphal arch in Rome. They dedicate the monument "To the liberator of the city" (*liberatori urbis*) and "To the founder of peace" (*fundatori quietis*) (Figures 93 and 94). On one side of the archway, the frieze shows the emperor on horseback mowing down barbarians in battle. On the other side, the frieze shows Constantine being crowned by Victory in the company of Roma.[44] The scale of Constantine's achievement in liberating Rome was expressed by the consul Volusianus, who, perhaps in thanks for his appointment in 314, erected a statue of Constantine in the Forum of Trajan and dedicated it: "To the restorer of the human race, enlarger of the Roman empire and dominion, and founder of eternal security."[45]

Later, after the victory over Licinius in 324 had secured Constantine's position as unrivalled ruler of the empire, the emperor wrote about his acts of salvation in a letter addressed to the eastern provinces. It contains the following prayer:

> Now I call upon you, the supreme God. Be merciful and gracious to your Orientals, and to all your provincials who have been crushed by protracted calamity, and proffer healing through me your servant. This petition is not unreasonable, Master of the

Universe, Holy God. For by your guidance I have undertaken deeds of salvation and achieved them; making your seal my protection everywhere, I have led a conquering army. Whatever the public need may anywhere require, following the same tokens of your merit I advance against the enemy.[46]

Another letter – written by Constantine sometime after 324 to Sapor II, the king of Persia – may also be quoted in this connection, since it contains similar sentiments and again refers to the Deity's ensign, under whom the imperial victories had been won and worldwide salvation achieved:

> Guarding the Divine faith I participate in the light of truth. Led by the light of truth, I recognize the divine faith. . . . Having the power of this God as ally, beginning from the shores of Ocean I have raised up the whole world step by step with sure hopes of salvation, so that all those things, which under the slavery of such great tyrants yielded to daily disasters and had come near to vanishing, have enjoyed the general restoration of right, and have revived like a patient after treatment. The God I represent is the one whose sign my army, dedicated to God, carries on its shoulders . . .[47]

The text of the speech said to have been delivered by Constantine at the opening of the Council of Nicaea in 325 is, if not genuine, highly plausible because it exploits themes familiar from elsewhere – God acts through Constantine, who saves his people and restores an age of light:

> So as, in the course of all the years and all the days that have passed, countless masses of peoples have been reduced to slavery, God has liberated them from that burden through me, his servant, and will lead them into the total brilliance of eternal light. That is why, my dear brethren, I believe, with the purest confidence in God, that I am henceforth particularly distinguished by a special decision of Providence and by the brilliant benevolence of our eternal God.[48]

Again, in a letter directed against the bishops Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicaea, a few months after the Council of Nicaea, Constantine claimed to have given salvation to the whole Roman world:

> You know me your fellow-servant, you know the pledge of your salvation which I have in all sincerity made my care and through which we have not only conquered the armed forces of our foes, but have also enclosed their souls alive to demonstrate the true faith of the love of man. But at this success I rejoiced most of all because it resulted in the renewal (*ananeōsis*) of the world.[49]

It emerges clearly from these passages that Constantine saw himself as a channel for the healing light of his god. He could therefore describe himself (as the king of Diotogenes' philosophy is described) as a physician caring for the welfare of his citizens. Constantine attributed his success to the military and spiritual aid given by his chosen god, and he believed that through his victories he had become, like Augustus before him, the saviour of the Roman world and the inaugurator of a new Golden Age. Here, in Constantine's own writings, we have clear evidence that the emperor was prepared to exploit the traditions of kingship theory on which the orators and historians of the period were also drawing.[50]

Common Worship of the Supreme Deity

The Christian Contribution

It was the benevolence of the Supreme Deity in whom the emperor had put his trust that ensured the safety of his person and his empire. Therefore, securing the continued support of that Deity was of paramount importance – and this could be achieved only if all citizens engaged in the correct form of worship. Constantine moved quickly to make this happen. In February 313, only a few months after his victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge, he met with Licinius in Milan and agreed on a policy by which Licinius would extend to Christians in Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt the privileges that Christians in the West had possessed by law since 306 under Constantine, and informally since 305 under Constantius. Licinius appears to have issued a version of the agreed text to the governors of the provinces in the East as he liberated them from the control of Maximinus. The policy is generally called the "Edict of Milan," but whereas the appellation is firmly established in scholarship, it is utterly misleading since there is no evidence that any edict was issued in that city.[51] It is preserved in two versions: a letter sent by Licinius to the governor of Bithynia in June 313, which is preserved in Latin by Lactantius; and another document posted in Caesarea some time later, which reads more like an edict and is preserved in Greek by Eusebius.[52] Not only were Christians granted freedom to practise their religion unhindered, but the pagan cults with their sacrifices and ceremonies were allowed to persist. This course of action was taken for two reasons: "so that we do not appear to have acted to the detriment of any cult or religion" and "in order that whatever divinity there is in the seat of heaven may be appeased and made propitious." The justification given for the policy is the divine favour that would be bestowed in return for religious observance:

> No one whatever was to be denied the right to follow and choose the Christian observance or form of worship; and everyone was to have permission to give his mind to that form of worship which he feels to be adapted to his needs, so that the Deity might be enabled to show us in all things His customary care and generosity. . . . By this provision, as was mentioned above, the divine care for us of which we have been aware on many earlier occasions will remain with us unalterably for ever.

A similar justification for this nonprejudicial policy towards religious worship was given in a letter written by Constantine before April 313 to the governor Anullinus:[53]

> Many facts combine to prove that the sad neglect of religious observances, by which the highest reverence for the most holy, heavenly Power is preserved, has brought great dangers on the community, and that the lawful restoration and preservation of the same has conferred the greatest good fortune on the Roman name, and wonderful prosperity on all mankind – blessings conferred by divine benevolence. I have accordingly decided that those men who with due holiness and constant attention to this law give their services to the conduct of divine worship shall receive the rewards of their own labours, Anullinus, Your Excellency.

After this statement on the importance of religious observance for ensuring the security of the state, Constantine's letter goes on to make a concession ensuring that the Christian clergymen in Anullinus' province should at no time be distracted from worship of the Deity by any obligation to perform public duties.[54]

> So in the province entrusted to you, in the universal church over which Caecilian [bishop of Carthage] presides, I desire those who give their services to these sacred observances – the people commonly known as clergymen – once and for all to be kept entirely free from all public duties. This will ensure that by no error or sacrilegious fall from grace will they be drawn away from the worship owed to the Godhead; rather will they be completely free to serve their own law at all times. In thus rendering wholeheartedly service to the Deity, it is evident that they will be making an immense contribution to the welfare of the community.

In the past, Christians had been persecuted because their faith, being contrary to tradition, was considered a danger to the state. It was believed that if the traditional gods did not receive sacrifice from all citizens, then they would become displeased, and the empire and its rulers would suffer. Yet here, in Constantine's writing, we see a different view. The

letter shows that the emperor believed that Christian worship, like traditional worship, could make an "immense contribution" to the well-being of the state.[55] His view reflected that expressed two years earlier, in April 311, when the dying Galerius admitted his concern that persecution had failed to make the Christians see the error of their ways, and worse still had resulted in the Christians "neither paying to the gods in heaven the worship that is their due nor giving any honour to the god of the Christians." Godlessness, it appears, was considered worse than rejection of tradition, and Galerius concluded: "So in view of our benevolence and the established custom by which we invariably grant pardon to all men, we have thought it proper in this matter also to extend our clemency most gladly, so that Christians may again exist and rebuild the houses in which they used to meet, on condition that they do nothing contrary to public order.... Therefore, in view of our clemency, they are in duty bound to beseech their own god for our security, and that of the state and of themselves, in order that in every way the state may be preserved in health and they may be able to live free from anxiety in their own homes."[56] Thus, the Christian God was effectively accepted as a god whose power could benefit the state in the same way as that of any traditional Roman deity.[57]

It would appear, therefore, that Galerius and Constantine (and perhaps even Diocletian before he initiated the persecution) saw merit in the claim made by early Christian theologians that belief in Christ was compatible with support for the emperor and the Roman state. Tertullian and Origen, for example, had explained that Christians, while they might refuse to take the military oath of allegiance to the emperor, could nevertheless support the empire and its ruler through prayer. Tertullian had written: "Thus we sacrifice for the emperor's welfare by sacrificing to our own and his God, and this we do only as God will have it, namely with pure prayers.... That is how we pray for the emperor's welfare: by invoking it from Him who can provide it." Origen had made a similar claim: "And none fight better for the king than we do. We do not indeed fight under him, although he require it; but we fight on his behalf, forming a special army – an army of piety – by offering our prayers to God."[58]

Summa Divinitas

Licinius' letters announcing the policy agreed in Milan in 313 speak of a "Supreme Divinity" (*summa divinitas*) being responsible for the well-being of the empire but they deliberately avoid defining the nature of that god in specific terms. By employing such a vague monotheistic expression it was possible to speak to both polytheists and Christians, suggesting that both were engaging in worship of the same Supreme Deity who controlled the fortunes of the state.[59]

Among polytheists, the idea that there was one Supreme God to whom all others were subordinate was not uncommon.[60] Such a belief, known as henotheism, had existed in Near Eastern tradition since the second millennium B.C. According to the *Babylonian Creation Epic*, for instance, the god Marduk saved the other gods from the tyranny of Tiamat and claimed as his reward supreme authority over all of them. In Palestine, a polytheistic tradition prevailed until at least the seventh century B.C. and is reflected in certain texts of the Old Testament. Psalms 49:1, for example, states, "The God of gods, the Lord has spoken," and Job 1:6 and 2:1 refer to the "sons of God," who are the lesser deities who attend the gods' assembly and who worship the Lord in his splendour. In the Homeric epics, Zeus presides over the council of gods and makes final decisions. In Aeschylus, however, we find that the Olympian government has developed into a sort of monotheistic system in which Zeus is the Master Mind, the source of initiative, and in which all the other gods support and execute his will.

The Presocratic philosophers went further, rejecting the anthropomorphic gods, seeking instead the unchanging forces that governed the cosmos, which might reasonably be called "gods." Xenophanes, for instance, proposed a powerful Mind, the Unmoved Mover, which controlled matter and which was the "one god, the greatest among gods and men." Anaxagoras, writing in the early fifth century B.C., mentioned no gods, only the everlasting

and supremely powerful Mind, which governed the past, present, and future in the cosmos. Since the Mind is not referred to as a god, it is unclear whether this is a theology at all, but it nevertheless demonstrates the tendency to search for a single, intelligent governing power.

In the third century A.D., the metaphysical and mystical aspects of Platonic teaching were revived and developed by the Neoplatonists (chiefly Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus), and Neoplatonism became the dominant philosophy. Its teachers held that enlightened people could perceive the Logos within themselves and could, with proper training, achieve unity with the One.[61] Like the Neoplatonists, some followers of the wisdom of Hermes Trismegistus – a semidivine figure from the ancient Egyptian past thought by some to be the ultimate source of Plato's philosophy – were monotheists. Hermetic treatises refer to god as "alone and one" but at the same time speak of various gods. It seems that, as initiates acquired greater understanding of the One, they learned it was wrong to worship a plurality of divinities.[62]

Such views of a supreme controlling power (Deity or not) were clearly not restricted to philosophers, since inscriptions indicate that the cult of Theos Hypsistos – the Highest God to whom all other divine beings, including Olympian gods, were subordinate – existed across the entire eastern Mediterranean and the Near East from the Hellenistic period until the fifth century.[63] Henotheistic ideas were also expressed around 390 by Maximus of Madaurus. He considered the worship of various deities legitimate because the gods all formed part of the Supreme Divinity. In a letter to Augustine, Maximus wrote: "His powers, scattered throughout the material world, we call upon under various names, since, undoubtedly, none of us knows His true name. For 'god' is a word common to all religions. Thus, when we honor his separate parts by different forms of prayer, we seem to worship Him wholly."[64]

The Christian viewpoint regarding the multiplicity of traditional deities is well illustrated by Tatian, writing around A.D. 165. He deliberately omitted from his work any reference to the thinking of pagans like Plutarch (who argued for a single supreme cosmic power) so that he could dismiss paganism as an invalid religion on the ground that it upheld the rule of many gods rather than the rule of one. Tatian described the Father in philosophical terms as the First Principle, and the Logos as His firstborn son, who sprang forth from Him but was inseparable from Him.[65]

The Christian philosopher Athenagoras, writing in the late second century A.D., also rejected polytheism, observing that if the gods had been created they could not be eternal. He claimed that "all things are subordinated to the one God and the Word that issues from Him, whom we consider His inseparable Son."[66]

Arnobius' *Against the Nations* was probably written in Africa sometime after the beginning of the Great Persecution on 24 February 303.[67] Its author admits to being a new convert to Christianity and to having worshipped until recently idols, animals, trees, and stones; he also appears to have been attracted to Neoplatonism.[68] Whilst asserting that the stories of Greek and Roman mythology are so ridiculous as to prove that the gods mentioned in them do not really exist, Arnobius does not deny the existence of certain unspecified lesser gods (presumably because such lesser gods are mentioned in the Old Testament), but rather seeks to explain why Christians choose not to worship them. It is unnecessary, he explains, to worship all the gods individually if one worships the source of divinity from which all other divine beings are derived. Indeed, the lesser gods cannot be worshipped individually because their identities are not known:[69]

> Because we uphold the supremacy of the divine itself, from which the very divinity of all gods whatsoever is derived, we think it pointless to approach each personally, since we neither know who they are, nor the names by which they are called; and we are further unable to learn, and discover, and establish their number.
>
> ... these [lesser] gods (whoever they be), for whose existence you [pagans] vouch, if they are a royal race and spring from the

Supreme Ruler, even though they do not expressly receive reverence from us, nevertheless understand that they are honoured in common with their Lord, and are included in the reverence shown to Him. . . .

And yet let no one think we are perversely determined not to meet obligations to the other deities, whoever they are . . . if only we may learn who those divine beings are whom you press upon us, and with whom it may be right to share the reverence which we show to the King and Prince who is over all. . . . You might, perhaps, have been able to attract us to the worship of these deities you mention, had you not been yourselves the first, with foul and unseemly fancies, to devise such tales about them as not merely to stain their honour, but, by the natures assigned to them, to prove that they did not exist at all.

Macarius Magnes, also writing in the fourth century, held a similar view to that of Arnobius. He acknowledged the existence of lesser gods, or angels, who had been created by the Supreme God and acquired their divinity from him, but wrote that worship must be directed to the absolute divinity alone:

So God alone is god absolutely; the others are only such relatively, although the name of "God" may be given to "gods many and lords many." God rules not as having the same name as other gods and therefore as one of them, but as supreme, and without being one of them. He is uncreate, and they are creatures, whom He has made, and it is thus that He rules over them. He does not grudge them the name of god if they simply draw their divinity from nearness to Him; it is when they turn away from Him that they fall into darkness. . . .

We may liken Him to the sun, which gives things light and beauty till they themselves are bright, and yet receives nothing back from them. Just so God makes the angels shine with a reflected Godhead, though they have no part in His actual deity.

And so the right thing to do is to worship Him who is God absolutely. To worship one who is merely such relatively is as great a mistake as to hope to get heat and light from a red-hot iron instead of from the fire itself, for the metal will soon resume its own nature. Such is the case of the man who worships an angel or any other spiritual being except the one true God.[70]

Lactantius, a pupil of Arnobius, expressed similar ideas in his *Divine Institutes*, although when he wrote he had not read his teacher's *Against the Nations*. Lactantius had been appointed to a chair in Latin rhetoric in Nicomedia around the time that Diocletian launched the Great Persecution in 303. He left for the West (Italy or Africa) in about 305 and, perhaps as early as 310, became tutor to Constantine's eldest son, Crispus, in Trier.[71] His stay at Constantine's court has led scholars to speculate on the extent to which his thinking may have influenced the emperor. Lactantius, like Arnobius, frequently referred to God as *summus deus* (Supreme God), thereby emphasizing a consensus between Christians and a wide range of pagan monotheists. Unlike other Christian authors, Lactantius was willing to recognize that classical thinkers had often come close to the truth about divinity, although none of them had ever been wholly right. To demonstrate this shared belief in a single Supreme Deity, he quoted the words of Roman poets, such as Vergil and Ovid, of philosophers, such as Plato and Cicero, and of the oracles of Apollo, Hermes Trismegistus, and the Sibyls.[72] However, despite this consensus, Lactantius explained, polytheists failed to realize that all their lesser gods were inferior to the Supreme Deity and for that reason could not be divinities at all:

Those who argue for gods . . . say that their many gods are in charge of individual areas, but in such a way that there is one overlord. In that case the rest of them will not be gods, but subsidiaries and servants, and the overlord, controlling everything, will put them in their posts and they will comply with his commands and wishes. If they are not all equal together, then they are not all gods: slave and master cannot be the same. If god is the name of supreme power, he has to be incorruptible, perfect, the victim of no feelings and inferior to nothing. Those forced of necessity to obey one supreme god are therefore not gods.[73]

Lactantius argued that all traditional cults were forms of ancestor worship and therefore superstitions: Christianity was the one authentic religion.[74] However, Lactantius may have considered those who shared belief in a single Supreme Deity, including Neoplatonists and Hermeticists, to be potential converts to Christianity.[75] In Lactantius' view, if mankind could be united in the worship of one Supreme God, the lost Golden Age could be restored: there would be no wars, no plots, no treachery or theft, no adultery, and no prostitution.[76]

This widespread acceptance of the existence of a unique Supreme Divinity clearly influenced the hopes expressed in the policy on religious freedom negotiated in 313. Reflected in the letters of Licinius to his governors in the East, the policy does not express an expectation that pagans should convert to Christianity, or Christians to traditional religion. Therefore, it is possible that its authors were inspired by Lactantius' idea that mankind could unite in common worship of the Supreme Deity and thereby establish divine peace (*pax dei*).[77] When Constantine finally achieved unchallenged authority in 324, he began to speak openly of his abhorrence of polytheism. Nevertheless, even at that time the emperor remained grudgingly tolerant, and the ultimate goal of unifying all mankind in common worship of one god to restore the lost Golden Age of peace and harmony remained the same.[78]

The previously presented evidence suggests that both pagans and Christians would have been able to accept the *summa divinitas* of the policy on religious freedom. From the pagan perspective there is no hint that the Supreme God of the policy is the only god. Nor is there any suggestion that the Supreme God is the God of the Christians; that is, there is no mention of Christ, whom many pagans saw as a jumped-up sorcerer mistakenly worshipped as a second high god. From the Christian point of view there is no hint of the existence of lesser gods, which orthodox Christians utterly rejected except in the form of angels. Constantine and Licinius imagined – or, for the sake of harmony, were at least willing to promote the view – that both pagans and Christians were, in their different ways, revering the same Supreme Deity who controlled the fortunes of the state. Thus, it was important for both pagans and Christians to be allowed to worship freely to ensure that no contribution to the worship of the Deity was lost.[79]

Divine Guidance from the Logos-Nomos

If the Supreme Deity were to receive the worship necessary to secure heavenly favour, the emperor and people would require, and need to heed, divine guidance. According to Ecphantus, such guidance was provided by the Logos (Reason), which God planted like a seed in the king's mind. Thus, the ruler's thoughts were themselves divine and led him to a virtuous life.[80] Those citizens who accepted the king's Logos would be saved from their sins.[81] The persistence of such ideas into Late Antiquity is illustrated by the Neoplatonic belief that enlightened people could perceive the Logos within themselves and, with the correct guidance, achieve unity with "the One."[82]

Closely associated with the concept of the Logos was that of the Nomos (Law). According to Plato, who wrote his *Statesman* in the early fourth century B.C., there were three basic types of constitution: rule by the one (monarchy), rule by the few, and rule by the many. Each of these, he proposed, could be subdivided depending on whether they observed or flouted the Law. A law-abiding monarchy was in his opinion the best of the six constitutions; a law-flouting monarchy (*monarchia paranomos*) the worst.[83] The nature of the Law was also discussed by Roman political thinkers. Cicero, for instance, presented his *Republic* in the form of a debate in which Laelius argued for the existence of a True Law (*vera lex*) that was in harmony with nature and present in all

things. The Law, according to Laelius, was immutable and eternal. It summoned men to their duty by its commands and deflected them from wrongdoing by its prohibitions. The Law governed all nations at all times and was explained and enacted by the one god who commanded the human race. Furthermore, True Law was equated with Right Reason (*recta ratio*),[84] an equivalence that can be traced in political thought to Speusippus, Plato's successor.[85]

Late in the first century A.D., such ideas were taken up in a Jewish context in the political and legal writings of Philo. The ideal king, Philo asserted, would imitate God in administering the state. If he exercised Reason (*logos*), which meant respecting Law (*nomos*) and Justice, he would bring about harmony and order. Since Philo drew on many of the same philosophical sources as Cicero, he too equated the Law with Reason.[86] For Philo, the supreme example of the ideal king was Moses, who respected the Nomos and Logos to such an extent that he could be called the Living Law and Living Reason (*nomos empsychos te kai logikos*).[87]

Discussing the nature of monarchy from his Greek philosophical perspective, Plutarch argued that the marks of a true monarch were possession of both virtue and the Logos. Wise men could learn about the Logos by studying philosophy, and a good king could accommodate the Logos in his mind, where it would become animate (*logos empsychos*) and be like an inner voice ruling over him and pointing out his regal responsibilities.[88] For Plutarch, the Logos was to be fully identified with the Nomos. The Nomos, Plutarch stated, "is king of all, mortals and immortals," and the earthly king was ruled, "Not by that law which is written externally in books and on tablets, but by the Law which is Animate in him, viz., the Logos, which dwells in him and protects him, and never leaves his soul without guidance."[89] Like Ecphantus, Plutarch explained that the king's conduct set the moral standard for the rest of mankind, and that the monarch had to educate his citizens by example and lead them to moral salvation.[90] By living a virtuous life and ruling by the laws of justice, the king could become the image of God (*eikōn theou*) on earth.[91]

At about the same time, Dio Chrysostom wrote his *Orations on Kingship*. Although two of the speeches address Trajan, this is probably a rhetorical flourish, and there is no certainty that they were read before the emperor himself. It is more likely that they were written for public performance in the civic centres of the eastern empire.[92] To his Greek audience Dio presented himself as a travelling philosopher who embodied the traditional values of Greek learning (*paideia*), an expert who could educate the unlearned Roman emperor. What made the difference between a good king and a tyrant, he argued, was the king's character, which could be improved through philosophical learning.[93] Dio explained that a good king looked towards Zeus, the supreme Olympian deity, for his inspiration, and that he ordered and governed his people with justice and equity in accordance with the Law (*nomos*) of Zeus.[94] Dio described the goddess Royalty flanked by a strong, proud, grey-haired man named Nomos. Nomos was also called Logos Orthos (Right Reason), Symboulos (Counsellor), or Paredros (Coadjutor), and without him Dike (Justice), Eunomia (Civic Order), and Eirene (Peace) could take no action.[95] For Dio, the Logos-Nomos was Hercules, who had been entrusted with kingship over all mankind by his father, Zeus. He had crushed tyranny, becoming the saviour (*sōtēr*) of the earth and its people.[96] For this reason, Hercules was Trajan's helper and advisor in his quest to become a good king.

Eusebius drew inspiration from this long tradition of kingship theory when he began characterizing the rule of Constantine. This is most clearly illustrated, as Norman Baynes first observed, in his oration *In Praise of Constantine*, which was read before the emperor in Constantinople in 336.[97] Eusebius' speech begins by promising the audience not a standard panegyric but something new. Although he avoids Christian terminology, Eusebius succeeds in justifying Christianity and the overthrow of paganism by referring to the traditions of Greek philosophy. Perhaps Eusebius, like Lactantius, felt that he could best promote Christianity by presenting it as consistent with the teachings of earlier philosophers, thereby rebutting those who portrayed it as a new religion that was contrary to tradition.

As part of his philosophizing, Eusebius addresses the relationship of God, the Logos, and the emperor.[98] The emperor is repeatedly referred to as

the "friend" of the Logos, and he endeavours to imitate the Logos, thereby acquiring the divine virtues with which he can lead his people to knowledge of God. As in Plutarch, the Logos is identified with the Nomos, which is not a written Law but a living one:

> The Only-Begotten Logos of God [i.e., Christ] endures with His Father as co-ruler from ages that have no beginning to ages that have no end. Similarly, His friend [i.e., Constantine], supplied from above by royal streams and confirmed in the name of a divine calling, rules on earth for long periods of years. As the Universal Savior [i.e., the Logos] renders the entire heaven and earth and highest kingdom fit for His Father [i.e., God], so His friend [i.e., Constantine], leading his subjects on earth to the Only-Begotten and Savior Logos, makes them suitable for His kingdom. Again, our common Universal Savior, by invisible and divine power, keeps the rebellious powers – all those who used to fly through the earth's air and infect men's souls – at a distance, just as a good shepherd keeps wild beasts from his flock. And His friend [i.e., Constantine], armed against his enemies with standards from Him above, subdues and chastizes the visible opponents of truth by the law of combat. The Logos, being the Pre-Existent and Universal Savior, has transmitted to His followers rational and redeeming seeds, and thereby makes them rational and at the same time capable of knowing His Father's kingdom. And His friend [i.e., Constantine], like some interpreter of the Logos of God, summons the whole human race to knowledge of the Higher Power [i.e., God], calling in a great voice that all can hear and proclaiming for everyone on earth the laws of genuine piety. The Universal Savior throws wide the heavenly gates of His Father's kingdom to those who depart hence for there; the other [i.e., Constantine], in imitation of the Higher Power, has cleansed all the filth of godless error from the kingdom on earth, and invites bands of holy and pious men into the royal chambers, taking care to preserve intact each and every one of all those entrusted to his care.[99]
>
> There is one Sovereign, and His Logos and royal law is one: a Law not expressed in words and syllables, nor eroded by time in books or tables, but the living and actual God the Logos, who directs His Father's kingdom for all those under and beneath Him.[100]

Eusebius' image of the Universal Saviour (the Logos) as a good shepherd taking care of his people can be traced to ancient Near Eastern thinking on kingship. For instance, in the Old Testament, the title "shepherd" was used of the king, of God, and of the Messiah.[101] The concept was also expressed in Greek political theory by Homer, who referred to King Agamemnon as "the shepherd of his people," and by Xenophon, who reported that the Persian king Cyrus had once claimed that "the duties of a good shepherd and of a good king were very much alike; a good shepherd ought, while deriving benefit from his flocks, to make them happy . . . and in the same way a king ought to make his people and his cities happy, if he would derive benefits from them."[102] In the New Testament, Jesus, as the Messiah, was naturally referred to as the Good Shepherd,[103] and the imagery of the sheep-carrier, which had a long pre-Christian history in Greece, Rome, and the Near East, was adopted in early Christian art.[104]

As for Eusebius' concept of Constantine striving to imitate the virtue and justice of the Divinity, it was, as we have seen, a feature of the philosophies of Diotogenes, Sthenidas, Aristeas, Philo, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom.[105] Similarly, the idea that the king should be guided in this imitation by the Logos-Nomos was familiar from Ecphantus, Philo, Plutarch, and Dio. However, according to Eusebius, the Logos to whom Constantine looks for guidance and whose will he interprets on earth is not, as in the works of earlier theorists, an attribute of Constantine himself. Rather, Eusebius' Logos is (although not explicitly stated) to be identified with Christ, in much the same way that Dio's Logos is identified with Hercules. In this way Eusebius adapted traditional kingship philosophy and fused it with Christian theology.

The equation between Christ and the Logos had already been made in the gospel of John, where it was asserted that Jesus was the Logos made flesh.[106] Lactantius also made the identification, but rather than citing John's scriptural precedent, he observed that Hermes Trismegistus had taught the same idea: the Supreme God had created a second god, who had created the cosmos and who was the Logos. By describing Christ as the Logos, Lactantius hoped to demonstrate to philosophical monotheists such as Hermetists and Neoplatonists that Christian religious faith was not new and different, but ancient, traditional, and compatible with their own beliefs.[107]

Eusebius himself explicitly equated Christ with the Logos in another oration, *On Christ's Sepulchre*.[108] There can, therefore, be no doubt that a Christian hearing *In Praise of Constantine* was expected to identify the Logos with Christ.[109] Eusebius' failure to make the equation overtly in that speech, or to make any suggestion that the Logos had ever taken human form, been crucified, risen again, and ascended to the heavens presumably reflects a desire to justify Christianity by presenting it as compatible with traditional Greek thinking.[110]

Given that the emperor and his son were present at the reading of *In Praise of Constantine*, it seems highly unlikely that this philosophical representation of Constantine's kingship was incompatible with the emperor's own views on the nature of his rulership. In fact it may have reflected them closely.[111] We need not reject the possibility that Constantine himself shared such a philosophy of kingship.[112] Granted, it may have been the case, as asserted in the *Origin of Constantine*, that the emperor "had been instructed little in letters" before he served under Diocletian.[113] But Eusebius, who apparently saw Constantine travelling beside Diocletian in Palestine in 301–302, claims that he "distinguished himself by the excellence of his rhetorical education."[114] Timothy Barnes has rightly argued against the view that the emperor was a poorly educated soldier,[115] pointing out that he may have been taught philosophy as a young man at the court of Diocletian and may have been able to learn from Lactantius and Neoplatonic philosophers such as Sopater, a pupil of Iamblichus.[116] Lactantius, who taught rhetoric in Nicomedia whilst Constantine resided there, was later chosen by the emperor to be his son's tutor at court in Trier.[117] Lactantius probably arrived in Trier in 310, when Crispus was about ten years of age, and he remained until at least 313. This was when Lactantius began composing his *Divine Institutes*, in which he quoted Cicero's words on True Law and Right Reason to show that Christianity – far from being the subversive and abnormal religion Porphyry had painted it – was compatible with the natural law that formed the foundation of Roman legal tradition.[118] Constantine must have read or more likely listened to Lactantius' work as it was composed, since in 314 he used some themes from it in his letter to the bishops at Arles.[119] Given Constantine's familiarity with Lactantius' work, the emperor's views may have been influenced by the rhetorician's philosophical and religious thinking, particularly with regard to the rejection of religious coercion and the search for concord in the worship of a common Supreme Deity.

Additional evidence for the emperor's learning comes from his own *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, which is now believed to be an authentic work of Constantine, although its date is still a matter of dispute. In this oration, which is preserved in a Greek translation, Constantine observes that the Platonic and Christian theologies are to a great extent consistent. Plato was correct, Constantine explains, in describing a first and second god:

> Plato . . . did well when he postulated the god above being, then made a second subordinate to this one, dividing the two essences numerically, while both shared one perfection, and the essence of the second god received its concrete existence from the first. . . . According to the exact account then, there would be one God who exercises care over all things and takes thought for them, having set all other things in order by his Word [Logos]. And the Word is himself God and the child of God.[120]

Here, therefore, while distinguishing God from His child (the Logos or Christ), Constantine makes it clear that the two constitute the "one God" or "one perfection," and that they are both worthy of the name God.[121] Indeed, earlier in the speech Constantine emphasizes that the only conceivable form of heavenly government is monarchy.[122] Unfortunately, although Constantine speaks of the Logos, he does not go on to discuss his own relationship to the Logos. Nevertheless, this evidence of his interest in philosophy makes it apparent that he might have examined and explained his rulership in philosophical terms and may even have concurred with Eusebius' views as expressed in *In Praise of Constantine*.[123]

In his oration, Constantine attributes the philosophical views that he discusses to Plato, but they do not come directly from Plato's works. In the *Divine Institutes*, Lactantius had discussed Platonic and Neoplatonic thought, attempting to demonstrate their compatibility with Christianity; however, the particular information given by Constantine in his oration could not have been obtained from there. It is possible that Constantine's source was Chalcidius' Latin translation of, and commentary on, the first part of Plato's *Timaeus*, which probably made use of the work of the second-century Neoplatonist Numenius.[124] However, the date of Chalcidius' work is uncertain, and it may not have been written until around 400, in which case it could not have been Constantine's source. Furthermore, Chalcidius' work could not have been Constantine's only source, since it never alludes to the doctrine of a First and a Second God.[125]

Another possibility is that Constantine derived his information from Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel*, a huge treatise in fifteen books, which was composed sometime between mid-313 and 324. In it, Eusebius argues that the religious and philosophical ideas of Greece and Rome are in harmony with, and were a preparation for, Christianity. He frequently quotes Plato and his followers Numenius and Plotinus – and, indeed, the *Preparation* is today the main source of fragments of Numenius' work.[126] From the *Preparation* we get a clear idea of Numenius' ideas on the First and Second Gods – and, of course, of Eusebius' own Christian interpretation of those ideas.[127] Given the lack of precedents for such an interpretation of Greek philosophical concepts,[128] we should give serious consideration to the possibility that Constantine's own similar interpretation was directly inspired by Eusebius' work. Constantine could certainly read and speak a certain amount of Greek, but if he had experienced difficulty understanding Eusebius' language or interpreting the philosophical content, he could no doubt have sought assistance from learned advisors such as Ossius of Córdoba.[129]

A letter from the emperor probably written late in 335 and quoted proudly by Eusebius thanks the bishop for sending a "mystical explanation" of Easter. It emerges from the letter that Eusebius' text had been translated into Latin so that Constantine could read it, and that the emperor had approved the work and ordered its publication.[130] It is, therefore, conceivable that a portion of *Preparation for the Gospel*, a treatise completed much earlier than this letter, had been translated for Constantine and that he had referred to it when writing his own *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*. If the contents of the *Preparation*, which was not started until mid-313, influenced the *Oration*, the latter could not have been composed as early as 313, as is sometimes suggested, and should probably be dated after 324.

If, however, this theory is wrong and Eusebius' *Preparation* was not available in whole or in part to the emperor, it is nevertheless clear that Constantine was interested in philosophical questions at the heart of kingship theory: the existence of only one God and the relationship between God and the Logos.

At the climax of the *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints* (as in his letter to Sapor II, quoted previously), Constantine attributes his success in saving the Roman world to his devotion to God.[131] In other writings, he refers to this devotion as the observance of the Nomos or divine Law and explains how he sets an example for his people. When Constantine uses the term Nomos, he apparently refers to the regulated lifestyle of the faithful rather than to the philosophical concept of an inner voice, but it is clear that the terminology derives from kingship philosophy, as does the idea that Constantine, by observing the Nomos, teaches his people to follow his example and thereby leads them to salvation. These were his words in a letter to the people of the East in 324 or 325:

> But now there have been even more clearly demonstrated, by more manifest deeds and

> more brilliant achievements, both the absurdity of doubt and the magnitude of the power of the great God, when, to those who faithfully honour the most dread Law (*semnotaton nomon*) and are not so rash as to break any of its injunctions, the benefits have been unstinted, and strength for their undertakings has been superb, with an outcome to match their good hopes. . . . I, beginning from that sea beside the Britons and the parts where it is appointed by a superior constraint that the sun should set, have repelled and scattered the horrors that held everything in subjection, so that on the one hand the human race, taught by my obedient service, might restore the religion of the most dread Law (*semnotaton nomon*), while at the same time the most blessed faith might grow under the guidance of the Supreme.[132]

Whilst Constantine saw his world conquest as a consequence of his observation of the Nomos, by contrast he explained the military failure of each persecuting emperor as a demonstration of "how far he was swept on by folly in his idea that he could defeat the divine Law (*theion . . . nomon*)."[133] At the end of the same letter, Constantine clearly expresses how his own devotion to the divine Law ensures his continuing alliance with God and hence his role as saviour of his people:

> But since the most obvious and manifest demonstrations have revealed that, by the goodness of Almighty God and by the frequent acts both of encouragement and of assistance which he has seen fit to perform on my behalf, the harsh regime which formerly gripped all humanity has been driven away from every place under the sun, let each and every one of you observe with close attention what that authority is which has been established, and what grace: it has eliminated and destroyed the seed, so to speak, of the most evil and wicked men, and spreads unstintingly to all lands the newly recovered happiness of good men; it gives back again full authority for divine Law (*theion nomon*) itself to receive with all reverence the accustomed cult, and for those who have consecrated themselves to this to perform the due rites. If they have as it were looked up out of deepest darkness and take clear cognizance of what is happening, they will henceforward manifest towards him appropriate religious reverence and corresponding worship.[134]

Thus, Constantine held that the salvation of the state depended on the religious devotion of himself and his people to the Nomos. That belief echoes the solar kingship philosophy of Plutarch, in which it was claimed that the more a king allowed his soul to be guided by the Logos-Nomos, the better the example he would set for his citizens, and the more likely he was to lead them to salvation. Although Constantine does not describe the Logos-Nomos residing in him and guiding him, it is possible he held such a view. As explained in Chapter 7, the inscription on the Arch of Constantine in Rome describes the emperor as achieving victory "with inspiration of divinity and greatness of mind," an ambiguous expression that may be interpreted as suggesting that divine insight similar to the Logos inhabited the emperor's mind and guided him to success.

The Monuments of the Saving Ruler

It was argued in Chapter 2 that Constantine's radiate statue should be understood in the light of kingship philosophy: the monument represented the emperor as the luminous saviour of his people, casting a benevolent light on them. The evidence presented in this chapter refines that interpretation. Texts on kingship speak of the king leading his people to salvation by imitating the Supreme Deity under the guidance of the Logos-Nomos. It seems likely that the heavenward gaze of Constantine's portraits (which was no doubt also a feature of the radiate statue) was meant to indicate that the emperor was inspired by the Logos-Nomos and intimately connected with the supreme solar deity, who was the model for

Figure 95. Rare copper alloy *nummus* minted in Constantinople. Obverse shows head of Constantine. Reverse shows serpent pierced by a standard topped by the chi-rho monogram. A.D. 327. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. (1890,0804.11)

his conduct on earth and the source of his saving power.

Constantine's role as saviour is also indicated by an issue of extremely rare copper alloy *nummi* struck in Constantinople in 326–330 (Figure 95). The obverse carries Constantine's profile portrait while the reverse bears the legend SPES PVBLIC ("Hope of the public") and shows a serpent or dragon pierced by a standard topped by a monogram of the Greek letters chi (X) and rho (P), thus: ☧.[135] The reverse imagery represents victory over evil, and the message of these coins has been connected with Constantine's defeat of Licinius in 324. This conclusion is supported by a letter written by Constantine in which similar serpentine imagery is applied to Licinius: "But now, with liberty restored and that dragon driven out of the public administration through the providence of the supreme God and by our service, I reckon that the divine power has been made clear to all."[136]

Closely related to these coins is the depiction, known only from Eusebius' description, placed above the entrance to Constantine's palace in Constantinople. Its prominent location is an indication that it was an important piece of imperial propaganda art, and according to Eusebius it showed the "Saviour's sign" towards the top, beneath it Constantine and his sons, and below their feet a dragon, pierced by a dart, falling into the abyss or the sea.[137] The theme in the case of both the coins and the palatial depiction is salvation – or, more specifically, imperial victory over evil under the protection of the sign of the Supreme Deity.

I have already explained that the destruction of the serpent in battle is connected with the ancient myth of Horus overcoming the dragon Seth-Typhon. The story is just one example of a number of combat myths known in the Near East and the Classical World. All such myths tell how a divine monster (often a dragon or serpent) representing chaos and sterility prevails in his attempts to prevent a young god, the embodiment of order and fertility, from coming to power. He rules destructively, attacking the god's wife or mother. However, with the help of his mother or sister or both, the god returns from the dead, and he or his son is victorious over the monster and restores order to the universe.[138]

In Greek and Roman mythology, such a combat myth surrounded the birth of Apollo. When the goddess Leto became pregnant by Zeus, the serpent Python foresaw that he would be displaced as ruler over the oracle at Delphi by their son. Driven by

the goddess Hera, Python pursued Leto, intending to kill her child at birth. At Zeus' command, however, the North Wind and Poseidon, god of the sea, came to Leto's aid. She escaped to the island of Delos where she gave birth to Apollo and Artemis. Apollo later returned to Mount Parnassus and killed Python in his Delphic cave.[139] Not surprisingly, the Greeks and Romans equated Apollo with the Egyptian god Horus, and the rule of Apollo, like the rule of Horus, became synonymous with the restoration of peace and fertility after chaos.[140]

Writing at the end of the first century A.D., the author of the book of Revelation chose to adapt the myth of Apollo's victory over Python to describe Christ's victory over evil and His earthly rule for 1,000 years before the end of time.[141] Thus, it is arguable that the serpentine imagery of Constantine's coins and the picture over his palace entrance had a Christian import – a possibility to which we shall return in Chapter 9. At this point in our discussion, however, it is more relevant to emphasize the association of the slaying of the serpent with the victory of the solar deity (Horus, Apollo) and the beginning of a new age of peace and prosperity. Implicit in the coins and the depiction at the palace, therefore, are Constantine's close personal association and assimilation with Apollo, his victory over evil, the salvation of the Roman people, and the dawn of a new era.

It is in this context that we should, perhaps, interpret another Constantinian monument. Displayed prominently on the *euripos* (central barrier) of the hippodrome in Constantinople, forming part of a large collection of statuary assembled by Constantine, there was a bronze column consisting of three intertwined serpents. It survives to this day in Istanbul (Figure 96), although the three serpents' heads have long been severed, the upper jaw of one being preserved in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums. The column was brought to Constantinople from the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, where it had originally supported a golden tripod dedicated to that god by the thirty-one Greek cities that had defeated the Persians at the battle of Plataea in 479 B.C. The names of those cities had been scratched into the surface of the bronze using the Phocaean alphabet employed at Delphi.[142] By the second century A.D. only the serpent remained, the tripod having vanished from the sanctuary.[143] In his *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius states that Constantine displayed some tripods in the hippodrome at Constantinople.[144] Sozomen, writing in the mid-fifth century, mentions that the emperor acquired Delphic tripods that had been dedicated to Apollo after the Persian war.[145] Taken together, these texts suggest it is likely that the monument that survives in Istanbul today was brought with other tripods from Delphi and set up in the hippodrome by Constantine in the fourth century.[146] However, the fact that the foundations of the Serpent Column have been disturbed makes it impossible to be certain that the column has always stood in its present location.

The transfer of the Serpent Column to Constantinople has been interpreted as a claim by Constantine to be heir to the Greek lands that had united against the Persian threat in the fifth century B.C.[147] More plausible is the suggestion that Constantine ordered the closure of the Delphic shrine because Apollo's oracles had played a crucial role in encouraging Diocletian to begin persecuting Christians in 303.[148] If so, Constantine may have seized the Serpent Column and tripods as symbols of victory over the persecutors. We might perhaps go further and imagine that the Delphic origins of the monument were considered highly significant. It was at Delphi that the sun-god Apollo had overcome the serpent Python, banishing chaos and establishing a new era of peace and fertility. Since Eusebius memorably compares Constantine's enemies Maxentius and Licinius with serpents, it is possible that the Serpent Column was intended to allude simultaneously to Apollo's victory over Python and to Constantine's victories over his military opponents. If so, there was an implicit comparison between Constantine and the conquering sun-god.[149]

The monumental and numismatic evidence, taken together with Constantine's letters and his *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, all indicate that the emperor saw himself as a new Augustus or Alexander, a ruler chosen by the supreme solar deity and guided by the Logos to imitate his divine protector. He was a saviour, a victor over evil, a restorer of harmony and freedom, and a defender of the divine Law. Collectively, the evidence suggests that Constantine and his advisors had adopted

Figure 96. Remains of the Serpent Column in the hippodrome in Istanbul. After 479 B.C. © Jonathan Bardill.

and adapted, or at least been influenced by, elements of kingship philosophies, such as those of Ecphantus and Plutarch. The extent to which Constantine allowed such philosophies to affect the nature of his rule is difficult to assess, but it is nevertheless clear that imagery and language associated with them were exploited for rhetorical and propagandist purposes.

NOTES

1 Will 1984, 54.
2 The title *Sōtēr* was adopted by: Antiochus I (281–261 B.C.), Attalos I of Pergamum (241–197), Seleukos III (225–223), Eumenes II of Pergamum (197–160), Demetrius I (162–150), Ptolemy IX (116–107 and 88–81). See Smith 1988, 50 with n. 34. Goodenough 1928, 98, also believed that the best explanation of the

epithets *Sōtēr*, *Epiphanēs*, and *Euergetēs* was to be found in the philosophy of kingship.

3 Stobaeus 4.7.61 ed. Hense 1909, 263–65, trans. Delatte 1942, 52–53; Dvornik 1966, 248–49.

4 Stobaeus 4.7.62 ed. Hense 1909, 270.1–11 and 267.16–268.17, trans. Delatte 1942, 55–56 and 54–55; Dvornik 1966, 249–50, 259.

5 Stobaeus 4.7.61, ed. Hense 1909, 265.6–12, trans. Delatte 1942, 53; Dvornik 1966, 249–50.

6 Stobaeus 4.7.62, ed. Hense 1909, 267.12, trans. Delatte 1942, 54.

7 Stobaeus 4.7.63 ed. Hense 1909, 270–71, trans. Delatte 1942, 56; Dvornik 1966, 252.

8 Stobaeus 4.7.66, ed. Hense 1909, 278.22–279.1 and 279.14–20, trans. Delatte 1942, 51, 52.

9 Stobaeus 4.7.65, ed. Hense 1909, 278.9–20, trans. Delatte 1942, 51, trans. Chesnut 1978, 1320 n. 48; Dvornik 1966, 258.

10 Stobaeus 4.7.64, ed. Hense 1909, 274.4–5, trans. Delatte 1942, 48–49 and trans. Chesnut 1978, 1320 n. 44; Stobaeus 4.7.65, ed. Hense 1909, 278.9–11, trans. Delatte 1942, 51 and trans. Chesnut 1978, 1320 n. 47.

11 Pseudo-Aristeas, *Letter to Philocrates* 188, ed. and trans. Pelletier 1962, 190–91.

12 On the development of the myth in the Egyptian and Classical periods, see Griffiths 1960.

13 Frankfort 1948, 36–47; Cohn 2001, 12–16.

14 Dvornik 1966, 293–94; Koenen 1970, 250–51; Cohn 2001, 19–20; Leadbetter 2006, 380–81.

15 Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 371 A–B, 49, ed. and trans. Babbitt 1936, V, 120–21; Brent 1999, 281–85.

16 Ezekiel 40:1–47:5 (Temple and waters) 47:6–12 (paradise); Isaiah 11; 65:17–25; Amos 9:13–15; Joel 3:18; Dvornik 1966, 312–13.

17 For Cyrus, see Isaiah 45:1 and Dvornik 1966, 327–28. For Zerubbabel, see Haggai 2:21–23 and Dvornik 1966, 329–30.

18 *Sib. Or.* III, 624–731 esp. 652–56, ed. Geffcken 1902, 80–85 (esp. 82) and trans. Buitenwerf 2003, 241–44 (esp. 242). See the discussion in Collins 1974, chs. 2–3. Gruen 1988, 23–24, 30, 32, expresses grave doubts about the claim that the work shows Jewish favour towards the Ptolemies. See further Buitenwerf 2003, 272–75, who places the author in Asia Minor after the Mithridatic wars.

19 Gruen 1998, 30 with n. 67, points out that this passage need not be Jewish in origin.

20 *Sib. Or.* III, 350–80, ed. Geffcken 1902, 66–68, trans. Buitenwerf 2003, 211–12. Cleopatra: Collins 1974, ch. 4. Asia: Gruen 1998, 26–27. Buitenwerf 2003, 221–27 places the oracle during or soon after the Mithridatic wars.

21 Brent 1999, 57.

22 Vergil, *Eclogues* 4.15, 49, ed. and trans. Fairclough 1934–1935, I, 30–31, 32–33.

23 Vergil, *Eclogues* 4.5, 6, 10, 24–25, 30, ed. and trans. Fairclough 1934–1935, I, 28–31.

24 Suetonius, *Augustus* 7, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 158–59; Galinsky 1996, 315–18; Brent 1999, 38.

25 Dio Cassius 51.20.4, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, VI, 56–57; Brent 1999, 40.

26 Brent 1999, 64–66.

27 Brent 1999, 60–61.

28 Trans. Price (after Lewis and Reinhold) 1984, 55; Brent 1999, 68–69.

29 Trans. Price (after Lewis and Reinhold) 1984, 54; Brent 1999, 69–70. For further discussion of Augustus as the saviour of mankind, see Harrison 2002, 88–95.

30 Dio Chrysostom, *Third Kingship Oration* 73–81, ed. and trans. Cohoon 1932, 138–43.

31 Dio Chrysostom, *First Kingship Oration* 84, ed. and trans. Cohoon 45–47; Moles 1990, 330–31.

32 Dio Chrysostom, *Fourth Kingship Oration* 139, ed. and trans. Cohoon 1932, 232–33; Moles 1990, 349–50.

33 Pliny, *Panegyric*, ed. and trans. Radice 1969, II, 317–547; Dvornik 1966, 501–504.

34 See pp. 67–68, 100–104.

35 *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Heliogabalus 35.4, ed. and trans. Magie 1921–1932, II, 174–75: *aurei parens saeculi*.

36 *Pan. Lat.* VIII.10.4, ed. and trans. pp. 124, 548. For further examples, see Potter 2004, 294–98.

37 *caelestibus suffragiis ad salutem rei publicae vocabaris*: *Pan. Lat.* VI.7.5, ed. and trans. pp. 228, 575–76.

38 *omnium nostrorum conservator; ille quasi maiestatis tuae comes et socius*: *Pan. Lat.* V.14.4 ed. and trans. pp. 286 (adapted), 593.

39 *Pan. Lat.* V.7.6, ed. and trans. pp. 227, 589.

40 Eusebius, *Life* 1.41.2, ed. pp. 37, trans. p. 86.

41 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 1.13, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 4, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 59 adjusted. There is uncertainty as to whether such dedicatory passages were inserted into the text by Lactantius in the 310s or 320s: Schott 2008, 107.

42 Firmicus Maternus, *Mathēsis* 1.10.13–14, trans. Barnes 2011, 168–69.

43 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.9.11, ed. p. 832, trans. p. 294. Eusebius, *Life* 1.40.2, ed. pp. 36–37, trans. pp. 85–86. For the acclamations, compare Eusebius, *Life* 4.65.2, ed. p. 147, trans. p. 179.

44 Holloway 2004, 31 Fig. 2.20 and 32 Fig. 2.21. Holloway claims that these frieze fragments were taken from a monumental altar far from Rome. Peirce 1989, 389 (citing Angelicoussis) disagrees.

45 *ILS* no. 692.

46 Eusebius, *Life* 2.55.1, ed. p. 70, trans. p. 113.

47 Eusebius, *Life* 4.9, ed. p. 123, trans. pp. 156–57 (and also Dodgeon and Lieu 1991, 150–52 (no. 6.2.5)). It has been suggested that the letter was Constantine's answer to an embassy from Persia perhaps to be dated to 324/5: Lane Fox 1986, 636. Barnes 1981, 258–59, leaves the date of the letter uncertain, whereas Barnes 1985a, 132, suggests "very shortly after October 324." Corcoran 2000, 316–17.

48 Gelasius, *Church History* 2.7.1–41, ed. Hansen 2002, trans. Janet Lloyd in Veyne 2010, 51.

49 Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 27 (= Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaenae synodi* 41, ed. Opitz 1934–1941, II), trans. Baynes 1972, 27–28; Veyne 2007, 103 (= 2010, 52).

50 Constantine's role as saviour continued to be recognized in later centuries, as demonstrated by an inscription set up in the basilica of St. Peter in Rome. The inscription again illustrates the intimate connection that was perceived between military victory, the support of the Christian God, and the salvation of the world. See Bowersock 2005, 8.

51 On the problem of the term "Edict of Milan," see Baynes 1972, 11, 70–71; Barnes 1998b, 147–48; Corcoran 2000, 158–60 no. 66; Barnes 2007, 186–89; Barnes 2011, 93–97.

52 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 48.2–12, ed. and trans. pp. 70–73 (quoted in Clarke 2005, 662–63); Eusebius, *Church History* 10.5.2–14, ed. pp. 883–87, trans. pp. 322–32.

53 Eusebius, *Church History* 10.7, ed. p. 891, trans. p. 327. On this letter, Frend 1971, 146; Barnes 1981, 50; Corcoran 2000, 155 no. 63.

54 Similar exemptions from public duties are found in Constantinian laws: *Theodosian Code* 16.2.1 (A.D. 313) and 16.2.7 (A.D. 330), ed. pp. 835, 837, trans. pp. 440–41, 441–42. Constantine's exclusion of the Donatists from the privilege set out in his letter is paralleled by *Theodosian Code* 16.5.1 (A.D. 326), ed. p. 855, trans. p. 450. On these laws, see Salzman 1993, 365–66, 375–76.

55 Compare Constantius II's justification of a law that was passed in A.D. 361 (*Theodosian Code* 16.2.16, ed. p. 840, trans. p. 443): "We are aware that our state is sustained more by religion than by official duties and physical toil and sweat."

56 Eusebius, *Church History* 8.17.9, ed. p. 794, trans. pp. 278–80; Lactantius, *Persecutors* 34, ed. and trans. pp. 52–53; Barnes 1981, 39; Keresztes 1983, 390–92; Mitchell 1988, 112–13 (H); Corcoran 2000, 186 no. 26.

57 DePalma Digeser 2000, 56, 120.

58 Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam* 2, ed. Bulhart and Borleffs 1957, 10, trans. Dvornik 1966, 582, and Holmes and others 1869–1870, I, 48. Compare Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 30–31, ed. Hoppe 1939, 78–81, trans. Holmes and others 1869–1870, I, 109–11, trans. Dvornik 1966, 581; Origen, *Against Celsus* 8.73, ed. Koetschau 1899, II, 290–91, trans. Crombie 1872–1878, II, 556–57; Dvornik 1966, 605; Helgeland 1974, 150–53; Helgeland 1979, 736–40 (Tertullian), 746–52 (Origen); Leithart 2010, 255–78.

59 MacMullen 1984, 45, comments that "Believers of every persuasion could certainly swallow" the vague call to worship the Supreme Deity. See also Drake 2000, 193–98.

60 For the following, I rely on West 1999. See also the general comments of Liebeschuetz 1979, 262; MacMullen 1984, 12–13; Edwards 2006a, 141.

61 Edwards 2000, vii–xxix; Edwards 2006a, 140–41; DePalma Digeser 2000, 74, 77, 81–82.

62 DePalma Digeser 2000, 69–70.

63 Mitchell 1999 with the comments of Barnes 2001b, 146–48.

64 Maximus of Madaurus in Augustine, *Letters* 16.1, ed. Daur 2004–2005, I, 38, trans. Parsons 1951–1956, I, 37–38, discussed by Turcan 1996, 335; Fowden 1993, 40–41; Cameron 2011, 30–31.

65 Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 5, ed. and trans. Whittaker 1982, 10–11; Brent 1999, 301–303.

66 Athenagoras, *Legatio* 19.1 and 18.2, ed. and trans. Schoedel 1972, 38–41, 36–37; Brent 1999, 303–307.

67 On this work, see Liebeschuetz 1979, 252–60; Simmons 1995; North 2007. For the date, see Simmons 1995, 47–93 and Barnes 2001, 152–53 with objections from Edwards 2004, who places the publication in 326–327. North 2007, 27–28, reminds us that a date in the late 290s cannot be ruled out.

68 DePalma Digeser 2000, 67, 68.

69 Arnobius, *Against the Nations* 3.2–3 and 3.6, ed. Reifferscheid 1875, 112–13, 115, trans. Bryce and Campbell 1871, 150–51, 153 (adapted); Frede 1999, 58.

70 Macarius Magnes, *Apocriticus* 4.26, ed. Blondel 1876, 211.16–212.4; 212.25–213.11, trans. Crafer 1919, 144.

71 On Lactantius' career, see Barnes 1981, 13–14; Pohlsander 1984, 82–83; DePalma Digeser 2000, 133–35; Odahl 2005, 125–26, 328 n. 8; Schott 2008, 79–80; Barnes 2011, 8–9, 176–78.

72 Schott 2008, 81–96. DePalma Digeser 2000, 87–90, argues that by drawing these parallels Lactantius was presenting Christianity as consistent with traditional religion, but Schott 2008, 96–109, explains that Lactantius rejected all traditional religion.

73 *Divine Institutes* 1.3.21–24, eds. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 64.

74 Schott 2008, 96–109.

75 DePalma Digeser 2000, 63, 64–90 (especially pp. 68–69 on the term *summus deus*), 83–84 (explaining that, from Lactantius' point of view, Hermetists needed to

admit that Hermes was really Christ, and that Porphyry needed to dissociate himself from traditional cult), 140–41.

76 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 5.8.6–9, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 296.

77 DePalma Digeser 2000, 136 highlights the differences between Lactantius and the "Edict of Milan."

78 See esp. pp. 282–89, 301–302, 305–306.

79 Compare Drake 2000, 241: Constantine conceived "a consensus of pagans and Christians who would put aside specific differences in order to achieve a stable and harmonious empire based on two general principles: the legitimacy of Constantine and his dynasty, and the existence of a Supreme God who underwrote both the empire and the dynasty."

80 Stobaeus 4.7.66, ed. Hense 1909, 278.22–279.20, trans. Delatte 1942, 51–52.

81 Stobaeus 4.7.65, ed. Hense 1909, 278.9–20, trans. Delatte 1942, 51, trans. Chesnut 1978, 1320 n. 48.

82 Edwards 2000, vii–xxix; Edwards 2006a, 140–41.

83 Plato, *Politicus* 300e–303b, ed. and trans. Fowler and Lamb 1925, 156–65.

84 Cicero, *Republic* 3.22, ed. and trans. Keyes 1928, 210–11; Ferguson 1975, 162–63.

85 Goodenough 1935, 54–58. Speusippus quoted in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 2.4, ed. Stählin, Früchtel, and Treu 1985, 122.23–123.2, trans. Wilson 1867–1869, II, 12.

86 See Goodenough 1935, 54–58 (on the equation of Logos and Nomos); Goodenough 1938, 86–120 (in general on Philo's kingship philosophy), esp. 89 (on the king as incarnate Logos or animate Law).

87 Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 1.162, ed. Colson and Whitaker 1929–1962, VI, 358–59; Dvornik 1966, 280–81; Rapp 1998b, 689–90.

88 Plutarch, *To the Untutored Ruler* 779d–f, 780c, ed. and trans. Fowler 1936, 52–55, 56–57. On Plutarch: Goodenough 1928, 94–95; Scott 1929; Chesnut 1978, 1321–24; Whitmarsh 2001, 184–86.

89 Plutarch, *To the Untutored Ruler* 780c, ed. and trans. Fowler 1936, 56–57; Dvornik 1966, 271. On the concept of the Law of Nature identical with the Logos (amongst the Stoics, Philo, and Justin): Goodenough 1923, 117–21. The concept of the king as Animate Law, which we have noted in Philo, had been anticipated in texts attributed to Archytas of Tarentum and Diotogenes: Beskow 1962, 215; Dvornik 1966, 245–48 (and 252 on Sthenidas, who approaches this idea), 272–73.

90 Plutarch, *To the Untutored Ruler* 780b, ed. and trans. Fowler 1936, 54–57.

91 Plutarch, *To the Untutored Ruler* 780e–781a, ed. and trans. Fowler 1936, 58–61.

92 Whitmarsh 2001, 186–88, 325–27.

93 Whitmarsh 2001, 190–216.

94 Dio Chrysostom, *First Kingship Oration* 45–46, ed. and trans. Cohoon 1932, 24–25.

95 Dio Chrysostom, *First Kingship Oration* 75, ed. and trans. Cohoon 1932, 38–39.

96 Dio Chrysostom, *First Kingship Oration* 84, ed. and trans. Cohoon 44–47. On Hercules as the Logos, see Moles 1990, 330. Moles explains on pp. 325–29 and 332–33 that Dio and Hermes, who also advise Trajan, are Logoi.

97 Baynes 1933–1934. Calderone 1973, 224–40, has attempted to argue against the connection that Baynes makes between Eusebius and the surviving texts on kingship, particularly the link with those texts preserved by Stobaeus. However, his case cannot stand. The general theme of imitation of God may have been widespread in Eusebius' day, as Calderone claims (p. 236). However, what is relevant when considering the source of Eusebius' inspiration is the specific idea of the *king's* imitation of God. I see no reason to doubt the possibility that, when devising a kingship theory of his own, Eusebius would have drawn on existing theories on kingship. Calderone (p. 237) claims that in Ecphantus, Diotogenes, and Sthenidas "there is no attempt by the king to imitate God. . . . In Eusebius, by contrast, the king must be engaged in a continuous task of imitation." This is incorrect: Diotogenes argues that "royalty is an institution imitating divinity" (Stobaeus 4.7.62, ed. Hense 1909, 270.10–11, trans. Delatte 1942, 56); and Sthenidas concludes, "The wise and legitimate king will therefore be an imitator and servant of God" (Stobaeus 4.7.63 ed. Hense 1909, 271.11–12, trans. Delatte 1942, 56). Furthermore, Ecphantus' ideas are also reflected in Eusebius in the following respects: the Supreme God and the king are both conceived of as luminous; God planted Reason (Logos) like a seed in the king's mind; the virtue of the king is his people's route to salvation. Also, the connection between Eusebius' philosophy and those of Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom should not be forgotten, since, like Eusebius, both describe the king as imitating the Supreme God, as guided by the Logos-Nomos, and as the saviour of his people. Dvornik 1966, 619, rightly cites Baynes with approval as the only scholar who had appreciated this truth.

98 Date and place: Eusebius, *Life* 4.46, ed. pp. 139–40, trans. p. 171. Another speech "interpreting . . . the elaborate descriptions of the Emperor's philosophical ideas" is mentioned by Eusebius, *Life* 4.45.3, ed. p. 139, trans. p. 171. The Nomos is equated with the Logos in *In Praise of Constantine* 3.6: "There is one Sovereign, and His Logos and royal law is one" (trans. Drake 1976, 87).

99 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 2.1–5, trans. Drake 1976, 85–86.

100 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 3.6, trans. Drake 1976, 87.

101 For God and the Messiah as the Good Shepherd, see Psalms 23:1, 80:1, 95:7; Isaiah 40:11; Jeremiah 23:4; Ezekiel 34:23, 37:24; Micah 7:14; Zechariah 13:7.

102 Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 8.2.14, ed. and trans. Miller 1914, 338–339.

103 For Jesus as the Good Shepherd, see Matthew 2:6, 25:32–33; Mark 14:27; John 10:11, 10:14; Revelation 2:26, 12:5, 19:15. See further Beskow 1962, 87–89, 198–200; Dvornik 1966, 187–91 and, for precedents, 266–68. For Christ, the Logos, and Constantine as shepherds in Eusebius, see Farina 1966, 62–63, 93, 196–98.

104 Finney 1994, 188–89; Jensen 2000, 37–41.

105 The idea can be traced back to Plato: Dvornik 1966, 258–59.

106 John 1:14.

107 DePalma Digeser 2000, 70–78.

108 Baynes 1933–1934, 169–70.

109 On the equation of the Logos with Christ, see Goodenough 1923, 139–41.

110 Barnes 1981, 253–54; Barnes 2011, 12. Drake infers much more, supposing that the audience must have contained both pagans and Christians, and that Eusebius, constrained by a necessity not to cause offence to the pagans, composed an oration that allowed each listener to understand it according to his own faith: Drake 1976, 48–60; Drake 2000, 222, 378–82. Certainly Kee 1982, 34, is quite unjustified in jumping to the conclusion that Eusebius could not identify the Logos as Christ because he knew that Constantine was not a Christian. Kee 1982, 41, also claims that in this speech Eusebius has denied Christ's incarnation completely, substituting Constantine for Christ. He bases his conclusion on *In Praise of Constantine* 6.21 (ed. Heikel 1902, 212, trans. Drake 1976, 94: "most God-fearing sovereign [Constantine], to whom alone of those who have yet been here since the start of time has the Universal All-Ruling God Himself given power to purify human life"). Presumably, however, Eusebius means "alone of those [sovereigns]"; compare Eusebius, *Life* 1.24 and 4.62.4, ed. pp. 27, 146. However, if Eusebius was in fact intending to suggest an *equation* between Constantine and Christ the claim could not, contrary to Kee, be taken to imply Constantine was a pagan.

111 Drake 1976, 51 with 147 n. 33 (emperor's presence); Drake 2000, 378 ("one thing is certain: . . . Eusebius on this occasion would have taken Constantine's views into account when he described imperial belief and policy").

112 Even later Christian emperors were not averse to exploiting aspects of this philosophy of kingship: the inscription on Theodosius I's equestrian statue in the Forum Tauri hailed the emperor as "second sun, giver of light to mortals." See *Palatine Anthology* 16.65, ed. and trans. Paton 1916–1918, V, 195; Bassett 2004, 208 (no. 117).

113 *Origin of Constantine* 2, ed. Mommsen 1892, I, 7, trans. Stevenson in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 43.

114 Eusebius, *Life* 1.19.2, ed. p. 26, trans. p. 77.

115 Barnes 1981, 73–76. See also the comments of Fowden 1988, 175–76; Corcoran 2000, 263–65. Contrast Alföldi 1948, 20.

116 Pagan philosophers: Alföldi 1948, 57, 99, 105; Barnes 1981, 252–53; Barnes 1989, 334–35.

117 Barnes 1981, 13–14; 2011, 8–9, 176–78. DePalma Digeser 1997 argues that Lactantius may have been in Trier from 310–313.

118 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 6.8.6–12, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 508–509, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 346. See the comments of DePalma Digeser 1998, 143; 2000, 56–63.

119 DePalma Digeser 2004, 133–36.

120 Constantine, *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, 9.3–4, ed. Heikel 1902, 163, trans. Edwards 2003, 14–15.

121 I agree with Edwards (2003, xx n. 2 and 15 nn. 1, 5; 2006b, 229–30; 2007, 158–61) that Christ becomes Plato's Second God only by analogy, and that Constantine is quite clear that there is no suggestion of ditheism: Constantine clearly states, "the Word is himself God and the child of God." What is less clear is whether Constantine would have chosen to use such language, which might be taken to suggest the subordination of Christ to the Father, after Arianism was rejected at the Council of Nicaea (held in June and July of 325) or whether he would have modified his expression. Barnes 2001a, 34–36, and 2001b, 154, and 2011, 116–17, argues that the speech must have been delivered before the Council of Nicaea, pointing out in comparison that Eusebius of Caesarea altered his language – although not his theology – after the council. Parvis 2006, 83 (accepting Barnes' delivery date of Easter 325) suggests that Constantine was not aware of how tendentious the terms he was using in fact were, and that his Greek translator may have inserted some technical terms into his rendering of the Latin original.

122 Constantine, *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, 3, ed. Heikel 1902, 156.22–25, trans. Edwards 2003, 5 with xxi–xxii.

123 Edwards 1999, 260 comments that chapter 9 "adumbrates the parallel that he wished to draw between himself and God." Commenting on chapter 26, Edwards 1999, 274, claims that "Constantine, when he vows himself to the service of the Deity at the end of his speech, implicitly compares himself with the second god, the Logos, who is perfectly obedient to his Father."

124 On the philosophical views expressed and their source, see Baynes 1972, 55–56; Barnes 1981, 74; Edwards 1999, 260–62; Edwards 2003, xx, 13–16, 34, 38.

125 As noted by Edwards 2003, 14 n. 4.

126 On the *Preparation*, see Barnes 1981, 71–72, 178–86.

127 On the First and Second Gods in Numenius, see Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 11.14, 11.18, 11.22 ed. Des Places 1982–1983, II, 34–35, 40–44, 48–51, trans. Gifford 1903, III, 531–33, 536–40, 543–44. Note also that at 11.13.4, Eusebius refers to the Platonic idea of "lesser gods." This concept, too, is referred to by Constantine in the *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints* 9 (although Edwards 2003, 16 n. 3, suggests that Constantine may have become acquainted with it from Chalcidius or Cicero). Earlier, when writing his *General Elementary Introduction* at the beginning of the fourth century, Eusebius had derived his philosophical views from Origen, and, on the basis of Origen's *Against Celsus* 6.61 (ed. Koetschau 1899, II, 131–32, trans. Crombie 1872–1878, II, 403–404), had come close to suggesting that the Word was a Second God: Barnes 1981, 173–74; Barnes 2001a, 35. See also Barnes 1981, 99–100, on Eusebius' confusion of Origen's and Numenius' theologies in relation to the First and Second Gods in his commentaries on Isaiah and the Psalms.

128 As stressed by Edwards 2006b, 227.

129 Van Dam 2007, 194–96; Barnes 1981, 74.

130 Eusebius, *Life* 4.35, ed. p. 133, trans. p. 166.

131 Constantine, *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, 26, ed. Heikel 1902, 192, trans. Edwards 2003, 61–62.

132 Eusebius, *Life* 2.24.2; 2.28.2, ed. pp. 58, 60, trans. pp. 104, 105–106. See the comments of Fears 1977, 314. Eusebius, *Life* 2.27.1, ed. p. 59, trans. p. 105 refers to some persecutors who have "met their final doom" and others who are "spinning out a life of shame," which suggests that this letter was written before Licinius' death around April 325.

133 Eusebius, *Life* 2.27.2, ed. p. 59, trans. p. 105.

134 Eusebius, *Life* 2.42, ed. pp. 65–66, trans. p. 109.

135 *RIC* VII, 64, 566–67, and Constantinople nos. 19 (327), 26 (327–328); Walter 2006, 29–30, Fig. 29; Engemann 2007, 206 Fig. 16.

136 Eusebius, *Life* 2.46.2, ed. p. 67, trans. p. 110. Eusebius also compares Licinius to a serpent at *Life* 2.1, ed. p. 47. See Odahl 1975, 47.

137 Eusebius, *Life* 3.3, ed. p. 82.

138 Fontenrose 1959.

139 Fontenrose 1959, 18.

140 Fontenrose 1959, 90–91, 189–90, 193, 391.

141 Yarbro Collins 1976.

142 On the monument, see Steinhart 1997, Stichel 1997; Bassett 2004, 224–27 (no. 141); Bardill 2010b, 164–67.

143 Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 10.13.9, ed. and trans. Jones and Ormerod 1926, IV, 442–43.

144 Eusebius, *Life* 3.54.2, ed. p. 108. Bassett 2004, 230–31 (no. 145).

145 Sozomen, *Church History* 2.5, ed. Bidez and Hansen 1995, 573, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 262.

146 As concluded by Madden 1992, 112–16 and Stichel 1997, 316–22.

147 Dagron 1984b, 306; Guberti Bassett 1991, 94; Stichel 1997, 319–20.

148 Barnes 2002a, 202–203, argues that Eusebius, *Life* 2.50–51, ed. p. 69, trans. p. 112 refers to the consultation of the oracle at Delphi in the winter of 302–303, when Apollo at Didyma is also known to have been consulted. DePalma Digeser, however, argues that Eusebius in fact refers to the consultation of the oracle at Daphne near Antioch in 299. Delphi was already closed when Eusebius wrote *Preparation for the Gospel* 4.2.8, ed. Des Places 1982–1983, I, 167–68, trans. Gifford 1903, III, 133–36. See also Barnes 2011, 213–14 n. 7.

149 Dagron 2000, 107–108, similarly considers the tripods from Apollo's temple to be appropriate acquisitions for "un empereur chrétien encore très attaché à la tradition du *Sol invictus*." Madden 1992, 116, sees the decision to loot the Serpent Column as having been influenced by Constantine's "affinity for solar deities." Eusebius makes no specific mention of the serpentine form of the column, although he might have given it a specifically Christian interpretation, such as by referring to Moses' bronze serpent, which saved those who touched it, for which reason the evangelist John compared it to the Son of Man (Numbers 21:4–9; John 3:14).

4

THE HIPPODROME PROCESSION

CONSTANTINOPLE'S DEDICATION CEREMONY BEGAN on 11 May 330, when, as discussed in Chapter 2, Constantine's radiate statue was raised to the top of the porphyry column. The events of the following day, which are the subject of this chapter, are also significant for understanding the nature of Constantine's image as ruler, since they demonstrate once again his adoption of the trappings of kingship – even of divine kingship.

Our clearest accounts of the second part of the dedication ceremony are found in the *Chronicon Paschale* and the *Chronicle* of Malalas, which must be supplemented with details from the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*.[1] According to those texts, Constantine commissioned a gilded statue of himself, which had in its right hand a personification or Tyche of the city of Constantinople. The statue was fashioned from an unspecified worked material (perhaps wood or ivory) and the emperor called the Tyche "Anthousa" (Flowering, Flourishing).[2] The author of the *Parastaseis* claims that the statue had been removed from the arch called the "Milion" and that it represented the god Helios in a quadriga. This is an unlikely assertion, probably resulting from a misunderstanding, but the confusion between Constantine's statue and the sun-god's statue suggests the possibility that the former sported a radiate crown.[3]

Escorted by troops wearing mantles and slippers, and holding white candles, Constantine's statue was transported on a carriage[4] from the starting gates of the hippodrome, down the west side of the track, around the southern turning-post, to a point opposite the imperial box (*kathisma*; Figure 97). On the same day, Constantine held chariot races in the hippodrome and appeared before the crowds wearing a diadem of pearls and precious stones. After the statue had received prizes from Constantine and had been crowned, it was taken from the hippodrome to the Senate house (on the north side of Constantine's forum), where it remained until the following year.

The emperor ordered that the same ceremony be performed each year on 12 May so that future emperors would rise and pay homage to Constantine's statue and the Tyche of the city.[5] According to the *Parastaseis*, the ceremony continued to be conducted only until the reign of Theodosius I (378–395). However, the *Chronicon Paschale* suggests that a version of the ceremony was performed under Phocas (602–610). If it had lapsed after Theodosius, the ceremony was apparently revived by Phocas, who seems to have substituted a statue of himself for that of Constantine.[6]

Most scholars accept our sources' claim that this ceremony first took place when Constantinople was dedicated.[7] However, this assumption has been questioned by Albrecht Berger. The ceremony recalls the *pompa circensis* (circus procession) in which idols taken from the temples were carried together with an image of the deceased emperor.[8] This observation suggested to Berger that the ritual said to have been instituted by Constantine was in reality only a posthumous honour conferred upon him annually by his successors, perhaps to fulfil Constantine's will.[9] The issue is important: if the ceremony were

posthumous, it could not be used to draw inferences about Constantine's image during his lifetime. Although the question cannot be answered with certainty, there is reason to believe that our texts are reliable in claiming that this ceremony was instituted by Constantine in conjunction with the dedication of his city in 330. To demonstrate this, we must look to an important precedent for Constantine's hippodrome procession, which occurred during the Republican era in Rome.

News of Julius Caesar's victory at Munda was received in Rome on 20 April 45 B.C., the day before the city's annual commemoration of its founding (the Parilia). It was therefore decided that the victory and birthday celebrations should be combined. Consequently, for the first time circus games formed part of the annual celebration of Rome's founding. It was traditional for circus entertainments to be opened each day by the *pompa circensis*, in which statues of the gods on litters and symbols of the gods on carriages were brought from their temples and carried to the *pulvinar*, the couch of the gods, in the Circus Maximus.[10] On this occasion, however, the images of the gods (who included Romulus-Quirinus, the deified founder of Rome) were accompanied by the ivory statue and symbols of a mortal – Caesar himself. The statue (on a litter, *ferculum*) and the symbols (on a carriage, *tensa*) were carried from the temple on the Capitol and placed in the circus on the *pulvinar*. In Caesar's day, the *pulvinar* was a wooden platform for images of the gods, although it was later monumentalized by Augustus, who built a proper temple where he could also watch the races.[11] Supplications (offerings of wine or incense in thanksgiving) began on the day of Rome's founding and continued for fifty days – longer than the forty days of celebrations in Constantinople in 330. The circus procession and supplications subsequently became a tribute to deceased emperors, since living rulers dared not follow Caesar's precedent of claiming divinity.[12]

The display of Caesar's statue in the procession of deities followed the tradition of the Hellenistic kings, as various precedents show. For example, during the wedding celebrations of Philip of Macedon's daughter in 336 B.C., a statue of the king, described as "suitable for a god," had been carried into the theatre at Aigai (modern Vergina) behind costly statues of the Twelve Gods.[13] As another example, the parade through the stadium during the second Ptolemaieia at Alexandria in 275–274 B.C. included a procession of the god Dionysus with a float bearing statues of the divinized Alexander the Great and Ptolemy I Soter wearing ivy crowns of gold. There was also another procession, which included statues of the Twelve Gods followed by a golden statue of Alexander in a chariot hauled by four real elephants.[14] Thus, the procession of Caesar's statue amongst those of the gods was primarily a divine honour, and the symbolism was probably strengthened by the use of a *tensa* to bear Caesar's symbols, since this type of carriage was apparently a privilege of the Capitoline deities.[15]

Caesar's divinity had already been proclaimed after the battle of Thapsus in 46 B.C., when he was represented on the Capitol with the sphere of the inhabited world under his foot. The inscription associated with the statue referred to him as *divus*, an immortal god.[16] In 45 or 44 B.C., Caesar was accorded the extraordinary privilege of having a pediment, like that of a temple, on his new house, clearly implying his divine status.[17] Perhaps in early February 44, Caesar was granted a golden chair to be carried to the theatre. This was also a divine honour, since thrones of the gods bearing divine symbols were taken in procession to the theatre.[18] Finally, in the last months of Caesar's life, the Senate formally decreed his divinity. Having apparently rejected the title of "Jupiter Julius," which would have elevated him to the status of supreme Olympian deity, Caesar accepted the more modest appellation "Julius the god" (*divus Iulius*).[19] The designation recognized that Caesar was not merely a *deus* (a term that in this period referred to man who had attained divinity) but an immortal divinity.[20] With Caesar's murder, however, the title *divus* became tainted with connotations of death. Thereafter, the Senate made emperors *divi* only after their demise.

Thus, the procession of Caesar's statue amongst those of the gods was one of a number of divine honours bestowed on him. More specifically, it was a divine honour associated with kings. The circus parade, together with the erection of a statue of Caesar on the Capitol beside statues of the former kings of Rome, can be seen as a prelude to several attempts

Figure 97. Reconstruction drawing of the hippodrome in Constantinople during Constantine's reign, showing southern turning-post (left), masonry obelisk (centre), starting gates (distance), and *kathisma* (right). A. Tayfun Öner.

in 44 B.C. to make Caesar a king.[21] The offices Caesar held – *consul, imperator, triumphator, dictator perpetuo, pontifex maximus, augur,* and *praefectus morum* – made him as powerful as any king, and it therefore seems unlikely that Caesar himself sought royal status. Rather, the Senators urged him to accept the position, although whether they anticipated a king in the Greek style of Alexander, whom Caesar admired, or in the Roman style of Romulus is unclear. While he unwisely accepted the honour of deification and certain kingly attributes, such as the parade of his statue in the circus, Caesar declined the title of *rex* and the diadem.[22]

For the dedication of his new city in 330, Constantine held the kind of circus procession that had been used in 45 B.C. to commemorate the founding of old Rome. Constantine's parade, recalling those of Caesar and his Hellenistic predecessors, may have suggested to onlookers that Constantine was claiming the privileges and status of a king. Indeed, unlike Caesar before him, Constantine does not seem to have hesitated to claim regal privileges, since we know that he *did* adopt the diadem and appeared wearing the jewelled form of the diadem at this ceremony.[23]

Given the evidence presented in preceding chapters for Constantine adopting the trappings of Hellenistic kings, I see no reason to reject the *Chronicon Paschale* and Malalas when they assert that the annual procession of Constantine's statue was instituted by Constantine himself at the dedication of Constantinople in 330. Assuming it was not posthumous, the ceremony takes on added force. Given that the imperial statues paraded in the circus were usually those of deified (and therefore deceased) emperors (*divi*), the parading of the statue of the living Constantine (presumably unaccompanied by statues of pagan deities) was bound to suggest to many observers that Constantine was claiming to be a god, a *praesens deus*, who, unlike the immortal deities, was accessible to mortals. As we have seen, this was the view of the panegyrist of 310, who referred to Constantine as "this most manifestly present god" (*praesentissimus hic deus*).[24] No doubt, as in the case of Caesar's earlier procession, a certain ambiguity regarding Constantine's divine status was intentional.

Besides having general divine and regal implications, Constantine's hippodrome ceremony was also intimately connected with the more specific concept of the king as a saviour who maintained universal order under the protection of the solar deity. The symbolism of Constantine's statue publicly making a single circuit of the hippodrome each year was doubtless linked with the conception of the circus as a microcosm, the charioteers making laps like heavenly bodies, thereby serving as universal timekeepers.[25] Such a cosmic interpretation of the circus is illustrated by Eusebius in his oration *In Praise of Constantine*, when he describes how God orders the universe thus: "All the heavenly luminaries alike, by His will and word trained to a single strain, covering the long course in aeon-long laps, run through the races on heavenly tracks."[26] This oration commemorated Constantine's thirtieth year of rule, and Eusebius presented in it a mathematical calculation of the length of the emperor's reign using the analogy of multiplying laps of the circus.[27] In using such imagery, Eusebius followed Iamblichus, who, when writing about Micomachus' *Arithmetical Introduction*, explained square numbers in terms of numerals arranged around the turning-post of a circus.[28] Clearly, therefore, the annual hippodrome celebrations were connected not only with the birthday of the city but also with the annual renewal of Constantine's power and the stability of the universe. It is relevant to note that Constantine's ceremony may ultimately have had ancient origins, since the connection between the circus and celebrations of imperial anniversaries can be traced to the Sed festivals of the Egyptian pharaohs, in which the king made a ceremonial walk around two ritual markers thought to have represented his realm in both the earthly and celestial spheres.[29]

Given that Constantine had chosen the solar deity as his protector, it is not surprising that he exploited the solar associations of the hippodrome, a building that a second-century author described as "dedicated chiefly to Sol."[30] We cannot be absolutely certain that Constantine was responsible for the construction of the hippodrome in Constantinople, but if the building is to be associated with the founding of the city in 324, he may have been instrumental in planning its roughly north–south orientation, which necessitated a great deal of effort being devoted to the construction of towering substructures at the southern, curved end of the track (*sphendonē*), where the ground fell away steeply to the sea (Figure 98).[31] The position and alignment of the hippodrome were such that the imperial palace was adjacent to the hippodrome's eastern flank and able to connect directly to it. The point of connection between the palace and hippodrome was the imperial box (*kathisma*), where the emperor prepared for the day's races and sat to watch them.[32] This arrangement meant that when the emperor entered the *kathisma* and appeared in all his splendour before the public at the races, he emerged like the sun from the east in a box reminiscent of the *pulvinar* of the gods in the Circus Maximus at Rome.[33]

Among the many monuments adorning the central barrier (*euripos*) of a Roman hippodrome, around which the chariots raced, it was traditional for there to be one or more obelisks. In Istanbul's hippodrome, two obelisks survive – one a real Egyptian antiquity erected by Theodosius I in 390, the other (which is considerably taller, its tip rising 32.51 m above the level of the ancient arena) built of masonry and probably of Constantinian date (Figure 99).[34] In the cosmic symbolism of the circus, the obelisk represented the sun. The connection was well-known and ancient. In Egypt, the obelisk, with a gold-covered, pyramidal tip, had been thought to glorify the sun,[35] and inscriptions show that Augustus dedicated his obelisks in the Circus Maximus and the Campus Martius to Sol.[36] In celebration of his *vicennalia* and his victory over the usurper Magnentius in 357, Constantius II arranged for transportation of the largest known obelisk – that erected by Tuthmosis IV at Thebes (Karnak) – from Egypt to Rome. It was erected in the Circus Maximus and surpassed the height of the monolith Augustus had acquired. The fourth-century historian Ammianus Marcellinus described Constantius' monument as "gradually tapering to resemble a sunbeam" and provided a translation of the hieroglyphs inscribed on the shaft, which revealed that it had originally been the gift from a pharaoh to the sun, who had granted the king rule over the whole earth.[37] Later, in the sixth century, Cassiodorus claimed that Constantius' obelisk

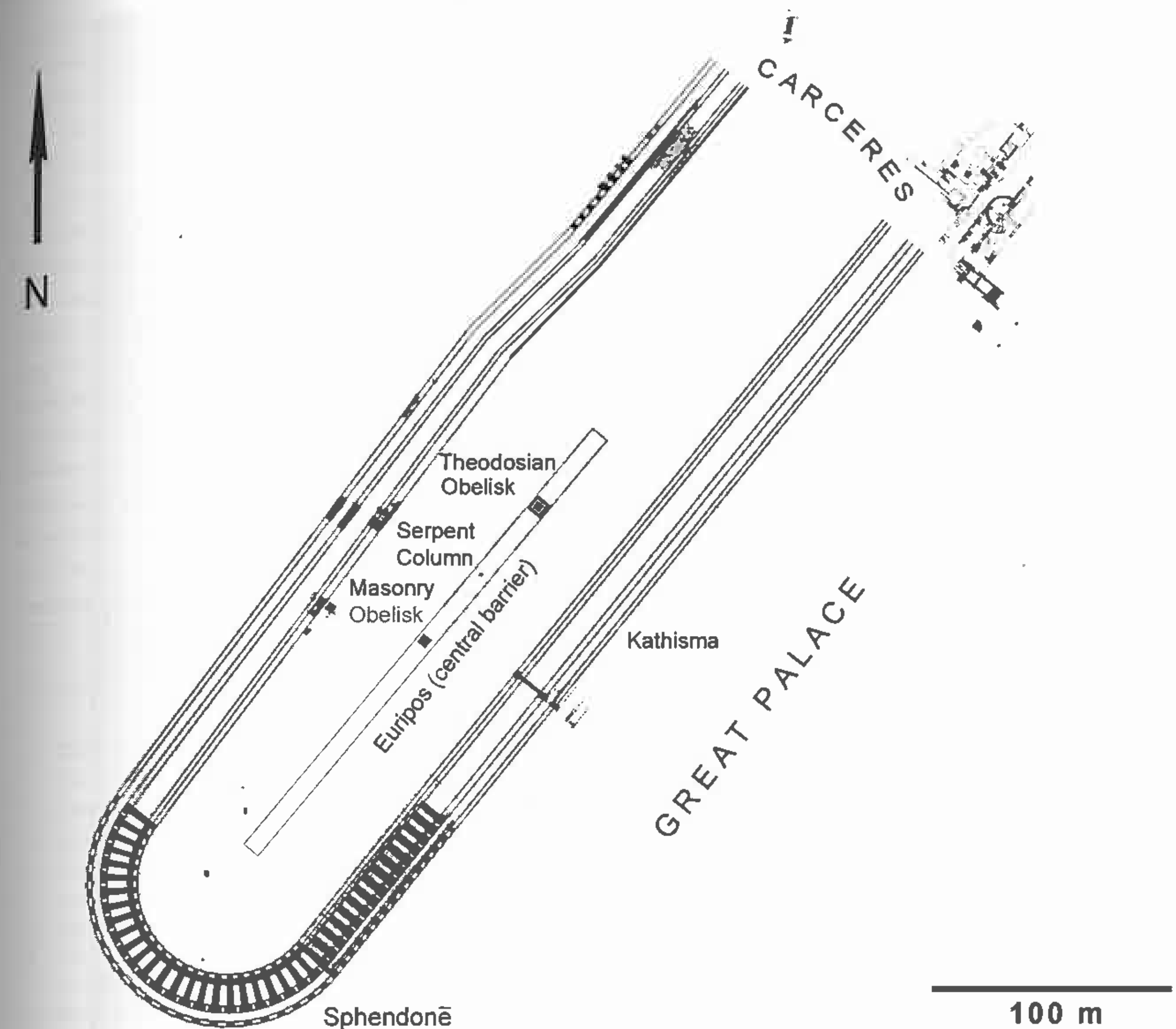


Figure 98. Reconstructed plan of the hippodrome in Constantinople showing surviving remains. A. Tayfun Öner.

was dedicated to the sun and the smaller obelisk of Augustus to the moon.[38]

The now lost inscription on the base of Constantius' obelisk asserted that Constantine had intended to send the monolith to Constantinople,[39] and it is clear from the advertisement of this information that Constantius' intention was to curry favour with the Romans by showing them that he was granting their city preferential attention. By contrast, Ammianus claims that Constantine had intended the obelisk for Rome.[40] But it seems less likely that Constantius' inscription misrepresented the truth about Constantine's intentions than that Ammianus lied to diminish the significance of Constantius' gift or to avoid making reference to Constantinople.[41]

We need not doubt that Constantine – especially given his devotion to the solar deity – wanted to follow tradition by erecting an obelisk in his hippodrome at Constantinople. And he probably would have wanted the monument set up before the dedication of his new city. If so, we can only assume that he found it impossible to arrange for the transportation of a genuine obelisk from Egypt in time for the ceremony of 330, and therefore arranged for the erection of the masonry obelisk that survives (without its metallic cladding) to this day in Istanbul. Once

Figure 99. The masonry obelisk in the hippodrome in Istanbul. © Jonathan Bardill.

the masonry substitute had been built, the urgency of obtaining the real thing from Egypt would have receded – although it is possible Constantine hoped one day to see a pair of obelisks in Constantinople's hippodrome to raise its profile above that of the Circus Maximus in Rome, which at the time was graced only by the Augustan monolith.[42] Constantine never acquired an Egyptian obelisk, and it appears that Constantius preferred to send the one on which Constantine had set his sights to Rome, giving the Circus Maximus the advantage Constantine intended for his own city. Nevertheless, Constantine's hippodrome was splendidly adorned. Plated in bronze and sparkling in the sunlight, the masonry obelisk would have reinforced the traditional association between the circus and the sun, and the connection between Constantine and the solar deity who had elected him to rule.

Notes

1 Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.8, ed. Dindorf 1831, 322, ed. Thurn 2000, 247, trans. Jeffreys and others 1986, 175; *Chronicon Paschale* A.D. 330, ed. Dindorf 1832, I, 529–30, trans. Whitby and Whitby 1989, 17–18; *Parastaseis* 56, ed. and trans. Cameron and Herrin 1984, 132–33, 242. A discussion of these passages appears in Speck 1995, 168–73.

2 Dagron 1984b, 41, 44–45 (no. 4), has suggested that in this case the Tyche may have been not a personification of the city but a figure of Victory standing upon a globe, thus representing the worldwide extent of Roman power. Also Bühl 1995, 28; Cameron 2011, 612.

3 *Parastaseis* 38, ed. and trans. Cameron and Herrin 1984, 100–103 with 215–18; Bassett 2004, 240–41 (no. 160). The figure, radiate and wearing a large aegis, shown on a cameo inserted into a cross in the cathedral of Polonia, has been connected with the statue of Constantine used in the hippodrome procession, since it holds in its left (sic) hand a helmeted figure (the Tyche of Constantinople or the Palladium?): see Calza 1972, 235 no. 146 with Fowden 1991, 126 n. 73; Bergmann 1998, pl. 1.4; Bassett 2004, pl. 22. Another possible representation of the statue of Constantine used in the hippodrome is a radiate bronze statuette wearing a *chitōn* and *chlamys* found in Tømmerbly, Denmark, in 1730, and now in the National Museum in Copenhagen (see Calza 1972, 234–35 no. 145; Stutzinger 1983, 507–508; Letta 1988, 622 no. 449; Bassett 2004, pl. 21; Bauer 2007, 165 Fig. 1). Leeb 1992, 17–18, argues for this identification, claiming that it is unlikely that the statuette represents the statue on top of Constantine's porphyry column, which he believes to have been naked. Leeb is followed by Wallraff 2001a, 134 n. 41 and 2001b, 262–63. Bergmann 1998, 287–88, argues the statuette represents the sun-god, not Constantine. See also Speck 1995, 167–68 and Bassett 2004, 203 (the latter discussing the cameo and statuette in the context of the radiate statue in the forum).

4 Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.8, ed. Dindorf 1831, 322, ed. Thurn 2000, 247, trans. Jeffreys and others 1986, 175 (for *schēma* of manuscript O, Thurn reads *okhēma*); *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. Dindorf 1832, I, 530, trans. Whitby and Whitby 1989, 17–18, which refers to a carriage (*okhēma*). Note also the probable gloss at *Parastaseis* 5, ed. and trans. in Cameron and Herrin 1984, 61. Wallraff 2001a, 134 and 2001b, 263, suggests that the imperial statue was probably in a quadriga and styled as Helios. Bauer 2001, 34–36, also assumes a triumphal chariot, pointing to depictions on coins of the emperor riding in a chariot and carrying a gilded statuette of Nike.

5 *Parastaseis* 38, ed., trans. and comm. in Cameron and Herrin 1984, 100–103, 215–218.

6 *Parastaseis* 5, ed. and trans. in Cameron and Herrin 1984, 60–61; *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. Dindorf 1832, I, 701, trans. Whitby and Whitby 1989, 153 with n. 427. Bauer 2001, 35 n. 32 claims that Malalas (writing in the sixth century) was simply copying the words of an older text, when he wrote that the ceremony continued in his own day.

7 As Dagron 1984b, 40–42; Dagron 1984a, 90–91.

8 Preger 1901, 466–69.

9 Berger 1988, 552.

10 Curran 2000, 252–58. See also Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 553–54.

11 On the *pulvinar*, see Humphrey 1986, 78–83, who explains that it was originally a wooden platform in the Circus Maximus for images of the gods, later monumentalized by Augustus. Rodríguez 2005 argues that Augustus' construction of the shrine as an imperial box suggests that he "allowed some sort of divine recognition of himself in the city" (p. 625). Van den Berg 2008, 265, describes the *pulvinar* as "a site to worship traditional state gods during a religious festival, but also as a place intended for worship of state consecrated *divi*, both present and future." Golvin 2008, 81, suggests that Nero and Domitian relocated the imperial box (as distinct from the *pulvinar*) towards the centre of the flank of the circus.

12 Weinstock 1971, 175–86, 285–86. See also Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 58; II.1, 555; Lapatin 2001, 124–25.

13 Weinstock 1957, 234; Walbank 1984, 90. See also Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 19 n. 85 with references, 58; Lapatin 2001, 118.

14 Stewart 1993, 252–60.
15 Weinstock 1971, 184–87, 285–86; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 62.
16 As argued by Gradel 2002, 61–68 (the Greek translation used in our texts is *hemitheos*). Gradel rejects the proposal of Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 58–60, that the inscription was in reality *deo invicto*, and that Dio accidentally switched the inscription for that on the statue in the temple of Quirinius. See also Weinstock 1971, 40–59 (with 41 and 53 on the inscription); MacCormack 1981, 97.
17 Weinstock 1971, 276–81; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 60.
18 Weinstock 1971, 281–86; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 61.
19 Clauss 1999, 46–53. Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 62–67 (esp. 66–67) suspects Caesar was never hailed by the title "Jupiter Julius," a claim found only in Dio. He observes that "Iuppiter Iulius" ought to mean "not Julius who is Jupiter but Julian Jupiter, that is Jupiter who operates in the sphere of Julius, a personalization and specialization of Jupiter's function. . . . It is possible, then, that one of the honours granted to Caesar was that Jupiter should be appropriated as his protective deity and that Dio, out of confusion or misunderstanding, reports the senators hailed Caesar by the name of his patron god rather than by his cult name Divus Iulius." Contrast Gradel 2002, 69–72.
20 Gradel 2002, 265.
21 Statue: Weinstock 1971, 145–48. Attempts to make Caesar king: Weinstock 1971, 270–81 (Caesar's regal attributes), 318–41; Meier 1995, 473–79; Fishwick 1995–2005, I.1, 68–70.
22 Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 67–72; Gradel 2002, 60; North 2008, 146, 158–60.
23 See p. 13.
24 *Pan. Lat.* VI.1.5 and 22.1, ed. and trans. pp. 219, 251, 573, 583. On Augustus as *praesens deus*, see Galinsky 1996, 314.
25 Dagron 1984b, 320; Cameron 1976a, 230–31; Humphrey 1986, 270–71; MacCormack 1981, 77, 79–80; Curran 2000, 246–50.
26 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 1.5, ed. Heikel 1902, 198, trans. Drake 1976, 85.
27 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 6.10–17, ed. Heikel 1902, 209–211, trans. Drake 1976, 93–94.
28 See Heath 1921, 113–14.
29 On the Sed festival, see Bleeker 1967, 96ff; Spencer 1978, 52–55.
30 *circus Soli principaliter consecratur.* Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* 8.1, ed. Reifferscheid and Wissowa 1890, 9, trans. Holmes and others 1869–1870, I, 15; Curran 2000, 246.
31 On the difficulty of determining the date of the construction of the hippodrome, see Mango 2003; Bardill 2004, 118; Bardill 2010a, 93–94. On the size and design of Constantinople's hippodrome and its monuments, see Bardill 2010a and Bardill 2010b.
32 The plan of the palace is known best in the tenth century, but the location of the *kathisma* had, so far as we know, remained constant since the fourth. For the position of the *kathisma*, see Dagron 2000, 119; Bardill 2010a, 140–45. For the palatial topography in general, see Bardill 2006b.
33 Dagron 2000, 122–24.
34 On the masonry obelisk, see Mango 1993, art. X, 17–20; Bassett 2004, 86 with n. 20; Bardill 2010b, 149–55.
35 Frankfort 1948, 153–54.
36 *Soli donum dedit*: *CIL* VI, nos. 701–702.
37 *utque radium imitetur, gracilescens paulatim*: Ammianus Marcellinus 17.4.7 and 17.4.17–23, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1935–1940, I, 320–21, 326–31.
38 Cassiodorus, *Variae* 3.51.8, ed. Mommsen 1894, 106, trans. Barnish 1992, 69. Curran 2000, 248–49.
39 *ILS*, no. 736.
40 Ammianus Marcellinus 17.4.13, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1935–1940, I, 322–25. Fowden 1987, 54–57 (and 1993, 47), argues that Ammianus is correct in stating that Constantine had intended to ship the obelisk to Rome, and that the gift should be "understood in the context . . . of his desire to conciliate the pagan Establishment of Old Rome." Hijmans 2009, 612–14, 616–17, speculates unconvincingly that Licinius and Constantine had agreed to erect the obelisk in Rome soon after Maxentius' defeat, but that the project foundered when the two fell out.
41 Kelly 2003, 604–606, allows both possibilities: that Ammianus is correcting an erroneous inscription; that he is deliberately falsifying. See also Henck 2001, 281–82 n. 17; Van Dam 2007, 137 n. 9.
42 Dagron 2000, 106, denies Constantine was responsible for the masonry obelisk, and suggests that Constantine erected the Serpent Column at the centre of the *euripos* as a temporary adornment, whilst anticipating the arrival of an Egyptian obelisk. He argues that the presence of two obelisks in the Circus Maximus must have provided the model for erecting two obelisks at Constantinople, and therefore dates the erection of the masonry obelisk no earlier than Constantius II and no later than Theodosius I. However I doubt Constantine would have been prepared to leave Constantinople without any obelisk in 330. Nor does it seem likely that the *euripos* could have been long enough (about 280 m) that the Serpent Column stood at its centre. In fact, it seems most likely that the masonry obelisk was built at the centre of a *euripos* about 225 m long. See Bardill 2010a, 105–109 (length of *euripos*); 2010b, 149–55 (masonry obelisk).

5

THE SYMBOL FROM THE SUN, THE STANDARD, AND THE SARCOPHAGUS

THE VISION, THE SYMBOL, AND THE STANDARD IN EUSEBIUS

THE STORIES OF CONSTANTINE'S VISION AND OF THE creation of his standard have long fascinated scholars, since they are striking accounts that raise many questions. What exactly did Constantine see in the sky? Was it a natural phenomenon? When and where did it happen? What did it signify? Did the vision inspire Constantine to convert to Christianity? What exactly did the standard look like? This chapter addresses a number of these issues, but places particular emphasis on a matter that has received less attention – how the story of the vision fits into the emperor's programme of propaganda and into the existing traditions of kingship. Indeed, consideration of this has a significant bearing on the way in which we might answer a number of the questions posed.

Our main source for the story of Constantine's vision, dream, and the fashioning of his military standard is Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*. The author is vague about the location and timing of events, which occurred when Constantine was "on a campaign he was conducting somewhere" at an unspecified time between the death of Constantius in York in 306 and the victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge on 28 October 312.[1] Furthermore, Eusebius tells us that it was a long time after the events that he heard the story of what had happened. However, the account came directly from the mouth of the emperor himself, who swore to him that the following had occurred:

> About the time of the midday sun, when the day was just turning, he said he saw with his own eyes up in the sky and resting over the sun, a cross-shaped trophy formed from light, and a text attached to it which said, "By this conquer." Amazement at the spectacle seized both him and the whole company of soldiers which was then accompanying him on a campaign he was conducting somewhere, and witnessed the miracle.[2]

Convinced that Constantine must have experienced some natural phenomenon, some scholars have suggested an astronomical explanation for the "cross-shaped trophy" that Constantine claimed to have seen.[3] However, Timothy Barnes points out that such an explanation is untenable since the sign was allegedly seen by Constantine and his troops at midday and over the sun (perhaps above the sun's disc or on top of it).[4] E. N. da C. Andrade made the more plausible suggestion that Constantine witnessed a solar halo, and the theory has been taken up by Peter Weiss.[5] In certain conditions, and particularly in the early afternoon, the sun acquires a halo, which has concentrated points of light above and to either side of the sun. In addition, a vertical pillar of light runs through the halo, creating a distinct cross shape. Although such a phenomenon appears

to provide a plausible explanation for Constantine's vision, and has been embraced by some, I would urge caution about seeking a natural explanation.[6] It is striking that certain verbal details of Eusebius' account recall the Biblical description of the vision of Paul on the road to Damascus. Paul explained to Agrippa, "At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me."[7] Both the midday timing of Paul's vision and the location of the light above the sun are exactly as reported by Eusebius, which raises a strong suspicion that either Constantine or Eusebius adjusted the details of what really happened (if anything happened at all) to imply a Biblical parallel. However, we need not worry whether Constantine witnessed a naturally occurring solar phenomenon. For our purposes it is important simply to recognize the fact that, according to Eusebius, Constantine had a vision involving the sun and a symbol.

In addition to the vision, says Eusebius, Constantine had a dream. This dream occurred on the night that followed the midday vision, since we are told that Constantine, pondering the heavenly sign deep into the night, fell asleep.[8]

Eusebius writes that, as the emperor slumbered,

> the Christ of God appeared to him with the sign which had appeared in the sky, and urged him to make himself a copy of the sign which had appeared in the sky, and to use this as a protection against the attacks of the enemy.[9]

Constantine did as he was instructed, ordering his goldsmiths and jewellers to create a standard of the required shape. Eusebius then explains that the emperor on one occasion allowed him to examine the standard, but says that this was "somewhat later" than the events to which he refers. He describes the standard as he saw it at that later time:

> A tall pole plated with gold had a transverse bar forming the shape of a cross. Up at the extreme top a wreath woven of precious stones and gold had been fastened. On it two letters, imitating by its first characters the name "Christ," formed the monogram of the Saviour's title, *rho* being intersected in the middle by *chi*.... From the transverse bar, which was bisected by the pole, hung suspended a cloth.... But the upright pole... carried the golden head-and-shoulders portrait of the Godbeloved Emperor, and likewise of his sons.[10]

According to Eusebius, therefore, Constantine saw a "cross-shaped trophy formed from light" both in the sky and in a dream, and ordered his craftsmen to fashion a standard of a similar shape. It should be borne in mind that Eusebius' description of the standard as "forming the shape of a cross" may mean that it was T-shaped rather than strictly cruciform, since, from the first century A.D., early Christians understood the cross on which Christ was crucified to have been shaped like a T, the Greek letter tau.[11] It is also important to note that the portrait medallions of Constantine and his sons must date to after 317 (the year in which Crispus and Constantine Junior were made Caesars)[12] and were probably added to the standard to connect it firmly with the Flavian dynasty.[13] It is possible, therefore, that the banner and the wreath containing the chi-rho monogram were also later elaborations, since these details also go beyond the basic cruciform or T-shaped symbol the emperor claimed to have seen in the vision and the dream. Because the elaborate standard Eusebius describes must have been seen by him after 317, it has generally been suggested that he saw it and perhaps also heard Constantine's account of the vision when he attended the Council of Nicaea in 325.[14] However, Eusebius visited Constantinople in November 335 to deliver before the emperor a second oration on the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and it may have been on this later occasion that he was granted the privileges of viewing the standard and of hearing the story of the imperial vision.[15]

The Dream and the Symbol in Lactantius

In his *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, written sometime between 313 and 315 (therefore perhaps two decades before Eusebius' account of the vision),[16]

Lactantius details the events that occurred before the battle of the Milvian Bridge. He describes no heavenly apparition, only a dream. Although Lactantius gives the impression that Constantine experienced this dream while camped close to the bridge, in reality he and his army probably set up camp about 13 km away, at Malborghetto, where a triumphal arch was later erected.[17] Despite this imprecision, it is important that Lactantius places the dream specifically on the night before the battle:

> Constantine was advised in a dream to mark the heavenly sign of God on the shields of his soldiers and then engage in battle. He did as he was commanded and *transversa X littera, summo capite circumflexo*, he marked Christ on their shields. Armed with this sign, the army took up its weapons.[18]

Lactantius' description of the sign in the dream, whatever its precise shape, is at odds with Eusebius' description of the heavenly sign, which refers to a cross of light. Jean Rougé suggested reconciling the two accounts on the grounds that the description of the sign in Lactantius might be a later gloss that could be deleted.[19] Many other scholars, however, have suggested that Lactantius' words be understood as referring to a monogram of the Greek letters chi (X) and rho (P), thus: ☧. The justification for this is fourfold: Eusebius refers to a chi-rho monogram adorning the top of Constantine's standard; silver multiples minted at Ticinum in 315 apparently show a chi-rho monogram on the crest of Constantine's helmet (Figure 114 on p. 178);[20] a chi-rho is shown decorating a shield on certain coins minted for Crispus at Trier in the early 320s;[21] on a gilded silver dish possibly made in Antioch, the monogram appears on the shield of a guard who accompanies an emperor (perhaps Constantius II) on horseback (Figure 100).[22]

These scholars therefore understand *transversa X littera, summo capite circumflexo* to mean "by means of a letter X crossed through [vertically], with the top of its head bent round." They also point out that if the sign is understood as a chi-rho monogram, this would explain Lactantius' claim that the symbol was the mark of Christ. However, this proposed translation of Lactantius' words is awkward since in his Latin there is no noun to indicate by what the X has been crossed through.[23]

Lactantius' text, known from only one manuscript, has been corrupted in many parts,[24] and some scholars have been tempted to suggest that this passage has also suffered. Henri Grégoire, for instance, proposed the insertion of a single letter, altering the words to read either *transversa X littera I, summo capite circumflexo*, or *I transversa X littera, summo capite circumflexo*, which would mean "by means of an X crossed through by a letter I, with the top of its head bent round" or "by means of an I crossed through by a letter X with the top of its head bent round." In this way, Lactantius is made to describe a chi-rho monogram more clearly.[25]

However, strong objections to Grégoire's adjusted text have been advanced by Henri-Irénée Marrou. In particular, he points out that the adjective *transversa* cannot be rendered "crossed through" (for which *transfixa*, *traiecta*, or *transmissa* would have been required), but can only mean "lying across" or "turned sideways."[26] The use of *transversus* to mean "lying across" is well illustrated in Jerome's description of the form of a monogram of *Christi* composed of a letter I intersected by two angled lines. He describes "an I standing upright, and an acute/lying across it and rising to the right, and a grave\descending across the I and the acute" (*I recte stantem, et/acutum transversum et in dexteram ascendentem,\gravemque descendentem trans I et acutum*).[27] Given that here *transversum* clearly means "lying across" and is used in the context of the formation of a monogram, the usage may be significant with regard to the interpretation of Lactantius' description. Thus, it might be suggested that Lactantius' text, as amended by Grégoire (*transversa X littera I*), could be translated "by means of an X lying across a letter I"; but this seems unacceptable, both because *transversus* in that sense appears to be followed by the dative case rather than the ablative, and because we would expect *transversus* to precede that dative, giving *X transversa litterae I*. Consequently, Grégoire's proposed reading can probably only be saved by understanding *transversa X littera I* as meaning "by means of a letter X lying across an I." However, it would seem unnatural in Latin for the X to have been qualified

Figure 100. Nielloed and gilded silver dish showing an emperor, possibly Constantius II, on horseback. Discovered in a necropolis in Kerch. Mid-fourth century A.D. The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. © The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Photo by Vladimir Terebenin, Leonard Kheifets, Yuri Molodkovets. (Inv. no. 1820/79).

by two terms (*transversa* and *littera*) while the letter I was left to stand alone. Thus, Grégoire's amendment, while perhaps not entirely impossible, is not very convincing, and his suggestion must be treated with even greater caution because good sense can be made of the transmitted text without any change.[28]

If we set aside the urge to reconcile Lactantius' account with Eusebius' reference to the chi-rho atop Constantine's standard, the most likely rendering of *transversa X littera, summo capite circumflexo* is, as Marrou observes, "by means of a letter X turned sideways, with the top of its head bent around."[29] Thus, by those who accept the text, the sign described by Lactantius has generally been understood as a cross with a loop at the top of the upright, ⳨, a sign which might equally be described as either a Greek letter rho (P) with a cross-bar, or a rho in ligature with a tau (T).[30]

Those who object to this interpretation have claimed that such a symbol did not appear until the middle of the fourth century, but this is demonstrably incorrect.[31] The ligature of the letters tau and rho occurs in pre-Christian contexts as an abbreviation for words such as *tr(opos)*, *tr(iakas)*, or the name

Figure 101. Funerary plaque of Beratius Nicatoras now in the Vatican Museums. Third century A.D. Reproduction from J. Quasten, "Die Grabinschrift des Beratius Nikatoras," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung* 53 (1938).

Tr(okondas), and also appears on some coins of King Herod (37–4 B.C.) to indicate that they were minted in the third year of his reign.[32] The same ligature was used in Christian contexts at the beginning of the third century A.D. In Papyrus Bodmer II, which preserves part of St. John's gospel, and Papyrus Bodmer XIV, comprising parts of St. Luke's gospel, it occurs regularly in the word σταυρός (*stauros*, "cross") and in the verb σταυρόω (*stauroō*, "I crucify") – hence, in such Christian contexts, the ligature is referred to as the staurogram.[33] The fact that this ligature was linked with particular words relating to Jesus' cross or his crucifixion suggests that it had significance beyond being merely a ligature of two Greek letters. The sign may in fact have been created as a sort of pictogram representing Christ on the cross, because in the Early Christian period the Greek letter tau was understood as an allusion to the cross of the crucifixion.[34] The loop of the rho might therefore have been considered a visual representation of the head of Christ (possibly in profile). The intimate link between the staurogram and the crucifixion would explain why Lactantius, if indeed he meant to describe the staurogram, could claim that Constantine's men "marked Christ on their shields."[35]

The staurogram occurs as an independent symbol twice on the third-century funerary plaque of Beratius Nicatoras in the Vatican Museums (Figure 101). That the context is Christian is suggested by the facts that the stone also depicts the Good Shepherd and, to either side, a monster devouring a human (apparently a reference to Jonah) and a lion (possibly a reference to Daniel).[36] The staurogram appears again (along with the chi-rho) in graffiti possibly dating before 320 in tombs below the Vatican,[37] and also on *solidi* with the legend VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AVG minted in Antioch in 336/337 (Figure 102).[38]

Figure 102. Staurogram used as part of mint mark. Reverse of gold *solidus* minted in Antioch, A.D. 336–337. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (R.165).

Probably the most important occurrence of the staurogram from our point of view, however, is in a wealthy Late Antique residence discovered in the 1970s to the south of the Lateran baptistery in Rome. The symbol is used in a painted mural inscription beneath a depiction of hippocamps emerging from the sea.[39] Although a number of superimposed and poorly preserved painted inscriptions of different dates form part of the mural, the large staurogram is most probably connected with the words IN | SIGNO [H]OC EST PATRIS VICTORIA ("In this sign is the victory of the Father"). The inscription clearly recalls the words Constantine claimed to have seen in the heavens at the time of his vision, which were rendered into Greek by Eusebius as τούτῳ νίκα (*toutōi nika*, "By this conquer").[40] Furthermore, the letters alpha and omega, which are suspended from the crossbar of the staurogram, make a reference to the text of Revelation and thereby confirm the Christian import of the sign.[41]

The words IMP LIC LICINI NOS IV COS apparently belong to the same painted inscription, so the staurogram has been dated to Licinius' fourth consulship in 315. This evidence for use of the staurogram, being so close in date to Lactantius' account of Constantine's dream, and coming from an aristocratic if not imperial context, strongly supports the possibility that Lactantius describes a staurogram.[42] It may be noted, incidentally, that an inscription beneath an adjacent wall painting in the palace contains a large chi-rho monogram. This appears to be associated with the words CONSTANS IMP [RO]MANORVM, which suggests that it is to be dated after the death of Constantine, between 337 and 350.[43] Thus, we have evidence for the importance of the staurogram in an aristocratic and Christian context during Constantine's reign, and of the chi-rho monogram shortly after.

Another important piece of evidence supporting the case for identifying Lactantius' sign as the staurogram is a bronze weight in the Art Museum of Princeton University (Figure 103).[44] This takes the form of a statuette of an enthroned emperor wearing a jewelled diadem and sporting a "hip-mantle" costume. This costume is worn by Constantine's colossal, enthroned statue from the Basilica of Maxentius in Rome (discussed in Chapter 6) and by the same emperor on a bronze medallion struck in Rome (Figure 142 on p. 214). The dress suggests a parallel between the emperor and Jupiter that would not have been acceptable to the Christian emperors who followed Constantine; and since Constantine was apparently the first emperor to adopt the diadem, there can be no doubt that this statuette is meant to show him. Constantine rests his left forearm on a circular shield, which is decorated not only with a staurogram but also with two horns terminating in confronted goats' heads. Andreas Alföldi discovered the same emblem on one of the pedestals of the Arch of Constantine in Rome and explained it as the sign of a Teutonic infantry unit of the Late Roman army called the *cornuti*, or "horned ones." The *cornuti*, Alföldi argued, are also shown on the battle scenes carved on the Arch, where they are distinguished by helmets with goats' horns (see the soldier at the far right of Figure 78). If the identification of the symbol is correct, the *cornuti* played an important role in Constantine's victory over Maxentius in 312.[45]

It is uncertain when the statuette was made. Alföldi claimed that the staurogram (which has a slight hook at the end of the loop) could not be

Figure 103. Bronze steelyard weight filled with lead, in the form of the emperor Constantine. Height: 12.5 cm. Princeton University Art Museum/Bruce M. White (y1955-3257).

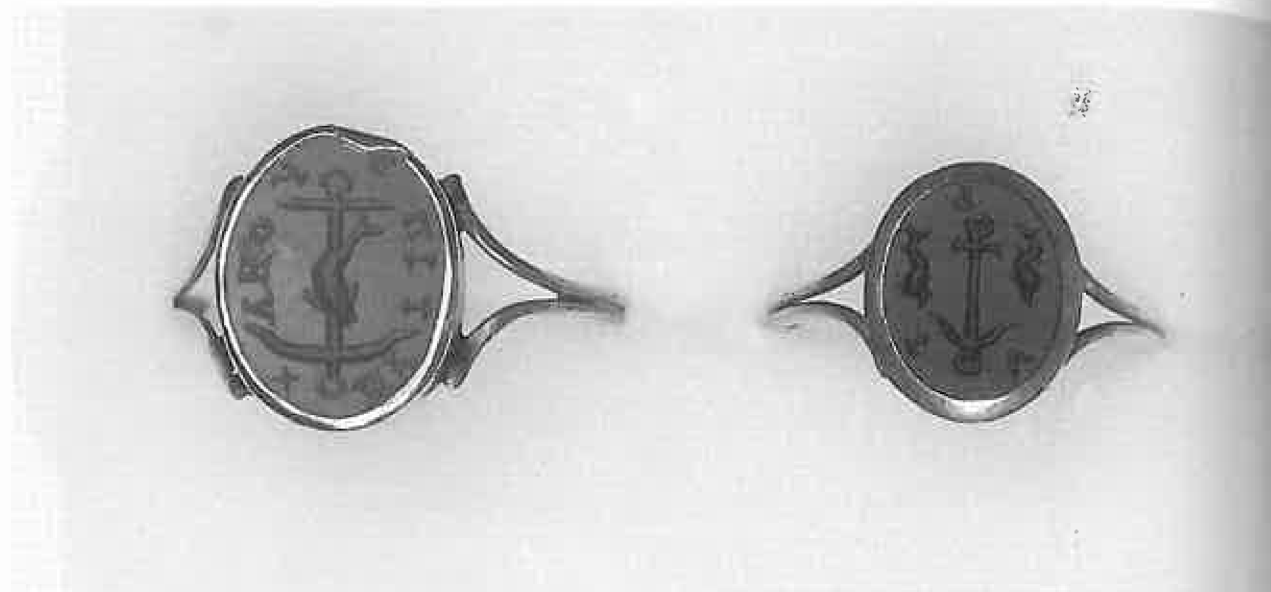


Figure 104. Late antique intaglios (red jasper and green jasper) with anchor symbols and dolphins. Third–fourth century A.D. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1856,0425.11).

earlier than the period of Theodosius I,[46] although, as we have seen, the symbol was used much earlier. In his right hand the emperor holds a globe on top of which is a rectangular lump of bronze. The presence of this protrusion may suggest that the globe was once surmounted by something now lost. Alföldi believed that the figure had once held a globe surmounted by a cross, and that this indicated the statuette had been made between the time of Theodosius I and the sixth century.[47] However, we should also consider the possibility that the globe was topped by a figure of Victory, and, if so, an earlier date for the statuette – possibly in the reign of Constantine (although after 324 given the presence of the diadem) – would be acceptable. It must be emphasized that there is no certainty about the significance of the protrusion on the globe, so any inferences are entirely speculative. Even if, as Alföldi claimed, the statuette belongs to the Theodosian period or later, the appearance on the shield of the same horned symbol found on the Arch of Constantine confirms that the bronze is a copy of an original from the Constantinian period, and possibly of a monumental statue of the emperor. What is important for our purposes is that Constantine's shield carries in conjunction with the horned emblem not the chi-rho monogram but the staurogram. This statuette therefore deserves more attention than it has received since it lends credibility to the suggestion that Lactantius describes a staurogram in his account of Constantine's dream and supports Lactantius' claim that this sign was applied to the shields of the soldiers.

We should also examine the possibility that Lactantius is describing the Egyptian *crux ansata* or "handled cross," ☥, which was similar to the staurogram. The *crux ansata* was intimately related to the Egyptian ankh, ☥, a hieroglyph meaning "Life," but differed from it in that the upper loop was circular rather than elongated. In the form of the *crux ansata*, the ankh passed into Christian usage, perhaps because of its similarity to the staurogram,[48] or because of its similarity to another Christian symbol, the anchor. The anchor seems to have been one of the earliest Christian symbols, and St. Paul connected it with the idea of hope in Christ and salvation.[49] In many representations of the anchor, the circular eye sits directly above the T-shaped stock and shank (Figure 104), with only the presence of the hooks at the bottom of the shank distinguishing the symbol from the *crux ansata*.[50] With its circular loop seated on a T, the *crux ansata* might, like the staurogram, have served as a pictogram of the crucified Christ. This emerges clearly when it is compared with early Christian depictions of the nimbate Christ on the

Figure 105. Carved ivory panel from casket made in Rome showing nimbate Christ on the cross. Ca. A.D. 420–430. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1856,0623.5).

cross, such as that on an ivory plaque in the British Museum (Figure 105).[51]

The frequent occurrence in pharaonic inscriptions from Tell-el-Amarna of a hieroglyph combining the solar disc with the ankh (which is suspended below it) appears to show a stage in the development from the ankh to the *crux ansata*. This evidence demonstrates clearly the powerful concept among the Egyptians of the solar disc as the dispenser of life, and may even suggest that the circle of the *crux ansata* was intended to represent the disc of the sun.[52] The *crux ansata* acquired a symbolic value for Christians not only because of its similarity to the staurogram and anchor but also for several other reasons. In the first place, the circle (or solar disc) of the *crux ansata* was important because both God and Christ were considered to have solar associations. Secondly, the tau shape below the circle could be interpreted as the cross of the crucifixion. In the third place, the crucifixion itself promised renewed life, which was the essential meaning of the ankh hieroglyph from which the *crux ansata* had derived.

A precise date when the *crux ansata* was adopted into the corpus of Christian symbols cannot be established, but the sign occurs in the Coptic Gospel of Judas, which radiocarbon dating places between 220 and 340 with 95.4 per cent probability.[53] The sign is also found in the mid-fourth century manuscript Papyrus Bodmer XX and in later fourth-century Coptic manuscripts in the Nag Hammadi collection.[54] Another apparent Christian occurrence, this time in the West, is in the tomb of the Valerii under St. Peter's basilica in Rome, in a painted epitaph including the abbreviation XS HIS (for *Christos Iēsous*). This dates to the period before the basilica was built, probably under Constans between 337 and 350. But whether the symbol is a true *crux ansata* imported from Egypt or only a relative of another symbol used in the West (such as the anchor) is uncertain.[55]

Rufinus, writing around 403, says that at the time of the destruction of the temple of Serapis in Alexandria in 391, busts of the god throughout the city were cut or filed away and replaced with painted Christian crosses. Pagan Egyptians recognized the sign as being identical to one among their hieroglyphs meaning "Life to come," and the priests, who recalled a prophecy predicting the coming of the sign, were

converted when they saw what was happening.[56] Socrates and Sozomen (writing around 439 and 450, respectively) claim that cruciform hieroglyphic characters were seen on the stones of the Serapaeum when it was torn down, and that both Christians and pagans alike were convinced that the sign was their own. When educated pagan converts to Christianity explained that the sign meant "Life to come" (an interpretation that confirms that the hieroglyph concerned was the ankh as opposed to other cruciform hieroglyphs), the Christians seized on the interpretation as proof that the sign was in fact theirs.[57]

Some have deduced from these accounts that the ankh, or the ankh in the form of the *crux ansata*, was not adopted by the Christians until 391,[58] but the evidence from the Gospel of Judas indicates that it had been adopted by Christians in Egypt before 340. Indeed, the fact that, according to Socrates and Sozomen, Egyptian Christians were adamantly claiming the ankh carved on the temple walls was Christian in origin suggests either that the sign had been in use in Christian contexts (as the *crux ansata*) for some time before 391 or that the Christians recognized its shape as being practically identical to their staurogram or anchor. As for the account of Rufinus, if certain Egyptians recognized the sign that had been painted over the busts of Serapis as an ankh, that may mean either that the Christians who defaced the busts had already adopted the similar *crux ansata* or that they had painted staurograms or anchors over the busts, and that the Egyptians identified these signs with the ankh. At any rate, all these popular tales are likely to have distorted and elaborated the truth, so it is difficult to know what can be deduced from them with any degree of reliability.

Further evidence that may be relevant to the Christian adoption of the *crux ansata* comes from the last years of Constantine's reign (334–335). At this time, copper alloy *nummi* were minted in Aquileia bearing on the reverse the legend GLORIA EXERCITVS ("Glory of the army"), two opposed soldiers each with a spear and standard, and between them a symbol that looks like a badly proportioned *crux ansata*, having a small disc above a tau-cross with widely splaying arms (Figure 106).[59] However, the symbol is used here only as a mark employed by the mint. Since it was not part of the main design, it indicates nothing about Constantinian propaganda. On similar coins minted at Arles we find as many as six different mint marks in the same position, such as a star, palm branch, chi-rho, and crescent.[60]

If, when attempting to interpret Lactantius' description of the sign seen by Constantine we must choose between the staurogram, chi-rho, and the *crux ansata*, I consider it more likely that Lactantius meant to describe the first. Two pieces of evidence seem particularly strong: the sign occurs at an early date in a high-status (possibly imperial) context in the Lateran wall paintings in conjunction with an inscription that Eusebius would later associate with the vision; and the sign occurs together with the emblem of the *cornuti* on the shield of a bronze weight representing Constantine. Although we cannot completely exclude the possibility that Lactantius was describing the chi-rho monogram, I find the adjustments required to make his text compatible with that interpretation rather forced, especially when a satisfactory explanation for the transmitted text can be suggested. The occurrence of a tiny chi-rho monogram on a limited issue of medallions minted in Ticinum in 313 is insufficient evidence for arguing for such adjustments. As for the *crux ansata*, our evidence for its use in the West is not strong, and although something similar appears beneath St. Peter's before 350, I am not certain it is a true *crux anasata* and suspect that it may in fact be related to other symbols of similar shape already in use in the West, such as the anchor.

Whether Lactantius was describing a staurogram, chi-rho, or *crux ansata*, we have to face the fact that the symbol to which he refers does not coincide with the cross that Eusebius describes in his account of the vision. Therefore, the historian must carefully consider the likelihood that Lactantius' account, being an almost contemporary description of the symbol, comes closer to describing what Constantine originally said he saw than does the later version of Eusebius.[61]

Reconciling Eusebius and Lactantius

When he wrote the ninth book of his *Church History* soon after 313, Eusebius did not mention

Figure 106. Reverse of copper alloy *nummus* minted in Aquileia in A.D. 334–335. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (B.3097).

Constantine's vision, dream, or standard.[62] Nor did the panegyrist of 313 make any reference to a particular vision or dream, claiming only that Constantine relied on some sort of "divine inspiration."[63] When he wrote *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* between 313 and 315, Lactantius mentioned only the dream,[64] and his description of the sign as *caeleste* ("heavenly" or "divine") certainly does not justify the inference that he knew but chose not to mention the vision.[65] The story of the vision, then, probably emerged a few years after the victory at the Milvian Bridge as part of the propaganda of the Constantinian court, although our first surviving record of it does not appear until years later in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*, which was probably written after 324.[66]

Despite its early date, the veracity of the account of Constantine's dream found in Lactantius is suspicious, not only because earlier Roman commanders used what were almost certainly fabricated reports of dreams to encourage their troops, but also because Lactantius himself ascribes a similar experience to Licinius before his victory over Maximinus in 313.[67] As Grégoire observed, Lactantius was writing when the political and military situation was still in flux, when neither Constantine nor Licinius had an anti-Christian policy. It is for this reason that Lactantius attributed the aid of the Christian god to both emperors.[68]

Constantine's dream, it has been suggested, was invented as a Christian response to the claim made by a pagan panegyrist in 310 that Constantine had seen a vision of the god Apollo.[69] According to the pagan orator, while travelling from Marseille to Trier in 310, Constantine experienced a personal vision of a solar deity (*tuus Apollo*) at a shrine in Gaul. Since the shrine in question may have been that of Apollo Grannus at Grand, which is known to have been an incubation shrine (where believers would sleep in a sacred area to experience a dream or cure), the divine apparition to which the panegyrist refers may have occurred to the emperor in a dream.[70] The orator reports that, alongside Apollo, Victory appeared to Constantine and offered him laurel wreaths, each representing thirty years of power. Unsurprisingly, this pagan apparition is something neither Lactantius nor Eusebius mentions, but both may have known of the story and adapted it. Indeed, the likelihood that Eusebius was aware of it, at least at a later date, is suggested by his oration *In Praise of Constantine*, delivered in 336. There Eusebius dwells on the cosmic ages and describes God, whose solar aspects are emphasized, awarding Constantine "tricennial crowns rendered in bountiful segments of time," and stretching out His right hand to Constantine from above, "Augmenting the sway of his kingdom by long periods of years."[71]

The panegyrist's account of Constantine's encounter with Apollo is very different from the story of the vision described by Eusebius in the *Life of Constantine*. However, Weiss has argued that both refer to a single real event – Constantine witnessing a solar halo phenomenon. The wreaths offered to the emperor by Apollo and Victory represent, Weiss claims, solar halo rings. The argument relies on the understanding that Apollo appeared to the emperor not in the temple but outside in the sky.[72] However, the panegyrist's description of events does not allow this interpretation:

> Fortune herself so ordered this matter [i.e., the restoration of peace] that the happy outcome of your affairs prompted you [Constantine] to present to the immortal gods the things you had vowed, there where you had

turned aside to the most beautiful temple in the world, or rather to, as you saw, the manifest deity.[73]

The Latin clearly means that Constantine fulfilled his vow after he had diverted from the main road towards the temple and, by so doing, towards the god who happened, on his arrival, to be present in the temple (*ibi . . . ferre quae voveras, ubi deflexisses ad templum . . . immo ad praesentem, ut vidisti, deum*). There is no suggestion that Apollo appeared to Constantine outside the shrine.[74]

However, despite the differences between the visions described by the panegyrist and by Eusebius, both experiences are in essence apparitions of a solar deity who confers imperial power. It is therefore conceivable that the earlier account of the vision in Gaul inspired the stories of the dream and the vision of a symbol bestowed by the sun.[75] A substitute for the Gallic vision would, it may be argued, have been created to suit Constantine's own political and religious agendas. Constantine and his advisors are likely to have found it desirable to replace the original firmly pagan vision of Apollo and Victory with an imperial experience more ambiguous as to its religious import. The pagan god Apollo might have been replaced by the sun, and the wreaths by a powerful symbol.[76] The symbol's precise form might deliberately have been left vague, making it susceptible to both pagan and Christian interpretations. Such ambiguity may be inferred from Eusebius' statement that Constantine needed to consult those in his retinue about the possible significance of the heavenly sign. But as Christians, both Lactantius and Eusebius naturally chose to promote the Christian interpretation that could be placed on these events.

Eusebius, I suspect, is likely to have known various tales of portentous events occurring before the victory of 312, as suggested by the completely different account in Nazarius' panegyric of 321. Here we are presented with a spectacular vision of divinely sent armies marching through the sky, carrying flashing shields and glowing weapons, led by Constantine's deceased father, the divine Constantius, and announcing, "We seek Constantine, we go to help Constantine."[77] We cannot now establish whether this tale emerged from Nazarius' own imagination when he was called upon to write this speech, or if it is based on a tale that in fact goes back much closer to the time of the battle itself. Nazarius makes mention neither of the dream recorded by Lactantius nor of the heavenly vision, even though both stories are likely to have been circulating for some time before Eusebius wrote of them both in his *Life of Constantine*. Here, therefore, we have a good illustration of how an author could choose the emphasis he wished to put on a particular event; and in this case the orator decided to stress divine support bestowed on the basis of dynastic links. It is Constantine's relationship with his divinized father that guarantees victory. The orator felt no obligation in 321 to ascribe the victory of 312 explicitly to the Christian God.

Art provides another perspective on the victory. In the Geldmuseum of Utrecht, a sardonyx cameo known as the Great Cameo shows Constantine and his second wife, Fausta, riding in a chariot pulled by two centaurs (Figure 107).[78] Also in the chariot is a young boy, presumably Crispus, who was probably born before 300 to Minervina, Constantine's first wife. Other identifications for the child are difficult to sustain. It is unlikely that the child is Constantine's first son by Fausta, who was probably born in 316 and also named Constantine. Both he and Crispus were appointed Caesar in March 317, so it is unlikely that Constantine Junior would have been shown without his older half-brother at any time before Crispus' death in 326. But the cameo cannot date later than 326, since in that year Fausta also died. Therefore, it does not seem possible that the child could be Constantine Junior. It is equally improbable that the child is Constantine's second son by Fausta, Constantius, who became Caesar in November 324, shortly after the overthrow of Licinius. Again, it is difficult to imagine that Constantius would have been represented without his two older brothers, the moreso given Crispus' prominent role in that victory.[79] Assuming, therefore, that the child is Crispus, then, since Constantine Junior is not shown, the cameo is unlikely to date later than the latter's birth around 316. This suggests that the victory depicted may be the battle at the Milvian Bridge, and, if so, the cameo may have been made in connection with the *decennalia* celebrations in 315.

Figure 107. The Great Cameo. Agate cameo showing Constantine, Fausta, and Crispus in a chariot drawn by two centaurs. Ca. A.D. 315. Geldmuseum, Utrecht.

While a Victory flies overhead and crowns Constantine, centaurs erect a trophy and trample defeated soldiers. Constantine wields Jupiter's thunderbolt, and below the chariot an upturned calyx *kratēr* for mixing wine hints that he is the New Dionysus. Although this is a private work of art of a quality that suggests it was made for a member of the imperial family, it is striking that it gives no hint that the Christian God played any part in securing the military success of the emperor. Rather, the emperor has been given an attribute of the highest Olympian god and his victory has been transferred to the mythological realm.

Such individual ways of representing and explaining the victory of 312 suggest that similar personal approaches should be expected from Lactantius and Eusebius. Various stories of divine support, both pagan and Christian (including the vision of Apollo, the dream of a symbol, and the vision of a symbol above the sun) are likely to have been circulating in explanation of Constantine's success. These, and possibly also the story of the heavenly army, may have been known to Eusebius when writing his *Life of Constantine*, and he would have chosen the materials he could best turn to his Christian purposes.[80]

It must be emphasized that we cannot – and may never – be certain of the symbol that Constantine himself claimed to have seen. But, as I have already indicated, if we want to get as close as possible to the thinking of Constantine and his court, I suspect we should put more faith in the early text of Lactantius, who seems to describe a staurogram, than in Eusebius' later description of a simple cross. However, some have argued that even Lactantius' account

Figure 108. Sol radiating light in four directions. Reverse of copper alloy *nummus* minted in Thessaloniki. A.D. 319. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (B.3917).

Figure 109. Eight-pointed star in wreath. Reverse of bronze coin minted in honour of Helena in Thessalonica A.D. 318–319. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (MK RÖ 80123).

is an elaboration and that the original symbol Constantine said he saw was in fact a star.[81] Such a claim would make sense if Lactantius were to be understood as describing a chi-rho symbol, since the chi-rho might then be explained as an elaboration of a six-armed star.[82] Although the star is rarely attested in Christian contexts before Constantine,[83] it might be argued that Constantine originally adopted the sign as a solar symbol before he converted to Christianity. However, the few prominent star or star-like designs on Constantinian coins are later than Lactantius' account of the dream and its symbol, the best examples being on copper alloy coins minted in Thessaloniki in 319, which show Sol radiating light in four directions (Figure 108), and others from the same mint, dated 318–319, which honour either Helena or Fausta on the obverse and show on the reverse a large eight-pointed star in a wreath (Figure 109).[84]

Admittedly, coins minted in Trier as early as 312–313 show eight-pointed stars on the bowl of Constantine's high-crested helmet, and some scholars have used this as evidence to argue that it was a star that the emperor adopted as his personal sign.[85] However, on other coins from the same mint, the bowl is decorated with three or four dots representing jewels or rivets. The same variety of decoration is found on coins issued by other mints, such as London (Figure 110a–d), where the bowl of the helmet might be decorated with stars, X-signs (sometimes referred to as crosses of St. Andrew) with a dot in each of the angles (Figure 110a), or simply three dots.[86] The Trier examples were the prototype for copper alloy coins minted in Siscia between 318 and 320. On the Siscian coins, the bowl of the helmet might carry large six-pointed stars (like monograms of I and X), small ordinary stars, or X-signs with dots in the angles; and the cross-bar of the helmet might carry the X-sign with dots in the angles (Figure 100e), a chi-rho monogram (Figure 110f), a large star, a small star, or a curious circular design.[87] Thus, it is clear that, at each of the mints, the precise decoration of the helmet could vary at the discretion of the workers. It is therefore difficult to argue that these coins provide evidence for the star having been the emperor's chosen sign, and that the symbol appeared on these coins by official command.

Another suggestion that has been advanced is that Constantine's standard (rather than his helmet) was at first decorated with a six-pointed star, and

(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)

Figure 110 (a–f). Copper alloy *nummi* showing a profile bust of Constantine wearing a helmet decorated with a variety of designs. (a–d) Minted in London, ca. A.D. 319–320; (e–f) Minted in Siscia, ca. A.D. 318–320. (a–e): © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (a = B.177; b = B.178; c = 1986,1214.15; d = 1901,1008.1; e = B.3463). (f): Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (MK RÖ 77437).

that, upon his conversion Constantine altered the standard's sign to a chi-rho monogram. But this must remain speculation in the absence of evidence.[88]

In short, there is no firm evidence to support the suggestion that the symbol described by Lactantius is not the symbol that Constantine originally claimed to have seen. The text of Lactantius, taken in conjunction with the Lateran wall painting and the bronze weight, is best understood to mean that Constantine claimed to have seen a staurogram in his dream. In his later account, Eusebius states merely that Constantine saw in the sky a "cross-shaped trophy formed from light," and this may suggest that Eusebius understood that Lactantius, in his account of the emperor's dream, was referring to a symbol with a cruciform or T-shaped basis, such as the staurogram.

At any rate, the exact form of the sign that Constantine claimed to have seen may not have been considered critically important in the years immediately following the victory of 312. The story circulated by the palace may have been deliberately vague to allow multiple interpretations that would appeal as widely as possible. This lack of clarity may explain why we find both the staurogram and the chi-rho monogram being used together in the catacombs before 320, and also in the early wall paintings in the Lateran residence. It may also help explain why (as emerges in Chapter 7) the surviving material evidence does not suggest that either the staurogram or chi-rho was used extensively in public as part of an imperial propaganda campaign. What was important was the basic idea that the supreme solar deity had bestowed a powerful, saving sign upon the ruler,

confirming his right to rule and assuring him of victory in battle.[89]

The possibility that the vision of Apollo was transformed – perhaps at Constantine's own instigation for propagandist reasons – into the vision of a symbol from the sun would provide an explanation for the timing of the vision in Eusebius. The Apolline vision is said to have occurred when Constantine's army was on the march in Gaul in 310, and the vision in Eusebius is said to have happened when Constantine's army was on campaign between 306 and 312.[90] The similar timing may suggest that, some years before Eusebius began writing the *Life of Constantine*, the story of the pagan vision of 310 had been substituted by the spin doctors at the Constantinian court with the more ambiguous tale of a vision of a heavenly solar symbol appearing in Gaul at that time. Naturally, it was the most recent official version that Eusebius chose to report, but when researching his *Life*, Eusebius would also have come across Lactantius' account of the dream of the symbol, an event that allegedly took place some years later on the eve of the battle of the Milvian Bridge. Eusebius may have decided to dissociate Lactantius' story of the dream from the battle of 312 and to shift it back to the time of the vision. He could then claim that the same symbol had appeared to the emperor twice, first above the sun (in a vision recalling St. Paul's on the road to Damascus) and then in a dream on the evening of the same day. Furthermore, as we shall see in Chapter 9, by placing the vision and dream before Constantine's four victories over Maxentius, Eusebius could suggest that the heavenly sign fulfilled prophecies concerning the Second Coming of Christ. By combining vision and dream, Eusebius' intention would have been, of course, to make Constantine's religious experience seem all the more profound.[91]

Lactantius (if the text has been correctly interpreted) claimed that Constantine's troops "marked Christ on their shields," but that need not mean that the sign he described was only susceptible to the Christian interpretation he chose to give it; nor did it mean that Eusebius would have found it symbolically powerful enough for his purpose. Whatever symbol Lactantius meant to describe, Eusebius chose not to describe it in the same detail as Lactantius had done, apparently considering its basic cruciform shape to be its most important aspect. Eusebius emphasized the cruciform basis of the symbol, leaving no room for doubt that the vision and dream had been sent by the Christian God. The original, pagan vision of Apollo had now been completely transformed, and the new story of the heavenly vision and dream could be further elaborated by being connected with the creation of Constantine's military standard.

The Standard

According to Eusebius, the cruciform symbol seen in the sky and in the dream was the basis for the design of Constantine's standard. The vision and the dream occurred, according to Eusebius' chronology, between 306 and 312, and the standard, Eusebius asserts, was made on the morning after the dream. However, Eusebius tells us that he saw the standard for himself only after 317, perhaps in 325 or 335. Furthermore, Lactantius does not mention the standard in his account of the victory over Maxentius. For these reasons it has been suggested that the standard was created only after the victory of 324, and that Eusebius projected its creation back to the time of the vision for effect, whereas in reality the soldiers who fought at the Milvian Bridge only painted the saving sign on their shields, as claimed by Lactantius.[92]

Yet there is evidence to the contrary. Eusebius asserts in his *Ecclesiastical History* that, shortly after his victory in 312, Constantine ordered "a trophy of the Saviour's Passion to be set up under the hand of his own statue – indeed, he ordered them to place him in the most frequented spot in Rome, holding the saving sign (*to sōtērion sēmeion*) in his right hand."[93] A similar account was written, at a later date, in the *Life of Constantine*: "He therefore immediately ordered a tall pole to be erected in the shape of a cross (*hypsēlon doru staurou schēmati*) in the hand of a statue made to represent himself."[94]

There can be no doubt that the imperial statue holding the "saving sign" existed, since Eusebius tells us that the Latin inscription upon the monument began with the words: "By this saving sign, the true proof of courage, I saved your city [i.e., Rome] from the yoke of the tyrant [i.e., Maxentius] and set her free."[95] The text therefore alludes to the victory of 312 and there is no reason to question Eusebius' assertion that it was written soon after Maxentius' overthrow. Indeed, an early date for the composition of this text is confirmed by the fact that it is quoted in Book Nine of the *Church History*. Since Book Nine was added by Eusebius to the second edition of that work in 313, the inscription, the statue to which it was attached, and the "saving sign" to which it refers are all likely to have existed before that date.[96] We cannot categorically rule out the possibility that this inscription was added to the statue a long time after the victory over Maxentius, and that Eusebius inserted its text when he prepared his fourth edition of the *Church History* after the emperor's victory of 324. But since the wording of the inscription is entirely appropriate to the context of 312, Eusebius' assertion that the statue was put up at that time should be trusted. It follows that the "saving sign" mentioned in the inscription existed in 312 and that it represented the sign alongside which Constantine's troops (or at least a contingent of them) fought victoriously at the Milvian Bridge.[97]

It is not important in this context whether this statue is the Colossus that once stood in the Basilica of Maxentius (a question to be addressed in Chapter 6). More significant is Grégoire's plausible suggestion that the "saving sign" that had "the shape of a cross" was not simply a Christian cross but a military standard of cruciform shape.[98] Standards could be assimilated to crosses by Christians like Eusebius because the basic shape of a standard was either a cross or a T. Justin Martyr, for instance, made a comparison between standards and the cross on which Christ was put to death,[99] and Tertullian mockingly praised the Roman army for its worship of standards, claiming that if one ignored the banners and decoration, a bare Christian cross remained![100]

> You [pagan soldiers] also worship Victories, since crosses are the skeletons of trophies. The whole religion of your army is the worship, the adoration of standards: the army swears by standards and prefers them to all other gods. All those collections of portraits on the standards are but jewelry on crosses; the cloth of the banners and pennants are cloaks for crosses. I praise your diligence: you did not wish to worship unadorned and naked crosses!

Clearly, therefore, some form of cruciform or T-shaped standard existed at the time of the victory, and Constantine believed that this "saving sign" had granted him victory. It does not seem unreasonable to conclude that this "sign" was the precursor of, or at least the inspiration for the more developed standard Eusebius was privileged to see sometime after 317.[101] It must be emphasized that there is no reason to believe that this precursor incorporated the chi-rho monogram that surmounted the later, more ornate standard. Nor is there any reason to believe Eusebius' unlikely assertion that, whilst on campaign in 306–312, Constantine had in his retinue goldsmiths and jewellers who could fashion a splendid standard of gold and precious stones on demand: the standard Eusebius saw after 317 may well have been jewelled with a chi-rho monogram, but the one that was first made was probably far less ornate.

Setting aside later adornments, the essential design of the standard, Eusebius indicates, was derived from the cruciform shape of the symbol Constantine had seen in the sky and in his dream.[102] But Lactantius, in his earlier account of the dream, gives a more detailed description of the symbol, and this, although difficult to interpret with certainty, seems to suggest that the sign was a staurogram, ⳨. If so, we might reasonably wonder whether Constantine's standard – in its original form, before the chi-rho monogram was added – was not merely a bare shaft and cross-bar but in fact a staurogram with a very long shaft.[103] Such a shape would also be consonant with the cruciform shape Eusebius ascribes to both the standard held by the statue in Rome and the more ornate, jewelled standard he saw later. In support of this possibility, we may note the appearance of such an object in Late Antique depictions of St. Peter, such as the *traditio legis* mosaic in the baptistery of San Giovanni in Fonte in Naples and a bronze statuette in the Early Christian Museum in Berlin (Figure 111), both of which show the saint carrying over his shoulder a staurogram with a long shaft.[104] However, there is no pictorial evidence from the first

Figure 111. Bronze statuette of St. Peter carrying staurogram. Fourth–fifth century A.D. © bpk / Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, SMB / Inv. no. 1.

decades of the fourth century to confirm that such a standard was ever used.

From a later period in Constantine's reign we possess differing depictions of the standard. Very rare coins with the legend SPES PVBLIC, which date to 327–330, show a serpent pierced by a standard (Figure 95). The banner bears three roundels (presumably medallions carrying images of Constantine and the two Caesars, Constantine and Constantius) and the top of the shaft is decorated with a prominent chi-rho monogram.[105] This depiction comes closest to the standard Eusebius saw after 317 (probably in 325 or 335), although there are minor discrepancies: Eusebius describes a wreath around the chi-rho monogram and also says that the portraits of the emperor and the Caesars (of an unknown number) were attached to the upright pole rather than to the banner.

Something different appears on medallions minted for Constantine's *vicennalia* in 326. The emperor is shown holding a standard that bears the chi-rho not on top of the pole but on the banner (Figure 112).[106] This style of standard also appears on coins minted in Arles (Figure 145 on p. 223). The coins carry the legend GLORIA EXERCITVS ("Glory of the army") and show two soldiers flanking a single standard. Three issues were struck before

Figure 112. Gold medallion minted in Siscia discovered in Borča, a suburb of Belgrade. Obverse shows Constantine with diadem looking heavenward. Reverse shows Constantine in military dress holding a standard bearing a chi-rho symbol on its banner in his right hand. A.D. 326. National Museum, Belgrade (Weifert Collection. RCW/156/26).

Figure 113. Constantius II, being crowned by Victory, holds a standard bearing the chi-rho monogram on its banner and looks towards the powerful sign. Reverse of bronze medallion minted in Siscia. A.D. 350. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (B.3651).

September 337, differing only in the design shown on the banner of the standard. The first issue showed an X, the second a chi-rho, and the third a circle.[107] The fact that these symbols differ clearly indicates that they were not determined by the imperial propaganda machine but that they were marks employed at the discretion of mint officials.[108]

Given their date, none of the depictions mentioned previously necessarily reflects how Constantine's standard looked at the time of the battle of the Milvian Bridge. However, they may represent more developed forms of that standard, and the inclusion of the chi-rho on the standards shown on the medallions may suggest that by 326 it was the chi-rho (rather than Lactantius' staurogram) that was coming to the fore as the symbol Constantine wished to promote as the one he had seen in his vision.

The medallions appear to have inspired the designs on coins minted by Vetranio in Siscia and Sirmium during his brief reign between March and December 350, before he abdicated to Constantius II (Figure 113). On the reverse, these coins bear the legend HOC SIGNO VICTOR ERIS ("With this sign you will be victor"), recalling the words "By this conquer," which are said by Eusebius to have been inscribed in the sky at the time of Constantine's vision. Constantius, either being crowned by Victory or with a star above his head, is shown holding a standard bearing the chi-rho monogram on its banner; he looks toward the powerful sign.[109]

Thus, depictions of a standard similar to that described by Eusebius in his account of Constantine's vision do not appear before 327, and even then not with great frequency. It is therefore conceivable that the distinctive chi-rho became a feature of the standard only during or after the campaign against Licinius.

If we wish to visualize the standard, or "saving sign," as it was closer to 312, we must turn to the obverse of silver multiples minted at Ticinum in 315.[110] As silver coins of a multiple denomination, they were clearly commemorative issues of restricted circulation, and this is confirmed by the fact that only three examples (in Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Munich) are known. In all likelihood they were donatives given to officers in the Constantinian army to mark the imperial *decennalia*.[111] Details of the design can be seen most clearly on the example in Munich (Figure 114). The obverse shows a three-quarter portrait bust of the emperor wearing a helmet, the crest of which appears to incorporate at the front a tiny chi-rho monogram. Constantine is gazing heavenward and carrying in his left hand a shield decorated with a representation of the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, an image that may allude to Constantine's capture of Rome from Maxentius in 312. The emperor's right hand grips the bridle of a horse, the head of which is shown above his right shoulder. Over his left shoulder he carries what appears to be a standard (lacking a banner) or an excessively large sceptre.[112] This consists of a shaft and a cross-bar, together forming a T, immediately above which are a large disc or globe topped by a small disc or globe.[113]

On the medallion, the T-shape of Constantine's sceptre or standard is emphasized because of the absence of any banner hanging from the cross-bar. Given that the cross on which Christ was crucified was believed to have been shaped like the Greek letter tau (T), the depiction is not at odds with the basic details of the standard Eusebius saw after 317 ("a tall pole plated with gold had a transverse bar forming the shape of a cross") nor with the "saving sign" held

Figure 114. Bust of Constantine carrying standard or sceptre over left shoulder and wearing helmet with chi-rho monogram in crest. Obverse of silver medallion minted at Ticinum in A.D. 315. Munich. Staatliche Münzsammlung, Munich.

Figure 115. Valentinian II (A.D. 375–392) carrying a sceptre or standard over his right shoulder. Obverse of copper alloy medallion. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1867,1223.35).

by the statue set up in Rome soon after the victory of 312 ("a tall pole in the shape of a cross"). However, if we are to believe that the object shown on the medallion is connected with Constantine's "saving sign" we must conclude that the large roundel shown surmounting the cross-bar (whether a globe or a disc) was later substituted by the wreath mentioned in Eusebius' description of the standard as he saw it after 317 (probably in 325 or 326).

The suggestion that the Ticinum medallions show the original "saving sign" Constantine carried into battle appears to receive support from the depiction of something similar on a later bronze medallion of Valentinian II (375–392) (Figure 115).[114] Valentinian is shown holding over his shoulder a T-shaped object recalling that on the Ticinum medallions. However, this sceptre or standard lacks the smaller disc or globe shown at the top of the shaft on the Ticinum medallions, and the large disc or globe that is present is not plain but decorated with a six-armed star, a symbol closely related to the chi-rho monogram. The medallion of Valentinian may suggest that the Ticinum medallions show an early form of the Constantinian standard with a large, plain disc that was later decorated with the chi-rho monogram described by Eusebius.

In summary, the precise nature of the object held by Constantine on the Ticinum medallions is unclear, but certainly the possibility should be considered that the sceptre or standard shown is the sign under which Constantine won his victory over Maxentius in 312, and which was later developed to become the standard seen and described by Eusebius sometime after 317. The similarity between this sign (which has a globe or disc placed immediately above a cross-bar) and the *crux ansata*, ☥, should perhaps not be overlooked. Since the loop of that Egyptian symbol seems to have alluded to the solar disc, one wonders whether Constantine's original standard incorporated a globe or disc to make a solar reference.[115] There is, of course, nothing to suggest that the object shown on the Ticinum medallions is a Christian sign, although its cruciform basis would have allowed Christian authors like Eusebius to construe it thus.[116]

The Significance of the Vision

Eusebius says that Constantine was "stunned by the amazing vision, and determined to worship no other god than the one who had appeared."[117] Yet the conversion to Christianity is apparently Eusebius' own contribution to the story, since there is no hint of it in Lactantius' account of the dream.[118] The key to the import of the vision lies not in the alleged conversion but in the fact that both Lactantius and Eusebius state that the sign seen by Constantine, and later carried into battle, guaranteed his army protection and victory. This is particularly evident from Eusebius' account, which states that the sign in the sky was accompanied by the inscription "Conquer by this." There can, therefore, be no doubt about the essential meaning of the vision and the dream: they promised victory – and hence rulership – through divine favour.[119] In a similar vein, the author of the panegyric of 313 could speak of "no doubtful victory but one divinely promised" – although he gives no indication of how the promise was made.[120]

Lactantius, who mentions only the dream, describes the sign that appeared to Constantine as "heavenly" or "divine."[121] Eusebius, who describes the celestial vision, claims that the sign was seen "in the sky and resting over the sun." Eusebius' more precise information is highly significant, since it corroborates what we have already concluded from Constantine's radiate statue and from the coins showing him receiving the crown and the globe from Sol: Constantine believed that his kingship had been sanctioned by a solar deity. Since we have seen how various solar aspects of monarchy persisted from Ancient Egypt to the Hellenistic period, to be set down in the writings on kingship by the likes of Ecphantus, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom, is it not possible that the specific idea of the Supreme Deity bestowing a symbol on the ruler was also a traditional part of such theories on kingship?

Portents and dreams before battles are commonly attested in antiquity.[122] Lactantius, for instance, informs us that, before his decisive battle with Maximinus on 30 April 313, Licinius was visited by an angel as he slept and was given a prayer to the Supreme Deity (*deum summum*) for his army to recite before the confrontation.[123] But Constantine's vision and dream are distinctive because of the emphasis they place on a specific, powerful symbol, and because that symbol is bestowed by a deity. Somewhat similar is the panegyrist's story of Constantine's vision of Apollo at the god's shrine in Gaul, because it incorporates the idea of the emperor being handed wreaths, each of which symbolized thirty years of rule. However, a number of much earlier parallels for divinely bestowed symbols and solar phenomena can be adduced, which support the suggestion that Constantine's experience was indeed part of a long tradition.

For instance, according to Suetonius, Quintus Catulus, who had dedicated the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill in Rome in 69 B.C., dreamed that many boys played around the altar. The god, who held in his hand the "sign of the Republic" (*signum rei publicae*), selected one of the boys and placed the sign in his lap. Shortly after, Catulus saw the young Octavian for the first time and said he was most like the boy about whom he had dreamed. The nature of the "sign" that the supreme Olympian bestowed on the boy is not made clear by Suetonius, although Dio Cassius, who also provides an account of the dream, describes it specifically as an image of the goddess Roma.[124] Whatever the truth, the point is that Jupiter, the Supreme Deity, bestowed upon Octavian a symbol representing his future power.

Suetonius also records a dream of Cicero, who reported that he had imagined a boy being lowered from the sky on golden chains to stand at the doors of the Capitol, where he was handed a whip by Jupiter. Later attending a sacrifice, Cicero recognized the boy whom he had seen in his dream: it was Octavian.[125] The tale is clearly similar to the dream of Catulus, although here the symbol of future power is described as Jupiter's whip.

Of particular significance is Suetonius' report of a portent that coincided with Octavian's entrance into Rome following Caesar's murder. He writes: "Though the heaven was clear and cloudless, a circle like a rainbow suddenly formed around the sun's disc."[126] The parallel with Constantine's solar vision is obvious, particularly since the phenomenon is intended to be an omen of future power.

Together this solar phenomenon and the dreams of powerful symbols being bestowed on Octavian by Jupiter provide a clear precedent for the details of Constantine's solar vision and dream of a symbol. One might even be tempted to think that these stories were the inspiration for the Constantinian accounts.

Figure 116. Silver coin of Seleucus I Nicator minted in Ecbatana. The reverse shows Zeus holding an eagle, a horse grazing at his feet, and monograms and an anchor in the field. After 306 B.C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (2002,0101.1377).

However, the tales surrounding Octavian are evidently part of an older tradition, since the best example of a symbol of rule being offered by a god is much earlier than his rise to power. The *Philippic History* of the Augustan historian Pompeius Trogus (known to us only from an epitome by Justin) tells the story of the dream of Laodice before she became mother to Seleucus I in the mid-fourth century B.C. The tale explains why the symbol of an anchor is sometimes found on Seleucid coinage (Figure 116):

> She dreamed that she had conceived after sleeping with Apollo, that when she was pregnant she had received from him, as a present for having slept with him, a ring with a stone on which an anchor was carved, with instructions to give this to the son she was to bear. Two things made this dream astounding. The first was a ring that was found in her bed the following day bearing that very motif, and the second a birthmark in the shape of an anchor on the infant Seleucus' thigh. Laodice gave this ring to Seleucus when he went off with Alexander the Great on the Persian campaign, explaining to him how he had been born. . . . The emblem of his birth persisted in the succeeding generations, since his sons and grandsons had an anchor on the thigh as a congenital mark of their ancestry.[127]

Here, therefore, a solar deity (Apollo) appears in a dream and presents a symbol to the dreamer (Laodice); the symbol is made tangible the following day (in the form of a ring), and it is taken into battle as a talisman. Furthermore, the symbol confers royal status on the holder. The parallels with Constantine's experience are clear: Constantine saw a symbol above the sun, thus making a solar connection; the emperor dreamed of the symbol and was urged to use it as protection against his enemy; Constantine did as he was told, either marking the symbol on his soldiers' shields or constructing a standard in the form of the symbol (or both); he won the battle and secured supreme power.

The similarities between the stories of Laodice and Constantine are enhanced by the significant fact that the symbol given to Seleucus was an anchor. The anchor later became an extremely common symbol in the wall paintings and inscriptions of the Christian catacombs in Rome, and it has similarities with the staurogram and *crux ansata*, the former being the most likely candidate for the symbol of Constantine's dream as described by Lactantius. Indeed, when

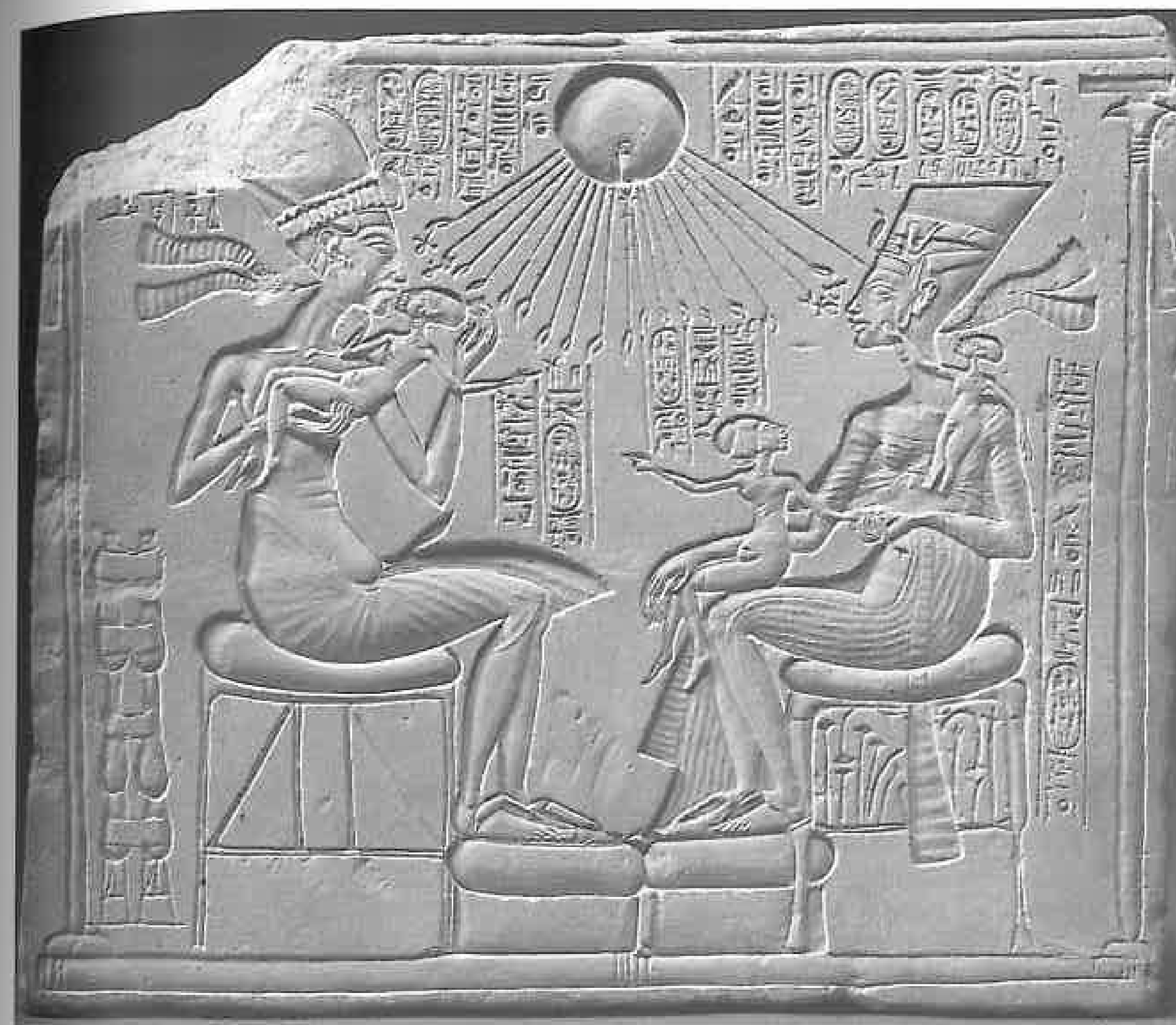


Figure 117. The pharaoh Akhenaten, his wife, Nefertiti, and their three daughters receive ankhs from hands at the ends of the rays of the sun's disc. Limestone stele, 1351–1334 B.C. © bpk / Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, SMB/Margarete Büsing/Inv. no. ÄM 14145.

Clement of Alexandria advised baptized Christians of the symbols that were appropriate for their rings, he mentioned not only doves, fish, ships, lyres, and fishermen, but also "a ship's anchor such as the one Seleucus had engraved on his sealstone."[128] Clement's words are important in suggesting both that the anchor was considered acceptable as a Christian symbol and that the story of Seleucus had not been forgotten in his day (around A.D. 200). Furthermore, the fact that Clement was encouraging Christians to select suitable designs from an existing range is a reminder that, whatever the precise form of the symbol that Constantine claimed to have seen, it too may well have been acceptable to both pagans and Christians.

Looking further back in kingship iconography, parallels for Constantine's vision of a powerful symbol from the sun are found in pharaonic art. Most prominent are the many depictions of the pharaoh Akhenaten receiving the ankh from hands attached to the ends of rays emanating from Aten, the disc of the sun (Figure 117). The ankh, the hieroglyph for "life," is analogous to the symbol Constantine claimed to have seen over the sun, a symbol that the emperor's advisors are said to have interpreted as "a token of immortality."

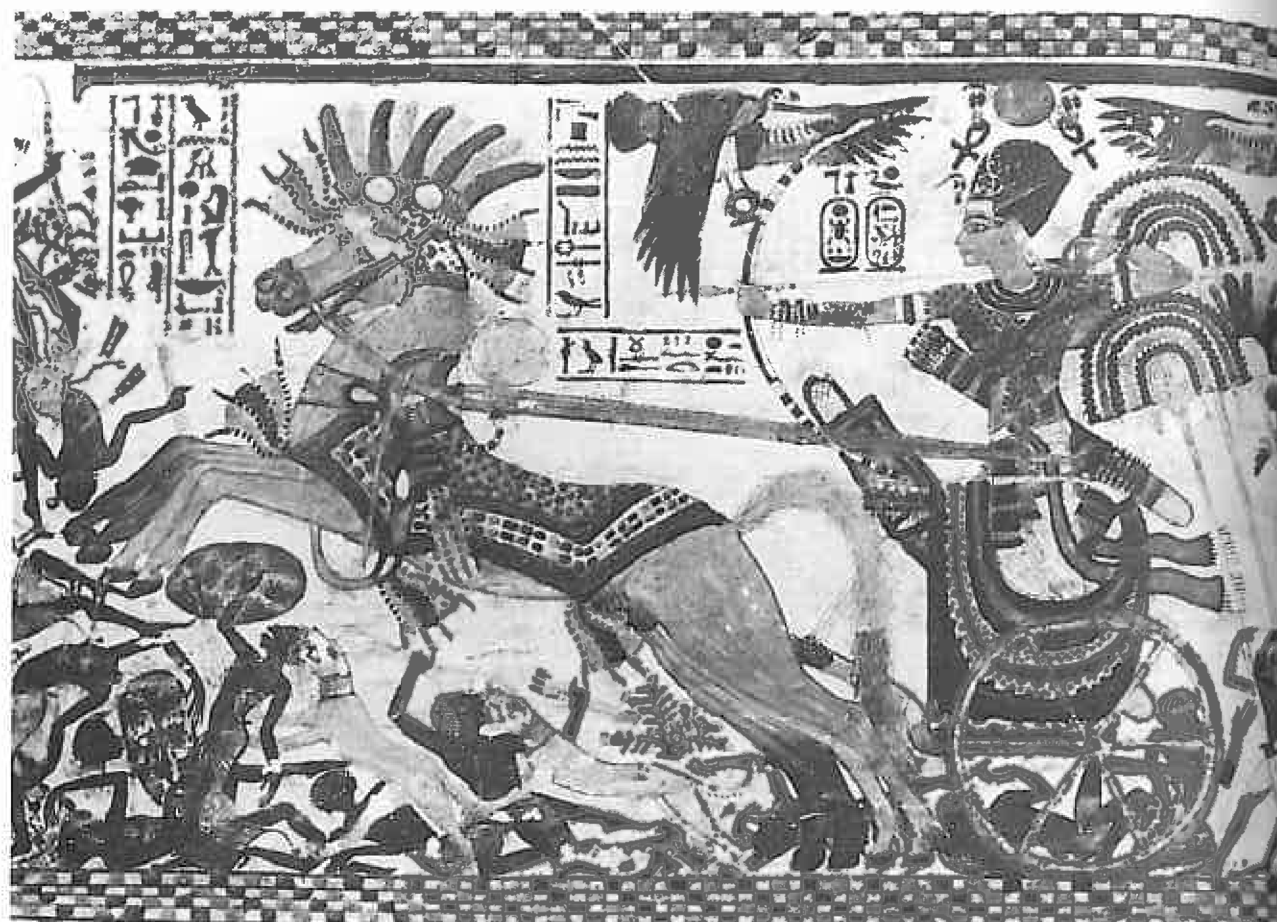


Figure 118. The pharaoh Tutankhamun in a chariot trampling his enemies, with solar disc and ankhs overhead. Painted wooden chest, ca. 1333–1323 B.C. © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford/Burton p1810.

It is not unusual to find depictions of an Egyptian pharaoh winning a battle with the sun positioned directly above his head and the sign of the ankh hanging from the necks of uraeus serpents that emerge from the solar disc. The sun-disc and the life-giving sign of the ankh are therefore depicted in intimate connection with the pharaoh's victory. Such a scene appears on a painted wooden chest found in the tomb of Tutankhamun, where the pharaoh in his chariot is shown mowing down his enemies (Figure 118). Not only do ankhs hang from the necks of serpents emerging from the sun's disc, but also a hieroglyphic caption beside the king's image emphasizes his relationship with Ra, the sun-god.[129] The scene is an ancient precursor of images such as that on the Trajanic frieze of the Arch of Constantine, where the mounted emperor tramples his enemies in a similar fashion, the powerful legionary standard close beside him, just as the solar disc and ankhs hover above Tutankhamun (Figure 93). Scenes similar to that on the chest appear on the exterior of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak. One on the south wall shows Seti I's return to Egypt from Rafah and his repulse of a Bedouin ambush. Another on the north wall shows the same pharaoh returning to Egypt from a battle with the Hittites. Such depictions stress the power of the sun-god not only in dispensing life (represented by the symbol of the ankh) but also in granting victory to the pharaoh.

The previous examples illustrate the long tradition of a deity – perhaps the Supreme Deity, such as Jupiter, or a solar deity, such as Apollo or Aten – bestowing a symbol of power on a future ruler. Constantine's own dream and vision of a symbol from the sun must be understood in this context. It is probable that there were among Constantine's advisors (who included not only Christian bishops but also pagan philosophers) some who were familiar with theories of kingship, such as those we know from Ecphantus, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom,

Figure 119. Porphyry sarcophagi displayed outside the Istanbul Archaeological Museums. Inventory nos. 3154 (left), 3155 (centre), and 3157. © Jonathan Bardill.

and with the traditional portents associated with a king's rise to power. It is probable that the vision was invented or, if inspired by any real occurrence, augmented with reference to these theories and traditions. The sign from the sun suggested that the solar deity was assuring Constantine's military victory and imperial status, and the emperor's adoption of the symbol as a talisman to be taken into battle is to be understood in the context of his exploitation of other imagery and trappings of a king elected by the sun, such as the diadem and radiate crown.

The Alleged Sarcophagi of Constantine

Having discussed the design of Constantine's original standard and its relationship to the symbol he claimed to have seen in his vision, I would now like to suggest that we possess a depiction of Constantinian date that shows the standard in its more developed form (that is, including the chi-rho monogram mentioned by Eusebius), and that this occurs on the emperor's sarcophagus. The argument requires me to demonstrate that one long-accepted identification of the imperial sarcophagus is wrong and that another more recently proposed is questionable.

From our historical sources we know of ten porphyry sarcophagi that once existed in Constantinople, all of them belonging to emperors, and all of them originally located within Constantine's mausoleum or the adjacent church of the Holy Apostles.[130] The emperors and empresses known from literary sources to have been laid to rest in such sarcophagi were Constantine, Constantius II, Julian II,[131] Jovian, Theodosius I, Valentinian I, Arcadius, Eudoxia (wife of Arcadius), Theodosius II, and Marcian.[132] Eight porphyry sarcophagi (with or without their lids) are still in existence in Istanbul (Figure 119). Another two, discovered in the

Figure 120. Cupids harvesting grapes. Fragment of the flank of a highly decorated porphyry sarcophagus. Istanbul Archaeological Museums. Inventory no. 806. © Jonathan Bardill.

court of the Topkapı Sarayı in 1750 but now lost, are known from drawings by the French manufacturer Jean-Claude Flachat. In addition, travellers to Istanbul describe two lost porphyry sarcophagi whose dimensions do not appear to correspond with any of those just mentioned, and a number of porphyry revetment plaques adorning the walls and floors of Ottoman mosques and palaces were evidently obtained by dissecting sarcophagi.[133]

Of one sarcophagus there remains only a fragment of a flank, which is displayed in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums (no. 806; Figure 120).[134] The fragment is elaborately carved and shows parts of two scrolls of acanthus mingled with vines. Within the scrolls, cupids (putti, *erōtes*) pick grapes and gather them in baskets; between the scrolls perches a singing bird. This was identified by Jean Ébersolt as a piece of the casket in which Constantine the Great was laid to rest.[135]

As Ébersolt observed, the design is almost identical to that on a complete porphyry sarcophagus that was once housed in the mausoleum on the Via Nomentana in Rome, and which was moved from there to the Vatican on the orders of Pope Pius VI in 1790 (Figures 121 and 122).[136] From Ammianus Marcellinus we know of two candidates for the deceased who occupied this sarcophagus. Constantina, Constantine's eldest daughter, died in Bithynia in 354, and her body was returned to Rome for burial on the Via Nomentana. Helena, Constantina's younger sister, died in 360 or 361, and her body was sent to Rome by her husband, the future emperor Julian (360–363) to be laid to rest beside her sister on the Via Nomentana.[137] To whichever of the two sisters the highly decorated sarcophagus belongs, it must have been manufactured before 361, when Helena died, but after 337, when Constantina is most likely to have moved to the Via Nomentana following the death of her first husband, Hannibalianus.[138]

The high degree of similarity between the decorated sarcophagus in the Vatican and the fragment from Istanbul requires an explanation. In an attempt to provide one, Ébersolt argued that both must have been carved in Rome. He pointed out that the body of Helena, Constantine's mother, is said to have been transported from Rome to Constantinople, and that her son, Constantine, is said to have been laid to rest in the same casket. The fragment in Istanbul, he suggested, was part of the sarcophagus that had been made for Helena in Rome and later transported to Constantinople. Helena died on her return journey from Palestine, probably in Nicomedia in 328,[139] so if Ébersolt were correct we would have to assume that a design used to decorate her sarcophagus before 328 was still in production between 337 and 361, when the Vatican sarcophagus was carved. That is not impossible, but the striking similarity between the two pieces suggests that in truth they are contemporary.

Figure 121. Highly decorated porphyry sarcophagus from the mausoleum on the Via Nomentana in Rome. Vatican Museums. Inventory no. 237. © Jonathan Bardill.

Figure 122. Cupids harvesting grapes. Detail of Figure 121. © Jonathan Bardill.

Ébersolt's claim that Helena's casket was taken to Constantinople is, in fact, improbable. He relied for his information on the fourteenth-century historian Nicephorus Callistus, who claimed that Helena's body had been moved from Rome to Constantinople at some point before Constantine's death.[140] The claim also occurs in the eleventh-century anonymous *Life of Constantine*, where it is stated that Helena was at first laid to rest in a porphyry coffin in her mausoleum in Rome, but then moved two years later, together with her coffin, to the church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople.[141] These late accounts, however, are in all likelihood derived from earlier accounts that themselves misrepresent Eusebius.[142] Eusebius reported that Helena "was carried up to the imperial city, and there laid in the imperial tombs."[143] By the "imperial city," Eusebius meant Rome, since Constantinople had not been dedicated at the time Helena died.[144] But already in the fifth century, starting with the church historian Socrates, it had come to be believed that Helena's remains had been conveyed from Rome for burial in Constantinople.[145] Socrates had apparently misinterpreted Eusebius' reference to the "imperial city," and there is no need to credit his account. In fact, we can be certain from our historical sources that Helena's body was (at least in the first instance) laid to rest in a mausoleum on the Via Labicana (the modern Via Casilina).[146] There is no good reason to think that it was ever moved from there to Constantinople. Eusebius, who describes Constantine's funerary arrangements in detail, makes no suggestion that the emperor was interred together with his mother (which would have been unprecedented).[147] Nor is any mention made of her body when Macedonius moved Constantine's sarcophagus to the church of St. Acacius in 359. Therefore, if for some reason Helena's body *was* moved from Rome to Constantinople, the transfer was almost certainly undertaken after 359, after Constantine's own death and burial. It is most likely, however, that Helena's body was buried and remained in Rome until at least the ninth century.[148]

In truth, the similarity between the sarcophagus in the Vatican and the fragment in Istanbul is likely to result from the fact that the two were decorated at the same time in Egypt (where the porphyry had been quarried) and then exported to Rome and Constantinople respectively. The suggestion that the porphyry was carved before being shipped abroad may find support from the fact that a porphyry sarcophagus lid in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria (no. 353) is decorated in a similar way to the lid of the elaborate sarcophagus from the mausoleum on the Via Nomentana.[149]

Assuming that the fragment from Istanbul was carved in Egypt at almost the same time as the Vatican sarcophagus, then it most probably dates to around 337–361. If so, we may reject as unlikely Ébersolt's suggestion that it belonged to the sarcophagus of Constantine (324–337). Nor is it likely that the fragment comes from the sarcophagus made for the emperor Julian (360–363).[150] Besides, Julian's casket is known to have been cylindrical,[151] whereas the fragment that concerns us came from a rectangular trough. The fragment in Istanbul, I would suggest, most likely belonged to the sarcophagus of the emperor Constantius II, who reigned between 337 and 361, and who was the brother of the two sisters laid to rest in the mausoleum on the Via Nomentana.[152]

There is a potential objection to this identification that should be addressed. Between 1198 and 1203,[153] Nicholas Mesarites, contrasting Constantius' sarcophagus with Constantine's, wrote, "This too is of porphyry color but not in all respects similar to the tomb of his father, just as he who lies within it was not in all ways similar to his father, but was inferior to his father, and followed behind him, in piety and in mental endowment."[154] Alexander Vasiliev took Mesarites' remark about the inferiority of Constantius' sarcophagus to suggest that Constantine's was the more highly decorated of the two. This led him to conclude that the elaborately carved porphyry fragment in the Istanbul Museums must have come from Constantine's sarcophagus, since none of the other known porphyry sarcophagi from Istanbul carry such extensive carved decoration.[155]

There are, however, other possible interpretations of Mesarites' words that are not incompatible with the suggestion that the highly decorated porphyry fragment belonged to Constantius' casket. It is important to note that in 1197, according to Nicetas Choniates, Alexius III Angelus (1195–1203) ordered the sarcophagi of the emperors stripped of their precious ornaments, leaving only bare stone caskets – although he forbade the looters from removing the splendid cover that adorned the tomb of Constantine.[156] That would suggest that, when Mesarites was writing (after this looting had occurred), Constantine's sarcophagus, having some kind of precious covering, was more richly adorned than any other, so that the elaborate carving on the sarcophagus that I have ascribed to Constantius would have been insignificant in comparison.

Another possibility is that Mesarites meant simply that Constantine's sarcophagus was larger than his son's. The fragment that I would ascribe to Constantius' casket must have come from a sarcophagus similar in size to that from the Via Nomentana, which measures 2.33 m long, 1.55 m wide, and 2.25 m high.[157] Others are larger, including a casket in Hagia Eirene, which measures 3.21 m long, 1.89 m wide, and 2.83 m high, and it is this sarcophagus that I would be tempted to ascribe to Constantine.[158]

Finally, bearing in mind the contrast Mesarites draws between the strength of faith of the two emperors, it is possible that he was alluding to an absence of any specifically Christian symbol on Constantius' casket. That is likely to have been true of the sarcophagus from which the elaborately carved fragment came, judging by the similar, complete sarcophagus now in the Vatican. The sarcophagus in Hagia Eirene, by contrast, is decorated with a Christian symbol.

Constantine's Sarcophagus and the Standard

Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger and Arne Effenberger, who, like myself, ascribe the fragment in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums to Constantius,[159] have proposed that Constantine's sarcophagus is one of the complete examples that today stand outside the entrance to the museum (no. 3155; Figure 123). However, their conclusion is based on evidence that is difficult to interpret with any certainty. At the end of the twelfth century, Nicholas Mesarites described the porphyry sarcophagus of Constantine as "four-sided, rather long, but not equal sided."[160] The Effenbergers discuss the possible interpretations of the words "not equal sided" and conclude that they ought to mean that the short sides were different in design from the long sides. This leads them to deduce that Mesarites was referring to sarcophagus no. 3155, the short sides of which are convex rather than flat.[161] Although the interpretation is possible, there is no certainty that Mesarites means anything more than that Constantine's sarcophagus was large and rectangular. And if that was in fact his meaning, it would not allow us to identify Constantine's casket, since all the porphyry sarcophagi from Constantinople might be described this way. Nor can anything be deduced with certainty from the observation of Cristoforo Buondelmonti, who, with wonder typical of a foreigner in Byzantium, asserted in 1420 or 1422 that Constantine was buried "in a big and very high porphyry tomb" (*in uno magno et altissimo porphirio sepulcro*).[162] Certainly we would not be justified in deducing from this that Constantine's casket was the biggest of all.

I would like to consider another candidate for the sarcophagus that belonged to the founder of Constantinople.[163] If the solution I propose here is correct, then it is relevant for understanding both the form of the symbol that Constantine saw in his vision and the standard that was designed on its basis.

In 1930, sensational reports appeared in Turkish newspapers claiming that a German scholar had identified Constantine's sarcophagus in the atrium of the church of Hagia Eirene (Figure 124).[164] Vasiliev dismissed the claims in his article of 1948 on imperial sarcophagi, and he defended Ébersolt's opinion that the decorated fragment belonged to Constantine's casket. Surprisingly, Vasiliev did not realize that the German scholar alluded to in the newspapers must have been Richard Delbrueck. Delbrueck's catalogue of ancient porphyry sculpture, in which the identification was made, had appeared in 1932 and is, in fact, cited elsewhere in Vasiliev's article.[165] In his catalogue, Delbrueck included the sarcophagus located in the atrium of Hagia Eirene and observed (as Philip Anton Dethier had done before him) that there were drill holes in its lid and flanks.[166] Having plotted the sockets, Delbrueck demonstrated that a metal cross had once been attached to the lid of the sarcophagus and that one flank of the trough had carried a design based upon two concentric circles.[167]

Figure 123. Porphyry sarcophagus. Istanbul Archaeological Museums. Inventory no. 3155. © Jonathan Bardill.

He asserted that this was likely to have been Constantine's casket, claiming that such decoration is referred to only with respect to Constantine's tomb.[168]

Although Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger claim that no such decoration is mentioned in the sources,[169] Nicetas Choniates clearly describes "the splendid cover interwoven with gold" (τὴν ἐπιτρέχουσαν διάχρυσον ἀγλαΐαν) that adorned Constantine's stone sarcophagus. Choniates states that the cover was the only ornamentation the emperor Alexius III Angelus spared when he ordered the imperial tombs to be stripped of their wealth in 1197.[170] Delbrueck apparently assumed that the sockets on the lid and flanks of the sarcophagus in Hagia Eirene were somehow to be associated with this cover and therefore identified the casket as Constantine's.

From the arrangement of the sockets on what is today the north side of the lid, it is clear that a metal cross was once attached there (Figure 125). This cross was about 87 cm high and had two crossbars, the upper one shorter (about 31 cm long) with indented ends, the lower one longer (about 44 cm long). Crosses of this design (termed the "Patriarchal Cross") appeared in Byzantine art only from the early eighth century, so clearly this cross was an addition to the porphyry casket.[171] On the south side of the trough is a more complex arrangement of sockets that relates to a design based around two concentric circles formed from 13 holes each, the inner with a diameter of about 49 cm, the outer of 85 cm (Figure 126). Since the holes of the outer circle are apparently deliberately positioned to alternate with those of the inner circle, it is possible to reconstruct

Figure 124. Porphyry sarcophagus in the atrium of Hagia Eirene, Istanbul. Inventory no. 608. © Jonathan Bardill.

a design with a central circle or disc having thirteen triangular rays projecting from it. This is a striking symbol, suggesting a solar reference and raising the prospect of a connection with Constantine.

The possibility should be considered that today the orientation of the lid is reversed, which would mean that the attached decoration (the cross on the lid and the radiate design on the trough) was once concentrated on one side of the sarcophagus. If all of this metallic decoration was a later addition to the sarcophagus, the possibility should be considered that originally the main focus of attention was the short side where a relief design is carved on the lid. If so, when the metallic decoration was attached, the casket may have been reorientated to draw attention to the long side rather than the short.

It is important to note that there are more drill holes not mentioned by Delbrueck that run along all the upper edges of the trough and along the lower edge of the lid on the side that today faces south.[172] The short, east face of the trough carries three holes along the top, and the same was probably also true at the west end, where the central hole is lost in an area of damage. On the long, north side of the trough there are twelve holes, generally spaced about 23.5–24 cm apart along the top edge. On this side, damage

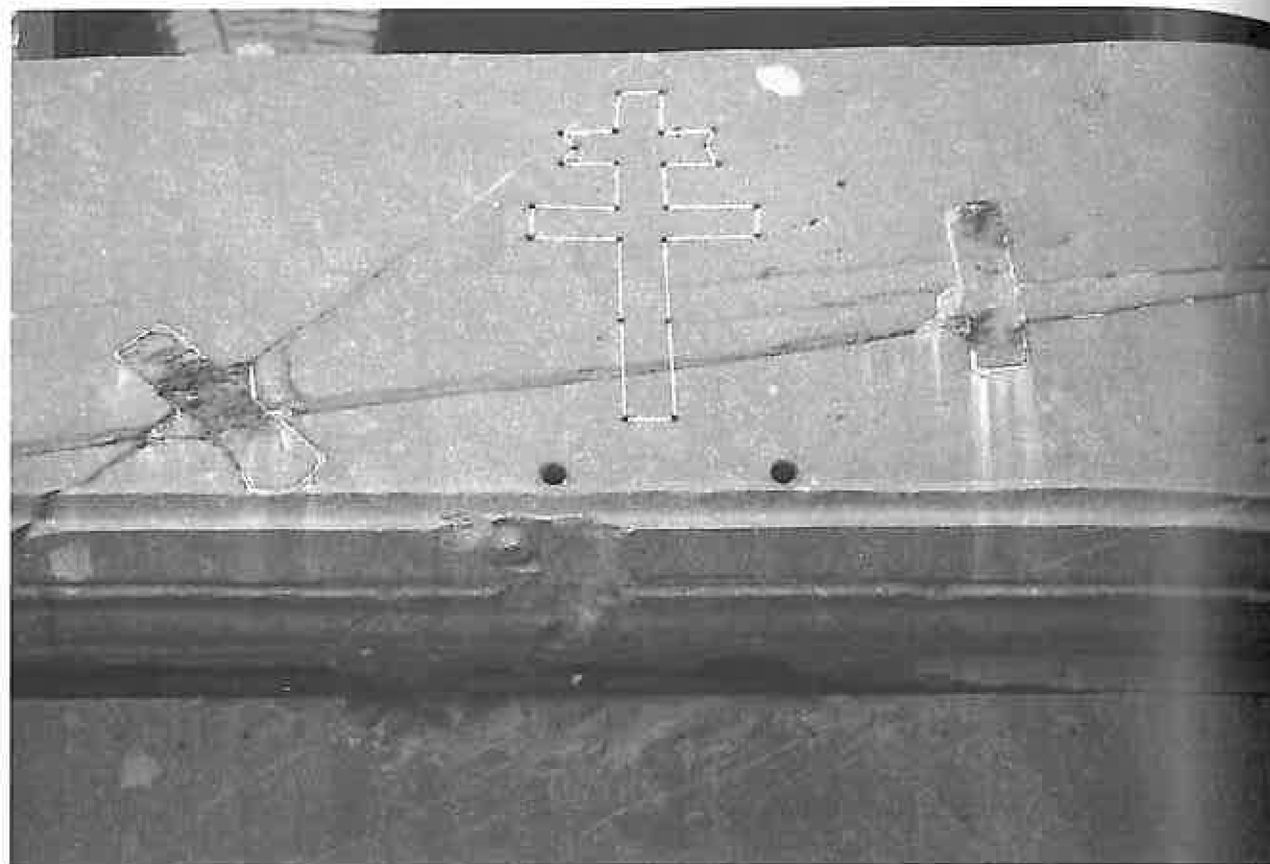


Figure 125. Detail of the holes on the north side of the lid of the porphyry sarcophagus in Hagia Eirene. Reconstructed design superimposed. Inventory no. 608. © Jonathan Bardill.

to the upper edge of the trough in its central part may have resulted in the loss of two holes, although the alternative possibility should also be considered that the visible holes were in fact added after the breakage occurred, since their spacing seems to be disrupted in the vicinity of the damage. On the long, south side of the trough, seven holes are irregularly spaced along its top edge, an eighth hole possibly having been lost from the west end. Along the lower edge of the lid on the south side of the casket are fourteen holes spaced about 23.5–24 cm apart.

We can only speculate about the purpose of these sockets. One possibility is that they were for metal brackets that allowed some sort of gilded covering (possibly woven from gold thread) to be hung over the stone, covering the entire trough. If this were the case, however, one would probably have to imagine that the metallic (and possibly jewelled) decoration attached to the trough had been stripped off before the hanging was added, since it would have been obscured by it. There are more holes to mention, in particular one in the top of each acroterion of the lid. Perhaps these served to receive the shaft of a cross or of a candlestick.

Eusebius gives no clue about the appearance of Constantine's sarcophagus. We are told that his body was taken from Nicomedia (where the emperor died) to Constantinople and that there the emperor lay in state in the palace in a golden casket. Apparently this refers to a gilded wooden coffin that was later enclosed within the emperor's porphyry sarcophagus.[173] Nicetas Choniates mentions the looting of all the imperial sarcophagi in 1197, an act that left all the emperors, except Constantine, with only their "coats of stone." Unfortunately it is unclear from this account whether the sarcophagi of other emperors had, like Constantine's, formerly been adorned on the exterior or whether Choniates

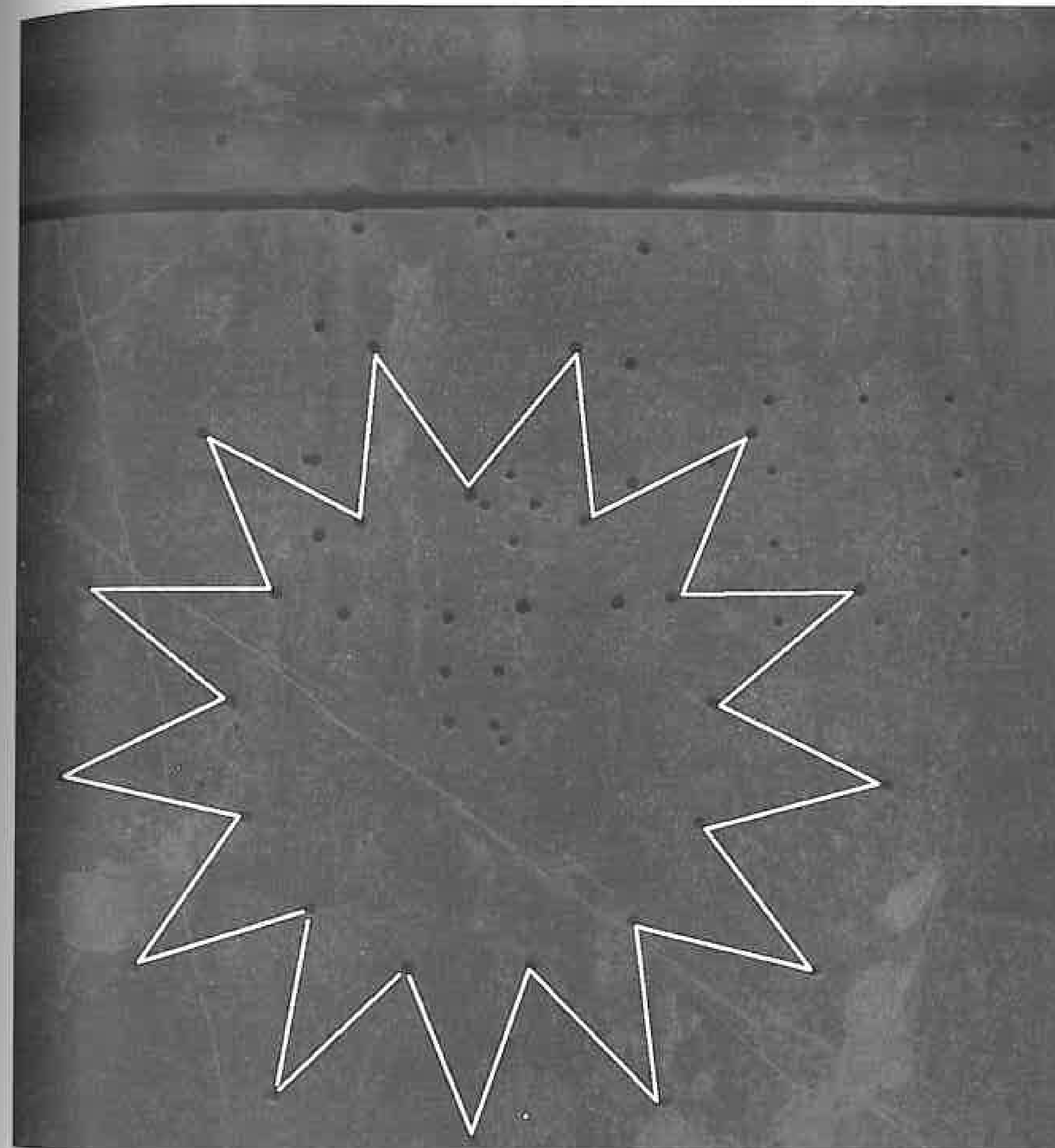


Figure 126. Detail of the holes on the south side of the flank of the porphyry sarcophagus in Hagia Eirene. Reconstructed design superimposed. Inventory no. 608. © Jonathan Bardill.

is thinking of the removal of valuables from inside their caskets. However, it is striking that no surviving porphyry sarcophagus, other than that in Hagia Eirene, shows sockets that would indicate it had been adorned on the outside. The decoration applied to the Hagia Eirene casket sets it apart from the rest, and its presence requires a special explanation. If this were the sarcophagus of Constantine it would be well accounted for since the addition of such decoration after the beginning of the eighth century could be explained in connection with the growing veneration of Constantine as a saint and with the use of the

Figure 127. The combined ankh and chi-rho design carved on the eastern gable end of the lid of the porphyry sarcophagus in Hagia Eirene. Inventory no. 608. © Jonathan Bardill.

"splendid cover interwoven with gold" mentioned by Nicetas Choniates.

Delbrueck's proposal that the complete sarcophagus in the atrium of Hagia Eirene belonged to Constantine finds further support from the design carved in relief on the casket's gable end (Figure 127). Surprisingly, this design attracted no comment from Delbrueck himself, and in Cyril Mango's important discussion of three imperial sarcophagi found in 1750 it is mentioned obscurely as "a chrism on top of a T."[174] André Piganiol, however, correctly identified the sign as the *crux ansata* derived from the ankh, the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic sign meaning "life." He commented, "This fusion of pagan and Christian symbols does not suit any emperor better than Constantine."[175] Vasiliev rejected Piganiol's claim, adducing the symbol only as evidence that the casket had been carved in Egypt.[176] It would seem to me, however, that even though the casket was probably carved in Egypt, where the porphyry quarries were located, the distinctive symbol with which it is decorated might have had a particular significance for the imperial owner of the sarcophagus. Indeed, I would be surprised if the emperor who commissioned this casket had no say in its decoration. In my opinion, Piganiol was thinking along the right lines when interpreting the symbol, although it is not merely the fusion of the *crux ansata* and the chi-rho that deserves attention.

I suggest that the importance of the design on the sarcophagus in Hagia Eirene is that it corresponds precisely with Eusebius' description of Constantine's standard, having a staff, a cross-bar, and a roundel (in place of a wreath) containing a chi-rho monogram. No banner is shown, and the roundel sits directly on the cross-bar. The omission of the banner and of the portrait medallions of Constantine and his sons reduces the standard to its essential T-shaped design, suggesting the cross of the crucifixion. However, the inclusion of the chi-rho monogram indicates that this is not the original standard shown on the silver multiples from Ticinum but a more developed version similar to that which Eusebius describes. The symbol on the casket corresponds so closely to Eusebius' description of the standard that I believe the sarcophagus itself should be considered a strong candidate for that of the emperor Constantine, having been made sometime after the dedication of Constantinople in 330 but before the emperor's death in 337.

A similar standard is found as the central design on the flank of several early Christian sarcophagi.[177] For instance, on a mid-fourth century sarcophagus in the Vatican's Pio Cristiano Museum, the standard (with the leaves of the wreath carefully carved) occupies the centre of a scene representing the trial of Christ (Figure 128). The symbol clearly alludes to the crucifixion and resurrection since Roman guards sleep at the foot of the standard just as they are said to have slept outside Jesus' tomb.[178] Other sarcophagi, however, show Constantine's standard being approached from either side by six Apostles, one group led by Peter, the other by Paul (Figure 129).[179] This is a significant design since, as we shall see in Chapter 9, Constantine's porphyry sarcophagus was flanked on either side by six coffins of the Apostles. Thus, if the sarcophagus in Hagia Eirene is Constantine's, the *crux ansata* carved on its lid would have been visible in the middle of the relics of the Apostles, just as the standard occupies the central position on the sarcophagi decorated with Apostolic processions. These fourth-century sarcophagi not only demonstrate the symbolic link between the standard and the cross of Christ but also suggest that it is reasonable to propose a fourth-century date for

Figure 128. Scenes from the trial of Christ with central cruciform standard topped by a chi-rho monogram within a wreath. Sarcophagus found near catacomb of Domitilla. Vatican Museums, Museo Pio Cristiano. Mid-fourth century A.D. © Jonathan Bardill.

Figure 129. Two groups of six Apostles approach a central cruciform standard topped by a chi-rho monogram within a wreath. Sarcophagus from cemetery of San Sebastiano. Left and right sections are casts; central section is original. Vatican Museums, Museo Pio Cristiano. End of fourth or beginning of fifth century A.D. © Jonathan Bardill.

the porphyry sarcophagus decorated with a similar standard in Hagia Eirene.

Although the sarcophagus in Hagia Eirene could not have belonged to Constantius (who was interred within the sarcophagus to which the highly decorated fragment belonged) nor to Julian (whose casket was cylindrical),[180] there are several potential candidates for its occupant: Constantine, Jovian, Theodosius I, Valentinian I, Arcadius, Eudoxia (wife of Arcadius), Theodosius II, and Marcian. Other than the holes drilled in the sarcophagus, only the symbol on its gable end provides a clue to which of these rulers was interred within. Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger – who identified a casket that stands outside the Istanbul Archaeological Museums (no. 3155) as Constantine's – insisted that the *crux ansata* on the sarcophagus in Hagia Eirene could only have been accepted in a Christian context after the destruction of the Serapaeum in 391, a claim I have rejected as unreliable. They also argued that the symbol would be most appropriately connected with Eudoxia, wife of Arcadius from 395 to 404, who shared with Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, an enmity for John Chrysostom.[181] But Eudoxia's Egyptian connections do not seem to have been extensive, since the empress and the Alexandrian seem never to have met, and their shared animosity does not in itself explain why the empress would have considered it appropriate to place the *crux ansata* on her sarcophagus.

The case for identifying Constantine as the occupant of this casket is significantly stronger. The *crux ansata* on the gable contains in its loop the chi-rho monogram and therefore has all the important elements of the Constantinian standard in its more developed form. Constantine would have had good reason to request that his standard be carved prominently on his sarcophagus, not only because it had been carried before his victorious army, but also because it had been fashioned after the symbol sent to him by his divine protector in a vision and a dream. On the sarcophagus in Hagia Eirene the T-shaped standard topped with the wreath has been turned into the *crux ansata*. This may be in part due to the fact that the casket was carved in Egypt, since the sculptor may have interpreted the drawing of the standard he had been given in familiar terms.[182]

But the possibility should not be ruled out that the similarity between the standard and the *crux ansata* was already recognized in Constantinople when the design for the casket was created.

Notes

1 Odahl 2005, 104–105, assumes the vision occurred when Constantine's army was crossing the Apennine Mountains before his battle with Maxentius.

2 Eusebius, *Life* 1.28.2, ed. p. 30, trans. p. 81. Weiss 2000, 247, translating γραφήν not as "text" but as "pictogram," argues that "there is no need to assume that the emperor ever told such a bizarre story of having seen an inscription in the sky." Accepting Weiss' proposal, one would have to understand the entire context as something like this: "He saw with his own eyes up in the sky and resting over the sun, a cross-shaped trophy formed from light, a pictogram attached to it meaning, 'By this conquer.'" But what was this pictogram attached to the cross-shaped trophy? Weiss fails to explain, as does Barnes 2011, 77, who adopts the suggestion without discussion.

3 Heiland 1948, Gagé 1951, and Dimaio and others 1988.

4 Barnes 1985b, 385–87.

5 Andrade's theory is noted by Jones 1948, xiv, 96 (= 1968, 9, 85–86). Jones repeated his belief in the "halo phenomenon" in 1964, 80. Weiss 2003, esp. 246–47.

6 Barnes 1998a, 288: "Constantine and his army undoubtedly saw a solar halo-phenomenon"; Mitchell 2007, 258–59 with nn. 3 and 5; Leithart 2010, 77–79. However, Harris 2005, 493–94 presents good arguments against Weiss and against the truth of the account as preserved in Eusebius.

7 Acts 26:13 (ἡμέρας μέσης κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν εἶδον, βασιλεῦ, οὐρανόθεν ὑπὲρ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου περιλάμψαν με φῶς). The midday timing is also mentioned at Acts 22:6, but not at Acts 9:3.

8 The timing is also observed by Grégoire 1931, 255: "La nuit suivante (en Gaule toujours), le Christ apparaît en songe à Constantin." Weiss 2003, 252 is wrong to claim that the dream "did not immediately follow the vision (and Eusebius does not actually say that it did)." Barnes 2011, 77, nevertheless tries to follow Weiss, claiming that "Eusebius slides over the interval of two years between the vision in the sky and Constantine's interpretation of it as a sign from the God of the Christians."

9 Eusebius, *Life* 1.29, ed. p. 30, trans. p. 81. Discussion and bibliography in Weber 2000, 288–90.

10 Eusebius, *Life* 1.31.1–2, ed. pp. 30–31, trans. pp. 81–82.

11 Hurtado 2006, 219–21; Cecchelli 1954, 58–64, 71–73; Sulzberger 1925, 352.

12 Eusebius, *Life* 1.31.2, ed. p. 31, trans. p. 82.

13 Van Dam 2007, 128.

14 See the comments on Eusebius, *Life* 1.31.2, trans. pp. 204–205 and 212.

15 Singor 2003, 482, says that Eusebius saw the standard "no doubt in Constantinople," and Bremmer 2006, 63–65, argues for 335. Note also Bleckmann 2007, 55 with n. 289.

16 For the date of *Persecutors*, see Barnes 1973, 31–32, 39–46. For the date of the *Life*, see Cameron and Hall 1999, 9–12.

17 Töbelmann 1915; Harris 2005, 490.

18 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 44.5–6, ed. and trans. Creed 1985, 62–63: *Commonitus est in quiete Constantinus, ut caeleste signum dei notaret in scutis atque ita proelium committeret. Fecit ut iussus est et transversa X littera, summo capite circumflexo, Christum in scutis notat. Quo signo armatus exercitus capit ferrum.* Note, however, that the single manuscript in fact reads: *coelesti*, later corrected to *caeleste*; *Christo* (written $\overline{\chi\rho o}$); and has a lacuna of two or three letters before *in scutis notat*, where the original text perhaps showed the monogram. See Sulzberger 1925, 402, 407; Marrou 1959, 405–406. Eusebius confirms Constantine had the "sign of the saving trophy" marked on his soldiers' shields but makes no connection between this act and the battle of the Milvian Bridge: *Life* 4.21, ed. p. 127, trans. p. 160. More recent discussion with bibliography: Weber 2000, 282–84.

19 Rougé 1978, 13–22. His proposal was adopted by Barnes 1985b, 383–84, who is wrong to conclude that "With Rougé's text, the sign described is the chi-rho monogram, and that brings Lactantius into line with all the other evidence." With Rougé's text, Lactantius gives no indication whatsoever of the form of the sign he was referring to, except that it could be interpreted as referring to Christ. Rougé's suggestion is also adopted by Singor 2003, 488, who wrongly believes that the staurogram could not have been considered a reference to the crucifixion in Lactantius' day.

20 For the medallions: *RIC* VII, 63, Ticinum no. 36; Overbeck 2005.

21 *RIC* VII, Trier no. 372 with note on p. 197.

22 Cecchelli 1954, fig. 45; Althaus and Sutcliffe 2006, 78, 96, 147 no. 62.

23 Among those preferring an interpretation referring to the chi-rho are Cecchelli 1951, 88, who claims that *Christum in scutis notat* must refer to the chi-rho (the first two letters of the word "Christos"), and that, had Lactantius meant the staurogram, he would have written *crucem in scutis notat*. See also Cecchelli 1954, 50–51, 81, 100 (with n. 197), 136. Odahl 1981, 16–18 and Drake 2000, 202 have also argued that Lactantius should be interpreted in the light of Eusebius' description of the standard topped by the chi-rho. Weber 2003, 255, suggests a chi-rho with a stunted rho, so that the symbol looked more like a six-pointed star. Cameron 2005, 92 says Lactantius' sign "seems to be the chi-rho," and no doubt is expressed by Deckers 2001a, 4 and 2005, 160; by Lenski 2008, 206, 213; or by Leithart 2010, 71. However, Sulzberger 1925 was not satisfied with attempts to translate *transversa* as "crossed through": "Peut-être pourrait-on traduire: «traversé verticalement» mais alors le *circumflexo capite* reste en l'air et ne se rapporte à rien" (p. 404); "c'est impossible: il faudrait dans ce cas, pour que *capite circumflexo* se rapportât à quelque chose, suppléer un mot, tel que *hasta*, *linea*, *littera I*, etc. . . . " (p. 406; compare p. 407). Mitchell 2007, 257, curiously renders *transversa X littera* as "the cross-shaped letter X," which is not only unacceptable, but also leaves us wondering where the "top of its head" would have been.

24 See n. 18.

25 Grégoire's emendation has been accepted by some, such as Sulzberger 1925, 406 n. 2, 407, and Moreau 1954, I, 127; II, 434–36, but rejected by others, such as Cecchelli 1954, 100 n. 197 and Marrou 1959, 404–405. The same emendation would also allow the symbol to be interpreted as an X intersected by a vertical shaft topped with a dot, which serves as part of the mint mark on coins (see Figure 144 and *RIC* VII, 62 with specific references), and which would have been similar enough to a chi-rho for Christians to have accepted it.

26 Marrou 1959, 404–405. See *OLD* s.v. *transversus* (p. 1968). I thank Mary Whitby for discussing Grégoire's proposed emendation with me.

27 Jerome, *De monogramma Christi* 20–22, ed. Morin 1903, 233. Moreau 1954, II, 434–35 lays great emphasis on the importance of this text for interpreting Lactantius.

28 Another interpretation of Lactantius' text is proposed by Weiss 2003, 255, who infers that a six-pointed star is being described. I fail to see how this can be the case given Lactantius' words, *summo capite circumflexo*.

29 Marrou 1959, 407.

30 On Lactantius describing a rho with a cross-bar, see Marrou 1959, 404–407; Aland 1967, 176; Black 1970, 321–32 (following Aland); Lane Fox 1986, 614; Bremmer 2006, 60–62. See also the discussion of Dinkler and Dinkler-von Schubert 1995, 39–43.

31 Sulzberger 1925, 401, 405–406 (followed by Moreau 1954, II, 434). Although Cecchelli 1954, 65–70 argued against Sulzberger, nevertheless, Odahl 1981, 20, referring only to numismatic evidence, has claimed that the staurogram "developed rather late in Constantine's reign, and in the eastern part of the empire."

32 Hurtado 2006, 210; Dinkler and Dinkler-von Schubert 1995, 36; Dinkler-von Schubert 1995, 33–34; Sulzberger 1925, 426; Gardthausen 1924, 78–79.

33 The examples are collected by Aland 1967. See also Dinkler and Dinkler-von Schubert 1995, 34–36; Dinkler-von Schubert 1995, 31–32, 34–36; Hurtado 2006, 212–14.

34 Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 55, ed. and trans. Munier 1995, 106–107, trans. Dods and others 1867, 54–55 (comparing the symbol of the crucifixion with the mast of a ship, a ploughshare, the human body with extended arms, and military standards). Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 6.11.3, ed. and trans. Descourtieux 1999, 228–29, ed. Stählin, Früchtel, and Treu 1985, 473, trans. Wilson 1867–1869, II, 352; Origen, *Selecta in Ezechielem* 9 (*PG* 13, 800–801); Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.22, ed. and trans. Evans 1972, I, 240–41, trans. Holmes 1868, 164–66; Hurtado 2006, 219–24; Guarducci 1978, 1763–72; Sulzberger 1925, 374, 382–84; Leclercq 1914, 3053–54 (fig. 3360).

35 Singor 2003, 487–88, is therefore wrong to claim that, "Only the Christogram could in that time have functioned as a *nota* or shorthand for the name of Christ." However, in Lactantius the reading *Christum* may be wrong (see n. 18). If so, the sign was described only as "the heavenly sign of God."

36 Cecchelli 1954, 66–67 with fig. 52. The plaque comes from a cemetery located within the limits of the Aurelianic wall, and ought therefore to antedate the construction of that wall under Aurelian (270–275). However, there is a possibility that the cemetery continued to be used even after the wall's erection. For another early example, from the *domus Faustae*, see Cecchelli 1954, 65–66 with fig. 53.

37 Guarducci 1960, 111.

38 *RIC* VII, Antioch nos. 98–101. Bruun 1962, 29–31. Odahl 1982–1983, 71.

39 Santa Maria Scrinari 1991, 163–64, 172. The hippocamps are on display in the Palazzo Massimo museum.

40 Stephenson 2009, 216–17, assumes that Eusebius' τούτῳ νίκα ("By this conquer," not, as Stephenson translates, "By this you shall conquer") is meant to be a translation of the Latin *hoc signo victor eris*, but this is uncertain given that the latter is not attested before 350–351.

41 Revelation 1:11. Cecchelli's claim that the letters alpha and omega were added to Christian monograms only after Constantine may be disregarded (Cecchelli 1954, 95, 97(i), with reservations on p. 168).

42 There is, therefore, grave doubt over Odahl's conclusion (1981, 21) that "it is unwarranted to assume that Constantine's shields at the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge were marked with any other sign than the Christogram" (repeated in Odahl 2005, 319 n. 14).

43 See Santa Maria Scrinari 1991, 164–65, 172.

44 Alföldi and Ross 1959.

45 Alföldi and Ross 1959; Barnes 2011, 155.

46 Alföldi and Ross 1959, 171.

47 Göbl 1987, 90, however, places the emergence of the cross-on-globe in the second half of the fifth century.

48 For Savignac's suggestion that the appropriation of the staurogram (or tau-rho monogram) by the Christians was provoked by its resemblance to the ankh and *crux ansata*, see Black 1970, 320–21, 323–24; Hurtado 2006, 216–17. The latter points out that it is more likely that the appropriation of the *crux ansata* was provoked by its resemblance to the tau-rho. A connection between ankh and tau-rho is considered a possibility by Cecchelli 1954, 69–70 and Baines 1975, 1; Gardthausen 1924, 78–79, treats the signs together.

49 Hebrews 6:19–20.

50 On the anchor, see Kirsch 1907; Sulzberger 1925, 377–81; Snyder 2003, 27–28.

51 Plaque: Spier 2007a, 229–32 no. 57. That the *crux ansata* evoked Christ on the cross is suggested by sculptures and textiles on which the circle has been filled by a portrait of Christ. See Cramer 1955, 20–24 with pls. X–XI, XII.

52 Michaïlidès 1948–1949, 45–50. Example of inscription from Tell-el-Amarna: Davies 1908, pl. XVI.

53 Krosney 2006, 272–74, 302, and color plate opposite p. 166.

54 Dinkler and Dinkler-von Schubert 1995, 39–40 fig. 5; Hurtado 2006, 217 n. 36.

55 Guarducci 1960, 146, fig. 44; Snyder 2003, 259–61.

56 Rufinus, *Church History* 11.29, ed. in Schwartz, Mommsen, and Winkelmann 1999, 1034–35, trans. Amidon 1997, 86.

57 Socrates, *Church History* 5.17, ed. Hansen 1995, 290–91, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 126–27; Sozomen, *Church History* 7.15, ed. Bidez and Hansen 1995, 319–22, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 386.

58 See Cramer 1955, 5–7; Dinkler and Dinkler-von Schubert 1995, 27; Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 78–82.

59 Bruun explains, "The upper part of the cross is ovoid in shape, the lower part exceptionally broad, like a very high trapezium." It has been suggested that the ankh may have been adopted because the Egyptian Church had close ties with Aquileia, although the symbol might be explained as a variant on the tau-rho ligature rather than as specifically Egyptian. See *RIC* VII, 62 n. 6, Aquileia nos. 124–27, pl. 12 no. 126. Odahl 1981, 23 n. 30 and 1982–1983, 70, describes the sign on these coins as a variant of the Latin cross.

60 Bruun 1997, 46 with fig. 1.

61 Odahl 2005, 320 n. 15, is too simplistic in his comparison of the Lactantian and Eusebian accounts, and in stating categorically that "the Eusebian vision element has finally regained the central place it has always deserved in the conversion story."

62 The omission of the dream may be because Eusebius disapproved of predictive dreams rather than because he had not heard the story: Heim 1992, 95–98.

63 *Pan. Lat.* XII. 4.5, ed. and trans. pp. 302, 596.

64 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 44.5–6, ed. and trans. Creed 1985, 62–63.

65 Baynes 1972, 63, observes that Lactantius' application of the adjective *caeleste* to the *signum* of the dream is equivalent to *sublime* or *maximum* and does not presuppose the existence of an early version of the story of the heavenly vision. Weiss 2003, 246, takes the opposite stance, and his claim is entertained by Barnes 2011, 79–80. The translations "heavenly" or "divine" for *caeleste* seem to me more likely, but, even so, we would hardly be justified in inferring that Lactantius knew the story of the vision given that he does not describe it.

66 It has even been argued that the entire account of the vision in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* is an interpolation of the later fourth or fifth century. See Grégoire 1931, 254–55 and 1939, 349–50, who (like Gibbon before him) notes that a letter of Cyril of Jerusalem (*Letter to Constantius* 3, ed. Bihain 1974, 287–88; *PG* 33 cols. 1168–69; which was written after 7 May 351) demonstrates that Cyril knew the legend of Constantine's discovery of the True Cross but not the story of his vision of the cross in the sky. See also Seston 1936a, 251. This need not, however, mean that the story of the vision emerged after 351: Drijvers 2004, 50–52, 162, argues that Cyril deliberately suppressed information on Constantine's vision.

67 On fabricated dreams, see Harris 2005, 491–93.

68 Grégoire 1939, 346; Moreau 1953, 308–309.

69 Moreau 1953, 312.

70 Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 248 n. 91; Barnes 2011, 79.

71 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 6.1 and 10.7, ed. Heikel 1902, 206, 223, trans. Drake 1976, 90, 102. The similarity was noted by Seston 1936b, 377–80.

72 Weiss 2003, 248–49, accepted by Barnes 2011, 78.

73 *Pan. Lat.* VI.21.3, ed. and trans. pp. 248, 583 (trans. adapted).

74 Compare objections to Weiss' theory in Harris 2005, 493c94.

75 That one story was transformed into the other was suggested by Grégoire 1931, 256 with n. 1 and by Piganiol 1932, 50 (both of whom went further and argued that Constantine must have seen symbols in the shrine of Apollo that were later interpreted as the chi-rho and other divergent forms of the monogram). Weiss 2003, 247–50 similarly argues that the account of the vision of 310 is the ultimate origin of the stories in Lactantius and Eusebius, and goes further, equating the wreaths bestowed on Constantine by Apollo and Victory with solar halo-rings. Commenting specifically on Weiss' theory, Barnes 1998a, 288, has stated that "the theory that there was only a single vision and that this happened in 310 and that it was only later, in 312, that Constantine adopted a Christian interpretation of what he had seen removes all the contradictions that had worried historians." Compare also further enthusiastic comments in Barnes 2011, 78–79.

76 I am not persuaded by Grégoire's suggestion that the form of the symbol of the dream and vision was derived directly from a symbol of a thirty-year reign (XXX) purportedly attached to each of the laurel crowns that Apollo and Victory offered to Constantine in the panegyric of 310. The X, Grégoire argued, was easily transformed into the Christian monograms of X and I or X and P (Grégoire 1931, 257–58; 1932, 135–36; 1939, 343, 347–48, taken up by Lenski 2006, 66–67). Nor am I persuaded by Piganiol's suggestion that the crowns carried the letters T and X (to be interpreted as *tria decennia*), and that the two letters were combined to give a star-shaped sign in which Christians could detect Christ's name (Piganiol 1932, 51, 74, 220). The main objection to both theories is that there is no suggestion in the panegyric that the crowns carried any symbol, only that they carried a connotation of a long reign (see Seston 1936b, 377–86). Admittedly, Victory is regularly shown on coins engraving the X-sign of the *decennalia* on her shield, but this is not evidence for an X in a wreath. Compare the objections of Alföldi 1932, 9–10 and Moreau 1953, 313–17. Instead, as explained in the following, I suspect that Constantine's claim to have received a symbol from the supreme sun-god emerged from considering traditional theories and stories about kingship.

77 *Pan. Lat.* IV.14, ed. and trans. pp. 357–59, 615.

78 For discussion of the date of the piece (with earlier bibliography) see Pohlsander 1984, 96–97 with ill. 10. See also Henig 2007, 71 with cat. no. 76.

79 However, Stephenson 2009, 218, insists that the child is Constantius, a position that contradicts his justified claim (pp. 126–27) that the Ada cameo must show the boys Crispus and Constantine Junior rather than Constantine Junior and Constantius because "there is no reason at this stage to conjecture that Constantine conceived of his family as a unit without Crispus." On Crispus' role in the victory of 324, see Pohlsander 1984, 88–89.

80 Grégoire 1939, 345–46, believes that Eusebius did know the story of the heavenly army and that he adapted it for his own use in *Life* 2.6.1, ed. p. 50, trans. p. 97, where, before the battle of Cibalae in 316, Licinius' troops are said to have seen visions of Constantine's troops marching in victory through the cities. Concerning adaptation and incorporation of the stories of Constantine's vision and dream (and of Licinius'

dream) in later authors, such as Rufinus, see Moreau 1953, 329–30; Cecchelli 1954, 81–84.

81 Seston 1936a, 252–53; 1936b; Moreau 1953, 321–28.

82 As claimed by Seston 1936b, esp. 390–93.

83 Sulzberger 1925, 393–97 cites two certain examples from around A.D. 270 from Rome and Asia Minor, and another of the late third or early fourth century from Asia Minor.

84 Sol radiating light: *RIC* VII, Thessaloniki 66–71 (date: 319); star in wreath: *RIC* VII, Thessaloniki 48, 50 (Helena), 49, 51 (Fausta).

85 Seston 1936a, 252; 1936b, 376, 384–87, 390; Moreau 1953, 320. Alföldi 1932, 10–11, by contrast, argued (unconvincingly) that the stars and other symbols were degenerate forms of the officially intended chi-rho.

86 Bruun 1962, 15–16.

87 Bruun 1962, 14–15. Also, Odahl 1977 and very briefly Bastien 1992–1994, I, 222–23.

88 Singor 2003, 490–96, postulates that a star on the standard's banner was altered to a chi-rho in April of 311 or the spring of 312 to demonstrate Constantine's adherence to Christ. He imagines that the alteration occurred because the sun-god "had been discredited by the persecuting emperors of the East who had venerated him next to Jupiter and Mars." This overlooks the fact that Sol continued to appear on Constantine's copper alloy coins until 318 or 319 and on his gold until late 324 or early 325. It also assumes that when Constantine first adopted the chi-rho he understood it as a firmly Christian sign, which need not be the case given that the first dated occurrence of a chi-rho with a firmly Christian meaning was in A.D. 331. Weiss 2003, 255, also attempts to argue that the standard originally carried not a chi-rho but a six-pointed star.

89 Edwards 2006b, 226–27, believing the symbol on which the standard was based to have been an "emblem of the sun," "a pagan symbol," and to have "contained the letters X and P," suggests that it was adopted by Constantine as a verbal sign or *logos*, since Christian theologians of the time spoke of a truth revealed by the universal *logos*. I will argue, however, that the theme of a powerful symbol being revealed to the future ruler is pre-Christian.

90 Grégoire 1939, 346, drew attention to the similar timing of both the pagan vision and the vision described by Eusebius and suggested the latter was a Christianized version of the former.

91 Bremmer 2006, 66, rightly comments on "a clear redundancy in the story: first a vision and then a dream," but does not explain its origin. By contrast, Veyne 2007, 313–14 (=2010, 236–37), sees the occurrence of accounts of both the dream and the vision in the *Life* as reflecting the editorial development of the text as Eusebius gained greater knowledge of events.

92 Leeb 1992, 45–46. Moreau 1953, 310 (quoting von Schoenebeck), writes of the standard "dont l'existence n'est guère conceivable avant la campagne decisive de 324." Compare Stephenson 2010, 182–87.

93 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.10, ed. p. 832, trans. p. 294.

94 Eusebius, *Life* 1.40.2, ed. p. 36, trans. p. 85. It is interesting that in this later account Eusebius felt it necessary to refine the description of the shape of the "saving sign" by stressing its cruciform nature.

95 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.11, ed. p. 832, trans. p. 294. Eusebius, *Life* 1.40.2, ed. pp. 36–37, trans. p. 85. For the possible interpretations of Eusebius' description, see the list in Leeb 1992, 34–35. See also Curran 2000, 77–79.

96 On the second edition, see Barnes 1981, 149–50 with n. 14.

97 Stephenson 2010, 151, claims that the references to the statue and the "saving sign" in both the *Church History* and the *Life of Constantine* postdate 325. By contrast, Barnes 2011, 78, claims the name of the standard ("labarum") is Celtic and indicates it was created ca. 312 when Constantine invaded Italy with a largely Gallic army.

98 Grégoire 1932, 138–43.

99 Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 55, ed. Munier 1995, 106–107, trans. Dods and others 1867, 54–55 (comparing the symbol of the crucifixion with the mast of a ship, a ploughshare, the human body with extended arms, and military standards).

100 Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 16.7–8, ed. Hoppe 1939, 43, trans. (with comments) Ando 2000, 264–66, trans. Holmes and others 1869–1870, I, 85. Compare Tertullian, *Ad Nationes* 1.12, ed. Reifferscheid and Wissowa 1890, 83, trans. Holmes and others 1869–1870, I, 449; Minucius Felix, *On the Error of Profane Religions* 29.6–8, ed. Halm 1867, 43, trans. Arbesmann 1950, 385. See also Cecchelli 1954, 56–57.

101 Bremmer 2006, 60, claims that the inscription refers to a cross, and that this should not be understood as a standard, since the standard did not yet exist. The argument in support of this claim (pp. 66–67) is flawed. It is untrue that Eusebius "explicitly notes that the standard came later into the open than the moment it was supposed to have been made." In fact, *Life* 1.29–30 makes it clear that the standard was made and used "as a protection against attacks of the enemy" from the morning after the dream. What occurred "somewhat later" (i.e., after 317) was the opportunity for Eusebius to see the standard for himself.

102 Singor 2003, 486, is wrong in claiming that "Eusebius speaks of a cross of light above the sun and then goes on to tell us that the copy to be made of it was the Chi-Rho monogram on top of the labarum." The cross of light was replicated in the overall cruciform shape of the standard itself.

103 As suggested by Cecchelli 1954, 66, 136–37.

104 Cecchelli 1954, 132–33, 140–41 with figs. 64a, 64b.

105 See Bruun 1962, 21–23 with fig. 10a; Bruun 1997, 45–46 with pl. 19.7; Overbeck 2005, 7 with fig. 14. Other designs of standard are also known on coins of the period, however: see Bruun 1962, 23–29.

106 Gold: Girardet 2007, 236 fig. 9; Spier 2007a, 91 fig. 65. Silver: Bellinger 1958, 135–36 = Odahl 1982–1983, 69 with fig. 6 = Odahl 2005, 208 ill. 61.

107 *RIC* VII, Arles nos. 381, 402, 413.

108 Bruun 1962, 24–25 with figs. 12c–d; Burgess 2008, 45–49.

109 *RIC* VIII, Siscia nos. 272, 275, 278–79, 282–83, 286, 288, 291–92; Sirmium nos. 30–31. By making this reference on his coins, Vetranio apparently intended to advertise his support for the Constantinian dynasty, and hence his subordination to Constantius. See Dearn 2003.

110 *RIC* VII, 63, Ticinum no. 36. Overbeck 2005. For the date, see Alföldi 1951. The Munich example is also illustrated in: Brandt 1998, 135–37 (M22); Walter 2006 fig. 189; Engemann 2007, 206 fig. 15. Bremmer 2006, 67, does not consider the possibility that these coins might show Constantine's "saving sign," observing that the standard "only starts to appear on coins in 327."

111 See Overbeck 2005, who also notes that all three obverses and reverses come from different dies. That these are "exceptional commemorative pieces" is noted by Bastien 1992–1994, II, 429.

112 A contrary interpretation of the attribute advanced by Radnoti-Alföldi – that the discs or globes were at the bottom of an inverted spear-shaft, and that what appears to be a cross-bar is in fact a side view of a disc separating the shaft of the spear from the globes – is to be rejected. See the refutation of Radnoti-Alföldi in Göbl 1987 (accepted by Bastien 1992–1994, II, 429). In the first place, the cross-bar (or proposed horizontal disc) and the large vertical disc (or large globe) are (at least on the Ticinum medallions) too big in proportion to the shaft to represent mere decorative elements at the bottom of a spear. In the second place, there are no numismatic parallels for the emperor holding an inverted spear, and certain coins, which are closely related to Constantine's medallion (having imperial bust, shield, and horsehead), clearly show the emperor holding an upright (not inverted) spear. Third, I would add that the cross-bar has splayed ends, features that make it unlikely that the die-cutter intended to represent a side view of a disc.

113 Cecchelli 1954, 52, describes a sceptre in the form of a T topped by a globe. Göbl 1987, 88, describes the attribute as "Globus auf der T-Kreuz-Stange." Leeb 1992, 38, also sees the design as representing a sceptre combining the cross with a globe, indicating world rule under the sign of the cross and in the name of Christ: "so kann die neue Insignie nur das Symbol für die Weltherrschaft im Zeichen des Kreuzes, also für die Weltherrschaft im Namen Christi sein." Bastien 1992–1994, II, 428, describes one large globe surmounted by another smaller one. Odahl 2005, 144–45, writes of a "Christian cross topped with a globe" or a "globular cross scepter."

114 *RIC* IX, Rome no. 37; Göbl 1987 pl. 4 no. 9; Bastien 1992–1994, II, 431 and 430 fig. 2.

115 Cecchelli 1954, 91–92, connects the wreath of Constantine's fully developed standard with the disc of the sun.

116 Note the unjustified Christian interpretation in Alföldi 1947, 15 ("his sceptre bears on its end the globe on the cross of Christ"); Alföldi 1948, 43 ("the Cross of Christ with the globe on top"); Alföldi 1954, 82 ("das Kreuz Christi mit langem Szepterstiel; auf dem Querstab des Kreuzes ruht die Weltkugel"); Leeb 1992, 29–39.

117 Eusebius, *Life* 1.32.1, ed. p. 31, trans. p. 82.

118 Elliott 1987, 427–30, argues that the conversion was Eusebius' addition to the story, although the reasons he proposes for Eusebius' introduction of the conversion are doubtful. Nicholson 2000, 312, claims that even in Eusebius there is no hint that the vision resulted in conversion: "The presence of Christian advisers in the emperor's entourage indicates, if nothing else does, that he was sympathetic to Christianity even before the Vision." Sympathetic maybe, but not necessarily already a convert, especially since it is claimed that those Christian advisors had to explain to Constantine the significance of the cross of light.

119 For possible eschatological connections, see Nicholson 2000.

120 *Pan. Lat.* XII 3.3, ed. and trans. pp. 297, 595.

121 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 44.5–6, ed. and trans. Creed 1985, 62–63. For discussion, see n. 65. Certainly, *caeleste* cannot be taken to suggest anything about the form of the sign that appeared: Moreau 1954, II, 433–34.

122 See, for example, Lewis 1976.

123 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 46.3–7, ed. and trans. pp. 66–67.

124 Suetonius, *Augustus* 94, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 290–91; Dio Cassius 45.2.3–4, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, IV, 410–11; Wildfang 2000, 48–51.

125 Suetonius, *Augustus* 94, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 290–93; Dio Cassius 45.2.2–3, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, IV, 408–11; Wildfang 2000, 48–51.

126 *Circulus ad speciem caelestis arcus orbem solis ambit*: Suetonius, *Augustus* 95, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, I, 294–95. Dio Cassius 45.4.4, ed. and trans. Cary 1914–1927, IV, 414–15, interprets this as a bad omen of the troubles that would result from Octavian's claim to the inheritance and family of Caesar.

127 Justin, *Epitome of the Philippic History* 15.4, ed. Seel 1972, 142, trans. Yardley and Develin 1994, 141.

128 Clement of Alexandria, *Logos Paidagogos* 3.59.2–3.60.1, ed. and trans. Marrou and others 1960–1970, III, 124–25; Finney 1994, 111–13.

129 On the chest, see Carter and Mace 1923, 110–11, pls. 50–53; Desroches-Noblecourt 1963, 80–81, 297; Silverman 1978, 46–47.

130 On the imperial tombs, see Grierson 1962, 1–60.

131 Although our sources concerning the Holy Apostles refer to Julian's tomb, it is difficult to explain why an emperor who attempted to restore paganism should have been granted a place there. Woods 2006a has speculated, without any convincing evidence, that the tomb described as Julian's might in reality have belonged to Constantine's son Crispus. Johnson 2009, 207–208, also finds Woods' suggestion unlikely. Johnson 2008 explains that, since the church had no control over imperial burials, it is not inconceivable that Julian's body was transferred from its original burial place in Tarsus to Constantinople, probably in the later fourth century. See also Johnson 2009, 103–104, 213. Kelly 2003, 594, expresses uncertainty as to whether Ammianus, writing ca. 390, failed to mention the transfer of Julian's body to Constantinople because the transfer had not occurred by that date or whether Ammianus, who wrote from a traditionalist viewpoint, wished to avoid referring to Constantinople. Kelly (p. 594 n. 33) follows Grierson 1962, 40–41, in emphasizing the role of Theodosius I in turning the Holy Apostles complex into an imperial mausoleum and suggests that this is when Julian's body arrived in Constantinople. See also Croke 2010, 253.

132 Grierson 1962, 39–40, 44.

133 See, in particular, the comments of Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, esp. 17–48, with list of sarcophagi on pp. 46–47, superseding Mango 1962.

134 Istanbul Archaeological Museums inv. no. 806. See Mendel 1912–1914, II, 447–48; Koch 2000, pl. 210.

135 Ébersolt 1929–1930. Accepted, for instance, by Odahl 2005, 370 n. 9.

136 Kleiner 1992, 457–58, with fig. 419; *Repertorium* I no. 174 = Koch 2000, pl. 212; Johnson 2009, 146, 153, with fig. 112.

137 For the burial of Helena with Constantina on the Via Nomentana, see Ammianus Marcellinus 21.1.5, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1935–1940, 2.92–93.

138 I am concerned in the main text with the date of the decorated sarcophagus, not with the date of the mausoleum (although the two may well be contemporary). Stern 1958, 160–63, places the mausoleum between 337 (when Constantina probably moved to Rome after the death of her first husband Hannibalianus) and 351 (when she married Gallus Caesar and moved with him to Antioch in Syria). Arguments for Julian having been its builder are presented by Mackie 1997 and Mackie 2003, 145–46; they are accepted by Holloway 2004, 104, who, however, does not see the decorative scheme as half-Christian and half-pagan. Julianic patronage is rejected by Johnson 2009, 143. Whatever its form and function, the earlier structure beneath the mausoleum (which is tentatively reconstructed as a triconch and identified as a martyrium by Stanley 1994, but which may have been the original mausoleum) is undoubtedly contemporary with the basilica of Sant'Agnese, which is said to have been built by Constantine, at Constantina's request, under Pope Silvester (314–335) (*Liber Pontificalis*, 34.23, ed. Duchesne 1955–1957, I, 180, trans. Davis 2000, 22: *Eodem tempore fecit basilicam sanctae martyris Agnae ex rogatu filiae suae et baptisterium*). If Constantine or Constantina built the basilica and "triconch" before 335, it seems possible that Constantina might have decided to build the mausoleum between 335 and her departure for Antioch in 351. Kleinbauer 2005, 68–69, however, places the construction of the mausoleum after the death of Constantina in 354, ascribing it to Constantius II, who died in 361. He dates the church and "triconch" between 338 and 351. Johnson 2009, 141–43, suggests the mausoleum may have been begun by Constantina but completed by Constantius.

139 Drijvers 1992, 73; Barnes 1982, 77–78; 2011, 43–44.

140 Nicephorus Callistus, *Church History* 8.31, ed. Migne 1865, 120.

141 Guidi 1907, 653; trans. Beetham in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 141.

142 Johnson 1992, 149; Johnson 2009, 211–12.

143 Eusebius, *Life* 3.47.1, ed. p. 103, trans. p. 139. On the "imperial city" being Rome, see Ébersolt 1929–1930, 584 with n. 3; Drijvers 1992, 74.

144 Krautheimer 1989, 6 n. 26.

145 Socrates, *Church History* 1.17.13, ed. Hansen 1995, 57, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 22. Later accounts include Theophanes, *Chronicle* A.M. 5817, ed. de Boor 1883–1885, 27; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Book of Ceremonies* 2.42, ed. Reiske 1829–1830, I, 642.5–7; Mesarites, *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople*, 39.4 (ed. and trans. Downey 1957, 891, 915). For the emergence and persistence of this tradition, see Johnson 1992, 147–48, and Wortley 2006, 362–67.

146 *Liber Pontificalis* 34.26, ed. Duchesne 1955–1957, I, 182, trans. Davis 2000, 23 (*Eisdem temporibus fecit Augustus Constantinus basilicam beatis martyribus Marcellino presbitero et Petro exorcistae in territurio inter duos lauros et mysileum ubi mater ipsius sepulta est Helena Augusta, via Lavicana, miliario III*); Johnson 1992, 148; Drijvers 1992, 74–75; Johnson 2009, 111. It seems likely that Helena was buried in the porphyry sarcophagus decorated with military reliefs found in the Via Labicana mausoleum (Delbrueck 1932, 215–16 with pl. 100; Kleiner 1992, 455–57 with fig. 418; *Repertorium* I no. 173 = Koch 2000, pl. 213; Walter 2006 figs. 10, 179), but, because the decoration seems unfitting for an imperial lady, it is often suggested that the sarcophagus (and therefore the mausoleum) may originally have been intended for Constantine (e.g., Alföldi 1948, 104; Kleiner 1992, 457; Koch 2000, 586; Holloway 2004, 87). Johnson 2009, 117–18, however, argues against this theory on the grounds that the land on which the mausoleum was built apparently belonged to Helena, that Constantine showed little interest in Rome, and that the sarcophagus need not have been made for Constantine (it could, for instance, have been made for Maxentius, although Johnson, p. 207, thinks it unlikely that it was made for Constantius Chlorus).

147 See Eusebius, *Life* 4.58–60, ed. pp. 144–45.

148 Grierson 1962, 39–40, is tempted to accept the theory of a transfer of Helena's body from Rome to Constantinople. As Dagron 2003, 145 n. 64, observes, if the translation took place, it can only have been after Constantine's death, when Constantius II altered the arrangement created by his father and instead made a family mausoleum. Wortley 2006, 362–67, does not discuss the possibility of a later translation from Rome, although it would provide the desired explanation for his observation (p. 364) that no mention is made of Helena's body in accounts of Macedonius' removal of Constantine's sarcophagus to St. Acacius' church in 359. It is more likely, however, that Helena was buried and remained in Rome until at least the ninth century: Johnson 2009, 211–12.

149 This conclusion has also been reached by Koch 2000, 585. On the lid, see Dalton 1911, 132; Vasiliev 1948, 15. The lid is also illustrated in Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, pl. 24, fig. 46.

150 A suggestion made by Mackie 1997, 403 n. 52.

151 See the comments of Mango 1962, 401, contrary to Delbrueck 1932, 14, 227, 227 (who is followed by Vasiliev 1948, 19–20).

152 It may be added that Delbrueck, in his catalogue of porphyry sculpture, placed the fragmentary sarcophagus in the period between Diocletian and Constantine, and so believed that it was not to be assigned to any of the Byzantine emperors buried in Constantine's mausoleum. He believed that, if it had stood in the mausoleum, its relief decoration would certainly have been mentioned in our texts. See Delbrueck 1932, 212, 219, 227.

153 For the date, see Downey 1957, 859.

154 Nicolas Mesarites, *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople*, 39.5, ed. and trans. Downey 1957, 891, 915.

155 Vasiliev 1948, 21.

156 Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten 1975, 479, 37–38; trans. Magoulias 1984, 263.

157 Delbrueck 1932, 219.

158 Ayasofya Museum inventory number 608. For the dimensions, see Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, Tables II, III, V. Delbrueck 1932, 223, wrongly gives the height as 3.10 m.

159 Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 75–76 with insufficient argumentation.

160 Nicholas Mesarites, *Description of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople* 39.4, ed. and trans. Downey 1957, 891, 915.

161 Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 72–75.

162 Gerola 1931, 276.

163 Pierre Gilles, who lived in Constantinople between 1544 and 1550, recorded that a porphyry sarcophagus located near the site of the Holy Apostles was believed by the locals to be Constantine's (Gilles 1561, 4.2). In truth, it could have belonged to any of the emperors laid to rest in that church. As noted by Vasiliev 1948, 13, the lidless sarcophagus that Gilles saw is to be identified with inventory number 2391 in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums, which was found near Marcian's column (Mendel 1912–1914, III, 419).

164 Vasiliev 1948, 21–24.

165 Delbrueck 1932.

166 Delbrueck 1932, 223–24; Koch 2000, 588, pl. 211.

167 Delbrueck 1932, 223–24 with figs. 115, 116; Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 38 n. 151 with pl. 6, fig. 8, pl. 28, fig. 52 (note that the outline superimposed on pl. 6, fig. 8 fails to indicate the upper cross-bar on the cross attached to the lid [although it is shown by Delbrueck 1932, fig. 115]; and note that the orientation of pl. 28, fig. 52, is at 90 degrees to that of Delbrueck's fig. 116).

168 Delbrueck 1932, 227 (and 222).

169 Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 51 n. 207.

170 See Nicetas Choniates, *History*, ed. van Dieten 1975, 479.37–38, trans. Magoulias 1984, 263.

171 Bellinger and Grierson 1966–1973, III/1, 131, 139.

172 These holes are clearly visible in Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, pl. 6, fig. 7, pl. 7, fig. 9.

173 See Eusebius, *Life* 4.66, ed. p. 147, trans. p. 179. Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 57, 104.

174 Mango 1962, 400. Kolb 2001, 70 n. 167, believes Delbrueck's identification to be "freilich hypothetisch" and describes the decoration as "Kreuz und Christusmonogramm."
175 Piganiol 1932, 241: "Cette union de symboles païens et chrétiens ne convient à aucun empereur mieux qu' à Constantin."
176 Vasiliev 1948, 15.
177 See *Repertorium* I nos. 49 (= Koch 2000, fig. 13.3, pl. 57), 59, 61 (= Koch 2000, fig. 17.1, pl. 58), 175 (= Koch 2000, pl. 7), 208, 215, 224, 653, 667 (= Koch 2000, fig. 24.2–3, pl. 5), 758, 933; *Repertorium* II nos. 102, 143 (= Koch 2000, pl. 66), 146; *Repertorium* III nos. 20, 49, 55, 282, 504 (= Koch 2000 fig. 63.3), 510 (= Koch 2000 fig. 61.2); Koch 2000, fig. 20.2.
178 *Repertorium* I no. 49 (= Koch 2000, fig. 13.3, pl. 57); Deckers 2001a, 4–5; Spier 2007a, 219–20 (no. 46). Neither Deckers nor Spier connects the cross with Constantine's standard.
179 *Repertorium* I nos. 175 (= Koch 2000, pls. 7), 208 (both from the San Sebastiano cemetery, Rome); *Repertorium* II no. 143 (= Koch 2000, no. 66) (Palermo); *Repertorium* III nos. 49 (Arles), 282 (Manosque).
180 Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Book of Ceremonies* ed. Reiske 1829–1830, I, 646.8–11.
181 Asutay Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 82–85.
182 Cecchelli 1954, 94, points out that this sarcophagus is illustrative of the means by which Egyptian symbols such as the *crux ansata* were introduced into Christianity.

6

THE ROMAN COLOSSUS

OUR ATTENTION MUST NOW TURN TO THE COLOSSAL statue of Constantine that stood in the Basilica of Maxentius in Rome, since it is possible that it held in its right hand the imperial standard that had led the emperor's army to victory at the Milvian Bridge. Furthermore, the statue's iconography and the inscription possibly carved on its base clearly illustrate the more important themes with which we have been concerned so far in this book: Constantine as ruler elected by God, Constantine as victor, Constantine as saviour, and Constantine as divinity.

Ten fragments of the statue, which was made from white marble from Carrara in Tuscany and the Greek island of Paros, are now displayed in the Musei Capitolini (Figure 130).[1] Many of these were discovered in 1486 in the Basilica of Maxentius, a huge hall that the usurper probably started to build after the fire of 306 (Figure 67).[2] The scale of the surviving fragments of the statue, including a memorable head measuring 1.74 m from chin to crown, suggest that the imperial image was about eight times life size. Therefore, to have been contained beneath the vaults of the basilica, it must have been seated, rising to a height of about 15 m if we include a pedestal 3 m high.[3] An eyewitness at the time of the discovery of the marble pieces, Francesco di Giorgio Martini, sketched a plan of the basilica on which he indicated, in the northwest apse, a block of masonry 6 m wide with a smaller block set before it, noting that these related to the plinth of the Colossus.[4] No doubt these blocks constituted parts of the throne and footstool of the statue. The back of the statue must have rested against the wall of the apse, because the head ends abruptly behind the ears.[5] The position of the legs can be deduced from the surviving feet. The heel of the left foot is raised, suggesting that it was drawn back towards the throne, whereas the right foot was flat to the floor and therefore further forward. Additional fragments of the statue – the left breast and the right arm – were brought to light in 1951, again near the northwest apse of the basilica, thus corroborating the accounts of the findspot of the discoveries made in the fifteenth century. Taking all the fragments and the architectural context into consideration, it is possible to produce an accurate reconstruction of the statue's appearance (Figures 131, 132).

It is generally assumed that the statue was set up when the emperor ordered structural changes that would put his mark on the Maxentian Basilica – the addition of a porch and a second apse.[6] However, the entrance-porch opening on to the Via Sacra from the southwest façade of the basilica was not an addition as once thought, but part of the original Maxentian edifice. Furthermore, although the apse on the northeast side of the building, opposite the porch (Figure 133), was not part of the original plan, it was erected while work on the main hall was still in progress. It is not certain, therefore, whether Constantine inherited an incomplete structure and was responsible for reinforcing it with the apse or whether Maxentius' architects added the apse when they realized that they needed to address structural

Figure 130. Fragments of the colossal statue of Constantine from the Basilica of Maxentius. Musei Capitolini, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

weaknesses that had come to light as construction work progressed.[7]

Unusual for a colossal portrait, the head has highly distinctive features (Figures 134 and 135): square jaw; projecting, dimpled chin; and an aquiline nose with pointed tip. The distinctive nose was the "dynastic badge" introduced by Constantine's father, which suggests that one purpose of this statue was to emphasize Constantine's dynastic legitimacy. It appears that the head was recut from one of uncertain identity, since, although the carefully arranged locks that frame the forehead are of Constantinian style, the hair on the higher parts of the head curls more voluminously and belongs to an earlier period. Additionally, the presence of square dowel holes at the temples demonstrates that locks were added in the Constantinian period to alter the appearance of the original head.[8] Constantine's face is clean-shaven with a placid expression, and the eyes are large, deeply carved, and turned to the heavens. The symbolism of this upward gaze, suggesting divine inspiration and possibly even the divinity of the emperor himself, was discussed in Chapter 1 in the context of coins on which the emperor is shown wearing a diadem, his head tilted back, looking skywards. Such coins appeared only after the defeat of Licinius in 324, although the upturned eyes alone are occasionally seen in earlier portraits of Constantine, as on the Ticinum medallions of 315 (Figure 114). If the eyes are to be dated after 324, either the statue was not recut to represent Constantine until after 324 or, more likely, the head was recut to represent Constantine around 312 and further restyled after 324 with the eyes we see today.[9] Two small holes in the centre of the head and just above Constantine's fringe, together with an incision running along the right-hand side of the head, have been taken to suggest that the statue was once adorned with some form

Figure 131. Reconstruction of the colossal statue of Constantine integrated into a reconstruction of the Basilica of Maxentius, Rome. (Reconstruction of the statue: © ArcTron 3D GmbH 2007 [www.arctron.de]. Reconstruction of the Basilica: © 2007 University of Virginia.)

Figure 132. Reconstruction of the Basilica of Maxentius as remodelled by Constantine, showing the colossal statue in the northwest apse. A. Tayfun Öner.

of headgear. It is therefore possible that when Constantine adopted the diadem after 324, the attribute was added to the Colossus and that at the same time the eyes were recarved.[10]

Among the fragments of statuary discovered in the basilica is a closed right hand, 1.61 m high (Figure 136). The hand ends not at the wrist but at the beginning of the thumb, and on the lower surface there is a dowel hole for the attachment of the missing part.[11] The presence of a hole drilled into the top of the fist indicates that this hand once gripped a sturdy shaft of some sort (Figure 137). The hole does not pass through the fist, a fact that at first makes one think that a short sceptre of some kind might have been in Constantine's grip. Yet the shaft was probably very long, its lower section somehow secured in the grip of the lower fingers, since the remains of the right bicep, bent elbow, and forearm make it clear that the right arm was raised high, projecting almost horizontally from the shoulder (Figure 138).[12] The back of the forearm was cut flat, presumably indicating that this part of the arm was (like the back of the head) in direct contact with the wall of the apse, a circumstance that would only have been possible if the arm had been raised.

Because the statue held a shaft in its right hand, it is possible that it should be identified with one described by Eusebius as standing in the most public place in Rome and as holding in its right hand "a trophy of the Saviour's Passion" (*tou sōtēriou tropaiou pathous*) or "the salvific sign" (*to sōtērion sēmeion*) or, more specifically, "a tall pole in the shape of a cross" (*hypsēlon doru staurou schēmati*).[13] Other candidates have been put forward for the statue of Constantine described by Eusebius, in particular the marble statue now in the Lateran basilica, which shows an emperor in military dress, who presumably originally held a standard in his right hand (Figure 139).[14] Indeed, it is not certain that the "most public place" in which Eusebius' statue stood was the Basilica of Maxentius; it may have been the Roman Forum or some other meeting place in the city. However, Eusebius' claim about the highly public nature of the statue does not necessarily mean that the sculpture stood in the open, since a much frequented building might equally be meant. A particular reason for identifying Eusebius'

Figure 133. The Basilica of Maxentius. Exterior view showing the northwest apse (far right) and northeast apse (left of centre). © Jonathan Bardill.

statue with the Colossus of the Basilica concerns the circumstances in which, according to Eusebius, the "trophy" was set up.

Eusebius states that when Constantine entered Rome in October 312 following his defeat of Maxentius, the Senate and people hailed him as "saviour" (*sōtēr*) and "benefactor" (*euergetēs*). Constantine, however, "was not in the least excited by their shouts or elated by their plaudits, fully aware that his help came from God: at once he ordered a trophy of the Saviour's Passion to be set up under the hand of his own statue."[15] When describing these events in both the *Church History* and the *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius emphasizes not the making of the statue but the fact that Constantine arranged for the "trophy" or "tall pole" or "salvific sign" to be set up in its hand. This leaves open the possibility that the statue already existed (perhaps because it was a statue of an earlier emperor) and that, in the weeks after the victory, it was reworked to represent Constantine. The purpose of adding the "trophy," Eusebius seems to suggest, was to alter the import of the statue, which represented the emperor as saviour and benefactor,[16] to indicate unambiguously to the viewer that Constantine owed a debt to a higher being.

The "salvific sign" to which Eusebius refers was doubtless the standard that Constantine had carried into battle. As we saw in Chapter 5, at this early date the standard may have looked like that shown on the Ticinum medallions. To Eusebius at least, it evoked the Christian cross through its essential T-shape, but in reality it gave no clear indication of the source of divine aid.[17] That the standard symbolized the divine help Constantine had received in battle was explained by the statue's inscription, which must have been added to the sculpture at the same time as the standard. Eusebius reports the text of the inscription in a Greek translation from the original Latin:

> By this saving sign, the true proof of courage, I saved your city [i.e., Rome] from the yoke of the tyrant [i.e., Maxentius] and set her free; furthermore I freed the Senate and people of Rome and restored them to their ancient renown and splendour.[18]

Figure 134. Head of the colossal statue of Constantine from the Basilica of Maxentius. Musei Capitolini, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

Figure 135. Head of the colossal statue of Constantine from the Basilica of Maxentius. Musei Capitolini, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

Rufinus gives a slightly different version of the inscription in Latin, but the significance of the standard is again clear:

> Under this singular banner (*singulari signo*) which is the badge of true virtue, I restored the city of Rome, the Senate and the Roman people, snatched away by the yoke of tyrannical despotism, to pristine liberty and nobility.[19]

If it is correct to infer from Eusebius that the "trophy" was an addition to a statue that already existed, then this might be taken to support the theory that the statue Eusebius describes is indeed the Colossus from the Basilica. This is because evidence suggests that the right hand of the Colossus was altered. A right hand 1.66 m high, and therefore slightly larger than that already mentioned but of almost identical design, was discovered during building work near the Capitol in 1744 (Figures 140 and 141). It might therefore be reasonably argued that this was the original hand that was discarded and replaced when the "saving sign" was added to the statue.[20]

However, it has also been proposed that the hand found at the Capitol belonged to a completely different statue on the basis that its wrist is too narrow to be compatible with the right forearm found in the basilica.[21] This suggestion, however, does not take into account the possibility that, when the decision was made to add the standard to the statue, an entirely new right arm was substituted. If the hand found near

Figure 136. Closed right hand of the colossal statue of Constantine. Musei Capitolini, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

Figure 137. Closed right hand of the colossal statue of Constantine. View of hole in top of fist. Musei Capitolini, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

the Capitol indeed belonged to the Colossus in its original form, then it is possible it was connected to a right arm that no longer survives. Replacement of the entire right arm would explain why the original hand was discarded: it did not connect with the newly carved right arm.

However, it is noteworthy that the fist found near the Capitol was pierced not only above but also below (Figure 141), suggesting that it gripped a long shaft, perhaps a sceptre or spear. Therefore, if this was the original right hand of the Colossus, it would appear to have been suitable to hold the "saving sign," and it is unclear why it was discarded and replaced with a new right hand.

Some scholars have claimed that the substitution of the right hand and the addition of the standard were contemporary with the addition of raised eyes and the diadem after the victory over Licinius in 324.[22] But, assuming Eusebius is indeed describing the statue from the basilica, that theory would require us to believe that the bishop was mistaken (or deliberately misleading) in assigning the addition of the "saving sign" to the period immediately after the victory at the Milvian Bridge. It would also require us to believe that the inscription quoted by Eusebius, which mentions the "saving sign" and the victory over Maxentius, was added to the statue only after 324 and incorporated into Eusebius' *Church History* only in a late edition of that work. While that is possible, in the absence of firmer evidence it would seem much more likely that the inscription was written and recorded by Eusebius soon after the victory it celebrates. Therefore, the statue, reworked from an existing sculpture, was probably adapted to commemorate the victory at the Milvian Bridge and the crucial role played in that triumph by the "saving sign."

Figure 138. Right bicep, elbow, and forearm of colossal statue of Constantine. Musei Capitolini, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

Figure 139. Statue, probably of Constantius II, in the narthex of St. John Lateran, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

If Eusebius' account is to be connected with the Colossus, we may suggest the following scenario. A huge, seated statue of a pre-Constantinian emperor was reworked soon after the victory of 312 to represent Constantine with his trademark clean-shaven chin and hooked nose. At that time, Constantine insisted that the figure should hold the standard that had led him to victory. To make the addition, it may have been necessary to replace the statue's original right hand (which perhaps held a spear or sceptre) and possibly also the right arm. The inscription explaining the standard's role in securing Rome's liberation would have been added to the statue's base at the same time. After the victory over Licinius in 324, the head was altered to show the emperor's eyes raised to heaven (if they were not already represented thus) and perhaps to accommodate a diadem. If the standard that was added to the statue in 312 looked like that shown on the Ticinum medallions, it is possible that, after the victory of 324, it was substituted by a more elaborate version incorporating a chi-rho monogram. If so, this would have been an alternative occasion on which the statue's right hand and arm might have been replaced.

Because the emperor was perceived, at least by some, as a living god, the Colossus could be interpreted as a statue of a divinity.[23] The transmission of an emperor's divine power through his statues was described in 297 by a panegyrist who, addressing Constantius Chlorus, spoke of how "the power of your divinity would be everywhere that your

images, everywhere that your statues, are revered."[24] An inscription set up at Saepinum soon after Constantine's victory in 312 hails him, in terms earlier used of the Tetrarchs, as "begotten of the gods" (*di(i)s genito*),[25] and the author of the panegyric of 313 states that the Senate had recently set up "a statue of the god" (*signum dei*), by which he means a statue of Constantine. He further comments that such a "likeness of his divinity" (*divinitati simulacrum*) will often be due.[26] We do not know whether the statue erected by the Senate was that in the Basilica of Maxentius, but it is clear that the orator perceived the emperor as a god, and his statue as representing him as such.

Constantine's tolerant attitude towards polytheism, as reflected in the policy on religious freedom of 313, suggests he would not have forbidden any who wanted to from describing him or even worshipping him as a deity. When the provincial council in Africa decreed worship of the *gens Flavia* (the living and dead members of the imperial family), Constantine granted permission for them to do so, at the same time conferring the name "Constantina" on the city of Cirta.[27] Even after 324, when Constantine had secured his position and could be more outspoken about his Christianity, he did not suppress the imperial cult, and in 337 the Caesar Constans granted a petition made by the citizens of the north Italian town of Hispellum (modern Spello, less than 160 km north of Rome) to build a temple in honour of the *gens Flavia* and to rename the town in his honour.[28] This request to establish a temple of the imperial cult was largely a pretext to obtain a locally elected priest (*pontifex gentis Flaviae*) who would present the annual theatrical entertainments and gladiatorial combats in a local religious sanctuary, thus rendering it no longer necessary for the citizens to travel over mountains and through forests to Volsinii.[29] Clearly the inhabitants were banking on Constans having a desire both to uphold traditional religious practices and to promote the Flavian dynasty. They were right. Deeply conscious of the political and economic importance of the dynastic cult and associated entertainment,[30] and perhaps also influenced by Hispellum's claim to be located on the Via Flaminia,[31] Constans did not rebuke the petitioners by ordering them to build a Christian church. Rather, he granted their request to build the temple and also bestowed on Hispellum the name "Flavia Constans" as a reward for its loyalty to the dynasty. By granting the name change, Constans established a politically useful connection between the second Flavian dynasty of Balkan stock and the homeland of the first Flavian dynasty, which was only a short distance from Hispellum.[32]

Although he gave approval to their petition, in his rescript Constans imposed one condition on the people of Hispellum – their new temple "should not be defiled by the evils of any contagious superstition" (*ne ... cuiusquam contagiose superstitionis fraudibus polluatur*).[33] The intention may have been to ensure that the petitioners would only express respect for the imperial family and to prohibit them from worshipping its members as gods by sacrificing. But this is not categorically stated, and, as expressed, the condition is ambiguous, since the word *superstitio* could refer not only to the sacrificial rite but also to the practice of evil magic. Constans may deliberately have left the wording of his decree open to interpretation, resigned to the reality that sacrifice to the members of the imperial family could not realistically be prevented. Those who wanted to sacrifice were free to understand that only evil magic was prohibited: enemies of paganism could believe Constans was on their side.[34]

By supporting the imperial cult, Constans was apparently continuing his father's policy, and Constantine's attitude must therefore be taken into account when assessing the meanings, both implied and inferred, of the Roman Colossus – all the more because, through its iconography, the Colossus conveyed the impression that the emperor possessed a degree of divinity. In the first place, the scale of the Colossus elevated Constantine way above the status of all other mortals.[35] But equally important was the statue's costume. It is highly significant that all its surviving stone fragments – both feet, right lower leg and knee, right upper arm and elbow, left breast and shoulder – relate to unclothed parts of the statue. The discovery in 1951 of the fragment of the left shoulder and breast was particularly significant since it confirmed that Constantine's upper body was largely bare.[36] However, while part of this fragment was smoothed to represent exposed flesh, part was less carefully dressed. This suggests that some of the left

Figure 140. Closed right hand found at the Capitol in 1744, probably from the colossal statue of Constantine. Musei Capitolini, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

Figure 141. Closed right hand found at the Capitol in 1744, probably from the colossal statue of Constantine. View of hole in bottom of fist. Musei Capitolini, Rome. © Jonathan Bardill.

shoulder was covered by a cloak, perhaps worked in bronze. The cloak no doubt covered the emperor's lap also, since the surviving fragment of the upper right leg contains a dowel-hole, which was probably used to attach the drapery.

This was therefore not a "fully nude" statue, such as that on the porphyry column was likely to have been, but rather a "hip-mantle" statue, in which the cloak passed from the left shoulder, across the back, around the right hip and over the lap.[37] In Greek art, the hip-mantle costume had been used primarily to represent the senior male deities but had not normally been employed for Hellenistic kings. It was perhaps precisely because the costume was untainted by associations with eastern kingship that the Romans adopted it.[38] The first Roman statue known to have worn this costume was a standing statue of the deified Julius Caesar. It was set up by Octavian following the appearance of a comet that was believed to represent Caesar's apotheosis (Figure 30).[39]

From Augustus' reign onwards, the hip-mantle costume was also used for enthroned portraits. Such portraits seem to have been a Roman innovation, since enthroned images of Hellenistic rulers are very rare; thus, the enthroned hip-mantle portrait is likely to have been considered something specifically Roman.[40] The pose and costume were intended to refer not to the Hellenistic kings but to the supreme Roman deity, Jupiter Optimus Maximus. The connection with Jupiter is clearly attested in the case of a cult statue of Augustus erected by King Herod in the temple of Roma and Augustus in Caesarea

Figure 142. Copper alloy medallion showing Constantine in the costume of Jupiter receiving a phoenix-topped globe from one of his Caesars. Mint of Rome. A.D. 326. Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques, Bibliothèque nationale de France (20663).

Maritima: it was fashioned on the model of Pheidias' chryselephantine statue of Zeus at Olympia and showed the emperor enthroned.[41] We have seen the enthroned Constantine sporting the hip-mantle costume on a bronze weight in the Art Museum of Princeton University (Figure 103), and he can again be seen so attired on a bronze medallion minted in Rome in 326. This shows the emperor seated (presumably on a throne), holding Jupiter's sceptre in his left hand and receiving with his right, from one of his Caesars, a globe topped by a phoenix, which represents the dawn of a new age (Figure 142).[42]

As we saw when discussing Constantine's statue on the porphyry column, the nudity or (as in the case of the Colossus) virtual nudity of a statue conveyed heroic power.[43] However, the enthroned Jupiter-like pose conveyed something more. The meaning can be deduced if we bear in mind the earlier use of the Jupiter pose by Augustus, who exploited it frequently on his cameos. These images do not show Augustus with Jupiter's trademark thunderbolt, but rather with other attributes that are not normally associated with Jupiter. In the case of the Gemma Augustea (Figure 143), for instance, while the eagle of Jupiter sits below Augustus' throne, the emperor holds in his right hand the *lituus*, the curved staff of an augur, suggesting his role as mediator between men and the gods. Thus, it would be wrong to conclude that Augustus was claiming to be identical with Jupiter. We have seen that Augustus and later emperors generally tried to avoid any suggestion (or any unambiguous suggestion) that they were living gods, and they were officially declared divine only after death. They might, however, exploit the iconography of divinity to demonstrate that they had been appointed by a god, were protected by that god, and shared a degree of that god's divine power. Coins of Trajan, for instance, showed a huge figure of Jupiter extending his thunderbolt over the emperor's head as protection.[44] The message was clear: Trajan was Jupiter's protégé and viceroy on earth. The point was reinforced by Pliny's oration in which it was asserted that Jupiter had placed control of the whole earth into Trajan's hands, freeing him to concentrate on the government of heaven.[45] Thus, it seems likely that the meaning of Augustus' Jupiter pose was similar, although it must be recognized that, whilst he honoured Jupiter, Augustus in fact relegated him to a minor role in his religious policy, placing much more emphasis on Apollo.[46]

The poet Horace addressed Jupiter with the words, "May you reign, with [Augustus] Caesar in second place,"[47] and Ovid elaborated thus: "Jupiter controls the aetherial citadels and the kingdoms of the triformed universe; but the earth is under Augustus' sway: each is a father and a ruler."[48] Their words are paralleled by Eusebius' claim that Constantine rules on earth as God rules in heaven.[49] We therefore understand that the enthroned, partially nude portraits of Augustus and Constantine expressed their roles as father figures and world rulers elected by the Supreme Deity to rule as his viceroy on earth.[50] Whilst such a claim did not identify the ruler with the Supreme God, it did emphasize the emperor's relationship with God.

Constantine's proximity to the divine would also have been suggested by the statue's rigidity. Like the frontal depiction of the enthroned emperor on his triumphal arch (Figure 80) and the frontal representations of the Tetrarchs on Galerius' arch

Figure 143. Augustus in the Jupiter costume, enthroned beside Roma. Detail of the Gemma Augustea. Ca. A.D. 10. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Cologne Digital Archaeology Laboratory (CoDArchLab) (www.arachne.uni-koeln.de) (FA-Kae2293_00407631293,01.tif).

(Figure 63), the stiff pose of the Colossus would have distanced the emperor from his people. The seated, front-facing, semiclad emperor was meant to resemble colossal cult statues, such as Pheidias' Zeus at Olympia and the related statue of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in the Capitoline temple at Rome.[51] Even if no inscription explicitly claimed that the emperor was a god, Constantine acquired a degree of divinity from his pose and costume, which imitated those of the Supreme Deity. His elevated status would have been further enhanced by the upward gaze of the eyes, suggesting divine inspiration.[52] If a diadem was added after 324, then Constantine, unlike Augustus and his successors, would have been deliberately connecting himself with the Hellenistic kings, who wore the diadem to suggest kingship in the style of Alexander.

Eusebius suggests that it was Constantine's modesty that caused him to order the "salvific sign" and the inscription to be added to his statue: he was responding to acclamations by the Senate and people that he was a saviour-king and benefactor. Therefore, the divinizing iconography of the Colossus in the basilica makes it a strong candidate for the statue Eusebius mentions, although the identification cannot be certain. While Eusebius' claim that Constantine altered the statue may be true, we should not necessarily trust his representation of the emperor's motives. Even if Constantine was not prepared to take credit for his victories because he believed they had been granted by his protective deity, he may not have denied himself a certain amount of reflected glory or divinity. The addition of the standard might have hinted at the role of the Supreme Deity in

imperial victories, but it is unlikely to have significantly diminished the impression of Constantine's elevated status.

Notes

1. The ten fragments are catalogued by Presicce 2007, 122–26 (omitting another right hand found at the Capitol). For overviews, see Cecchelli 1954, esp. 13–44; Jucker 1983, 51–57; L'Orange and Unger 1984, 70–77; Hannestad 1988, 329–30; Kleiner 1992, 438–40; Leeb 1992, 62–67; Kolb 2001, 85–86, 206–208 (M 17); Presicce 2005, 144–47; Deckers 2005; Hallett 2005, 265; Walter 2006, 15, 18–19, figs. 11–12, 160–61 (who does not allow for remodelling of the statue in the reign of Constantine); Safran 2006; Ruck 2007, 238–43; Presicce 2007. On the marble, see Pensabene, Lazzarini, and Turi 2002.
2. On the findspot, see Cecchelli 1954, 28–30.
3. Minoprio 1932, 11; Cecchelli 1954, 32.
4. The plan is reproduced in Presicce 2007, 117, fig. 1. See also Lanciani 1891, pl. IV (with pp. 161–64); Ashby 1904, 17 no. 16, 36 no. 59.
5. Presicce 2007, 126, and the profile view of the head in fig. 14. See also the drawing of the underside of the head in Cecchelli 1954, fig. 34 (with p. 20).
6. This is assumed, for instance, by Curran 2000, 81.
7. Amici 2005; Marlowe 2010, 208–11; Herres 1983, 111–12 with nn. 62–63.
8. Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 147–52 (no. 122) with pls. 151–52; Wright 1987, 493–94. Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 94, accepts the reworking but points out that, at this early date, the head is most unlikely to have been recut from that of a god. Smith also questions the claim of Evers (1991, 794–99) that the style of the ears, nose, and hair indicate that it was reworked from a (bearded) statue of Hadrian. Safran 2006, 48, nevertheless assumes a Hadrianic original. Harrison 1967, 94, suggests a colossal statue of Trajan was reused by Constantine, judging by the forehead hair. Oddly, Curran 2000, 82, denies that the statue was reworked. The view of Jucker and Coarelli (and also of Cecchelli 1954, 134) that the statue might originally have been one of Maxentius is still noted by some (Hekster 1999, 725; Hunt 2003, 107; Deckers 2005, 175; Stephenson 2009, 150) despite the fact that Zanker (cited by Evers 1991, 794–95) explains that a portrait of Maxentius would not have sported the voluminous curls seen on the head from the basilica. On the iconography of Maxentius, see Evers 1992.
9. Harrison 1967, 91–94. Harrison argues that the right hand was altered at the same time (around 324).
10. Cecchelli 1954, 19–20, 134 (who points to the indications that the statue wore headgear but observes that the form of that headgear can no longer be securely determined); Jucker 1983, 55–56; L'Orange and Unger 1984, 76–77; Deckers 2005, 172–73; Presicce 2007, 129 (who rejects the possibility of a diadem, suggesting only a jewel).
11. Until recently it had been thought that this hand, which is 1.61 m high, had not been found in the basilica but near the Capitol. However, the confusion of the findspots of the two right hands has been exposed by Presicce 2007, 121–22. For descriptions of the fragment, see: Stuart-Jones 1926, 12 (suggesting that it came from a different statue on the mistaken assumption that it was not found in the basilica); L'Orange and Unger 1984, 71–73 (where it is referred to as "Hand Nr. 1," and assumed to be the original that was later replaced and discarded).
12. Deckers 2005, 167; Presicce 2007, 124–25 with fig. 10.
13. Eusebius, *Church History* 9.9–11, ed. pp. 830–32, trans. pp. 293–94. Eusebius, *Life* 1.39–40, ed. p. 36, trans. pp. 85–86. On the possible connection between the surviving statue and Eusebius' description, see Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 148. The statue is linked with Eusebius' description in: Cecchelli 1951; Cecchelli 1954, 14–16; Barnes 1992, 646. For a discussion of Eusebius' terminology (*tropaion* and *sēmeion*), see Ligota 1963, 188–90.
14. This suggestion has been made by Bruun 1962, 28, amongst others. Singor 2003, 483 n. 7, is also attracted to this possibility. Claridge 2010, 265–66, 377, notes that the statue is more likely to represent Constantius II than Constantine.
15. Eusebius, *Church History* 9.9.10, ed. p. 832, trans. pp. 293–94; Eusebius, *Life* 1.39.3, ed. p. 36, trans. p. 85.
16. Ligota 1963, 178–79.
17. On the standard, see also Deckers 2005, 169–72. Lenski 2008, 207, without providing justification, makes reference to, "The cross alluded to in the inscription, a distinctly Christian symbol" and (p. 247) contrasts the supposed Christianity of the statue with the pagan vocabulary chosen by the Senate for the inscription on Constantine's arch.
18. Eusebius, *Church History* 9.11, ed. p. 832, trans. p. 294; Eusebius, *Life* 1.40.2, ed. pp. 36–37, trans. p. 85.
19. Rufinus, *Church History* 9.9.11, ed. in Schwartz, Mommsen, and Winkelmann 1999, 833; Grégoire 1932, 141–42; Curran 2000, 79; Bremmer 2006, 60 (who believes Rufinus translated Eusebius).
20. Until recently it was thought that this larger right hand had been discovered in the basilica with the other fragments of the statue, but the confusion of the findspots of the two right hands has now been clarified by Presicce 2007, 121–22. Proposing a substitution of one hand for the other, see L'Orange and Unger 1984, 71–76.

21. Presicce 2007, 122. Curran 2000, 78–79, imagines the existence of two versions of the same statue on the shaky grounds that Rufinus, *Church History* 9.9.10–11, ed. in Schwartz, Mommsen, and Winkelmann 1999, 833, refers to a plurality of images being set up by the Senate in honour of Constantine.
22. Harrison 1967, 94; L'Orange and Unger 1984, 76–77.
23. On the divinizing aspects of the statue, see L'Orange and Unger 1984, 78–80.
24. *Pan. Lat.* VIII.15.6, ed. and trans. pp. 136, 550.
25. *AE* 94 no. 367 (= Grünewald 1990, 222 no. 272).
26. *Pan. Lat.* XII.25.4 ed. and trans. pp. 331–32, 607. For discussion of the textual problem (*dee/deus/dei/deae*) and the meaning of the orator regarding the divinity of the emperor, see Ligota 1963, 180–81. Whether the statue of Constantine mentioned by the panegyrist had the attributes of a particular deity – such as Sol (Alföldi 1948, 69) – is uncertain. Alföldi 1948, 132 n. 23, denies that this statue could be the one said by Eusebius to have been set up in the most public place in Rome, holding "a trophy of the Saviour's Passion" or "a tall pole in the shape of a cross" in its right hand. All that is certain is that the orator believed the emperor to be divine.
27. Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40.28, ed. Dufraigne 1975, 57, trans. Bird 1994, 49; Tabata 1997, 390–93.
28. On the Hispellum inscription, see Barnes 2011, 20–23 (for the date) and Van Dam 2007, 23–34 and 363–67.
29. Tabata 1997, 387–90, 400–401.
30. Jones 1948, 212–13 (= 1962, 175); Van Dam 2007, 22, 34, 126.
31. Van Dam 2007, 53–57.
32. Van Dam 2007, 115–16.
33. Curran 2000, 180–81. Edwards 2006a, 154, makes the unlikely suggestion that this refers to Constantine banishing his likeness from the shrine.
34. Salzman 1987, 178; Tabata 1997, 398–99; Van Dam 2007, 32–34. Sandwell 2005, 90, attempts to argue that the ambiguity in the term was unintentional and resulted from the fact that terminology necessary to distinguish between magic and pagan practices was unavailable.
35. It is interesting to note the way in which philosophers, who in Late Antiquity were almost divine, might be compared with colossal statues: Zanker 1995, 307–308.
36. Kähler 1952, 12–15; L'Orange and Unger 1984, 71. Curran 2000, 82, is quite wrong in asserting that the statue was "probably wearing a cuirass and *paludamentum*" and had "a martial appearance," and Singor 2003, 483 n. 7 is also wrong even to allow the possibility. Safran 2006 notes the bare feet.
37. On this style, Hallett 2005, 166–72 and 187–90.
38. Hallett 2005, 123, 258.
39. Hallett 2005, 127–28.
40. Hallett 2005, 166–72, 258.
41. Hallett 2005, 167.
42. *RIC* VII, Rome no. 279. See the comments of Alföldi 1947, 15, and Alföldi and Ross 1959, 171–72.
43. Nicholson 2001, 188–91, 194, chooses to interpret the semiclad statue specifically in the light of Lactantius' Christian views on the naked body, but it seems to me extremely doubtful that there was any intention of such an interpretation on Constantine's part.
44. Hallett 2005, 252–53.
45. Fears 1981, 80–89.
46. Fears 1981, 56–66.
47. *tu secundo | Caesare regnes!*: Horace, *Odes* 1.12.51–52, ed. and trans. Bennett 1927, 38–39.
48. *Iuppiter arces | temperat aetherias et mundi regna triformis, | terra sub Augusto est; pater est et rector uterque*: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.858–60, ed. and trans. Millar 1916, II, 424–27.
49. See pp. 138–39.
50. On Augustus' enthroned Jupiter statues, see Hallett 2005, 256–58.
51. Pheidias' statue was taken to Constantinople in the early fifth century: Bassett 2004, 99, 238 (no. 157).
52. Safran 2006, 55–56, has suggested, not very convincingly, that the statue of Constantine would have been perceived as gazing beyond the walls of the basilica towards the Colossus with its rayed crown.

7

CONSTANTINE AND CHRISTIANITY

So far in this book we have seen little sign of Constantine's Christianity, and if we are to investigate it, the first issue that must be addressed – at least as best we can – concerns exactly when Constantine became a Christian. Given that his father, Constantius Chlorus, was in all likelihood a pagan, modern claims that Constantine was raised in the Christian faith must be treated with caution.[1] Support for Constantine having a non-Christian upbringing might also be found in Eusebius' assertion that his mother, Helena, was only persuaded to convert to Christianity by Constantine himself after his own conversion.[2] It would not be unreasonable to question Eusebius' veracity in this respect, since by claiming the emperor had not been raised in the faith he could excuse him of any failure to intervene in the Diocletianic persecutions. And by claiming he was responsible for converting his mother, he could cast his hero in a proselytizing role.[3] However, evidence provided by Constantine himself also suggests a late conversion. In his *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, the emperor indicates he was not an infant or even in his early youth when he became a Christian:

> I fervently wish that this revelation [of Christianity] had been granted to me long ago, if indeed the man is blessed who has been brought up from infancy gladdened in the knowledge of things divine and in the beauty of virtue. And let this be said with moderation, for even if, as people say, it is not from earliest youth or from the cradle that the good are wise, it is none the less a welcome thing if they achieve wisdom even in the prime of youth.[4]

The difficulty of determining the date of Constantine's conversion is compounded because the emperor apparently lied about his age, and the lie was repeated by Eusebius and others. Although born in the early 270s, and therefore about 30 years old when Diocletian initiated the Great Persecution in the winter of 302–303, Constantine later claimed he was "still just a boy" at the time to anticipate any criticism that he failed to intervene.[5] Since Constantine understated his age by about 20 years, we should perhaps deduce from the *Oration* that when he finally turned to Christianity "in the prime of youth" he was about 40 years old. If so, he converted around 310–315.

According to Eusebius, Constantine converted to Christianity at the time of his heavenly vision and dream in the years before the battle of the Milvian Bridge in October 312. But is Eusebius' account of a sudden conversion to be trusted? Doubt is raised by the fact that in Lactantius' earlier account of Constantine's dream there is no reference to Constantine's conversion. Furthermore, the vision described by Eusebius may in fact be a Christianized substitute for a pagan vision of Apollo that happened as early as 310. If the story of the vision was created in this

way, its veracity, including the veracity of its timing, must be called into question.

Whatever the date of the alleged vision and dream, I suspect that Eusebius' story of a sudden midday conversion is in all likelihood an oversimplification of a process that took much longer. It is possible that the story of Constantine's vision of Apollo was replaced by the imperial court with a more religiously neutral story describing how the emperor had received a symbol of power from the sun. Later, Eusebius may have chosen to adapt this official tale for his Christian purposes. In his version, the symbol became an unambiguous sign of the Christian God, and the vision became the moment of Constantine's conversion, which was cast as a dramatic "Road to Damascus" event. In reality, it is more likely that the emperor was gradually won over to the faith through thought processes about which we can only speculate.[6] We cannot know whether Constantine was already interested in the Christian associations of places such as Babylon and Egypt when he visited them as a young military officer under Galerius and Diocletian.[7] In 303, at the age of thirty, he probably acquiesced in the persecution of the Christians in Nicomedia. The shame of this later caused him to claim he was still only a boy at the time.[8] But the process of change had begun by 306 when Constantine chose to end Christian persecution in the parts of the empire over which he had just gained control. That in no way means that he had already adopted the Christian faith, but it does show an awareness of the fact that to secure a peaceful future for the Roman state it would be necessary somehow to accommodate the Christians.

In his story of the vision, Eusebius claims that Constantine had no idea which god had sent him the celestial sign, and that the emperor turned to his religious advisors for an interpretation of its significance. Eusebius suggests that these advisors were Christians who explained that the symbol was a sign of immortality and that the deity involved was the "Onlybegotten Son of God."[9] Ossius, bishop of Córdoba, was certainly at Constantine's side by the winter of 312–313 and may have been among those consulted at the earlier date when (and if) the vision occurred.[10] Perhaps as early as 310, Constantine appointed the accomplished Christian scholar Lactantius as tutor to his son, Crispus.[11] But we cannot firmly deduce from Lactantius' appointment that Constantine had committed himself to Christianity by this date. Referring to the period after 324, Eusebius gives the impression that Constantine was surrounded by Christian staff,[12] but from other sources we know that, even towards the end of his life, he was still showing favour towards, and taking advice from, Neoplatonic philosophers such as Sopater.[13] Clearly we cannot reliably determine Constantine's personal religious convictions simply from our knowledge of the learned and religious men who surrounded him.

When considering Constantine's beliefs, we must bear in mind that, at the time, ideas of what constituted correct Christian belief (orthodoxy) differed, and that these differences caused serious disagreements within the Church, such as the Donatist and Arian controversies, which will be discussed later in this chapter. While Constantine may have considered his beliefs to be compatible with the Christian faith, those inside the Church may not have been so liberal in their definition of Christianity. Furthermore, Constantine's beliefs, no doubt influenced by his personal experiences, may have changed over time, so that the modern scholar must attempt to determine how deep Constantine's Christian sympathies and understanding went at different stages in his career, and whether his public expressions of support for Christianity reflected a genuine personal belief, a strategic political stance, or – more likely – an intimate combination of the two that is difficult to unravel.[14]

Such issues can be explored by examining both material and textual evidence, both of which provide different and complementary perspectives on the problem. I have divided the following discussion into two parts – material evidence and textual evidence. However, it should be borne in mind that the division is somewhat arbitrary given that there is often textual evidence that bears on material evidence; indeed, some lost material evidence is known only from texts. As we shall see, while the evidence reflects Constantine's generosity towards Christians, it also indicates his acceptance (whether

willing or grudging) of polytheism and a notable change in behaviour after the victory over Licinius in 324.

Material Evidence

The Staurogram, the Chi-Rho, and the Standard

Because of the potential propaganda value of the symbol that Constantine claimed to have seen in his vision, it is instructive to assess the extent to which it was exploited by the court during the emperor's reign. The sign of the vision, as we have seen in Chapter 5, occurred essentially in two forms, the staurogram and the chi-rho, and neither is likely to have had an unambiguously Christian import.

Lactantius claims that the staurogram (or less likely the chi-rho sign) was painted on the shields of Constantine's army before the victory over Maxentius in 312. Yet no such design is shown on the shields in the depiction of Maxentius' defeat on the Arch of Constantine, nor amongst the shield devices illustrated in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.[15] As a shield design, the staurogram only appears, to my knowledge, on the bronze statuette of Constantine discussed in Chapter 5 (Figure 103). In addition, we have noted the occurrence of the staurogram in a private, aristocratic context in a wall painting dating to around 313, and in the wall paintings of the catacombs before 320. But if we search for evidence of its more widespread use as a symbol of Constantinian power, such as on coins, we do not find it until 336/337, when it appears on *solidi* minted in Antioch (Figure 102).[16]

The chi-rho monogram had been used in Christian contexts before Constantine's day, although often as a symbol that did not necessarily carry a specifically Christian connotation.[17] Indeed, it had also been used in pagan contexts as a ligature in words containing the adjacent letters chi and rho (such as *archōn* ["ruling"]) or to stand for entire words beginning with these two letters, such as *chronos* ("time") or *chrēstos* ("useful"), the latter being used in the margins of manuscripts to mark informative passages.[18] Even in Constantine's time there is no certainty that the chi-rho monogram had acquired a specifically Christian association.[19]

It is not until A.D. 331 that we have the earliest securely dated inscription in which the chi-rho is used with an undoubtedly Christian reference. On an epitaph dated to the consulate of Bassus and Ablabius, the chi-rho is used to create the phrase IN SIGNO CHRISTI, thereby referring to the words Constantine saw in the sky at the time of his vision. It reflects a growing belief that the victorious sign seen by the emperor had been a chi-rho, and that this symbol carried a Christian meaning.[20]

On coins, the chi-rho first appeared with an unquestionably Christian significance only after Constantine's death, in the period 338–350, when it was used flanked by the Biblical alpha and omega on a unique light *miliarensis* issued in Rome by Constans.[21] Slightly later, in 352, an unambiguously Christian import was given to the symbol in the same way when it was employed on the reverse of new copper alloy coins minted by the Western usurper Magnentius in the four Gallic mints.[22]

The antiquity of the chi-rho symbol suggests that, when a Christian significance was not implied by the context, it was probably understood as a universally acceptable, powerful symbol rather than as a sign specifically associated with Christianity. One illustration of this is an embossed metal plate that once decorated a wooden box placed in a grave in Pannonia. It was decorated not only with a chi-rho, but also with the lyre-playing poet Orpheus and busts of the gods Sol (with radiate crown) and Luna.[23] Whilst it is true that elsewhere the popular pagan image of Orpheus may have been used to allude to Christ,[24] and that it is therefore not impossible that the chi-rho on the plaque makes a Christian reference, it must be recognized that none of the imagery is unambiguously Christian.

The earliest dated appearances of the chi-rho as a shield design are on coins minted for Crispus at Trier in the early 320s. However, Crispus' shield in fact shows a wide variety of other designs too, suggesting that the chi-rho symbol was not part of the official design for these coins.[25] Later, the chi-rho is shown as a shield design on a silver dish representing an emperor, usually identified as Constantius II, on horseback. The symbol appears on the shield of a guard accompanying him (Figure 100).[26] The small amount of visual evidence for the use of the chi-rho on shields seems to suggest that, like the staurogram, it was not regularly used on the shields of troops, although it might perhaps be suggested that its use was reserved for the shields of the emperor's small group of personal bodyguards.[27]

A chi-rho monogram in a wreath is said by Eusebius to have surmounted the standard carried before Constantine's victorious armies. But it is clear that Eusebius gives a description of a standard he saw after 317, and probably only in 325 or 336. By that time additions had been made to the original design, and we therefore cannot be certain that the original standard, created sometime before 312, incorporated the chi-rho symbol. Since the Ticinum medallions show a standard topped by an empty disc (Figure 114), they may indicate the original design of Constantine's standard. The plain disc could have been interpreted as the disc of the sun, and the basic shape of the standard as a whole – formed by the combination of the disc with the T-shape of the shaft and cross-bar – would have recalled essential features of the anchor, ankh, and staurogram.

Constantine would not have risked the loyalty of his troops by expecting them to go into battle behind a standard around which they could not all unite, or carrying shields bearing a symbol in which they had no confidence. The army was filled with troops who held a wide variety of beliefs, and only a fraction would have been Christian. Many recruits are likely to have come from rural areas relatively untouched by Christian missionaries, and those Christians who had entered the forces had probably been weeded out during the persecutions.[28] It is therefore unlikely that Constantine created a new standard that was understood as "a Christian emblem"[29] or that he used the staurogram or chi-rho monogram with an unambiguously Christian intent.[30] Furthermore, we should also consider how prominent a role a new Constantinian standard is likely to have played in 312, since the older designs with which the troops were familiar are unlikely to have been jettisoned immediately. A new standard would probably have been one among several familiar designs, just as any shields marked with the staurogram or chi-rho would have been few among many bearing other symbols.[31]

A tiny chi-rho symbol seems to be attached to the crest of the imperial helmet shown on silver multiples minted in Ticinum to celebrate Constantine's *decennalia* in 315 (Figure 114).[32] However, only three examples of such medallions are known.[33] Their rarity is explained by the fact that they were of extremely limited issue, being sent only to select individuals. Therefore, they do not indicate an attempt at widespread promotion of Christianity through coinage.[34] Copper alloy coins were much more widely circulated, and some minted between 318 and 320 show a variety of symbols on the cross-bar of the imperial helmet. Among these symbols, on a very few examples, is a chi-rho monogram, but the majority show just two or three dots that probably represent jewels or rivets (Figure 110a–f). The variety in these designs suggests that they were in all likelihood adopted at the whim of mint officials and not officially sanctioned. Patrick Bruun concludes: "It is therefore unjustifiable to interpret the chance occurrence of a [chi-rho] sign in the cross-bar of the helmet as reflecting imperial policy."[35]

The chi-rho and a simplified form of that monogram in which a dot replaced the loop of the rho appeared in 319–321 as part of the mint mark on the reverse of some copper alloy coins minted in Ticinum, Aquileia, Siscia, and Thessaloniki – and later at Arles in 334 and 336 (Figure 144). These symbols were, once again, in the hands of the mint officials, such as the *procurator monetae* or the *rationalis summarum*, "but still very far from emperor and court and *comes sacrarum largitionum*." They therefore do not seem to have been a part of the official design of the coin.[36]

Unlike the standard shown on the Ticinum medallions, some later standards appear to have incorporated a chi-rho monogram, either on the banner or above the cross-bar. For instance, medallions minted for the *vicennalia* in 326 show Constantine holding a standard bearing the chi-rho on its banner (Figure 112). While this design may indicate that the chi-rho was emerging as the preferred form of the symbol Constantine wished to promote as his own, such valuable coins would not have been widely distributed.[37] Copper alloy *nummi* minted in Constantinople in 326–330 show Constantine's standard piercing a serpent (Figure 95). In this design, the standard has a chi-rho at the top of the shaft and a banner hangs from the cross-bar. Whilst such

Figure 144. Six-armed monogram with a dot at the top serving as part of the mint mark on a copper alloy coin of Constantine Junior as Caesar, minted in Ticinum. A.D. 319–320. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1981,1229.25).

coins would usually have been for wide circulation, these are in fact rare and therefore had no propaganda value. They were apparently made in such small numbers that one numismatist has suggested that the minting was quickly stopped and that the coins were withdrawn from circulation. If that is indeed the case, the reason is unclear.[38]

Chi-rho symbols also appear on coins minted in Arles in 333–337, which are similar to those we have already noted from Aquileia. They show either two soldiers each holding a standard, with a chi-rho monogram in the field between them, or two soldiers standing on either side of a single standard bearing a chi-rho on its banner (Figure 145a). In the case of the latter design, other symbols, such as an X or an O, may appear on the banner in place of the chi-rho (Figure 145b–c). This demonstrates that the chi-rho was not part of the official design but a changing mark applied at the discretion of the mint.[39] Thus, despite the fact that the chi-rho is not rare on these coins, there is again no justification for concluding that its inclusion, even at this late date, reflects an attempt on the part of the emperor to promote Christianity.

Finally, we may mention the stylized representation of the standard with the chi-rho on the lid of the porphyry sarcophagus in Hagia Eirene. If this sarcophagus belonged to Constantine, as has been suggested in Chapter 5, the symbol must clearly be considered a piece of imperial propaganda, yet its impact would have been posthumous, since the casket would presumably not have been available for public viewing until the emperor died in 337.

Thus, it is unlikely that at an early date either the chi-rho or the staurogram carried an unambiguously Christian import, and despite the circulation of stories of an imperial dream and vision of a symbol from the sun, it is clear that neither symbol was exploited widely by the imperial propaganda machine. When officially sanctioned, both were reserved for a small audience – and even after 324, when Constantine was secure in his control of the entire empire, and when the chi-rho emerged as the preferred imperial sign, both symbols were only used in a limited way.[40]

The Arch of Constantine

The arch built beside the Colosseum in Rome to commemorate Constantine's tenth year of rule (*decennalia*) in 315–316, and his earlier victory over Maxentius in 312, has already been discussed (in Chapter 2) with regard to the indications it gives of the emperor's close association with the solar deity. However, when taken as a whole, the arch's decorative scheme is not easy to interpret. In particular, the inscription and sculptural decoration are ambiguous or even confused in religious terms and reward close attention.

The Inscription

The inscription (Figure 146), which is identical on both sides of the attic storey of Constantine's arch, reads as follows:

IMP(eratori) CAES(ari) FL(avio)
CONSTANTINO MAXIMO
P(io) F(elici) AVGVSTO S(enatus)
P(opulus)Q(ue) R(omanus)
QVOD INSTINCTV DIVINITATIS
MENTIS
MAGNITVDINE CVM EXERCITV
SVO

(a) (b) (c)

Figure 145 (a–c) Reverses of copper alloy *nummi* minted in Arles. Two soldiers stand on either side of a single standard. The symbols on the banner (serving as parts of the mint mark) vary. Dates: December 333–September 337. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (a = 1853,1018.1; b = B.1778; c = B.1783).

TAM DE TYRANNO QVAM DE
OMNI EIVS
FACTIONE VNO TEMPORE IVSTIS
REM PVBLICAM VLTVS EST ARMIS
ARCVM TRIVMPHIS INSIGNEM
DICAVIT

To the Emperor Caesar Flavius Constantine the great, dutiful, and fortunate Augustus, the Senate and the People of Rome – because, with inspiration of divinity and greatness of mind, with his army, by just arms he avenged the state both from the tyrant and from all of his faction at the same time – dedicated this arch as a symbol of triumphs.

A striking aspect of this inscription is its failure to specify the divinity or divine force (*divinitas*) through whose inspiration Constantine had won his battles. Therefore, the text would have been acceptable to both pagan and Christian readers.[41] We cannot now determine whether this ambiguity was dictated by

Figure 146. Inscription on the Arch of Constantine, Rome. Ca. A.D. 315. © Jonathan Bardill.

Constantine or by the Senate. Earlier imperial victories in civil wars had not been granted monumental commemoration by the Senate, and it has therefore been assumed that the impetus for building the arch marking Maxentius' defeat must have come from Constantine himself.[42] However, construction of the monument may already have been started under Maxentius, who may have wished to commemorate his repulses of Severus and Galerius, and to anticipate victory over Constantine or Licinius.[43] If so, Constantine, or the Senate on Constantine's behalf, took the opportunity to turn the incomplete edifice to new advantage. The extent to which the emperor would have been directly involved in the design of the monument cannot be determined. Even assuming that the Senate took the lead, it is unlikely to have undertaken a construction or composed an inscription of which the emperor might disapprove.[44]

The exact meaning of the words *instinctu divinitatis, mentis magnitudine* (here translated "with inspiration of divinity and greatness of mind") is tantalizing and has been the subject of much scholarly discussion. Whilst considering the possible interpretations, we must resign ourselves to the fact that we will never be certain of the author's intention – indeed, it must be considered likely that ambiguity was deliberate. The phrase *instinctu divinitatis* finds its closest parallels in the panegyrics of 313, in which Constantine is "advised by divine inspiration" (*divino monitus instinctu*), and of 321, in which Constantine is said to manage everything "with divine inspiration" (*divino instinctu*).[45] However, the contexts of these phrases do not provide any clue about the nature of this divine inspiration and hence suggest no clear solution to the meaning of the words on the arch.

The interpretation of *instinctu divinitatis* generally adopted by scholars is that Constantine derived his inspiration from a god (*divinitas*) – a god who happens to be left unnamed.[46] No doubt if asked this is how Eusebius would have explained the inscription, for he tells us how, when on campaign, Constantine would spend a long time praying to God before receiving a revelation, "and then as if moved by a divine inspiration (*theioterai kinētheis empneusei*) he would rush suddenly from the tent, immediately rouse his troops, and urge them not to delay, but to draw their swords at once."[47] It is important to note, however, that Eusebius here employs the word *empneusis*, which is derived from *pneuma* ("spirit"). It corresponds to the Latin word *inspiratio*, which is derived from *spiritus* ("spirit"), rather than to the word *instinctu* (as used on the arch), which certainly indicates inspiration, but which can also carry negative connotations of prompting or goading.[48] Christian writers, it seems, generally preferred to speak of God giving motivation through the spirit rather than through a prompt, since prompting or goading was perceived as something associated with pagan gods or demons.[49] The Christian author Lactantius illustrates the contrast when he writes of "all prophets who act on God's inspiration (*ex dei spiritu*) and . . . all seers who act at the prompting of demons (*instinctu daemonum*)."[50] Here, in addition to the contrast between *spiritu* ("at the inspiration") and *instinctu* ("at the prompting"), we note that Lactantius refers to the Christian God not as *divinitas* (the term used on the arch) but as *deus* (the term Constantine himself favoured in later letters).[51] Thus, the language of the inscription on the arch is unlikely to reflect the preferred choice of words of a Christian author; it presumably represents the preference of the pagan senators who commissioned the monument.

The inscription's use of the word *instinctu*, and its failure to name the divinity (*divinitas*) responsible for driving Constantine on to victory, have been explained by Noel Lenski as a reference to the act of *evocatio* or "calling forth."[52] In this ritual, the besieger of a city would call forth the god or goddess responsible for protecting the city and its people and ask the divinity to abandon that city, cast the people into terror, and join his side in return for a promise of superior veneration. The name of a city's tutelary deity was a closely guarded secret to prevent enemies "evoking" the god. The most famous use of this ritual is reported by Livy in his account of Rome's ten-year siege of the Etruscan city of Veii. Before his ultimately successful capture of the city, the Roman general Camillus is said to have uttered a prayer beginning, "By your leadership, O Pythian Apollo, and goaded by your divinity (*tuoque numine instinctus*), I go forward to destroy the city of Veii, and from it I vow to you a tenth part of the booty."[53]

Figure 147. Sculptured frieze showing Roma (second from left) striding forwards on the bridgehead alongside Constantine (lost) as Maxentius' troops drown in the Tiber. Detail from the south façade of the Arch of Constantine, Rome. Ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

It is therefore possible that the words *instinctu divinitatis* on the arch inscription should be interpreted in the light of Livy's account and taken to mean that Constantine had won his victory over Maxentius by successfully winning over to his side, by means of *evocatio*, the unnamed tutelary deity of Rome, who then spurred him on to victory.

The likelihood of this interpretation is increased by the fact that the author of the Panegyric of 313 describes Constantine's victory over Maxentius in terms of *evocatio*, claiming that the "City's majesty" (*maiestatem illam Vrbis*) had abandoned Maxentius, having been "disgraced by his crimes and driven from its seat."[54] Furthermore, on the Arch of Constantine there is a graphic representation of the goddess Roma switching her allegiance to Constantine at the moment of victory over Maxentius. The frieze showing the tyrant's army drowning in the Tiber depicts the helmeted figure of Roma (and the winged figure of Victory) standing on the bridgehead alongside Constantine (whose image is now lost; Figure 147). Roma therefore stands pointedly on the side of the bridge that is farther from the city that she personifies.

The failure of the inscription to specify the name of the divinity responsible for the victory might therefore be explained on the ground that the name of the tutelary deity of Rome could not be revealed. Yet there are similar instances of such avoidance in contexts other than *evocatio*. For example, no name is given to the Supreme Deity in the letter sent by Licinius to the governors of the eastern provinces explaining the policy on religious freedom to which he had agreed with Constantine in Milan in 313. This letter (often misleadingly called the "Edict of Milan") referred vaguely to a "Supreme Deity" (*summa divinitas*) and to "whatever divinity there is in the seat of heaven" (*quicquid divinitatis in sede caeleste . . . possit existere*).[55] A similar expression is found in the prayer that Licinius' army is said to have recited before his decisive battle with Maximinus on 30 April 313; it referred simply to the Supreme Deity (*deum summum*):

> Supreme God, we pray to you, Holy God, we pray to you. We commend all justice to you. We commend our safety to you. We commend our empire to you. Through you we live, through you we emerge victorious and fortunate. Highest, Holy God, hear our prayers. We lift our arms to you. Hear us, Holy, Highest God.[56]

Although Licinius himself probably believed that the Supreme Deity mentioned here was Jupiter (the traditional protector of the Roman state, who

appeared on Licinius' coins),[57] the wording of this prayer was no doubt acceptable to both pagans and Christians in his ranks,[58] and many of the soldiers probably believed they were praying to the sun-god. A similar monotheistic prayer was given by Constantine to his non-Christian troops, who would recite it whilst Christian soldiers were attending church.[59] Constantine's prayer was possibly composed after 324, given that it is first recorded in the *Life of Constantine*. The God it refers to is unique but is not identified as the Christian God. In contrast to Licinius' prayer, it places greater emphasis on divine protection for the imperial dynasty. Such invocation of a nameless divinity seems to have been routine in the army:[60]

> You alone we know as God,
> You are the King we acknowledge,
> You are the Help we summon.
> By you we have won our victories,
> Through you we have overcome our enemies.
> To you we render thanks for the good things past,
> You also we hope for as giver of those to come.
> To you we all come to supplicate for our Emperor Constantine and for his Godbeloved sons:
> That he may be kept safe and victorious for us in long, long life we plead.

It is possible, therefore, that the *divinitas* of the arch inscription is the Supreme Deity, deliberately left unnamed because there was a general uncertainty about the identity of that god. The inscription may have been composed to allow readers to infer whatever they preferred.[61]

However, there is another possible interpretation of the phrase *instinctu divinitatis*: it might not have been intended to suggest that the emperor received prompting from the heavens, but rather that Constantine was divine or almost divine in his own right and was guided by his own divine insight.[62] Support for such an interpretation comes from a consideration of Constantine's "greatness of mind" (*mentis magnitudine*) mentioned in the inscription alongside the "divine inspiration." To understand this phrase, it is instructive to turn to the Panegyric of 313.

The author of the panegyric ponders the identity of the god that had prompted Constantine to liberate Rome from Maxentius. He initially postulates, "You must share some secret with that divine mind (*cum illa mente divina*), which has delegated care of us to lesser gods and deigns to reveal itself to you alone."[63] Thus, the orator has no shame in claiming, in the emperor's presence, that there is more than one god, although these many gods are inferior to the Divine Mind, with which the emperor is privileged to have a connection – a connection not shared by any other mortal. This Supreme God, although being given the attributes of Jupiter, has no name, and is referred to vaguely as *quisnam deus* ("What god . . . ?"), *divinum numen* ("divine power"), or the like.[64] The orator speculates rhetorically whether this "supreme creator of things" (*summe rerum sator*) might be "some kind of force and divine mind" (*quaedam vis mensque divina*) spread over the whole world.[65] On the basis of this statement, some scholars have, not unreasonably, concluded that the "greatness of the mind" (*mentis magnitudine*) mentioned on the arch must refer to a universal god.[66]

Yet elsewhere in the speech the orator proposes an alternative possible source for Constantine's inspiration when he asks, "Tell us, I beg you, what you had as counsel if not a divine power? Or did this calculation guide you (for each man's own prudence is his god), that in so unequal a contest the better cause could not but win."[67] It is this solution – that the emperor relied on the power of his own prudence – that the orator finally adopts, addressing Constantine thus: "You reckoned by divine inspiration (*divino consilio*), Emperor (that is, by your own [divine inspiration]), not the numbers of soldiers but the merits of the two sides."[68] Thus, the panegyrist perceives Constantine himself to be a deity since divine inspiration resides within in him. The orator adds that the Senate had recently dedicated a statue of the emperor as god (*signum dei*), commenting that such a likeness of his divinity (*divinitati simulacrum*) will often be due.[69] His explanation for Constantine's success recalls the claims of Dio Chrysostom that a king's good or bad fortune depended on his *daimōn*, which was not an external, supernatural force but was constituted by his character.[70]

Claims about the divinity of the emperor's mind are not peculiar to this one orator: we find something similar in the panegyric of 297, in which the orator addresses Constantius and Galerius, saying that they "provide for the well-being of nations . . . with those eyes of your divine minds" (*salutique gentium . . . illis divinarum mentium vestrarum oculis providetis*).[71] Similarly, Lactantius refers to a man's "almost divine mind" (*prope divina mens*), which looks out upon all things.[72] He also comments that "it is impossible that a mind conscious of rectitude should not from time to time look to the heavens,"[73] and speaks of "the mind which, through the eyes, sees those things which are placed opposite to it, as though through windows covered with pellucid crystal or transparent stone; and therefore the mind and inclination are often known from the eyes."[74] The reasoning behind such statements emerges yet more clearly from an assertion of the Jewish author Philo, who explained that it was necessary to lift the eyes of the soul, not those of the body, to perceive God.[75] It is irresistible to combine these opinions and to imagine that the portraits of Constantine gazing towards heaven (in the manner of the divinely inspired Apollo) make an allusion to the concept of his divine mind comprehending and achieving unity with the Supreme Deity.

Therefore, we have two possible interpretations of the inscription on the arch. On the one hand, the implication may be that Constantine was inspired with greatness of mind by a divinity (whether that god was, as the *evocatio* theory requires, the tutelary deity of Rome or, as is equally possible, the Supreme Deity).[76] On the other hand, the inscription could be interpreted to mean that Constantine possessed both the inspiration and the greatness of mind associated with being a god in his own right. The two interpretations are not necessarily mutually exclusive: if Constantine possessed divine insight and a divine mind, he may have acquired them through an intimate relationship with a higher god, much as the good king in philosophical treatises received into his mind the Logos, which was implanted by God, and which, if he chose to follow its guidance, might lead him to divinity. Although the Senate would not have deified a living emperor, the people (like the panegyrists) were free to worship Constantine as a god if they wished, so the ambiguity of the inscription may well have been intentional.

The Sculpture

As we saw in Chapter 2, Sol was prominent on the arch, perhaps because Sol was considered the divinity from whom Constantine took his inspiration. But Sol was not alone among the gods depicted. It is true that no gods other than Sol appear on the newly carved relief sculptures on the arch, there being only depictions of personifications such as Roma, Victory, river-gods, and seasons.[77] However, this is not the case when we consider the carvings that were reused.

Many of the sculptures on the arch were salvaged from monuments dating to the reigns of Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius (Figure 148). The sculptured heads of the earlier emperors shown in all these reliefs were recut to represent Constantine (Figures 81, 149) and another emperor (Figure 150). This second ruler, although sometimes identified as Licinius, is probably Constantius Chlorus, whose depiction on the arch would have emphasized Constantine's dynastic claim to power.[78] There has been much debate about why reused sculptures (*spolia*) were used alongside contemporary – and stylistically different – sculptures on the arch, but it seems likely that the intention was to attribute to Constantine and his father some of the good characteristics of the imperial predecessors whose heads their own had now replaced.[79]

The sculptures of the Trajanic period include sections of frieze attached to either flank of the central passageway and to the east and west ends of the attic storey. Those in the central archway depict Trajan-cum-Constantine on horseback defeating his enemies in battle, portraying him as a victorious hero and the establisher of peace (Figures 93 and 94).[80] To the Hadrianic period belong eight roundels (also called medallions or tondi), four located on either façade of the arch. Among these are two on the north façade and two on the south that show Hadrian-cum-Constantine hunting (Figures 151, 152). Depictions or descriptions of an emperor's success in hunting traditionally expressed his courage and moral strength (*virtus*) and served – like the coins

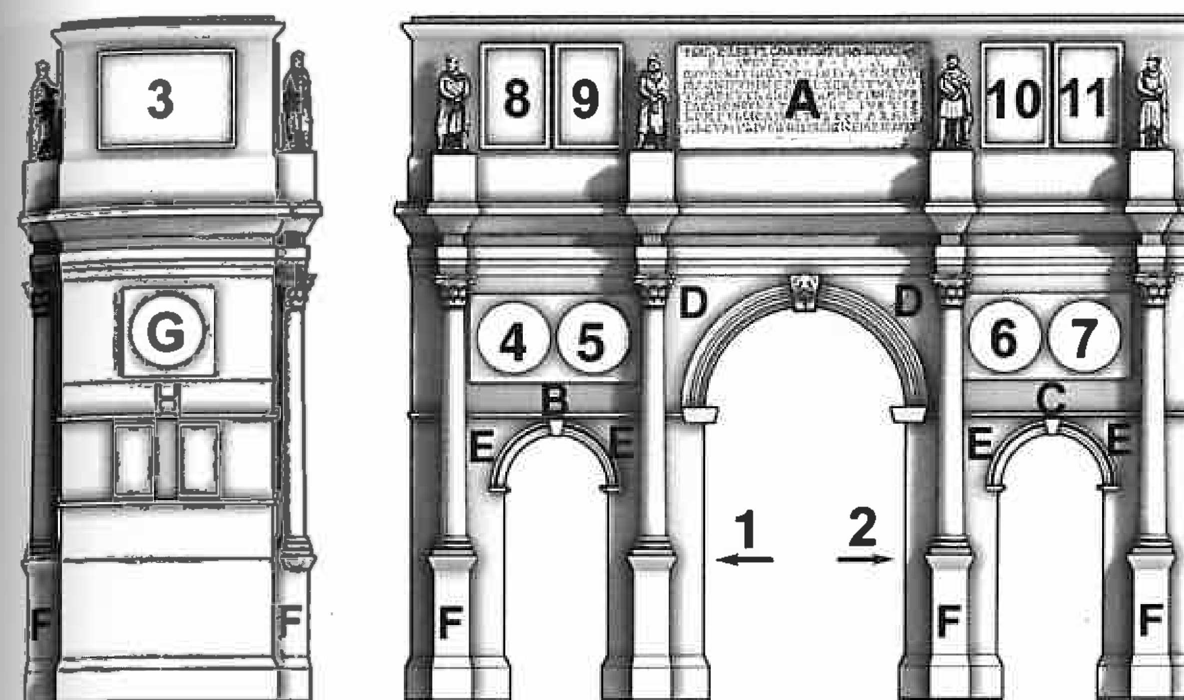
of Constantine showing the serpent pierced by the standard – as an allegory for the victory of good over evil.[81] Finally, the Aurelian sculpture consists of eight rectangular panels placed in pairs on the attic storey over the openings of the side arches. These panels show different imperial activities, each illustrating one of the virtues that equipped Marcus Aurelius-cum-Constantine to rule. Thus, on the south face a scene showing the emperor addressing his troops (*adlocutio*) stressed the harmony between ruler and army (Figure 153), and, on the north face, a panel showing him distributing largesse demonstrated his generosity (*liberalitas*) (Figure 154).[82]

One result of recutting the portraits was that two of the four Hadrianic roundels on the south façade came to show Constantine in the act of sacrificing, in one instance to Diana and in the other to Silvanus (although in both cases it must be admitted that the lost or poorly preserved imperial heads cannot be identified with certainty; Figures 155 and 156).[83] Similarly, in two of the roundels on the north façade, Constantius Chlorus (if he has been identified correctly) appears sacrificing to Apollo and Hercules (Figures 157 and 158).[84] In addition, on the south side of the attic, a rectangular relief originally portraying Marcus Aurelius shows Constantine presiding over the sacrifice of a bull, a pig, and a sheep (*suovetaurilia*) on the battlefield to purify the army (Figure 159).[85]

The representation of Constantius making a sacrifice to Hercules should be seen in the context of his belonging to the Herculian dynasty of the Tetrarchy. The roundel showing his sacrifice to Apollo certainly portrays him as an adherent of traditional religion, but does not constitute conclusive evidence that he was a henotheist who believed the Supreme Deity to have a solar nature.

Eusebius suggests that Constantine did not partake in any sacrificial rite during the celebrations that took place at the time of the arch's dedication.[86] Partial support for Eusebius' claim may come from the fact that Constantine is not shown on the arch making a sacrifice to Jupiter Optimus Maximus at the god's temple on the Capitoline, the usual climax of a triumphal celebration. The omission seems more striking when it is recognized that the full series of Aurelian panels, of which eight were selected for reuse on the arch's attic storey, included one showing Marcus Aurelius making such a sacrifice on the Capitol – but this particular panel was not used on the arch, despite the fact that the imperial head could easily have been reworked to show Constantine performing the rite.[87] One possible explanation for the decision to omit this scene is that the victory over Maxentius was a victory in a civil war and so would not have been marked by a formal triumph and sacrifice.[88] If so, the absence from the arch of a depiction of the emperor sacrificing at the Capitol may have nothing to do with Constantine's attitude toward traditional religion. At any rate, it seems unlikely that the designers of the arch deliberately omitted this panel to avoid connecting Constantine with traditional religion, since they chose to include the roundels showing the emperor sacrificing to Diana and Silvanus and overseeing the *suovetaurilia*. It might be argued that the poorly preserved heads on the roundels showing sacrifices being made to Diana and Silvanus did not in fact represent Constantine.[89] If so, all four roundels depicting sacrificial scenes showed either Constantius or Licinius, and Constantine appeared only on the four remaining roundels, which show secular scenes of animal hunting. This suggestion may seem attractive because, as far as the roundels are concerned, it would leave Constantine's religious inclination indeterminate. However, the issue is not so straightforward, since there remain other sculptures that challenge this solution: the scene showing Constantine participating in the *suovetaurilia* on the attic, and the sculptures connecting Constantine with Sol.

Despite uncertainties regarding the interpretation of the roundels, the sculpture on the arch publicly suggests that the emperor was a polytheist and that he owed his victory over Maxentius specifically to his devotion to a solar god. What this tells us about Constantine's personal beliefs is uncertain, since we do not know the extent of imperial input into this building project. But even if we imagine that the pagan Senators who commissioned the arch were largely responsible for its decoration, it seems likely that the imperial stamp of approval would have been sought, at least in general terms, regarding the decoration of such a major public monument. The presence of the sacrificial scenes alongside the solar



Key

Reused sculpture (spolia)

1-3 Trajanic frieze

4-7 Hadrianic roundels

- 4 Boar hunt (North); Departure for the hunt (South)
- 5 Sacrifice to Apollo (North); Sacrifice to Silvanus (South)
- 6 Lion hunt (North); Bear hunt (South)
- 7 Sacrifice to Hercules (North); Sacrifice to Diana (South)

8-11 Aurelian panels

- 8 Arrival of the emperor (North); Presentation of barbarian chieftain (South)
- 9 Departure of the emperor (North); Barbarian prisoners (South)
- 10 Imperial generosity (North); Imperial address to troops (South)
- 11 Submission of the defeated (North); Sacrifice (South)

Constantinian sculpture

- A Dedicatory inscription
- B Constantine's address in the Forum (North); Siege of Verona (South)
- C Distribution of largesse (North); Battle of Milvian Bridge (South)
- D Victory
- E River gods
- F Victories and captives
- G Sol (East); Luna (West)
- H Entry into Rome (East); Departure from Milan (West)

Figure 148. Diagram of the Arch of Constantine to show the positions and dates of the various sculptured elements. A. Tayfun Öner.

Figure 149. Head of Constantine. Attic panel of *profectio*. Arch of Constantine, Rome. Aurelian, reworked ca. A.D. 315. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome (Sansaini, neg. D-DAI-ROM-56.912).

references is highly significant and may suggest either a pagan Senate erring on the side of tradition because of uncertainty about its new emperor's beliefs or a new emperor indicating his devotion to a supreme solar deity without denying the existence of a multitude of traditional gods.[90]

Constantine's Churches

For two-and-a-half centuries before Constantine, Christians had been meeting and worshipping in ordinary houses.[91] However, once Christian persecution ceased and the Church began to enjoy the benefits of imperial generosity, the number of converts increased, and larger places of worship, worthy of the dignity of an officially recognized religion, were required. The design of the Roman assembly hall (termed in Latin a *basilica*, from the Greek *basilikē*)[92] was particularly appropriate to the Church's purpose, being an official building type of a suitable scale and grandeur, untainted by pagan religious associations.[93] Such basilicas had been built for a variety of uses. The public ones were used as meeting places for conducting business of many kinds and for hearing legal cases. Private residences had large reception rooms, perhaps also known as basilicas, among which may be counted the palatial audience chambers of the emperors.

By Constantine's day meeting halls were generally large, rectangular chambers with an apse in one of the shorter sides and an entrance at the opposite end, the whole being covered by a double-pitched wooden roof. A well-known palatial example, which can be seen today, although in a much restored state,

Figure 150. Head of Constantius Chlorus. Roundel showing a sacrifice to Apollo. Arch of Constantine, Rome. Hadrianic, reworked ca. A.D. 315. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome (Neg. D-DAI-ROM-2007.0028).

is the Constantinian audience hall at Trier (Augusta Treverorum) in Germany (Figure 160). The main chamber, which was entered through a transverse porch or narthex, measures 29 m by 58 m and terminates in a semicircular apse, where the emperor would have sat. The impression of scale was increased by a number of optical tricks that exaggerated the depth of the apse: the ceiling of the apse was placed at a lower level than the ceiling of the nave, the sills of the windows on the upper level in the apse were set about 1.2 m lower than those in the walls of the nave, and the width and height of the windows in the apse were reduced in comparison with those in the nave.[94] The design of such audience chambers was still undergoing development in the Constantinian period, as demonstrated by the public Basilica of Maxentius in the Roman Forum (Figures 67, 132, and 133). This was innovatively designed, having not only two apses – one on the long and one on the short axis of the building – but also a three-bay plan, as opposed to a simple, open nave. The plan recalled that of the cold-room (*frigidarium*) of an imperial bath complex, and the piers between the bays supported not a standard trussed roof of wood but an impressively high cross-vaulted roof of brick.[95]

For Christian churches, however, an older type of basilica – the aisled basilica – was revived. In this type, the roofed space was divided into nave and flanking aisles by linear colonnades, and in some cases the aisles were of two storeys. Modest examples of this type of basilica were still being built in a few places even in the fourth century, but it is most likely that Constantine's architects were looking back to the aisled designs either of the grand old judiciary

Figure 151. Constantine on horseback during a boar hunt. Roundel, north façade, Arch of Constantine, Rome. Hadrianic, reworked ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

Figure 152. Constantine after a successful lion hunt. Roundel, north façade, Arch of Constantine, Rome. Hadrianic, reworked ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

basilicas or of an early style of private audience chamber. Amongst the old public courts that may have provided inspiration were the Basilica Julia (12 B.C.–A.D. 12) and the Basilica Ulpia (inaugurated in A.D. 112) in Rome, and the Severan Basilica in Leptis Magna in Roman North Africa (dedicated in A.D. 216).[96] The Basilica Ulpia, which was still standing and much admired in Constantine's day, was constructed by Trajan on the western flank of his forum (Figure 161). It consisted of a large, rectangular central nave measuring 88 m by 25 m, surrounded on all four sides by two continuous colonnades, creating a double ambulatory. These colonnades were repeated at gallery level, with a clerestory above so that the nave ceiling was raised almost 25 m above the pavement. At each of the two short ends of the structure, screened from the nave by the colonnades, was a semicircular apse, which was to be echoed in Christian basilicas. The choice of this nostalgic aisled basilica design for the new Christian places of worship set them apart from the vast majority of secular basilicas of the day.

A number of reasons can be put forward for the choice of the basilical form for Christian churches.[97] The first is connected with the Biblical representation of God and Christ as kings and judges. In the Psalms of Solomon it was declared that the Lord is "our King, now and for ever," and that God would raise up the son of David as a righteous king to crush the enemies of the Israelites and purge Jerusalem.[98] In the New Testament, Jesus, who was recognized as the messiah by Peter, announced that He had brought the Kingdom of God to earth. He was put to death on a cross bearing the inscription "This is Jesus the king of the Jews."[99] The scriptures also predicted that when Christ made His Second Coming, He would be seated on the throne of His glory, which served not only as a royal throne but also as a seat of judgement.[100] These Biblical ideas of the Divinity as a royal arbitrator were reflected in the writings of the Christian faithful. Lactantius, for instance, described God as the "emperor of all," and Eusebius referred to Christ as the "great emperor," "all-imperial," and "the emperor of the universe."[101] Thus, churches were not only meeting halls for worship and funeral services but also audience chambers for the supreme king and judge. Consequently, it was completely appropriate that they should be built according to a royal design, such as the imperial throne-room (in which the emperor, seated in the apse, received the obeisance of his subjects) or a judicial design, such as the law court (in which the magistrate performed his duties in the presence of an effigy of the emperor).[102] Eusebius could apply to these new Christian buildings terms such as *basileios neōs* ("imperial temple") or *basileios oikos* ("imperial house"), thereby indicating their function as throne-rooms for the King of Heaven.[103] Similarly, in 333, the Bordeaux pilgrim could describe Constantine's church on Golgotha as "a basilica" and then explain the term by adding,

Figure 153. Constantine addresses his troops. Attic panel, south façade, Arch of Constantine, Rome. Aurelian, reworked ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

"that is, a house of the Lord" (*basilica . . . , id est dominicum*).[104]

It was not only its royal and judicial connections that made the basilical form suitable for the Christian God. Because of the Late Antique emperor's proximity to the gods, the imperial audience chamber, and particularly the apse in which the emperor sat, is likely to have acquired divine associations. Maxentius' alterations to the temple of Venus and Roma, which were made after the fire of 307, support this suggestion, since he added an apse to each sanctuary (*cella*), presumably with the intention that each apse should house the statue of a goddess.[105] The use of the apse as a fitting architectural setting for both the emperor and the pagan gods is likely to explain its subsequent adoption for the Christian God. Thus, when the basilical design was adopted as the model for Christian meeting places, the apse that had formerly served to frame the earthly ruler, his statue, his legal representative, or a statue of a pagan divinity became the focal point for worship of the Christian God as the divine emperor of heaven.

A further reason for choosing the basilica was the speed with which it could be constructed and the relatively low cost of the basic structure. A timber roof was cheap in areas where wood was not scarce, and it was possible to cover a nave of any length simply by increasing the number of columns in the arcades.[106] Furthermore, the width could be increased by adding an extra pair of aisles so that some basilicas (often known as "five-aisled basilicas") had a nave with two aisles on either side, examples from the Constantinian period being the Lateran, the Nativity Church, and the Golgotha basilica, which all belong to the reign of

Figure 154. Constantine distributes money. Attic panel, north façade, Arch of Constantine, Rome. Aurelian, reworked ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

Constantine himself, and St. Peter's, which belongs to the reign of his son Constans. Greater expense might come with the adornment of the basic shell, such as covering the walls with marble revetment, or gilding the coffered wooden ceiling. This expenditure could be adjusted according to the available funds.

By 313, the right of the Church and individuals to reclaim confiscated property had been extended throughout the empire,[107] but Constantine did more than just make reparations. He funded the construction of a number of new churches for the Christian community. The largest concentrations (which will be discussed shortly) were in Rome and (after 324) in Constantinople and Jerusalem. However, a number of foundations outside these centres should also be noted.

Relatively early in Constantine's reign, we hear of the dedication of a cathedral in Tyre (modern Sour in Lebanon) by the local Bishop Paulinus in 315,[108] and of the construction of a double basilica of the Apostles at Aquileia by Bishop Theodore before 319.[109] In neither case, however, is the extent of Constantine's involvement in the project clear. The triumph over Licinius in 324, which resulted in Constantine becoming the master of the Roman world, was followed by a general surge in church construction. After the victory, Constantine wrote to those in charge of churches in all the provinces telling them that they should request from the governor and the prefect all the supplies necessary for restoring, enlarging, or rebuilding the churches. His letter on this subject reveals the reason for his desire to see the churches restored: Constantine believed it

Figure 155. Constantine sacrificing to Diana. Roundel, south façade, Arch of Constantine, Rome. Hadrianic, reworked ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

Figure 156. Constantine sacrificing to Silvanus. Roundel, south façade, Arch of Constantine, Rome. Hadrianic, reworked ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

Figure 157. Constantius Chlorus sacrificing to Apollo. Roundel, north façade, Arch of Constantine, Rome. Hadrianic, reworked ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

Figure 158. Constantius Chlorus sacrificing to Hercules. Roundel, north façade, Arch of Constantine, Rome. Hadrianic, reworked ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

had been the Christian God who brought about the destruction of Licinius.[110] At Nicomedia in Bithynia (modern İzmit in Turkey), the emperor ordered a basilica to be built at his own expense as "a monument of victory over his enemies and the foes of God." In addition, a magnificent octagonal church was built at Antioch in Syria (modern Antakya in Turkey) next to the imperial palace on an island in the Orontes River. This was completed in 341 under Constantius II.[111] Also in this period, a double basilica was built at the edge of the city of Augusta Treverorum (modern Trier in Germany), apparently on the site of palatial rooms and possibly with imperial funding.[112] A church was built in Constantina in Numidia (modern Cirta in Algeria), but this was later overtaken by Donatists, necessitating that the emperor give orders to build a new basilica.[113] As part of Constantine's crackdown on some of the more infamous pagan cult centres, a "very large church building for worship" was erected near the shrine of Aphrodite at Heliopolis in Phoenicia (modern Baalbek in Lebanon), which had become a haven for prostitutes.[114] Other than these scattered foundations, the known Constantinian churches were mainly located in major cities and pilgrimage centres. To these we now turn our attention.

Rome

It was only shortly after his victory at the Milvian Bridge in 312 that the emperor showed great favour towards the Christians of Rome by building the Basilica Constantiniana (now San Giovanni in Laterano) on the Caelian Hill, on property that had once been in the possession of the Laterani family.[115] This was a huge five-aisled basilica measuring 55 m wide and 95 m long (including the sanctuary), and it is estimated that it would have held a congregation of several thousand and a clergy of two hundred or more (Figure 162). On either side of the nave was a colonnade of nineteen huge red (probably granite) columns supporting an architrave. The walls above the colonnades were pierced by large windows to light the nave. Dividing each pair of aisles was a colonnade of twenty-one columns of green, speckled marble on high pedestals. The wall above both aisle colonnades contained a series of small, semicircular windows that allowed light into the inner aisles. The outer aisles were illuminated by much larger windows in the exterior walls. Although the inner aisles extended the full length of the nave, the outer were cut short by low, projecting wings that may have been repositories for offerings. At the west

Figure 159. Constantine sacrificing a bull, pig, and sheep. Attic panel, south façade, Arch of Constantine, Rome. Aurelian, reworked ca. A.D. 315. © William Storage.

end of the edifice was a towering apse crowned by a semidome.

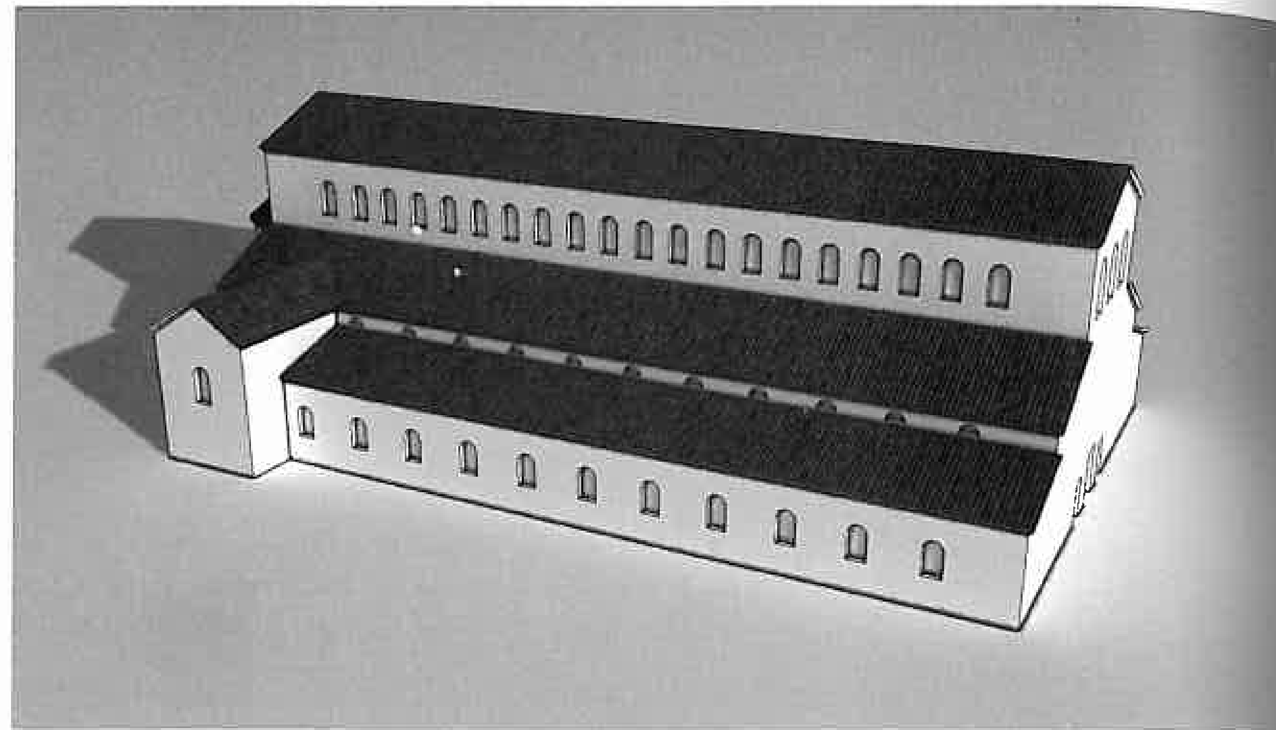
Many of the columns and other architectural elements are likely to have been reused rather than quarried specially for the project.[116] Such reuse of building materials, although known in earlier monuments, became commonplace under Constantine. Other excellent illustrations of this practice are the Arch of Constantine, perhaps begun by Maxentius, and the Basilica of St. Peter, which was built by Constans. Precise reasons for reuse are uncertain, but even if the practice is partly indicative of pragmatism or even necessity, clearly the extensive assemblage of rich and rare materials also expressed the extent of imperial power.[117]

The *Liber Pontificalis* records that the imperial lands with which the new Basilica Constantiniana and its baptistery were endowed, and from which they would receive necessary revenue, were located almost exclusively in Italy and Africa – the very territories recovered from Maxentius in 312. This almost certainly indicates that the church was built before the eastern territories were won from Licinius in 324, and may mean that it was constructed as a victory monument soon after the battle at the Milvian Bridge.[118]

A distinction may be drawn between congregational basilicas such as the Lateran and the martyria Constantine built. These were erected beside a martyr's grave or near a site hallowed by the presence of the Apostles. The martyria can be broadly divided into two types. In the first, the holy spot, surmounted by an altar, remained outside the basilica. The basilica itself was huge – between 80 and 100 m

Figure 160. Reconstruction of the interior of the imperial audience hall (basilica) at Trier. A. Tayfun Öner.

Figure 161. Reconstruction of the interior of the Basilica Ulpia in Trajan's Forum, Rome. A. Tayfun Öner.



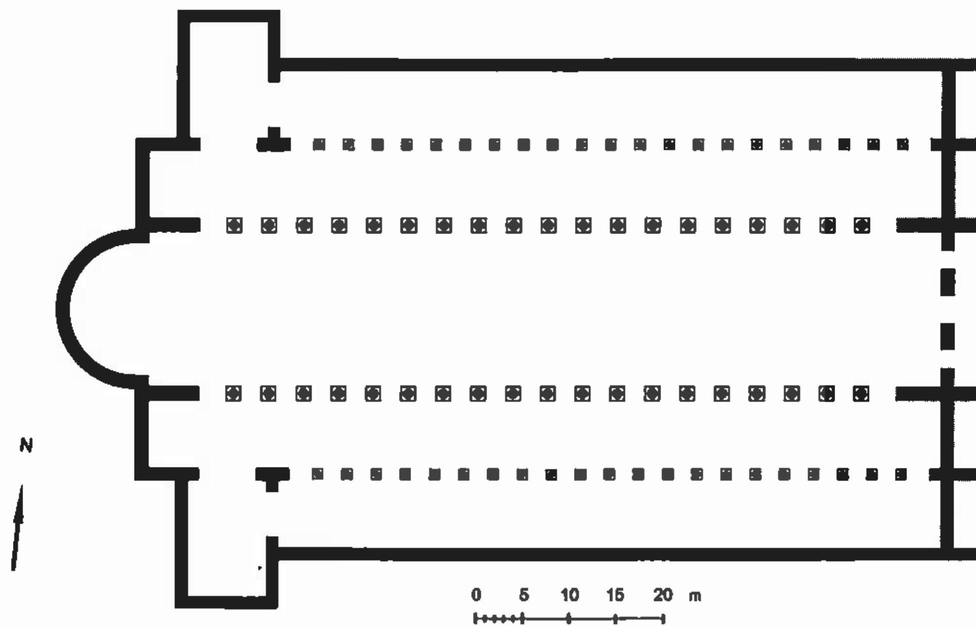
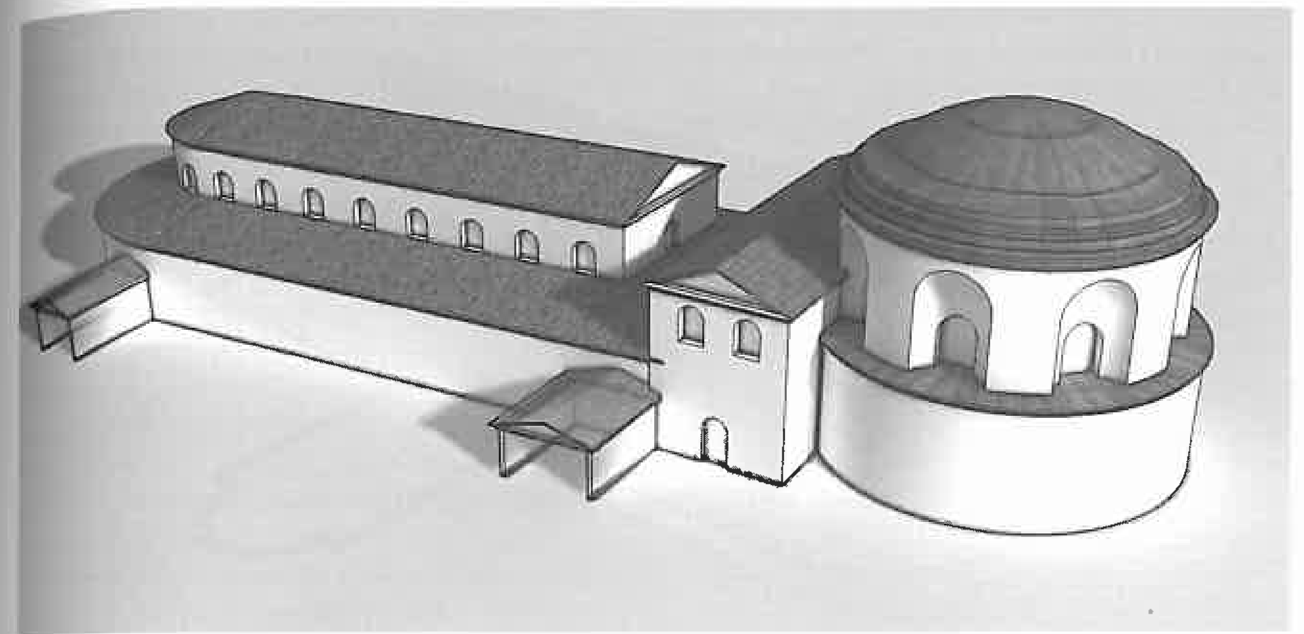


Figure 162. Basilica of St. John in the Lateran. Plan and 3-D reconstruction. A. Tayfun Öner.

long – and the nave was flanked by single aisles, which were in fact parts of a continuous ambulatory with a hairpin turn that followed the curve of the apse, hence the name "ambulatory basilica."[119] The arcades on either side of the nave (which might be built of either piers or columns) supported the walls of a clerestory, and the whole was roofed in wood. These basilicas served as burial places for the many Christians who wished to be laid to rest near the martyr's grave and as venues for the funeral banquet and Mass on the following morning. Less wealthy individuals were buried under the floor of the church



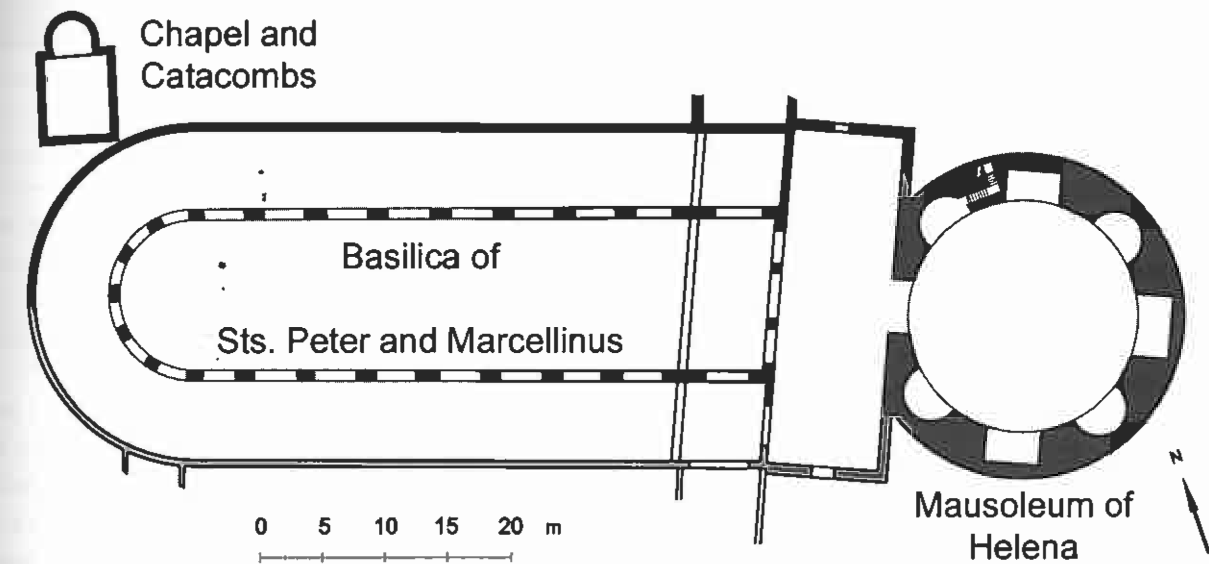
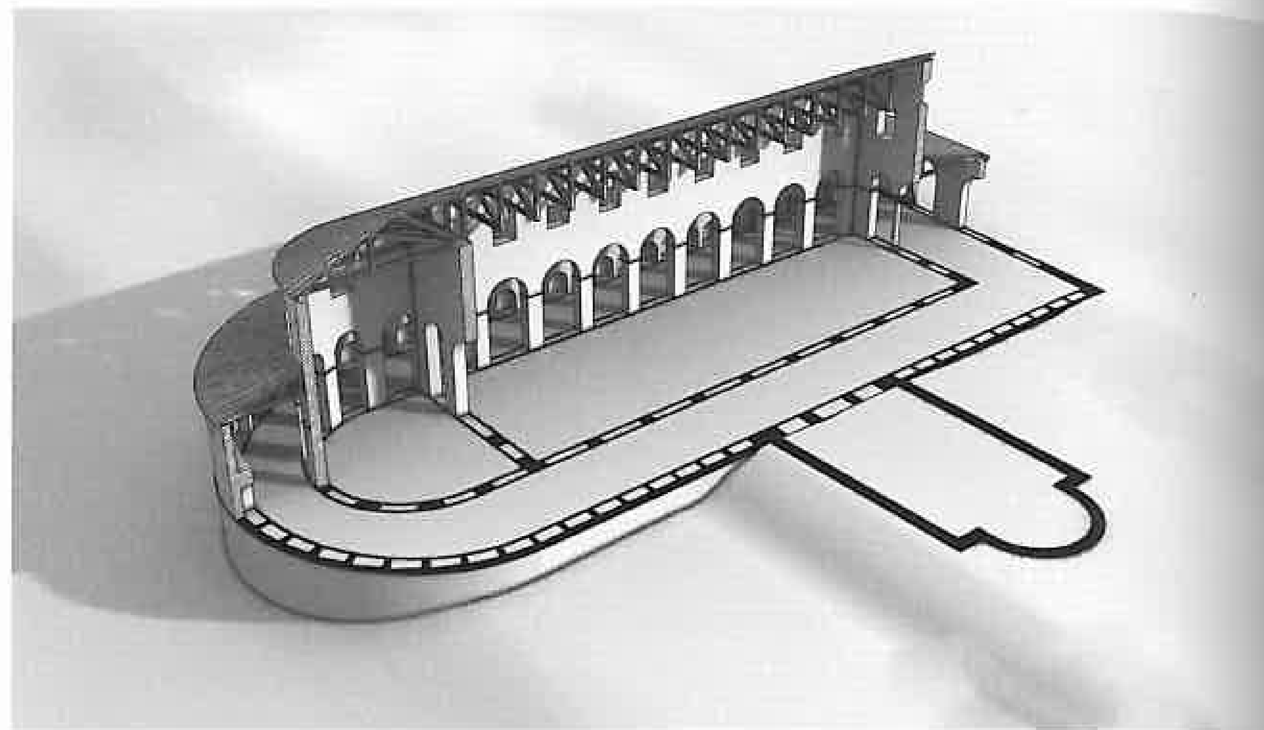


Figure 163. Basilica of Sts. Marcellinus and Peter with the Mausoleum of Helena. Plan and 3-D reconstruction. A. Tayfun Öner.

itself so that the nave was turned into a cemetery from wall to wall. The well-to-do, by contrast, might construct their own private mausolea beside the church.

Several examples of such basilicas may be mentioned. One was located on the Via Labicana, on a large estate owned by Helena, Constantine's mother. It was built beside the tombs of Sts. Marcellinus and Peter and was dedicated to those saints (indeed, it is still today Santi Marcellino e Pietro) (Figure 163). Its curved end was orientated towards the west, whereas towards the east end was a rectangular hall to which was attached Helena's mausoleum. This tomb was a domed rotunda (now known as the Tor Pignattara),



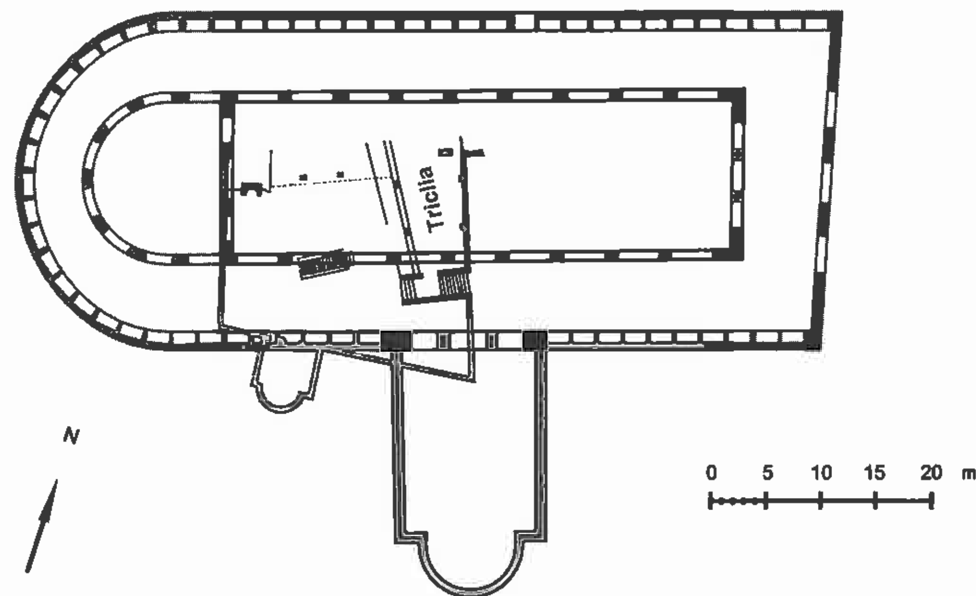


Figure 164. Basilica of the Apostles (now San Sebastiano). Plan and cut-away 3-D reconstruction. A. Tayfun Öner.

where, it is sometimes suggested, Constantine originally intended his own body to be laid to rest.[120] The church and mausoleum may have been planned and built as a whole, and an indication of the date of construction is provided by the information that the mausoleum was decorated around 324–326.[121]

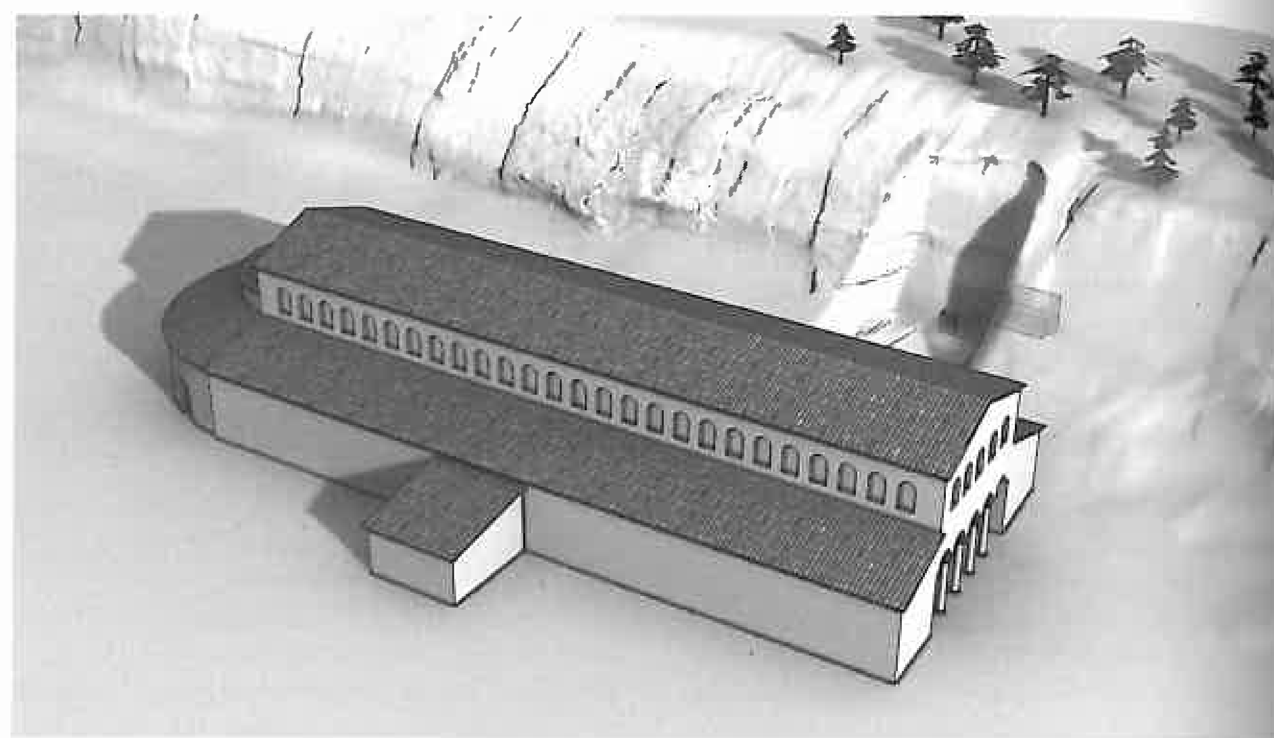
To take another example, a Basilica of the Apostles (now San Sebastiano) was built on the Via Appia, opposite Maxentius' complex of villa, circus, and mausoleum (Figure 164).[122] It was constructed above a group of third-century structures consisting of a courtyard having on its east side a modest portico

(referred to in academic literature as the *triclia*). This portico, which had a lean-to roof and a bench against its back wall, seems to have served as a banqueting hall to host feasts in honour of the Apostles Peter and Paul, since numerous graffiti asking for aid from the Apostles were found scratched into the frescoes on its rear wall. Literary evidence gives reason to believe that relics venerated as those of Saints Peter and Paul were on the site until 251, when they were relocated by Pope Cornelius – the remains of St. Paul to the Via Ostiensis and the remains of St. Peter to the Vatican necropolis. However, new cults of Saints Peter and Paul were inaugurated on the Via Appia site in 258.[123] The plan of the ambulatory basilica that was later built above the *triclia* shows that the nave was divided from the aisles by masonry piers, and that the inner face of the outer wall of the basilica was lined with many niches. These niches housed tombs arranged in tiers, three above the present floor level and up to five below. The aisles and nave were also packed with burials, and the site should be imagined as a covered burial ground. The basilica is not mentioned in the list of Constantine's church foundations in the *Liber Pontificalis*, but an inscription indicates that the foundations were laid under Bishop Silvester (therefore between 31 January 314 and 31 December 335, while Constantine was alive) and that Constans fulfilled the intentions of his father.[124]

The Basilica of St. Laurence on the Via Tiburtina (San Lorenzo fuori le mura), which was built beside the grave of the saint, is of uncertain date.[125] The structure, which covered a large graveyard, was 35.5 m wide and about 98.6 m long (Figure 165). Its design was that of a typical ambulatory basilica, the nave and aisles in this case being divided not by piers but by columns of which fragments have been excavated. It is estimated that the columns stood between 3.0 and 3.4 m apart.

Another ambulatory basilica was located on the Via Nomentana. At the request of his daughter Constantina, Constantine built a baptistery and adjoining church of St. Agnes (today Sant'Agnese fuori le mura) to the west of the catacombs in which St. Agnes was buried. The basilica measured about 98 m in length and 40 m in width and was preceded by an atrium (Figure 166). The date of the complex is again uncertain, but there can be no doubt that the church (and presumably the baptistery) was built some years before Constantina's splendid mausoleum (today Santa Costanza) was constructed at the eastern end of the southern flank of the basilica. This mausoleum, which was built on a circular plan, is demonstrably later than the basilica since it was built over a small structure (tentatively restored as a triconch) that was integral to and contemporary with the church. The function of the destroyed structure is uncertain, but it is possible that it was Constantina's original mausoleum. If Constantine built the basilica and the original tomb before 335, it is possible that Constantina decided to substitute the grander mausoleum in the period between 335 and her departure for Antioch in 351. However, later dates for the rotunda have also been suggested.[126]

In the second type of martyrium, the martyr's tomb merged with the basilica itself. The basilica served exactly the same purposes as already described, but the martyr's grave was incorporated into the structure and was therefore accessible to the crowds, allowing space for services to be conducted beside it. Two important examples of this type of martyrium are the Golgotha complex in Jerusalem, which is to be discussed shortly, and the basilica of St. Peter in Rome, which was built by Constans between 337 and 350, rather than by Constantine, as our sources claim.[127] The latter church was a magnificent five-aisled building, its transept built above St. Peter's grave in the cemetery of the *ager Vaticanus* (Figure 167).[128] The basilica measured 119.6 m long externally from façade to apse, the nave being 90.95 m by 63.42 m internally, and the transept being 20.12 m wide by 90.95 m long externally. The four colonnades flanking the nave and dividing the aisles were each built of twenty-two columns; these were of many different types of reused marble, and they supported an entablature that was also constructed of *spolia*.[129] The transept cut across the basilica in front of the apse, and at its centre was the shrine of the Apostle, which was protected by a railing and adorned with a canopy supported by four spiral columns. It has been suggested that the rectangular plan of the transept preserves the shape of a building that originally stood alone over the shrine, and that the nave was later added to this structure in two stages, the inner aisles belonging to the earlier stage,



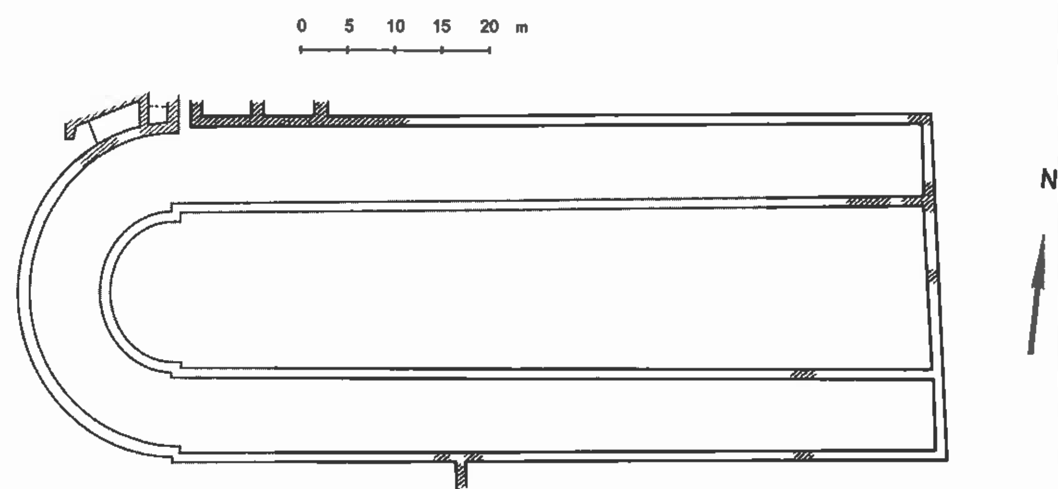
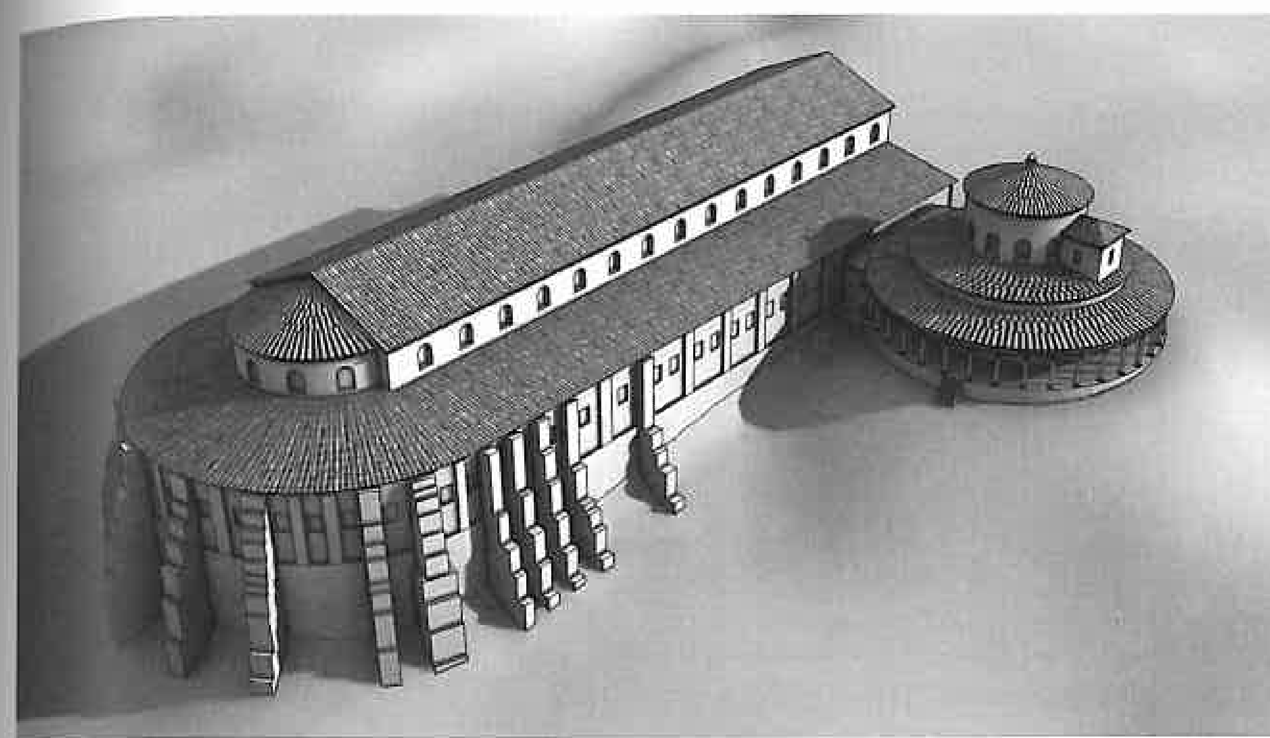


Figure 165. Basilica of St. Laurence. Plan and 3-D reconstruction. A. Tayfun Öner.

the outer being added later.[130] How much or little time might have separated these phases of building is impossible to determine.

The great size of the basilica was necessitated by its functions as both a place of worship and a major pilgrimage site. Many desired to be buried near the Apostle's memorial, and when the floors of the church were excavated in the sixteenth century, they were found to be full of graves, some dating to the fourth century. Wealthier families were buried in specially constructed mausolea. One of these had been built ca. 200 beside the obelisk of Nero's circus. It continued to stand when the basilica was built to the north and later became the chapel of Sant'Andrea. Another mausoleum was attached to the south end of the transept of St. Peter's around



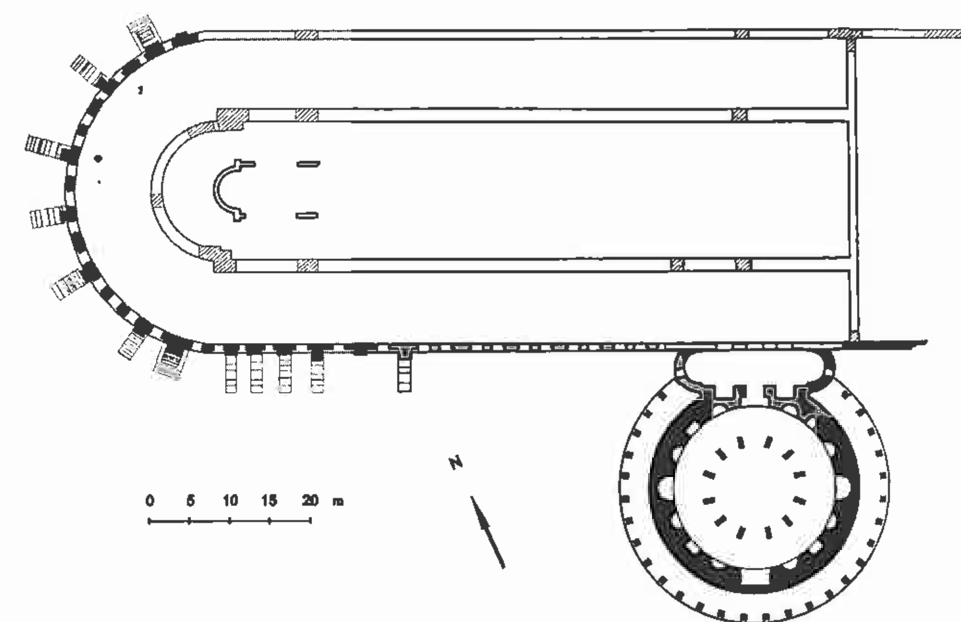
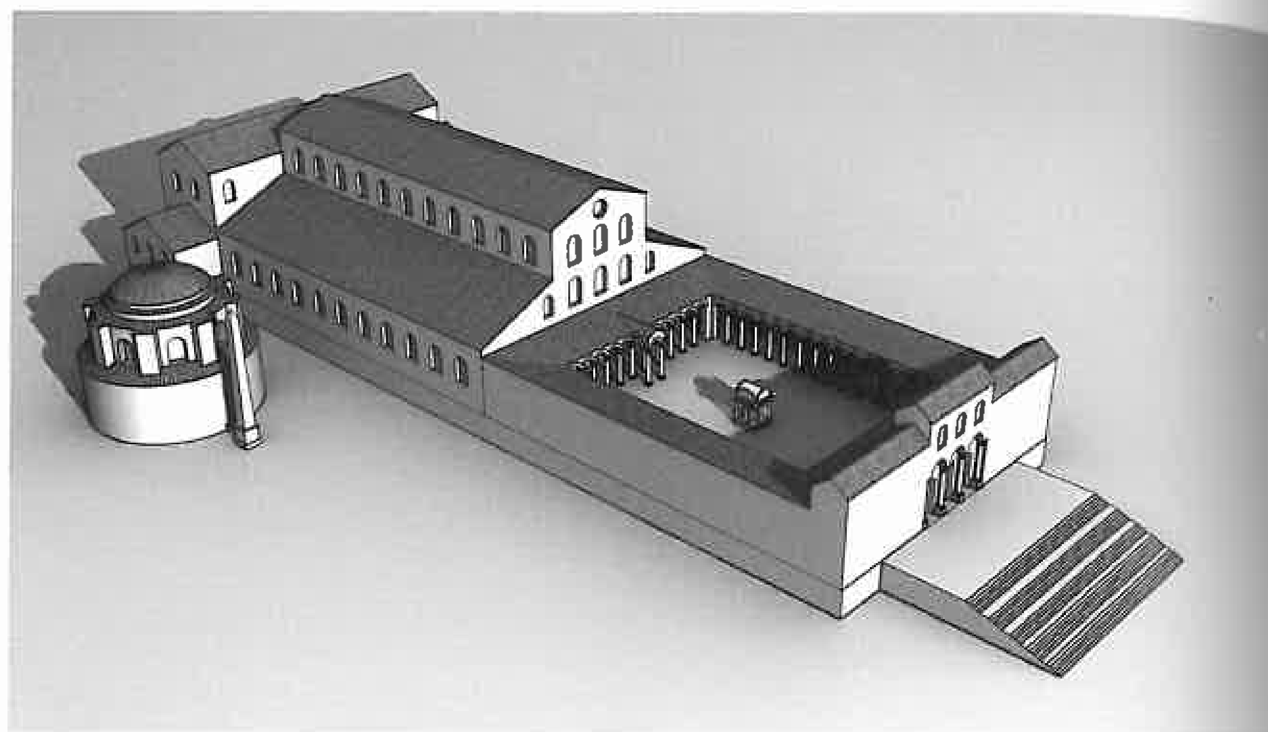


Figure 166. Basilica of St. Agnes and mausoleum of Constantina. Plan and 3-D reconstruction. A. Tayfun Öner.

400–415, later becoming Santa Petronilla. Within this second mausoleum, a number of wealthy, presumably imperial burials were discovered in 1458 and 1519. The year 1544 saw the discovery of the sarcophagus of Maria, wife of the emperor Honorius, which was made of Egyptian red granite and filled with precious objects.[131] The mausoleum can therefore be considered the Western counterpart of that attached to the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.[132]



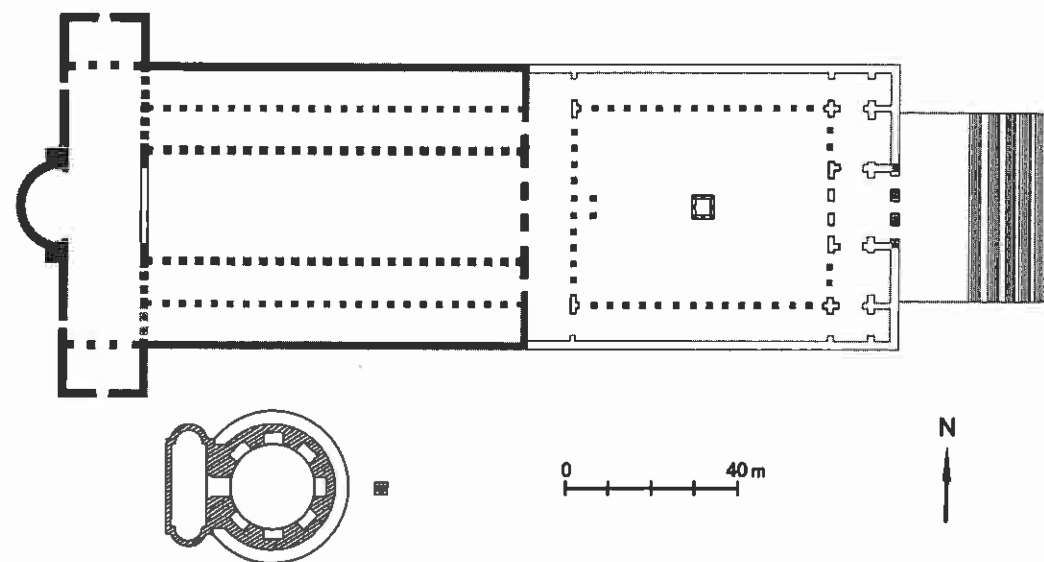


Figure 167. Basilica of St. Peter. Plan and 3-D reconstruction. A. Tayfun Öner.

Alongside St. Peter's must be mentioned the basilica of another Roman martyr, St. Paul, although nothing survives of the original church built in his honour. Like other martyrs' shrines it stood outside the city, in this case on the Via Ostiensis, where the relics of St. Paul had probably been relocated from the Via Appia by Pope Cornelius in 251. We know only that the church was of modest dimensions until, when imperial funds were granted in the late fourth century, it was replaced by a massive five-aisled basilica. In all likelihood the original, small church was the work of Constantine.[133]

Not all Constantinian Christian foundations can easily be categorized – which is a reminder that such categories, although often helpful, are the artificial invention of modern architectural historians. Chapels within palaces did not need to serve large congregations and so could be built on a smaller scale. For instance, a hall that had been built at the end of the second or the beginning of the third century in the Sessorian Palace was converted in the fourth century into a chapel by adding an apse and by being divided cross-ways into three bays (Figure 168). In addition, it was endowed with a relic of the True Cross, and is still today called Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. But although the *Liber Pontificalis* ascribes this alteration of the structure to Constantine, it is possible that the information is faulty. In fact, the conversion may have been undertaken by Helena (who probably owned the plot from 312 until her death) or more likely by one of Constantine's sons after his death.[134]

All of Constantine's Christian foundations in central Rome were located on imperially owned property rather than in public places (Figure 169). The Lateran was built on the site of the cavalry barracks of the *Equites Singulares*, which had become imperial property following Constantine's victory of 312; Sts. Marcellinus and Peter was constructed on the estate *ad duas lauros*, which belonged to Helena, and which incorporated the graveyard of the *Equites Singulares*; the chapel later known as Santa Croce was established in the Sessorian Palace, a villa that had been imperial property from the end of the second century onwards and that may have been expanded by Maxentius;[135] St. Peter's was laid out in the gardens of Nero; San Sebastiano is thought to have been constructed on an estate left to the *res privata* by Herodes Atticus; San Lorenzo was built on the *ager Veranus*, which was imperial land named after the Emperor Lucius Verus (161–169); and St. Agnes was located on the grounds of the villa of Constantina, Constantine's daughter. Of these churches, the majority were funerary in character, being built beside or over the grave of a Christian martyr. Of necessity, therefore, they were built outside the walls of the city.

Yet the Lateran, which was not associated with a martyr's grave, was nevertheless built at the very southeastern limit of the city, just within the walls. Some have seen this as surprising, claiming that other more central building sites might have been used. The emperor might, I suppose, have considered converting the vast and impressive Basilica of Maxentius for Christian use. However, the peripheral location of the Lateran is not unprecedented; it recalls the positioning of the sanctuaries of other new, officially sponsored cults, such as Aurelian's temple of Sol, located north of the *campus Agrippae*.[136] The location might be explained on the grounds that the centre of Rome was already so crowded with monuments that a more peripheral location had to be sought.[137] That may be true, but had Constantine been radical he could have converted the temples in the centre of Rome into churches, or he could have demolished them to make space for Christian places of worship. That he did not do. Nor did Constantine replace the festivals and holidays associated with the traditional cults (which occupied some 177 days of the year) with Christian ones. In fact, even by 354, Christian celebrations were not considered of sufficient public significance to be entered in a civic calendar.[138]

Until the reign of Constantine, Christians worshipping in the city had done so inconspicuously in private houses.[139] For Constantine to have broken with tradition by suddenly building prominent monumental churches in the city-centre might have been considered provocative by the pagan majority. Thus, there may be some truth in the claim that the emperor was wary of building Christian churches on public land in the heart of the city, close to the long-established pagan temples. If that is indeed a correct deduction, it would seem that the building and positioning of the new churches reflects Constantine's desire to show firm support for Christians, helping to restore the status of the Church after the persecution whilst at the same time avoiding disapproval from the pagan majority in Rome.[140] Constantine's actions, it would seem, were in the spirit of the policy agreed with Licinius in Milan in 313, working towards a harmonious coexistence of pagans and Christians.

Others have argued that the choice of location for the Lateran was determined by Constantine's desire to exploit the symbolic power of the spot. By building a Christian church over the barracks of the vanquished *Equites Singulares*, he could emphasize

that it had been the Christian God who had ensured the victory over Maxentius.[141] This view and the former are not, however, mutually exclusive: Constantine may have been looking for a peripheral site, and the barracks may have attracted him because of the symbolism that a Christian building would have in that spot.

Constantine could have built a temple to any god to commemorate his triumph, but he chose to erect a Christian church. Thus, the building may not merely have been a generous attempt to restore the status of the Church following the persecutions; rather, it may be that Constantine attributed his victory at the Milvian Bridge to the Christian God.[142] While that is indeed possible, we must consider more nuanced interpretations. For strategic reasons, Constantine may have been currying the support of Christians by demonstrating his belief that their God had played a crucial role in his victory of 312. By showing his pagan subjects that he recognized the value of Christian worship for maintaining the security of the state, Constantine may have hoped to move closer towards his goal of reconciling pagans and Christians in the worship of one Supreme Being. If that were the case, however, it would not necessarily mean that at this date Constantine was entirely devoted to the Christian cause to the exclusion of paganism: he did, after all, complete Maxentius' temple of Venus and Roma.[143] An acceptance of paganism would certainly have been in the spirit of the policy agreed in Milan in 313, but what is unclear from the text of that policy, as issued by Licinius in the East, is whether in 313 Constantine accepted paganism willingly or out of grudging necessity.

Constantine not only built new churches throughout the empire, helping to compensate for the damage of the persecutions, but also endowed a number of them generously.[144] An impression of the extent of his donations in Rome is given in the *Liber Pontificalis* in a chapter concerning the pontificate of Silvester (which lasted from 31 January 314 to 31 December 335).[145] The chapter describes the gold and silver gifts bestowed by Constantine upon various Roman churches, including a church on the estate of Equitius, the basilica and baptistery of the Lateran, St. Peter's, St. Paul's outside the walls, the chapel in the Sessorian palace, St. Agnes with its baptistery, St. Laurence outside the walls, Sts. Marcellinus and Peter, and a basilica to Peter, Paul, and John the Baptist at Ostia, Rome's port.[146]

This part of the *Liber* was compiled as late as the sixth century,[147] but it is unlikely that the detailed lists of donations that it contains could have been entirely forged, not least because the text contains details that a sixth-century forger could not have known. It seems that the sixth-century author was in fact relying for his information on a document created near the end of the reign of Constantius II.[148] Consequently the *Liber* provides some demonstrably reliable information about Constantine's church endowments.[149] However, some information relating to Constantine's works is certainly wrong. In particular, the ascription of the building of St. Peter's Basilica to Constantine is incorrect; the *fastidium* decorated with statues of Christ enthroned and flanked by four angels, which is said to have been donated to the Lateran by Constantine, could not have been produced before the mid-fifth century at the earliest, and we know that the Basilica of St. Paul outside the walls was originally small and cramped and is unlikely to have been endowed by Constantine to the extent that the *Liber* suggests. It therefore seems clear that the original list was later contaminated by the addition of inaccurate information.[150]

Although we must be cautious about using the *Liber* for statistical purposes, it is nevertheless interesting to ascertain figures for Constantine's alleged donations to the Roman Church during Silvester's pontificate: 963 kg of gold and 5,300 kg of silver, plus revenues from Church property of 32,469 *solidi* (148 kg of gold) each year.[151] It is also instructive to observe how different scholars interpret evidence of Constantine's generosity. Jaś Elsner, for instance, comments, "We should not exaggerate the Christianity of these gestures," by which he means, presumably, that whilst these actions reflect strong support for the Christian community, we should infer nothing about Constantine's personal religious stance.[152] On the other hand, in a different contribution to the same volume, A. D. Lee writes, "there is incontrovertible evidence of Constantine giving positive support to the Christian Church in a way which leaves no doubt about his personal

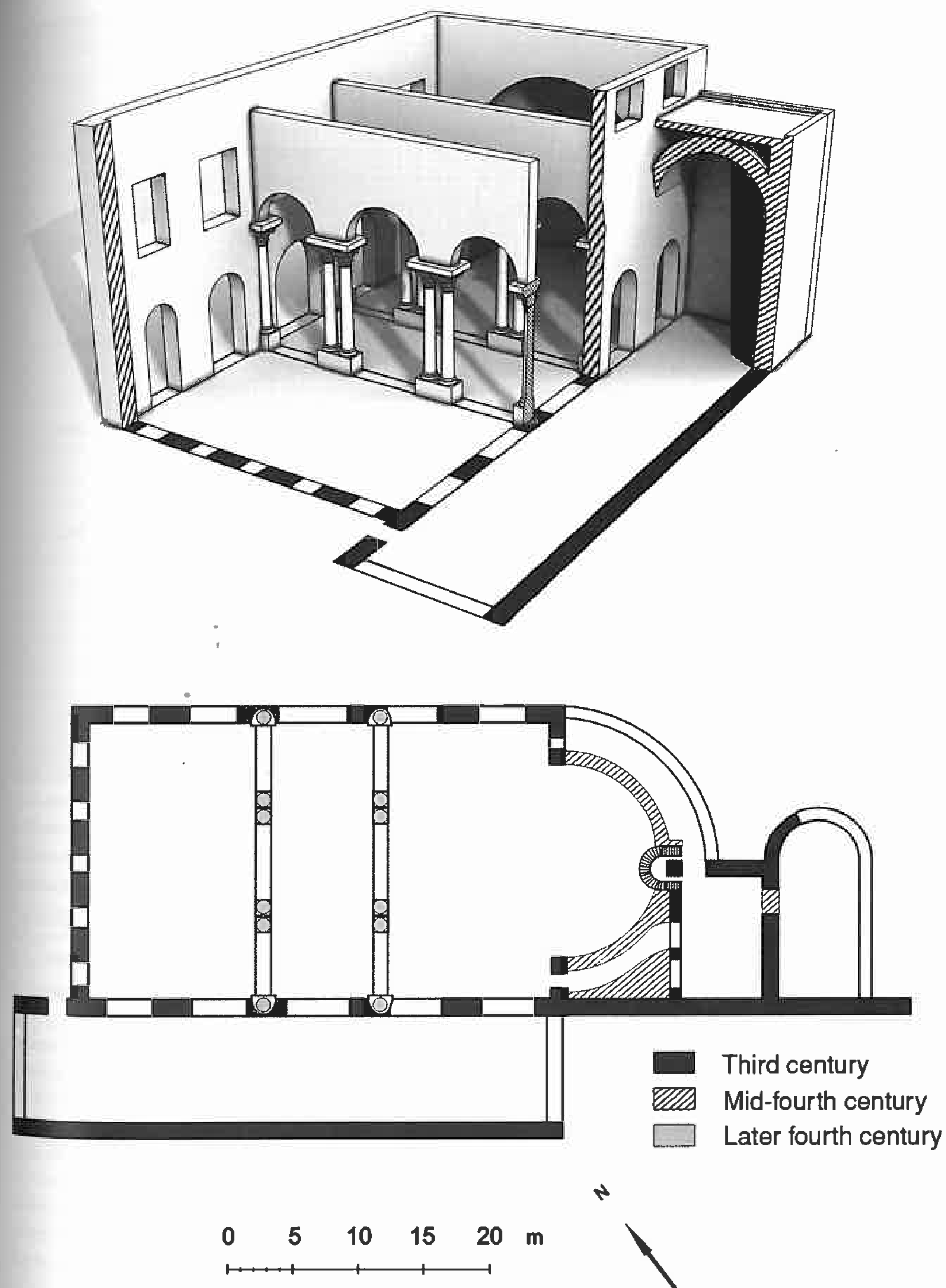


Figure 168. Chapel in the Sessorian palace. Cut-away 3-D reconstruction and plan. A. Tayfun Öner.

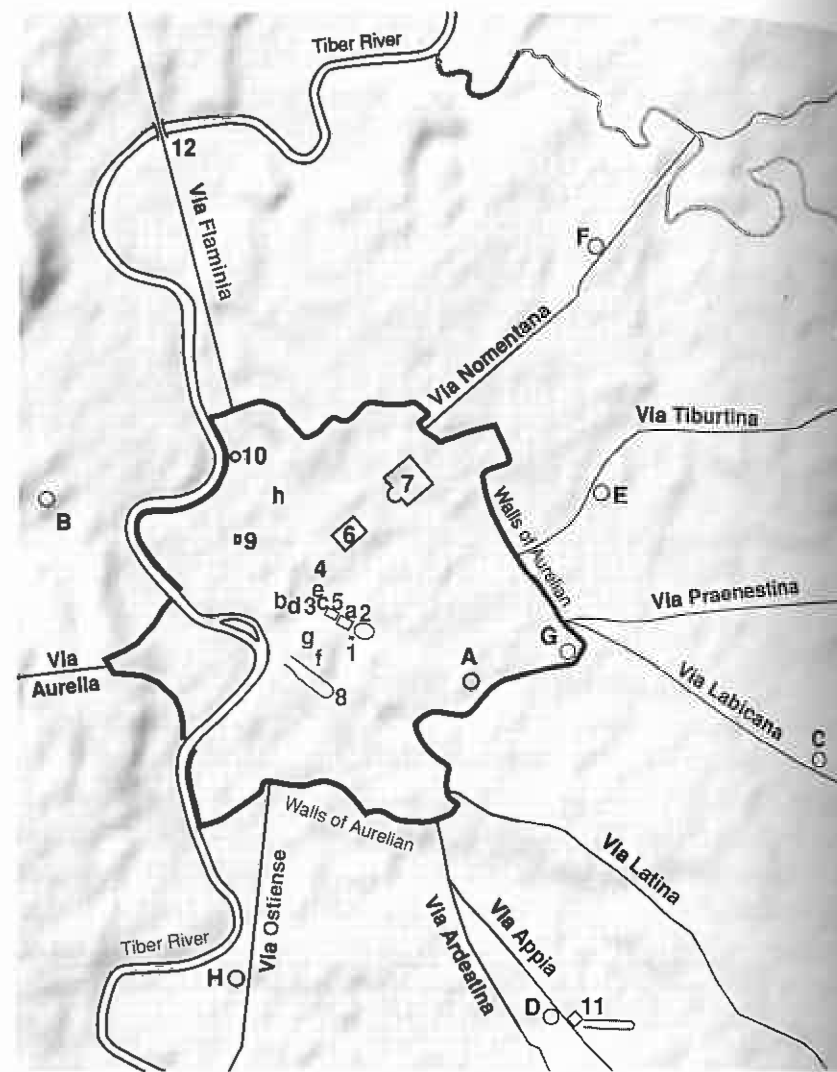


Figure 169. Map to show the locations of Constantine's Christian foundations in and around Rome. A. Tayfun Öner.

Key

Monuments

1 Arch of Constantine
2 Colosseum
3 Roman Forum
4 Imperial Fora
5 Basilica of Maxentius
6 Baths of Constantine
7 Baths of Diocletian
8 Circus Maximus
9 Pantheon
10 Mausoleum of Augustus
11 Villa of Maxentius
12 Milvian Bridge

Temples

a Temple of Venus and Roma
b Capitol and Temple of Jupiter
c Temple of Vesta
d Temple of Vespasian
e Temple of Antoninus and Faustina
f Temple of Apollo
g Temple of Cybele
h Temple of Sol

Churches

A St. John in Lateran (San Giovanni in Laterano)
B St. Peter's (San Pietro in Vaticano)
C Sts Marcellinus and Peter and mausoleum of Helena (Santi Marcellino e Pietro)
D Basilica of the Apostles (San Sebastiano)
E St. Laurence (San Lorenzo)
F St. Agnes and mausoleum of Constantina (Sant' Agnese and Santa Costanza)
G Sessorian Palace and chapel of the Holy Cross (Santa Croce in Gerusalemme)
H St. Paul's (San Paolo fuori le mura)

religious allegiance."[153] These conflicting interpretations reveal once again the great difficulty of drawing firm conclusions from material evidence.

Constantinople

The security achieved after Constantine's victory over Licinius in 324 led to further church building, particularly in the new city of Constantinople and at significant sites of the Holy Land. The funds must have come partly from the reserves that had been accumulated by Licinius, who is reputed to have been at the same time both merciless in extracting revenues and frugal in his spending.[154] Further finances would have come from Constantine's confiscations from the temples, and still more from two new taxes that Constantine introduced, the *collatio lustralis* (*chrysargyron*) and the *collatio glebalis*.[155]

Soon after the victory at Chrysopolis, Constantine made plans to establish his new capital on the site of Byzantium, where he had based his armies before the decisive battle. It is uncertain whether there is any truth in claims that he first considered other sites, such as Serdica, Ilion (Troy), Chalcedon, and perhaps even Thessalonikị. Each would have had its attractions – Ilion in particular, given that Alexander visited to sacrifice at the tombs of Ajax and Achilles, and given that the city's fate was intimately connected with the foundation of Rome.[156] Nor can it be denied that the site of Byzantium had significant disadvantages. In particular, there was no natural barrier to protect the city and its hinterland from attack, and the lack of a significant supply of drinking water meant that it had been necessary for Hadrian to construct a supply line bringing water from the Belgrade Forest located to the north of the city.[157] The Tetrarchic emperors had established two major residences in this region – Nicomedia to the east of Byzantium and Perinthus-Heraclea to the west. The extent to which they devoted attention to Byzantium itself is unclear. However, we do know that earlier emperors such as Caracalla, Macrinus, Valerian, and Aurelian regularly stopped at Byzantium with their armies, and a series of imperial laws were promulgated from there under Aurelian and especially under Diocletian. Licinius, too, possibly paid more attention to the city than our sources indicate. Such activity suggests that Byzantium may already have been equipped with appropriate buildings, such as an amphitheatre, baths, granaries, port installations, and an imperial palace.[158] However, the city had clearly not become so firmly associated with the Tetrarchic régime that Constantine could not consider it a candidate for redeveloping and renaming in his own honour.

The mentality behind the decision to found a new city is reflected in the words the emperor used when he granted the request of the inhabitants of Orcistus for their town to be upgraded to the status of an independent city. He asserted that the populace had "furnished a welcome opportunity for our munificence. For to us, whose aim it is to found new cities or restore the ancient or re-establish the moribund, their petition was most acceptable."[159] The refounding of Byzantium as Constantinople should therefore be seen as part of Constantine's programme of restoring the empire to its former glory.[160]

By creating a city fit for an imperial residence, Constantine followed in the tradition of kings and emperors since Alexander.[161] His decision to name Constantinople after himself also had firm precedents: throughout his kingdom, Alexander the Great had founded numerous cities that had been given his own name, and Diocletian and Maximian had named at least ten cities after themselves. Under Constantine, various cities were renamed in honour of a member of the Flavian dynasty: in Gaul, Autun became Flavia Aeduorum and Arles became Constantina; in Italy, Portus became Flavia Constantiniana; in North Africa, Cirta became Constantina; on the Danube frontier a fortress was named Constantia; and in Osrhoene a rebuilt frontier town was named Constantina.[162] Byzantium, however, was honoured with the emperor's own "eternal name," a privilege that indicated that the city was to be the capital for the Constantinian dynasty and a monument to Constantine's own legitimacy as ruler.[163] At the same time, however, the decision to rename and substantially expand Byzantium – the city from which Constantine had orchestrated the final confrontation with Licinius – commemorated the victory itself. Coins minted at Rome upon the dedication of Constantinople in 330 commemorated the crucial triumph over Licinius by showing a bust of the Tyche of the new city on the obverse, and Victory

standing on the prow of a warship with the legend VICTORIA AVGVSTI ("Victory of the Augustus") on the reverse (Figure 170).[164] This connection between Constantine's victory and the foundation of the city is explicitly stated in the *Origin of Constantine*, which asserts: "Constantine, in memory of his famous victory, called Byzantium Constantinople, after himself."[165]

According to the same text, the emperor intended Constantinople to be an equal of Rome.[166] In fact, already in 324, the bishops attending a synod at Antioch referred to Alexander of Constantinople as "bishop of the new Rome"; and, in 325 or 326, an official poem addressed to Constantine by Porfyrius referred to the city as "the nobility of the Pontus, another Rome."[167] Thus, the city was recognized from the outset as a foundation to match Rome, and it therefore seems that Constantine himself conceived it as such.[168] It is perhaps not surprising, then, that little attention was lavished on Rome beyond the foundation of new churches (which were necessary to firmly reestablish the Christian community) and the completion of building projects begun by Maxentius (on which Constantine could quickly stamp his name). The emperor's failure to bestow new public buildings on Rome, and the rarity of his visits to the city have been interpreted as a punishment for the support its people gave to Maxentius.[169]

In a law of 334, Constantine referred to Constantinople as "the city which we have endowed with the eternal name at God's command" (... *urbis quam, aeterno nomine iubente deo donavimus*).[170] The emperor may well have believed that the instruction to apply his own "eternal name" to the new city had come from the Christian God, although there is no explicit indication of the deity's precise nature.[171] Eusebius claims that Constantine "consecrated the city to the martyrs' God," yet, as always with Christian authors, we must be wary of such claims.[172] Fortunately, we possess a contemporary pagan perspective. Palladas, apparently referring to the designs on medallions struck to commemorate Constantine's defeat of Licinius and the dedication of Constantinople in 330 (Figure 170), describes Victory standing on the prow of a galley, "bearing victories to the Christ-loving city." There can, therefore, be no doubt that Palladas recognized Constantine's new city as a haven of Christianity.[173]

Palladas' perspective is important, since, looking at accounts of Constantinople's dedication, it is not possible to discern any Christian component in the ceremonies of 330. The assertion in the *Parastaseis* that "*Kyrie eleison*" ("Lord have mercy") was chanted one hundred times at the dedication of the city can hardly be considered trustworthy given that the text is dated as late as about 800. It has been conjectured that the cry was added to the text by a Christianizing editor who substituted it for what had been imperial acclamations.[174] Some have found support for a Christian dedication ceremony in the sixth-century account of Malalas, who writes of a bloodless sacrifice being conducted. Yet bloodless sacrifices of grain or wine also played a part in pagan ceremonies.[175] In fact, Malalas himself makes no mention of a Christian ceremony. He refers only to the naming of the Tyche of the city as Anthousa.[176] The Tyche of a city should be distinguished from the goddess Tyche (with her attributes of the rudder and wheel) and should be considered more of an abstraction, symbolizing the spirit of the city. As such, Christians would have been able to tolerate an image of the Tyche of Constantinople, but we certainly cannot deduce from Malalas a Christian component in the dedication ceremony.[177]

When discussing Constantine's porphyry column – a monument at the heart of the Constantinian city and intimately connected with its dedication day – Malalas claims that the Palladium (the archaic statue of Athena that had been brought to Italy from Troy by Aeneas) was buried beneath it.[178] On the other hand, writing in the fifth century, the Church historian Socrates claimed that a fragment of the True Cross sent from Jerusalem by Helena had been concealed there.[179] Socrates' assertion led to later allegations that a host of other Christian relics – the crosses of the thieves, the holy unction, saintly relics, the baskets of the loaves and fishes, the axe of Noah, and the rock from which Moses drew water – were also hidden under the monument.[180] One has the impression that the earliest sources, Socrates and Malalas, reflect opposing Christian and pagan claims on the city's heritage, and it now seems impossible to determine whether either faithfully reflects the religious aspects of events in 330.[181] As we have seen in Chapter 2, the inscription that probably belongs to the Constantinian period on the base of Constantine's column speaks only of the emperor shining in the manner of the sun towards his citizens and makes no reference to any god. Two other alleged inscriptions on the column – this time unambiguously Christian – are mentioned only in late texts and, if genuine (which few would claim them to be), would have been added to the monument at a relatively late date.[182] There is, therefore, no clear evidence suggesting that the monument at the centre of Constantinople's dedication ceremony was Christian.

Figure 170. Copper alloy medallion showing on the obverse a bust of the Tyche of Constantinople, and on the reverse Victory standing on the prow of a warship with the legend VICTORIA AVGVSTI. Minted at Rome in A.D. 330. Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques, Bibliothèque nationale de France (204553).

Palladas' description of Constantinople as the "Christ-loving city" clearly reflects the emperor's public profession of Christianity and the government's new religious outlook, but how and to what extent were these manifested in Constantinople? Given the meagre and contradictory nature of the evidence concerning Constantinople's foundation and dedication ceremonies, any assessment of the extent to which Constantine's city was visibly a "Christ-loving city" must rest largely on the evidence of its temples and churches. The temples will be discussed shortly. As for the churches, we must first mention the construction, at a short distance to the north of the old forum (Tetrastoon), of the cathedral of Hagia Eirene (Holy Peace; Figure 171). This church was assigned by Socrates to Constantine, and its very name suggests that it – rather like Augustus' *Ara Pacis* – commemorated the peace established as a result of the emperor's god-given military successes.[183] In addition to Hagia Eirene, we read of two other churches that existed in the Constantinian period in Constantinople.[184] One, built on an impressive scale, was located outside the walls of old Byzantium and was dedicated to St. Mokios, a local martyr in the reign of Diocletian. Although it is alleged that part of a temple of Zeus or Hercules was used when building the church, it seems doubtful that a temple would have been located outside the limits of Byzantium.[185] The other church was constructed (at an uncertain date before its first mention in the year 359) in Region X of the city in memory of St. Acacius, who had been beheaded in Byzantium during the Diocletianic persecution on 7 or 8 May in 303 or 306.[186] An additional structure, Constantine's burial place, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9, but it should be noted here that Eusebius tells us that the emperor arranged for an altar to be erected inside it and for services to be conducted

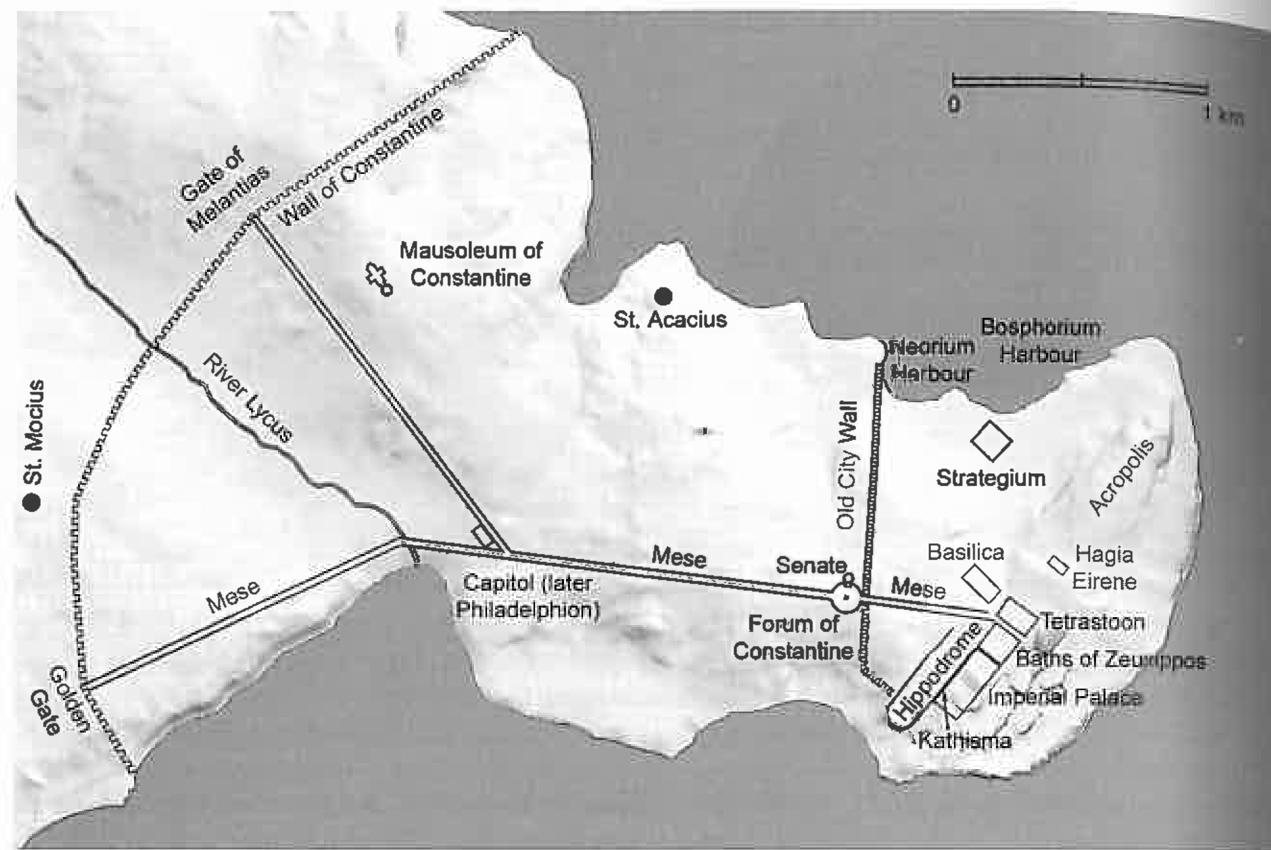


Figure 171. Map of Constantinople in the Constantinian period. A. Tayfun Öner.

there in memory of the Apostles.[187] We do not know, however, whether Constantine was buried within a church proper or in a mausoleum adapted for Christian services – or, indeed, if he built both a church and a mausoleum.

Although we can point to only three or four churches in Constantinople for which Constantine was responsible, Eusebius preserves a letter that he had received from the emperor urgently asking him to arrange for skilled calligraphers to prepare fifty leather-bound volumes of the scriptures, easy to read and portable, for use in the city's churches. It is likely that Constantine was not requesting complete Bibles, which were rare curiosities, but rather volumes containing texts of the four Gospels.[188] Constantine explained the need thus: "In the City which bears our name by the sustaining providence of the Saviour God a great mass of people has attached itself to the most holy Church, so that with everything there enjoying great growth it is particularly fitting that more churches should be established."[189]

Consequently, it seems that more churches existed, or were planned, although we know nothing of them.[190] Whilst we must always treat with caution Eusebian statements that ascribe unquestionably Christian motives to the emperor, Constantine's letter should at least make us think twice before we dismiss out of hand Eusebius' claim that the city was embellished "with very many places of worship, very large martyr-shines, and splendid houses, some standing before the city and others in it."[191] That need not mean that the churches to which the Gospel books would be presented were imperial foundations, but, by endowing churches with these texts, the emperor was certainly demonstrating his support for the Christian community and promoting the foundation of new places of worship. Thus, it is conceivable that there were more Christian churches than those that are firmly attested, and it is perhaps possible that some of the churches less securely attributed to Constantine in our texts were indeed built during his reign: St. Menas, St. Michael at Anaplous, St. Agathonikos, and Hagios Dynamis ("Holy Power"). That said, however, it is surprising that, besides the shrine to the Apostles, Eusebius does not mention by name a single Constantinian church in the city.[192]

Jerusalem and the Holy Land

The theological disputes that took place at the Council of Nicaea in 325 perhaps kindled Constantine's curiosity about the historical Jesus, for soon after that gathering a host of churches and shrines were built in the Holy Land to mark sites associated with Jesus' life.[193]

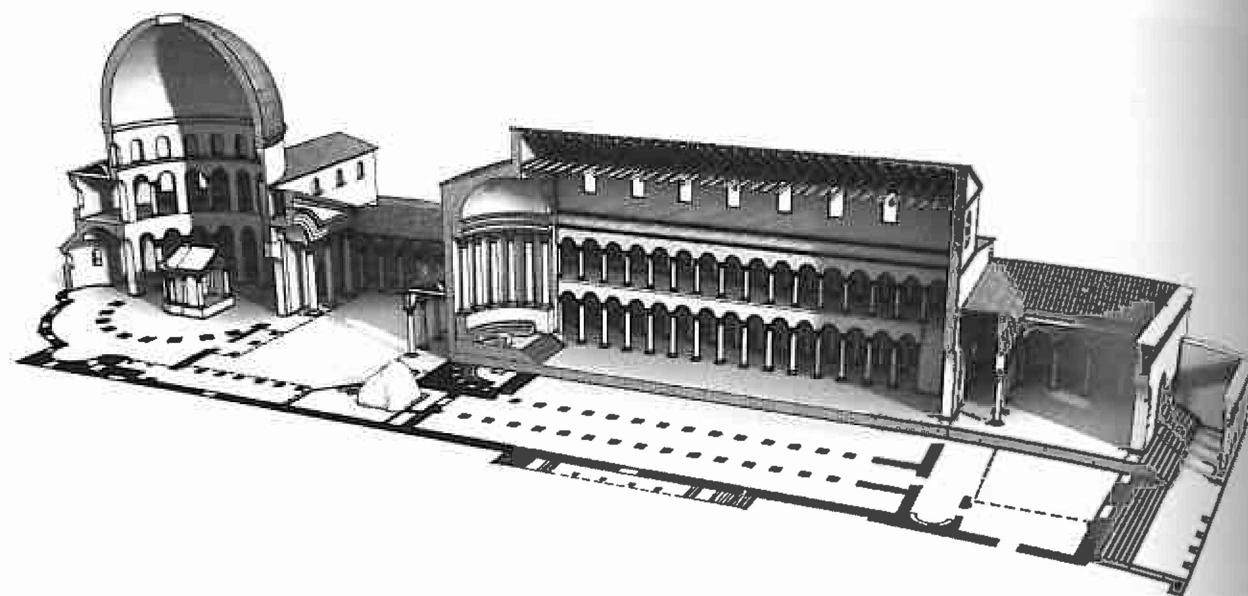
After the defeat of Licinius, Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, probably received a letter similar to that sent to Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, in which the emperor urged all bishops to repair, enlarge, or rebuild churches, and to tell provincial governors what resources were required.[194] If so, it is possible that, whilst he was in the emperor's presence at Nicaea, Macarius suggested to Constantine the construction of a church in Jerusalem. Such a suggestion would have been timely because the Council of Nicaea had officially recognized not only the privileged position of the see of Caesarea, but also the traditional place of honour given to the see of Jerusalem.[195] Whether or not the initial suggestion came from Macarius, in 325 or 326 he received from the emperor a letter instructing him to prepare to build a magnificent basilica on the site of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.[196] No doubt the building would be a monument both to Constantine's victory over Licinius and to his success in unifying the Church at the Council of Nicaea.[197] The salvation of the Roman people and of the Church would be commemorated by building a fitting monument to Christ, the Saviour of mankind, on the site of his death and resurrection.[198] Constantine himself described the uncovering of the tomb, long buried beneath a pagan temple to Aphrodite, as a symbol of the restoration of the Roman world following the defeat of Licinius.[199]

There was, it seems, a local tradition in Jerusalem regarding the precise location of the cave in which Christ had been buried, and Eusebius claims that the spot had been concealed long ago by the construction of a temple to Aphrodite.[200] On the orders of Constantine, who himself claimed to be acting "at God's command," the temple was demolished, the cave was rediscovered, and work began on the construction of a basilica that Constantine expected to be "superior to those in all other places . . . such that all the excellences of every city are surpassed by this foundation."[201]

The five-aisled basilica, which was dedicated in 335, was built close to, but not over, the tomb (Figure 172).[202] According to Eusebius, the "headpiece" of the basilica itself was a *hemisphairion* – a small hemisphere – surrounded by twelve columns and decorated with silver bowls. There is debate about the precise form of this *hemisphairion*. Is Eusebius describing, for example, decorative columns standing against the wall of the church's apse, or is he referring to free-standing columns arranged in a circle to support some sort of hemispherical canopy (Figure 173)?

The cave that had served as Christ's tomb was located outside the basilica, about 40 m behind its apse, and Eusebius says that it was "beautified with rare columns" by Constantine. From representations on lead pilgrims' flasks and a stone replica in the museum in Narbonne, we can visualize the appearance of the small monument erected over the cave, the so-called "Edicule." Certainly by 387, if not by 350, the cave and Edicule had been covered by a monumental, domed structure known as the Anastasis Rotunda. It is uncertain, however, whether this rotunda was built by Constantine at the same time as the basilica or whether the cave and Edicule were originally left exposed in the centre of a walled courtyard.[203] It is therefore possible that initially the complex fell into the category of martyria in which the sacred place was left exposed outside the place of worship. Eventually – if not from the outset – the basilica and rotunda together formed a complex incorporating the sacred spot inside.

It was apparently unnecessary for the workers responsible for clearing the site to excavate the rock believed to be Golgotha, the "Place of the Skull," where Christ was crucified. Unlike the tomb, this outcrop seems to have remained visible in the pagan temple complex. Constantine's architects preserved it in a courtyard between the site of the tomb and the apse of the basilica.[204]



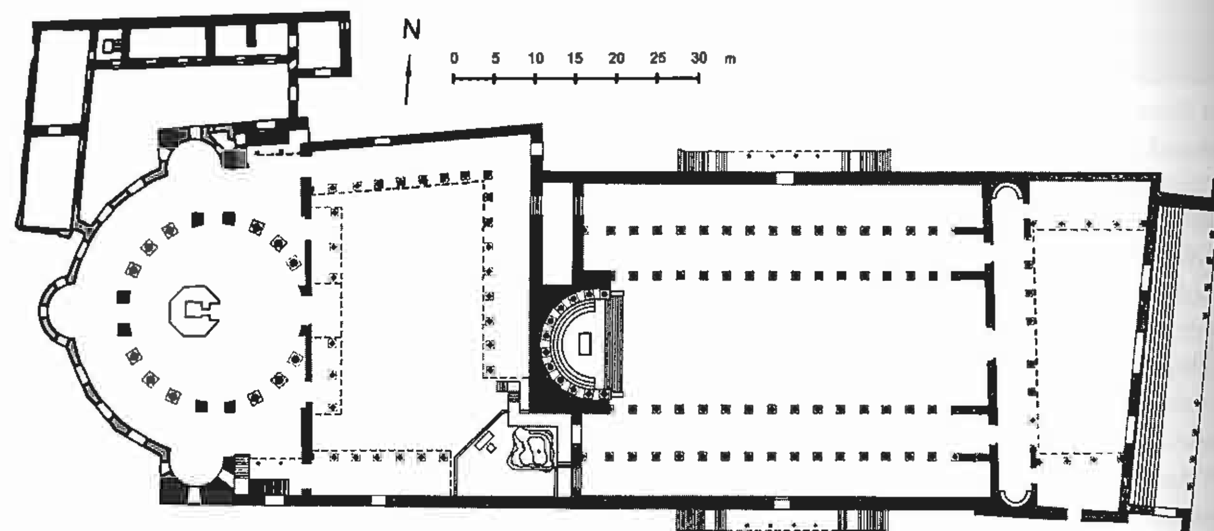


Figure 172. Anastasis Rotunda and basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem. Cut-away 3-D reconstruction and plan. A. Tayfun Öner.

The decision to found the church certainly demonstrated strong imperial support for the Christian community, particularly since it required the demolition of Hadrian's temple.[205] On its own, the foundation of a Christian church need not indicate anything about the emperor's personal religious beliefs, but in this case the timing of the construction – soon after Constantine's emergence as sole ruler and at the moment when he believed he had achieved the unity of faith on which his security as ruler relied – leaves little doubt that this project held great symbolic power for the emperor. Furthermore, given that Constantine began his letter to Macarius by referring to "our Saviour's grace" and to "His most sacred passion," the emperor's belief in Christ can hardly be denied: the common saviour

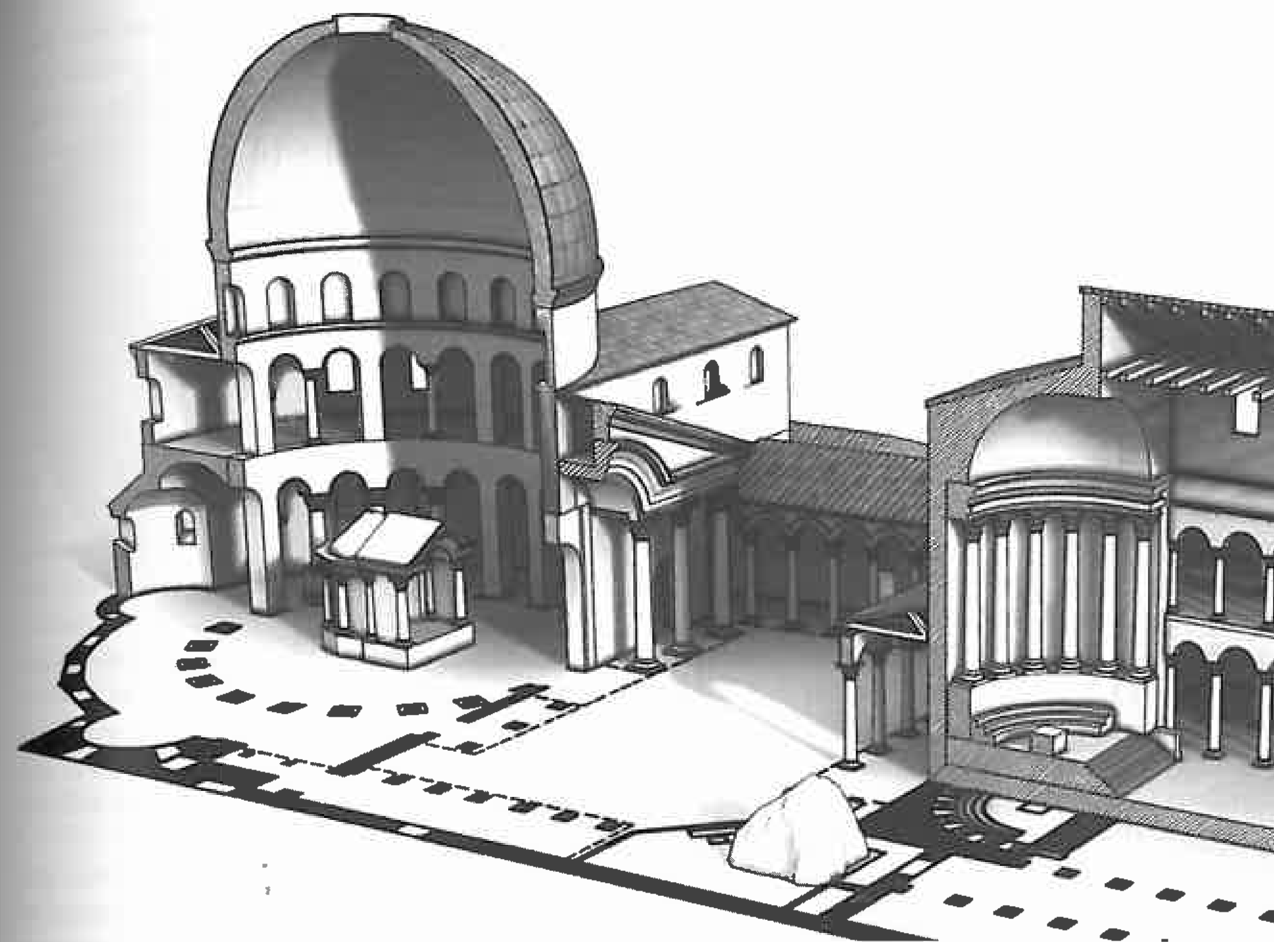


Figure 173. Anastasis Rotunda and apse of the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem. Cut-away 3-D reconstruction. A. Tayfun Öner.

of Constantine and Macarius was not an ambiguous Supreme Deity but rather Jesus Christ who had suffered on the cross.

As we shall see, the significance of this extensive architectural complex, marking the sites of the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Christ, was profound, and when describing it Eusebius suggests that Constantine had established the New Temple that was due to descend from heaven in the eschatological age. If Constantine himself believed this, then he was claiming to be the messiah.

The building of more new churches in the Holy Land was not instigated by Constantine himself but by his mother, Helena, who visited Palestine in 327–328.[206] Despite her relationship to the emperor, Helena is ignored in Eusebius' biography of Constantine until this period. No doubt this was in part because of her low birth,[207] which caused Constantius Chlorus, around 289, to separate from her to marry a daughter of Maximian by the name of Theodora, whose status was more suited to his newly acquired social and political standing.[208] After 306, Helena may have lived in Trier, Constantine's main residence, and after 312 she is known to have moved to Rome, where she owned a great estate, including the Sessorian Palace.[209]

Although Constantine's claim to power was based upon his victories, which culminated in the defeat of Licinius in 324, it nevertheless seems that he wanted to consolidate his position further by stressing his parentage. After all, Constantine's half-brothers, Flavius Dalmatius and Julius Constantius, who were the sons of Constantius Chlorus by his second wife, Theodora, were potentially still rivals for the throne. To stress his own legitimacy whilst minimizing theirs, Constantine chose to raise the standing of his own

mother, Helena, whilst diminishing the attention given to the father he shared with his stepbrothers.[210] After Licinius' defeat, Helena suddenly became more prominent in public life, since she, together with Constantine's second wife, Fausta, was promoted to the rank of Augusta.[211] Widely distributed coins showed a bust of Helena on the obverse and, on the reverse, a standing female figure identified by the legend as "Security of the Republic" (SECVRITAS REIPVBLICE; Figure 174). Thus, it was implied that the security of the empire rested on Helena and, by implication, on her son.[212]

Helena's journey to the East was no doubt intended, at least in part, to emphasize the prominence the Holy Land was going to acquire in Constantine's conception of his empire, and it coincided with his momentous decision to build the church on the site of Christ's suffering and resurrection. Eusebius says that Helena made her trip "to complete in prayers her thank-offerings for her son, so great an Emperor, and his sons the most Godbeloved Caesars her grandchildren."[213] This seems to suggest that Helena was travelling not merely on a personal pilgrimage but on a government mission as the Augusta and representative of the emperor and his sons.[214] Indeed, it may be that she was travelling in place of Constantine himself, who had been forced to cancel his own planned visit to the East because the Arian controversy required his urgent attention.[215]

Constantine may have felt the need for an imperial presence in the Holy Land for two reasons. In the first place, he may have feared that unrest in the East challenged his rule and needed to be calmed.[216] In the second place, he may have thought that Helena's mission would help strengthen the dynastic image following the crisis of 326.[217] That year had seen the trial and execution of Crispus, Constantine's eldest son by Minervina, his first wife. Crispus' execution at Pola in Istria was followed in the same year by the death of Crispus' stepmother, Fausta, allegedly in an overheated bathhouse at Rome. We do not know whether there is any truth in the claim that Crispus was charged with having sexual relations with Fausta. If the claim is true, Fausta may or may not have given her consent. If no union occurred, perhaps Fausta trumped up the charge with the aim of promoting her own sons over Crispus, who was due to inherit the whole empire. The curious circumstances of Fausta's death have provoked the suggestion that she died during an attempt to induce an abortion. If she was indeed expecting a child, she may have considered it in the interests of her sons to lay the blame for her predicament on Crispus, whether or not he was really the father. But since bathhouses were also associated with suicide, the circumstances of Fausta's death do not necessarily indicate she was with child. Whether Fausta had been adulterous (with Crispus or another) or had fabricated the charges (of whatever kind) that led to Crispus' condemnation, Constantine may have allowed her the dignity of suicide before damning her memory. The fact that Crispus' memory was not revived after Fausta's death requires explanation. Perhaps Constantine remained convinced of his son's guilt, or perhaps he was too ashamed to publicly admit that Crispus had been falsely convicted. Much is speculative, and it is unlikely that the truth surrounding the deaths of Crispus and Fausta will ever be discovered.[218]

If Eusebius is to be trusted, Helena was persuaded to convert to Christianity by Constantine,[219] and when in Palestine she took the initiative to arrange for a church to be built over the cave of Christ's Nativity in Bethlehem and for another to be erected on the Mount of Olives. At Bethlehem, five miles south of Jerusalem, a cave associated with the cult of Adonis had apparently been appropriated as the site of Christ's birth.[220] The shell of the complex Helena built on the site is known to have been completed by 333. Like the Golgotha complex in its more developed form, the Bethlehem compound consisted of a five-aisled basilica and an associated structure to shelter the cave of the Nativity (Figure 175). In this case, the cave was surrounded by an octagonal building, and the octagon was not freestanding but attached to the basilica, whose apse it replaced.[221] Helena's second church, to the east of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives, was of similar design to the Bethlehem church. It was built over the cave where Christ was believed to have instructed his disciples before his crucifixion, but it was meant, according to Eusebius, to commemorate the Ascension, which had taken place on the nearby peak.[222]

Figure 174. Gold *solidus* minted in Sirmium. Obverse shows Helena as Augusta. Reverse shows a personification of Securitas. Ca. A.D. 324–325. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1864,1128.194).

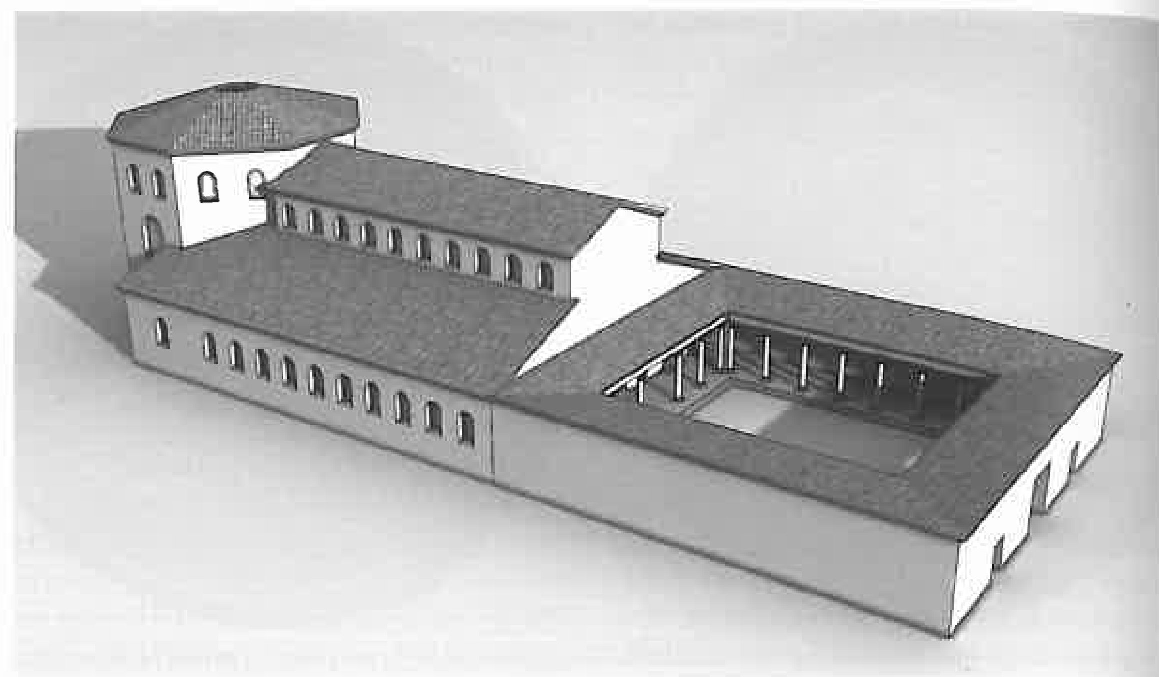
Eusebius claims that Helena initiated both of these building projects of her own accord, and funding from Constantine came only once they were well under way.[223] In contrast, it must be noted (given the emergence of a later tradition to the contrary) that Eusebius makes no claim that Helena had any role whatsoever in the construction of the complex on Golgotha.[224]

Helena was joined in Palestine by Eutropia, mother of the late Fausta. Eutropia wrote a letter to her son-in-law concerning the pollution of the oak of Mamre. Located in the plain between Bethlehem and Hebron (at modern Ramat al-Khalil), this was allegedly the place where Abraham had been addressed by God. Eutropia had been disgusted to find the site polluted by idols, an altar, and regular sacrifices. Upon receiving her letter, Constantine sent an order to Macarius in Jerusalem that the place should be burned and cleared, and that a Christian basilica should be built on the spot. Here the architectural scheme was the reverse of that on Golgotha, since the sacred oak tree, the well, and Abraham's altar were all contained in the atrium to the west of the church, so that the pilgrims arrived at them before, rather than after entering the basilica (Figure 176).[225]

This act of clearing away all traces of traditional cults to make way for a Christian church may be interpreted (as in the case of the basilica on Golgotha) as a symbol of Constantine's victory over his pagan predecessors. However, the site of Mamre is also significant for symbolizing Constantine's goal of achieving religious unity among the peoples of the empire.[226] For the emperor not only recognized the sacred antiquity of the site but also understood its significance, mentioning in his letter to Macarius God's promise to Abraham that he would become the father of many nations.[227]

Temples

A pagan orator, not without the exaggeration typical of panegyrists, could write in about 310 that temples sprang up in Constantine's footsteps like flowers sent forth from the earth for Jupiter and Juno.[228] The claim that Constantine sponsored pagan religion is not surprising given the early date of this speech, but even at much later dates there are indications that Constantine not only permitted existing temples to remain standing but also allowed new ones to be constructed, even if he himself did not commission them.



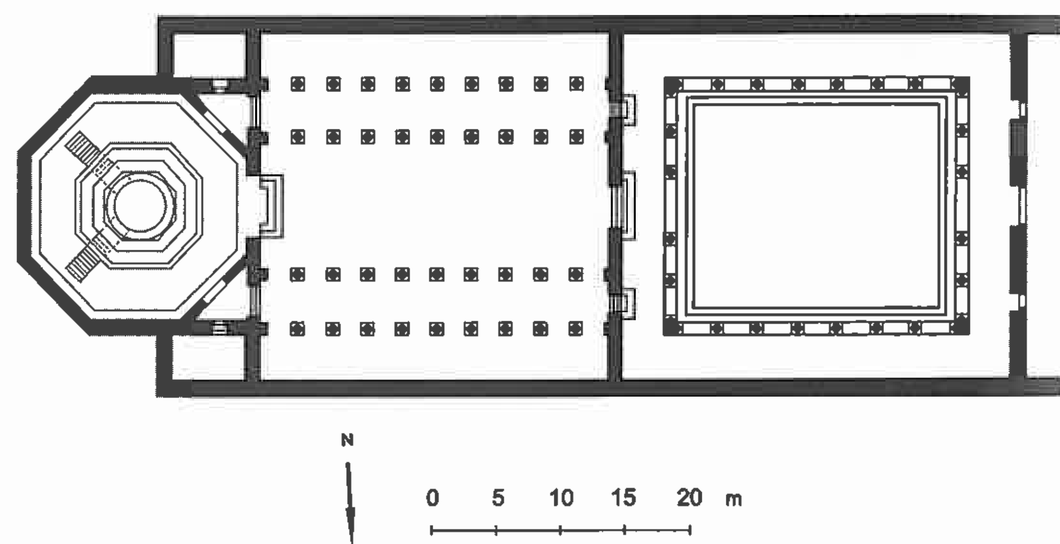


Figure 175. Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem. Plan and 3-D reconstruction. A. Tayfun Öner.

It has been claimed by Timothy Barnes that when Constantinople was founded in 324, "Constantine neither enlarged nor refounded the ancient city of Byzantium; he razed the ancient city to the ground and thus wiped both the city and its ancestral cults off the face of the earth. In its place Constantine founded a new city from scratch with its own newly constituted cult, the cult of the Christian God."[229] Elsewhere, Barnes expresses the same idea in different words: "Only when the old Byzantium had been completely destroyed, did Constantine build a completely new city on an empty site which now had no non-Christian temples, no other non-Christian buildings and no pre-Christian history."[230] Reliable evidence contradicts such a scenario.

Constantine certainly enlarged the city limits, building a new wall about 3 km to the west of the old walls of Byzantium.[231] Furthermore, there

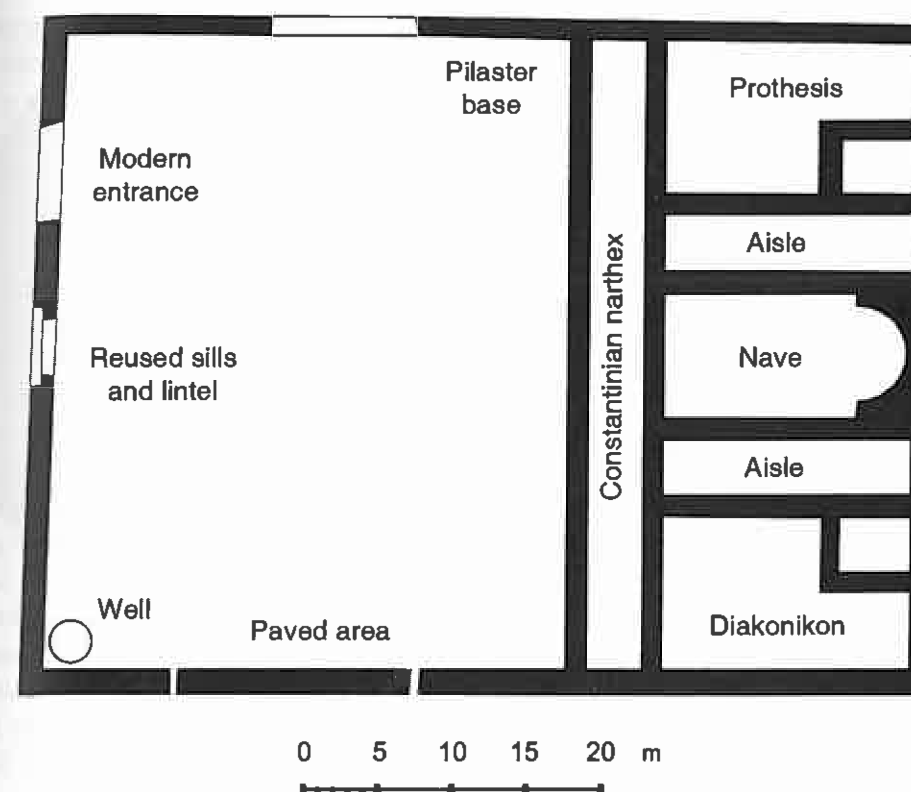


Figure 176. Church at Mamre. Plan. A. Tayfun Öner.

is no evidence to suggest that he razed Byzantium to the ground. The Hadrianic water supply system was maintained and the theatre on the acropolis and the amphitheatre (or Kynegion) remained, as did the two main public squares, the Strategion and the Tetrastoon. The porticoed street connecting the Tetrastoon with the main gate in the old city walls was in all likelihood preserved when Constantine decided to extend it further west towards his new walls.[232]

Just as important elements of infrastructure were not razed, the shrines of the ancestral cults were not "wiped . . . off the face of the earth." We know that the temples of Helios, Artemis, and Aphrodite were allowed to remain on the acropolis, a little to the north of the cathedral of Hagia Eirene, until the reign of Theodosius I, and the temple of Poseidon probably remained undisturbed on the nearby headland (modern Saray Burnu), since its conversion into a church of St. Menas is believed to have occurred only after Constantine's day.[233] Even if we cannot trust Malalas when he ascribes the temple of Helios to Septimius Severus, and the temples of Artemis and Aphrodite to Byzas, the mythical, founder of Byzantium, it is clear that he believed them to be ancient foundations, and there is no reason to dispute this.[234]

Malalas informs us that shortly before Constantine's death three temples became *achrēmatistoi* on the emperor's orders.[235] This means that the temples had been allowed to stand throughout Constantine's reign, before being deprived of state funding – and even then, the cults themselves were apparently not prohibited. According to Libanius, Constantine confiscated all temple landholdings and incorporated them into the emperor's private property (*res privata*).[236] Yet, despite Constantine's actions, we know that several temple buildings in Constantinople were not destroyed or converted for other purposes until the reign of Theodosius I, when the temple of Helios became a courtyard surrounded by houses, the temple of Artemis became a gaming room, and the temple of Aphrodite became a carriage-house for the Praetorian Prefect.[237]

Clearly, therefore, Eusebius is not being truthful when he claims that Constantine saw fit to purge his city of all idol worship,[238] and Barnes' attempt to bolster Eusebius' assertion with reference to Himerius is unconvincing.[239] Himerius claims that the emperor

Julian "established alien rites in the city" later in the fourth century.[240] Even if Himerius meant that Julian had been the first to permit pagan worship at Constantinople (which I doubt), his intention would not have been to reflect the absolute truth but to flatter Julian by emphasizing his pious devotion to traditional religion. Himerius suggests that Julian built new shrines and may imply that no new shrines had been built since Constantine's reign, but we can hardly reliably infer that Constantine's city, founded on the site of Byzantium, preserved no earlier temples and was "totally free of any trace of paganism until Julian introduced such rites into Constantinople in December 361."[241]

Not only is there evidence to indicate that existing pagan temples were allowed to remain standing during Constantine's reign, but there are also claims that Constantine permitted brand new pagan temples to be built in the city. If the pagan historian Zosimus is to be believed, when Constantine built the hippodrome, he incorporated a shrine to the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux).[242] This is certainly not implausible, since the twins were the patrons of the equestrian order in Rome and had a natural association with the circus from an early date. Indeed, the eggs used to count the laps of the charioteers were believed to symbolize the egg from which the twins had been born.[243]

Zosimus also alleges that near the public forum called the Tetrastoon the emperor built a temple to Rhea-Cybele and another adjoining shrine containing a statue of the Tyche (Fortune) of Rome.[244] Other sources locate these temples more precisely in the northwest corner of the porticoed plaza called the Basilica (which, if it was not Constantinian, existed by the 340s).[245] Given Zosimus' anti-Christian stance, we should be cautious about accepting his claim that Constantine was responsible for the construction of these temples.[246] Hesychius asserts that the sanctuary of Rhea in the Basilica was of a much more ancient origin, ascribing it to Byzas, the legendary founder of the city. He adds that the shrine was known to the people of Byzantium as a Tychaion, a temple of Tyche, which would suggest that Rhea-Cybele was considered Byzantium's protectress.[247] Yet Zosimus' claim of Constantinian involvement may be indirectly supported by the pagan poet Palladas. Writing soon after the foundation of Constantinople, Palladas jokes about the conversion of a temple of Tyche into a tavern. His story may be reconciled with that of Zosimus if we infer that Constantine allowed an ancient shrine of Tyche to be used as an inn after he had built a replacement in the Tetrastoon.[248]

The Tyche of a city such as Rome or Constantinople symbolized the spirit of the city and was considered more of an abstraction than the goddess Tyche; as such, Christians would have been able to tolerate an image of a city Tyche.[249] Rhea-Cybele was, of course, a goddess that Christians would have rejected, but Zosimus adds that Constantine altered the posture of her statue "through his disregard for [polytheistic] religion, by taking away the lions on each side and changing the arrangement of the hands; for whereas previously she was apparently restraining lions, now she seemed to be praying and looking to the city as if guarding it."[250] It seems likely that, by removing the lions, Constantine intended to divest the goddess of her divine aspect and use her statue to represent the Tyche of Constantinople.[251] This would have been possible because Cybele, when portrayed in the traditional manner as patroness of cities, wore the turreted crown typical of city Tychai.[252] On coins and medallions there are two iconographic models for the Tyche of Constantinople, one a helmeted figure obviously modelled on Roma (Figure 170), the other a woman, sometimes winged, holding a horn of plenty, wearing a turreted crown (such as that worn by Cybele) and seated on a high-backed throne with her feet on a ship's prow. The latter type was shown on the reverse of silver medallions commemorating the day of Constantinople's inauguration in 330 (Figure 177). The obverse showed Constantine wearing the jewelled diadem he is said to have worn during the celebrations.[253]

Thus, under Constantine these two "temples" in the Basilica of Constantinople may have served not as places of worship of pagan deities but rather as shrines housing statues of the Tyche of Rome and the Tyche of Constantinople, abstractions representing the promise of worldwide domination.[254] We may compare other juxtapositions of these two Tychai on equal terms in art, such as on a sixth-century consular diptych in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna,

Figure 177. Silver medallion minted in Constantinople in 330. Obverse shows Constantine as Maximus Triumphator Augustus wearing a jewelled diadem. Reverse shows the Tyche of Constantinople holding a horn of plenty, wearing a turreted crown, and seated on a throne. A ship's prow is visible below her feet. © bpk / Münzkabinett, SMB/Inv. no. 18200825.

which shows the dress and attributes of each Tyche clearly (Figure 178).[255]

Surprisingly, although it was traditional for a forum to contain at least one temple, no temple or church was built in Constantine's new forum. This may indicate that the emperor judiciously avoided displays of favouritism to either pagans or Christians. The forum's centrepiece was, therefore, the radiate statue of the emperor himself, the religious associations of which were ambiguous. However, a temple is known to have existed in the year 407 on the main street of the city, to the west of Constantine's forum (Figure 171). This was the Capitol, whose name suggests it was a temple to the Capitoline Triad – Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva – or at least to Jupiter Optimus Maximus himself. Unlike the temples mentioned previously, the Capitol stood outside the walls of ancient Byzantium and could therefore have been built no earlier than the westward extension of the city under Constantine; consequently, some scholars have assigned the building to the city's founder, although this cannot be proved.[256] If erected by Constantine, the Capitol would have clearly indicated that the emperor was courting pagans as much as Christians in his new city – particularly if it is true that no capitolia had been built in the empire since the Severan period.[257] The possibility might be considered that Constantine dedicated the Capitol to a nameless Supreme Deity, but there is no evidence to support such a belief. A cross or Christogram is known to have fallen from the building in a storm in 407,[258] but the symbol may have been added to the structure in the post-Constantinian period. It has been suggested that, by locating the Capitol outside the old walls of Byzantium, Constantine deliberately attempted to reduce its prominence.[259] But given that Constantine had marked out the line of a new fortification 3 km to the west of the old one, the Capitol was in fact at the heart of the area into which the city was expected to expand. Furthermore, it was in a location likely to ensure that it had maximum impact on the traveller, being at the intersection of the two main streets that entered the city from Thrace.[260]

It is also clear that Constantine did not suppress the imperial cult. The Hispellum rescript, which is dated between Constantine's death on 22 May 337 and the joint proclamation of his three sons

as Augusti on 9 September, suggests that Constans was continuing his father's policy when he allowed a temple of the *gens Flavia* to be constructed there.[261] The request by the people of Hispellum to establish the temple was a pretext to obtain a locally elected priest who could oversee the theatrical and gladiatorial entertainments in a local sanctuary, thus making it unnecessary for them to travel to Volsinii. Constans' assent clearly demonstrates that he recognized the importance of tolerating and even maintaining traditional religious institutions – not least the imperial cult, which helped maintain and promote the imperial dynasty.[262]

It is possible that Constantine tolerated celebration of the imperial cult even in Constantinople. The fact that the main public square close to Hagia Eirene was given the name Augustaion may suggest that it was the site of a temple to the imperial cult – although later authors attempted to explain the name by observing that a statue of Helena had once stood there.[263] If it indeed existed, such a temple would probably have been built long before Constantine refounded Byzantium in 324, but it is not impossible that it continued to function during his reign.

There is, on the other hand, evidence that Constantine took action against pagan religion. Eusebius refers to the looting of temple doors and the stripping of metal cladding from temple roofs.[264] He adds that cult statues were removed from the temples and stripped of their gold, a subject to which we shall return. The pagan Libanius claims that "poverty reigned in the temples" and that Constantine "employed the sacred treasures on the building of the city upon which his heart was set."[265] The looted gold and silver would not only have been useful for building, however; they are also likely to have been used for Constantine's coinage reforms, which included issuing the *solidus*, struck at seventy-two to a pound of gold.[266] The impact of Constantine's plundering of the temples should perhaps be assessed in view of the fact that many shrines were already in a poor state of repair.[267] Evidence from Egypt suggests that from the mid-third century temples were destroyed, abandoned, ruined, or – as in the case of the temple of Luxor described in Chapter 2 – converted to other uses; and in Gaul following the invasions near the end of that century, many rural sanctuaries had been abandoned.[268] Arnobius, who wrote his *Against the Nations* probably after 24 February 303, observed: "The gods are neglected, and in the temples there is now a very thin attendance. Former ceremonies are exposed to derision, and the time-honoured rites of institutions once sacred have sunk before the superstitions of new religions."[269]

Constantine is also known to have ordered the outright closure or destruction of certain temples, but it would be wrong to imagine that this was an unwavering policy.[270] Despite the claim in the *Origin of Constantine* that the emperor "issued an edict that the temples of the pagans should be closed without any loss of life" and Jerome's claim that "the temples of the pagans were overthrown by an edict of Constantine," it was not, in fact, until Constantius' reign that a law of 346 officially closed them – and even then imperial policy was not to destroy the structures, which could be put to other uses.[271] On the occasions Constantine is said by Eusebius to have closed or destroyed a temple, it was apparently because a particular and urgent circumstance had been brought to the emperor's personal attention, so provoking his action. Sometimes these circumstances were not specifically concerned with religion but with morality.[272]

In 313, Licinius had the priests and prophets of the oracle of Zeus Philios in Antioch tortured and executed because the prophet Theotecnus claimed that the god had announced that all Christians should be cast out of the city. It is likely (but not certain) that Constantine closed the oracle at Delphi at about the same time.[273] These particular pagan holy places were singled out for closure because their oracles had encouraged Diocletian to begin Christian persecution in 303.

The Hadrianic temple in Jerusalem was demolished around 326 because it stood upon the site of Christ's sepulchre, a supremely significant site for Christians, and one that Constantine set out to adorn in unprecedented fashion.[274] Again, the destruction of this temple was provoked by specific circumstances: to have left the shrine standing on such a sacred site might have been construed as a display of favouritism towards the pagans over the Christians. Had Hadrian's temple stood elsewhere, it would very likely have been left standing.

Figure 178. Ivory diptych showing the Tychai of Rome (left) and Constantinople with turreted crown. Sixth century A.D. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (ANSA X 37 and ANSA X 38).

Regarding Mamre, Constantine's instructions that sacrifices should be forbidden, that idols and an altar should be destroyed, and that a church should be built are again to be explained by the fact that the site was uniquely sacred for the Christians (and Jews): it was there that God had appeared to Abraham.[275]

Other shrines were destroyed not because they had been built over Christian sacred sites but because immoral activities were taking place there.[276] Two shrines of Aphrodite in Phoenicia, at Aphaca and Heliopolis (modern Efqa and Baalbek in Lebanon), were singled out for destruction because large-scale prostitution had become associated with the cults.[277] Eusebius makes much of the devastation of these two shrines because, by recording the shameful activities that had been occurring there, he could tarnish the

reputation of paganism as a whole. The magnificent temple of the healing god Asclepius at Aigai in Cilicia, one of the principal sanctuaries of the god, was also destroyed. It was possibly chosen because it had an association with the pagan philosopher and popular wonder-worker Apollonius of Tyana, about whom the pagan Hierocles had recently written a work in which Jesus was compared unfavourably with him. Although Eusebius claims that Constantine himself ordered the army to demolish this shrine, in reality the destruction seems to have occurred in 326 on the initiative of the local bishop, who removed the colonnades from the temple to reuse them in the nave of a church.[278]

If Constantine's destruction of pagan shrines was restricted to a small number of specific sites, its effect was apparently not always long-lasting either. Although Eusebius states that Constantine destroyed the temple at Aigai, pagan activity is known to have continued there.[279] Even in the sixth century it is alleged that there was pagan worship at Heliopolis where Constantine founded a church.[280]

Antiquities

Constantine is said to have denuded the cities of the empire of their ancient statues and monuments so that the squares and colonnaded streets of Constantinople could be appropriately adorned. The sculptural collection created in the new imperial city can now only be reconstructed from texts and from a few archaeological vestiges, but the evidence is sufficient to show that the statues represented a wide variety of historical personalities and mythological gods, heroes, and creatures. In the Baths of Zeuxippos, for instance, there were statues not only of various poets, historians, generals, and philosophers, but also of heroes and gods from the tale of the sack of Troy. On display in the hippodrome were reused victory monuments (such as the Serpent Column from Delphi) and statues of generals and rulers (such as Alexander, Caesar, and Augustus); and in the Forum of Constantine stood statues of Aphrodite, Hera, and Paris, which together recreated the Judgement of Paris, the trigger for the Trojan War.[281] The statue of Constantine on the porphyry column may itself have been an antiquity that had been adapted to portray the emperor: a sixth-century source alleges it had been brought from Troy.[282] Its probable nudity has been described as "rather surprising" and "nothing short of astonishing" in view of "the well-documented aversion on the part of early Christians to the nude images of Greek and Roman art."[283] However, that overestimates the impact of Christianity on the choice of decoration in Constantine's city. The statue on the column must be seen in its context, for amongst the numerous other antique statues that Constantine gathered and displayed in Constantinople, a significant proportion must have been nude or partially nude.[284]

Some statues displayed by Constantine were bronze or gilded cult statues – that is, statues of pagan deities to which sacrifices had been made. A Christian like Eusebius could claim that the emperor had removed them from their sanctuaries and displayed them in public to be ridiculed by his fellow believers.[285] Yet, we would not be justified in blindly accepting the motives Eusebius ascribes to the emperor and in concluding that Constantine's urban displays were primarily meant as a statement against traditional Roman religion. A series of imperial decrees shows that the looting of statuary from smaller cities to adorn bigger ones was a widespread phenomenon in the fourth century, and one that was not just undertaken by Christians.[286] Nor would it necessarily be right to conclude from Eusebius' account that all the statuary was looted. We might imagine, for example, that a statue such as that of the historian and statesman Theophanes of Mytilene, made of bronze on Lesbos in 62 or 61 B.C., was selected and sent by the people of Mytilene as a gift to the city of Constantinople. Indeed, it may be that many cities were encouraged, and were pleased, to send choice works of art to advertise their connection with Constantine's new foundation – and such statues may have represented not only important individuals like Theophanes but also heroes and gods.[287]

Eusebius attempts to portray Constantinople as immaculately Christian, and his explanation for the presence of statues of pagan gods smacks of desperation. The inadequacy of the explanation is exposed by the contrasting pagan perspective of the poet Palladas, who draws attention to the paradox of the statues' survival, wryly commenting that the gods must have converted to Christianity, since otherwise their statues would have been melted down for coins.[288] While Palladas acknowledges the ascendancy of Christianity in Constantinople, he draws attention to the fact that the traditional gods are nevertheless highly visible. It is clear that Constantine compromised: he removed many pagan statues from their shrines, but rather than destroying them as Eusebius would doubtless have preferred, he exploited them for their artistic and propagandist value, displaying them in public, perhaps justifying this by claiming that the old gods now recognized the Christian God as the Supreme Deity.

In his accounts of how Constantine looted pagan statuary, Eusebius distinguishes between bronze and gilded works of art.[289] With respect to the gilded statues, Eusebius describes how they were collected by imperial representatives:

> Confident in the Emperor's piety and their own reverence for the Divinity, they visited populous communities and nations, and city by city, country by country, they exposed the long-standing error [of paganism], ordering the consecrated officials themselves to bring out their gods with much mockery and contempt from their dark recesses [i.e., from the temple sanctuaries] into daylight, and then depriving them of their fine appearance and revealing to every eye the ugliness that lay within the superficially applied beauty. They then scraped off the material which seemed to be usable [i.e., the gold], purifying it by smelting with fire; as much useful material as was deemed to belong to them they collected and stored in a safe place, while conversely what was superfluous and useless they allowed the superstitious to keep as a souvenir of their shame.[290]

Thus the gilded statues, once stripped of their "fine appearance," were returned to the temple priests. Eusebius has done his best to describe the treatment of these statues using the traditional language and imagery of iconoclasm,[291] but it is highly significant that the cult statues were not (or not all) destroyed outright – and, indeed, that the temples themselves were left standing. This suggests that Constantine's primary aim in denuding certain shrines was not the utter destruction of the pagan idols and their cults. Constantine, we have seen, stripped the temple buildings of metals such as lead and bronze to meet the material needs for adorning Constantinople, and it may be that the removal of the gilding from the cult statues was undertaken in part for the same reason.[292] That is not to say, however, that Constantine approved of paganism: textual evidence yet to be discussed clearly shows that after 324 the emperor openly expressed his contempt for it. The point is rather that Constantine is likely to have been astutely cautious about the extent of the actions he took against it.

Regarding the fate of bronze statues, Eusebius writes:

> the sacred bronze figures, of which the error of the ancients had for a long time been proud, he [i.e., Constantine] displayed to all the public in all the squares of the Emperor's city, so that in one place the Pythian [Apollo] was displayed as a contemptible spectacle to the viewers, in another the Sminthian [Apollo], in the Hippodrome itself the tripods from Delphi, and the Muses of Helicon at the palace. The city named after the emperor was filled throughout with objects of skilled artwork in bronze dedicated in various provinces. To these under the name of gods those sick with error had for long ages vainly offered innumerable hecatombs and whole burnt sacrifices, but now they at last learnt sense, as the Emperor used these very toys for the laughter and amusement of the spectators.[293]

Although Christians might have liked to claim that a pagan cult statue was deprived of much of its power once divorced from its temple, pagans held that statues of gods, whether they received sacrifices or not, were filled with the power of the god they represented and were able to intervene in the city's affairs.[294] Indeed, at Rome we know of pagan officials who were not averse to being involved in

the public display of pagan statues.[295] There, statues of pagan gods are known to have been moved to the bathhouses – and since religious acts traditionally took place in the *thermae*, the religious significance of the idols was not negated by the relocation.[296] Furthermore, the Circus Maximus, while not a temple, was filled with statues of gods (such as Castor and Pollux, Cybele, and Magna Mater) because their presence suggested divine participation in the entertainment rituals.[297] In Constantinople, statues of Zeus and Athena that had been put on public display outside the Senate House were buried by rubble when that building was destroyed by fire in June 404. It was said that the sculptures were later dug up unscathed, and that pagans interpreted their preservation as a sign that these gods would always take care of the city.[298] According to the pagan philosopher Porphyry, certain craftsmen could manufacture statues that served as divine abodes, and Maximus of Ephesus claimed that statues could be ritually purified to receive the god for the purpose of prophecy. By a technique called "theurgy" or "telestic," the statues were filled with a divine presence and became animated so that they could achieve miracles, such as predicting the future by means of spells, prophecies, and dreams. Divination by statues became standard practice amongst Neoplatonists.[299] There was a popular belief, shared by pagans and Christians, that malevolent powers resided in statues, and it was this that ensured the survival of many of them, since the Byzantines considered it best to leave the statues and their demons undisturbed. As a result, much of the statuary in Constantinople survived until the city was looted by the Crusaders in 1204.[300]

The emperor can hardly have been unaware of the power that statues of pagan gods would have retained in the eyes of many of the citizens of his new city, even when removed from their original context. That the statues were allowed to survive at all after Constantine had risen to become sole ruler therefore requires explanation. In the first place, the statues were important because of the powerful political messages they could be exploited to convey. They were the décor that was traditionally considered suitable for a major Roman centre, and they could, when programmatically arranged, make powerful historical and mythological allusions, portraying the new city as the rightful successor to Rome and Troy, and its ruler as a worthy successor to victorious generals and astute politicians.[301] The pagan gods were too much a part of the Roman world to be quickly forgotten, and Constantine clearly exploited their power as far as he felt he could.

Another reason for allowing the pagan statues to survive was their fine workmanship. Even Eusebius acknowledges the aesthetic qualities of the bronze statues of pagan gods, describing them as "objects of skilled artwork" – although he adds that the gilded cult statues were ugly once stripped of their gold. An appreciation of the aesthetic value of statuary in this period is clearly demonstrated by a law of 382 in which the Emperors Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius I ordered that a temple in Osrohoene in Mesopotamia be kept open so that the public could appreciate the cult images "for the value of their art rather than for their divinity" (*artis pretio quam divinitate*) – sacrifice, however, was forbidden. The law thus allowed the structure of the temple to serve its function as a gathering place for the citizens, thereby preserving the civic cohesion born of traditional worship and encouraging pride in the city's monuments and art.[302]

Evidence suggests that some pagan statues acquired by Constantine were not simply displayed unharmed. As we have already noted, the pagan historian Zosimus alleges that the emperor altered the statue of Rhea-Cybele in the temple near the Basilica "through his disregard for [polytheistic] religion."[303] This act, while disrespectful to the cult of Cybele, was presumably driven not primarily by a desire to show contempt for paganism but rather by pragmatism: why commission a new statue of Tyche when an old one of Cybele could be adapted?

Eusebius claims that there was some Christian statuary in Constantinople. He describes "the emblems (*symbola*) of the Good Shepherd, evident signs to those who start from the divine oracles, and Daniel with his lions shaped in bronze and glinting with gold leaf." We must be aware of the possibility that these descriptions reflect Eusebius' own Christian interpretations of what was in fact pagan statuary.[304] For example, Eusebius does not here refer explicitly to a likeness of Christ, only to the allegorical figure of the Good Shepherd, which was not infrequently used in pagan contexts to suggest philanthropy. Consequently, the cultic reference of the statue was to be inferred by the viewer, although that need not necessarily mean that Constantine did not intend a Christian interpretation.[305]

Textual Evidence

The issue of Constantine's personal faith is more easily addressed through textual evidence bearing on his own actions rather than through an analysis of material evidence. But, just as the monuments can be ambiguous, the textual evidence can be biased and difficult to interpret. As we have seen in the introduction, historians such as Lactantius and Eusebius were likely to put a positive Christian gloss on Constantine's actions or even to misrepresent them deliberately for reasons of propaganda, whereas pagan writers like Zosimus could portray them in the most negative light. The authors of panegyrical orations delivered to Constantine were constrained by conventions of a pagan genre, so the speeches give no overt references to Christianity and tend not to give clear indications of the emperor's personal beliefs. More significant, therefore, are Constantine's own decrees, speeches, and letters – although even in these cases we must take account of the audience to which they were addressed, the emperor's desire to please, and the extent to which others may have been involved in their composition. I have found it instructive to divide the following discussion of the textual evidence into two sections reflecting the situation before and after the crucial victory over Licinius in 324.

From 306 to 324

The End of Persecution

Lactantius informs us that upon the death of his father in York in 306, Constantine behaved as an Augustus by issuing legislation. He decreed an end to the Christian persecution in his domains (Britain, Gaul, and Spain) and restored to Christians everything they had lost.[306] In his provinces (Italy and Africa), Maxentius brought an end to persecution sometime between 306 and 308, although he did not allow Christians to recover property that had been confiscated.[307] The new official attitude towards Christians did not and was not meant to prevent pagans from carrying on as usual. The Gallic panegyrist of 311, for instance, did not hesitate to remind Constantine of his recent visit to Autun, when the people had decorated the streets leading to the palace and had brought out "the images of all our gods."[308] Furthermore, when the emperor met with a group of veteran soldiers in Gaul, perhaps in 307, his entrance into the headquarters building of their camp was accompanied by a cry from legionary prefects, tribunes, and *viri eminentissimi*: "Constantine Augustus, may the gods preserve you for us: your salvation is our salvation!"[309] This acclamation indicates that high-ranking soldiers held polytheistic views that they were not ashamed to express in front of the emperor.

In the eastern empire, by contrast, Diocletian's persecution edict of 24 February 303 remained in force,[310] and pressure on the Christians increased when, in 305, he abdicated and Galerius took his place with Maximinus as his Caesar.[311] We know few details of Galerius' maltreatment of the Christians in the Balkans and Asia Minor, but the persecutions in Palestine under the new Caesar Maximinus are well documented by Eusebius.[312] The situation changed briefly on 30 April 311, when Galerius, who lay dying from infection or disease,[313] confessed that the persecution had failed to persuade Christians of the value of traditional cults. Worse still, it had caused them to neglect their own God. He posted an edict of toleration, giving Christians the right to build places of assembly, thereby recognizing that worship of the Christian God could benefit the state in the same way as worship of any traditional Roman deity.[314]

Licinius enacted Galerius' decree in the Balkan territories over which he ruled, although he may not have taken the opportunity to go one step further and extend to the Christians in his lands the right to recover confiscated property.[315] By contrast, Maximinus, who succeeded Galerius as Augustus in Asia Minor, acted on Galerius' edict half-heartedly. Whilst Christians were no longer compelled to sacrifice, no provision was made for them to assemble or build churches.[316] By the autumn of 311, despite a letter from Constantine discouraging

him from persecution.[317] Maximinus had become more intolerant – not by promulgating an explicit edict of persecution, but by responding favourably to pagan petitioners who requested permission to expel Christians from local territory.[318] He is said to have actively encouraged such requests, and this would seem to agree with evidence that he toured major pagan shrines in western and southern Asia Minor not only to pray publicly to the gods but also to receive anti-Christian embassies.[319] To encourage the embassies he granted tax reductions to those who denounced the Christians.[320] We possess the texts of three rescripts in which Maximinus responded to such petitions (from the cities of Tyre, Arycanda, and Colbasa). Strikingly, although they respond to requests from different localities, they are all phrased almost identically, suggesting that they should be interpreted as copies of a general imperial edict or letter.[321] According to Eusebius, who preserves one version of this rescript, it deprived the Christians of hope.[322] In it, Maximinus firmly reasserted the view that it was the traditional gods who influenced world affairs:

> Who could be found so stupid or devoid of all sense as not to see that it is thanks to the beneficent activity of the gods that the soil does not refuse the seeds committed to it and disappoint the hopes and expectations of the farmer? And that the form of impious war does not rise up irresistibly upon the earth while the balmy air of heaven grows foul and men's bodies covered with filth are dragged off to death? . . . All these things, and things more terrible still, have in days gone by happened over and over again, as we all know. And all of them happened at once as a result of the fatal error implicit in the empty folly [i.e., Christianity] of these immoral people, when it enslaved their minds and by its shameful deeds came near to making the entire world suffer.[323]

The situation for the Christians soon changed. In the autumn of 312, Maximinus fought an unsuccessful campaign in Mesopotamia against largely Christian principalities that had rebelled against the persecution. Because of his failure, and on the strength of the victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge later that year, Constantine and Licinius instructed Maximinus to allow Christians to hold meetings and build churches.[324] Maximinus, in a vain attempt to reduce tension between himself and his Western colleagues, wrote a letter relaxing persecution in the East at the end of 312. Had it not been deceitful, this document would have brought a complete end to Christian persecution in the Roman empire.[325]

In the provinces of Italy and Africa, which he had acquired following his defeat of Maxentius, Constantine set out to reverse the effects of persecution.[326] A letter preserved in Eusebius' *Church History*, which the emperor wrote in the winter of 312–313 to Anullinus, proconsul of Africa, ordered that gardens, houses, and other property that had been seized from the Church be immediately restored.[327] In addition, Constantine began actively fostering the Christian community: he wrote to Caecilian, bishop of Carthage, granting him 3,000 folles to be distributed to Christian priests in Africa, and instructing him to request a further payment if this proved insufficient.[328] Another imperial letter written to Anullinus in February 313 excused clerics from public service, thereby ensuring that they could devote their time fully to worship of the Supreme Deity and thus make a valuable contribution to ensuring the welfare of the state. The privilege was not, however, extended to Donatist clerics for reasons that will become clear.[329] The letter should be considered alongside two laws that Constantine passed on 31 October 313 and 21 October 319, which granted similar immunity.[330] Licinius, too, may have extended such an exemption to clerics in the provinces over which he governed.[331]

The end of the persecution and the restoration of confiscated property cannot be taken to indicate that Constantine, Maxentius, Maximinus, and Licinius had each decided to convert to Christianity. All that can safely be deduced is that they were astute enough to recognize that, since Christians had penetrated the Senate, the imperial court, and the army, "no emperor could rule securely without the acquiescence of his Christian subjects."[332] Thus, like Galerius on his deathbed, they decided the best way to deal with the Christians and maintain

stability within the Roman state was to accommodate them and to treat them fairly rather than to attempt suppression.[333] This emerges more clearly from the so-called Edict of Milan.

In February of 313, Licinius and Constantine met in Milan to forge an alliance against Maximinus, which was sealed by the engagement of Constantine's oldest half-sister, Constantia, to Licinius. They also agreed on a policy of toleration for all religions and restoration of property to Christians. The meeting was interrupted by news that Maximinus had left Asia Minor, crossed the Hellespont, and launched an invasion of Licinius' territories in Europe. In April, at Hadrianopolis (Adrianople), Licinius defeated Maximinus, who fled to Tarsus. In his desperation, Maximinus again questioned his earlier treatment of the Christians, just as Galerius, in agony on his deathbed, had admitted the error of Christian persecution. In the following month Maximinus issued an edict reasserting that Christians should be able to practise their religion unhindered, and adding that all property confiscated from them should be restored.[334] He then committed suicide, with the consequence that Licinius' territories now extended beyond the Balkans into the eastern provinces of Asia Minor, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. Licinius swiftly issued an order for the destruction of his enemy's monuments and began a systematic purge of the supporters of Maximinus who had executed or harassed Christians. He also ruthlessly set about removing all possible dynastic rivals: Maximinus' wife and their young son and daughter; Prisca, the wife of Diocletian; Valeria, Diocletian's daughter and Galerius' wife; Candidianus, Galerius' bastard son; and Severianus, the son of Severus.[335]

It was no doubt because Licinius considered Maximinus a usurper, and his actions as invalid, that he thought it necessary to make a public pronouncement of his own regarding the treatment of Christians in the East of the empire.[336] Thus, in Nicomedia on 13 June 313, whether or not Constantine needed to exert any pressure on him to do so,[337] Licinius published a long letter in which he described the policy agreed with Constantine at Milan in February of that year.[338] This letter, traditionally but misleadingly known as the "Edict of Milan," was circulated to the governors of Licinius' territories who published it with an edict of their own.[339] It settled a policy on religious belief: all men, including Christians, were granted freedom of worship. It also ordered the immediate restoration of property earlier confiscated from the Church (although apparently nothing was done to compensate individual losses). Thus, it extended to the Christians in all Licinius' territories the benefits that had already been extended to those in the West by Constantine and Maxentius.

In the letter issued to the eastern governors, the policy of restoring Church property was not intended as an act of imperial favouritism but as a step towards ensuring that Christianity would in future stand on a level footing with traditional cults for the sake of securing religious harmony and divine favour throughout the empire.[340] Nothing can be deduced from the agreed policy about Constantine's or Licinius' personal religious allegiance beyond a shared desire to establish a peaceful coexistence between pagans and Christians and a common recognition of a single Supreme Deity.[341] The reference in the letter to the unnamed Supreme Deity (*summa divinitas*) presumably reflects, at least to a certain extent, a compromise between Constantine and Licinius, since the former used Sol Invictus to represent the Supreme Deity on his coinage, and the latter allowed only Jupiter to appear on his coins from 313.[342] However, both rulers clearly perceived the necessity of such compromise if their goal was to be achieved. Whether Constantine personally had a preference for Christianity over paganism cannot be deduced from the language of the letter. Nor can we know whether the agreed text hides a desire on Constantine's part to go further either in promoting Christianity or in expressing distaste for paganism.[343] It is probable that both parties were happy with the impartiality of the document. But whatever their private feelings, it was in the interests of both rulers to keep the peace by adopting a neutral stance.

The Donatist Controversy and Unity within the Church

In addition to reconciling pagans and Christians, the healing of divisions within the Christian Church was an essential requirement if God's wrath was not to be provoked, the emperor's position was to remain secure, and the state was to be saved. A major rift

in the Church was exposed soon after Maxentius brought an end to the persecution of Christians in his realms in the winter of 306–307. In Africa, the change in policy was followed by the consecration of Caecilianus as bishop of Carthage by Felix of Abthungi. However, the appointment had opponents, and at a council convened by Secundus of Tigisis, senior bishop of Numidia, Felix was found guilty of *traditio* (surrendering scriptures or sacred vessels to the imperial authorities during the persecution), the appointment of Caecilianus was declared invalid, and the lector Majorian was elected bishop in his stead.[344]

Constantine recognized Caecilianus as rightful bishop of Carthage, possibly because Caecilianus had seized the initiative by contacting Ossius of Córdoba to promote his interests at court.[345] The emperor made his position clear in the winter of 312–313, when he informed Caecilianus by letter that the *rationalis* Ursus had been instructed to give him 3,000 folles to distribute to ministers of the faith.[346] He also assured Caecilianus that if anyone – he presumably meant Majorian's supporters – should try to disrupt the Church, the proconsul and *vicarius* of Africa had been instructed to support his cause. In another letter, he instructed Anullinus, proconsul of Africa, to grant a valuable exemption from the burden of public duties (*munera*) to all those in communion with the bishop.[347]

The supporters of Majorian objected to the emperor's decision to recognize Caecilian, presenting to the proconsul a statement claiming that Caecilianus had not been appointed in accordance with Church procedure and denouncing his character. Constantine agreed to arrange a council to resolve the dispute, but he believed it would be improper for him to be involved and, as the emperor Aurelian had done when asked to expel the bishop of Antioch in 272, referred the matter to the bishop of Rome. As the council approached, however, Majorian died and was succeeded as bishop by Donatus, from whom the controversy takes its name. Convened at Rome in 313 and presided over by Bishop Miltiades, the council concluded that Donatus should be condemned for insisting on rebaptizing those whom he considered to be polluted because they had been baptized by *traditores*.

But Donatus swiftly appealed to the emperor on the grounds that the whole case had not been heard.[348] A letter purporting to have been written by Constantine in the spring of 314 to one Aelafius (perhaps the *vicarius* of Africa) in an attempt to settle the dispute explains the emperor's decision to intervene:

> I think it in no way right that such disputes and altercations should be concealed from us, when they might perhaps arouse the highest deity not only against the human race, but also against myself, to whose care he has by his celestial nod committed the regulation of all things earthly, and might decree something different if so provoked. For only then shall true and full security be possible for me, and hope of the best and most prosperous outcome always and in everything from the unstinting benevolence of the most almighty God, when I am aware that all men worship the most holy God by the due rites of the catholic religion in harmonious brotherly observance. Amen.[349]

Here Constantine is not suggesting merely that all members of the Christian Church should be in agreement, but rather that all mankind should share in the worship of the "highest deity." In this he reflects the thinking of Origen. Responding to Celsus' insistence that Christians should protect the emperor and the state by enlisting for military service, Origen expressed a belief in a far greater empire, an empire in which the barbarians would convert to Christianity and no longer pose a threat: "It is evident that even the barbarians, when they yield obedience to the word of God, will become most obedient to the law, and most humane; and every form of worship will be destroyed except the religion of Christ, which will alone prevail."[350]

One of Constantine's later letters, to Domitius Celsus in 316, sets out clearly his view of his own duty in religious affairs, and the attitude that he would adopt in approaching the controversy:

> What greater obligation is imposed on me by my own intent and the bounty of my sovereign, than that, dispelling errors and cutting short all rashness, I should bring it about that everyone displays true piety, simple concord and the worship fitting to God Almighty.[351]

In 314, therefore, Constantine decided to order a council to be convened in Arles, and attended himself – a revolutionary act from a Christian perspective, since participation at synods was normally limited to bishops and clerics, but a natural step for a Roman emperor, who, as Pontifex Maximus, was responsible for maintaining the peace of the gods (*pax deorum*).[352] In Arles, however, the bishops again ruled against the Donatists.[353] The missive that Constantine wrote after they had reached their decision contains a number of references to Christ, and reading it we cannot doubt that the emperor already considered himself to be a follower of the Christian faith.[354] He admits that "there were initially in me many obvious defects in righteousness, nor did I believe that the supernal power saw any of those things that I did in the secrecy of my heart. . . . But Almighty God who sits in the vantage-point of heaven bestowed upon me what I did not deserve." Of the discredited Donatists he wrote, "It was not without good cause that the mercy of Christ withdrew from these, in whom it is as clear as day that their madness is of such a kind that we find them abhorrent even to the heavenly dispensation," and he complained angrily to the bishops that the Donatists had already appealed to him against their decision. He set himself apart from the decision-making process and claimed that the decision of the priests was the judgement of God:

> They demand my judgement, when I myself await the judgement of Christ. For I tell you, as is the truth, that the judgement of the priests should be regarded as if God himself were in the judge's seat. For these have no power either to think or to judge except as they are instructed by Christ's teaching. . . . What are they doing, these slanderers of religion, who refusing the judgement of heaven have thought fit to demand my judgement? Is that what they think of Christ our Saviour?

This passage reveals Constantine's own perception of his relationship to the Church. He could be involved in and advise on Church matters, even attempting to control the agenda for his own purposes, but ultimately the decisions had to be taken by men of the cloth.[355] This was a position that Constantine would later adopt again in the Arian controversy, when he stressed that "the judgment of three hundred bishops cannot be other than the doctrine of God."[356] His stance gives plausibility to Eusebius' claim that on one occasion the emperor described himself as "a bishop" or "overseer" (in Greek, an *episkopos*) "of those outside" the Church. The assertion suggests that Constantine saw it as his duty to watch over the citizens of the empire and to lead pagans to Christianity; but at the same time it recognized a distinction between his role and the role of the Church.[357] Constantine's understanding of his role, as revealed by his complaint that the Donatists had turned to him to arbitrate, is not inconsistent with Eusebius' characterization of the emperor as (on occasion) convoking, attending, setting the agenda for Church councils, and firmly guiding, but not dictating, their decisions:

> like a universal bishop appointed by God he convoked councils of the ministers of God. He did not disdain to be present and attend during their proceedings, and he participated in the subjects reviewed, by arbitration promoting the peace of God among all. . . . Then such as he saw able to be prevailed upon by argument and adopting a calm and conciliatory attitude, he commended most warmly, showing how he favoured general unanimity, but the obstinate he rejected. There were even some who spoke harshly against him, and he tolerated them without resentment, with a gentle voice bidding them to behave reasonably and not be contentious.[358]

For Constantine to have imposed a decision on such a Church council would have been contrary to his purpose, which was to achieve genuine agreement amongst all the clerics who were present.[359] In Milan in 313, Constantine and Licinius had agreed a

policy promoting freedom of religious belief. It was therefore fitting for Constantine to guide discussion in the right direction and to be satisfied, as Eusebius puts it, to "put his seal on the decrees of bishops made at synods."[360]

The letter to the bishops at Arles contrasts completely with the policy of 313 in that it clearly suggests that the emperor's personal faith in the Supreme Deity is Christian faith. This contrast requires explanation. The reason is no doubt that the policy agreed in Milan was an attempt to foster empire-wide harmony and was to be published throughout the East, whereas the letter to the bishops was concerned only with concord within the Church and was distributed accordingly. Addressing Christian bishops, Constantine could openly profess his faith in Christ, or, looking at it slightly differently, would have felt it desirable to emphasize the compatibility of his faith with Christianity. On the other hand, in a public policy declaration (which, although issued by Licinius, had been agreed by Constantine) it would have been considered politic to refer only to the Supreme Deity to not alienate any of the audience.[361] "The whole letter," writes W. H. C. Frend of the missive to the bishops, "reads like a sermon," suggesting to him that the text was drafted on Constantine's behalf by a cleric in his entourage.[362] Be that as it may, the sentiments must have been approved by the emperor himself.

But although Constantine clearly considered his personal faith to be compatible with Christianity, it is uncertain whether Church authorities would have viewed his beliefs as Christian.[363] In his letters Constantine wrote as though he shared the bishops' faith, but in truth he had not received the necessary instruction as a catechumen. Indeed, in the *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, the emperor claimed that he had not taken religious instruction from any man, but had rather derived his gifts of character and conduct directly from God.[364] Furthermore, it is significant that, when the Donatists made the appeal to which Constantine reacted so angrily, they explained their confidence in the emperor not on the grounds of a shared Christian faith, but because his father, Constantius, had refrained from persecution.[365]

Constantine's words in his letters to Aelafius in 314 and to Domitius Celsus in 316 reveal his straightforward, if ambitious, desires that everyone should "worship the most holy God by the due rites of the universal religion in harmonious brotherly observance" and that he "should bring it about that everyone displays true piety, simple concord and the worship fitting to God Almighty." These were his aspirations not only for members of the Church but for all his people, and they explain why the policy agreed in Milan in 313 emphasized a single Supreme Deity. We may reasonably wonder, therefore, whether Constantine expected pagans to do any more than adopt a henotheistic outlook if they were to respond satisfactorily to his plea. It may be that, in 314, Constantine would have been satisfied if he could unite his people in a faith that accommodated henotheists and monotheists under a common Supreme Deity.[366] Indeed, such an aspiration would provide a satisfactory explanation for Constantine's decision to represent the Supreme Divinity on his coins as the traditional pagan god Sol Invictus.[367] Sol's image would have served to represent the Supreme Deity to the pagan audience, but at the same time, as we shall see in Chapter 8, Constantine may well have envisaged his luminous deity as compatible with the Christian God.

Despite Constantine's desires for unity of worship and acceptance of the decisions reached by bishops, his attempts to heal the Donatist schism failed.[368] The Donatists did not accept the verdict reached at Arles in 314, and when the situation deteriorated in North Africa, Constantine decided to begin persecution. He wrote to Celsus, the *vicarius* of Africa, stating that "people who incite and do things of this nature, so that the supreme God is not worshipped with the requisite devotion, I shall destroy and scatter." He went on to explain that those who suffered as a result would not be able to claim martyrdom because they were opposed to religious truth and violated the due form of worship. The emperor perceived resorting to such action as his duty to God: "What greater obligation is imposed on me by my own intent and the bounty of my sovereign, than that, dispelling errors and cutting short all rashness, I should bring it about that everyone displays true

piety, simple concord and the worship fitting to God Almighty."[369]

Constantine then ordered the confiscation of churches from the Donatists and the exile of their leaders. Donatus, however, refused to relinquish the churches, and as a result they were stormed by his opponents, who had been granted military support. The situation did not improve, however, and six months later Constantine resigned himself to the hopelessness of attempts to make the Donatists see reason. As the emperor's relations with Licinius deteriorated and war became inevitable, it became a priority for Constantine to establish stability in Africa so that he could turn his attention elsewhere. Furthermore, only by ceasing persecution himself could Constantine hope to cast Licinius in the role of tyrannical persecutor. Thus, on 5 May 321, the emperor finally wrote a circular letter to the supporters of Caecilianus, admitting failure and requesting that they show patience towards their opponents.[370]

The Panegyric of 313

The panegyric of 313 gives little indication of Constantine's personal faith, although it seems clear that the speech was addressed to a ruler unlikely to be offended by (and possibly receptive to) its henotheistic outlook.[371] The orator speaks of a Supreme God who has revealed himself to Constantine alone and who has delegated the care of lesser mortals to lesser gods. But this Supreme God is not identified with any of the traditional deities; rather, he is the "supreme creator of all things, whose names are as many as you willed the tongues of the nations to be (for what you yourself wish to be called we cannot know)."[372] Whilst the evidence of the policy agreed in Milan in 313, the inscription on the Arch of Constantine, and Constantine's own letters indicate that the emperor would have approved of the orator's references to the Supreme Deity, what are we to infer from the panegyric's mention of lesser gods? The orator clearly did not consider that such a reference would annoy Constantine, although it is significant that, in contrast with earlier panegyrics, the author avoids naming any of the traditional gods. It at least seems likely that the panegyrist knew that in 313 the emperor adopted an inclusive approach to religious thought and would not object to a henotheistic viewpoint that subordinated the traditional gods to a Supreme Deity.[373]

Official Appointments

Having captured Rome in 312, Constantine might have chosen to dismiss from his new administration all those who had been connected with the Maxentian régime. On the contrary, however, he retained the services of four pagans who had held senior posts in Maxentius' government.[374] C. Annius Anullinus, who had been reappointed City Prefect on the eve of the battle of the Milvian Bridge, was kept in post for just one month by Constantine, perhaps because he had been an enthusiastic persecutor of Christians while proconsul of Africa.[375] Aradius Rufinus, who had served as City Prefect immediately before Anullinus, was restored to the position by Constantine, and remained in office until 8 December 313. He is known to have dedicated a pair of altars to Sol and Luna in the North African city of Thuburnica.[376] His successor in the post, until 20 August 315, was C. Ceionius Rufius Volusianus, who had been City Prefect under Maxentius for a year from 28 October 310. Volusianus was also given the honorary title of *comes Augusti* and the ordinary consulship of 314. He was a member of the priestly college of *XVviri sacris faciundis* ("The Fifteen Men for Overseeing Sacral Duties").[377] Later, when Constantine returned to Rome to celebrate his *decennalia* in 315, he appointed a new City Prefect, C. Vettius Cossinius Rufinus, who was a priest of the sun-god (*pontifex dei solis*), a member of the college of augurs, and *salius palatinus*. He held the prefecture from 20 August 315 to 4 August 316, was promoted to *comes Augusti*, and appointed consul for 316.[378]

Despite recognizing the value of these pagan officials, Constantine was soon raising Christians to the highest ranks.[379] A Christian nobleman by the name of Ovinius Gallicanus was appointed as Rome's City Prefect for 316–317 and as Consul for 317. Gallicanus' selection apparently marked a turning point in the acceptance of Christians in these posts, although it is not possible to show that the City Prefecture or the Consulate was occupied by another Christian until Publilius Optatianus held the former post

(329, 333) and Flavius Ablabius the latter (331). Like the Consulate and the City Prefecture, the Praetorian Prefecture was a position reserved for the nobility, and in the East it was held for a lengthy period, from 318 to 331, by Junius Bassus. Unfortunately his faith is uncertain.

Thus, while the evidence indicates Christians entered official posts early in Constantine's reign, it does not allow us to determine whether Constantine began promoting Christians in preference to pagans at that time.

Sacrifice

It is said that Constantine consulted soothsayers (*haruspices*, who read the future in the viscera of sacrificed animals) regarding the wisdom of attempting to liberate Rome from Maxentius. The panegyrist of 313 tells us that the emperor ignored their advice against an attack, but nevertheless won a decisive victory at the Milvian Bridge. We cannot know whether there really were unfavourable pagan omens or whether the orator invented the story to enhance Constantine's reputation for daring.[380] Nor do we know whether Constantine sacrificed to the pagan gods when he entered Rome soon after this victory in October 312. The fact that the panegyrist makes no mention of a visit to the Capitol to sacrifice to Jupiter – saying only that the people desired to see their liberator so much that they complained when he entered the palace too quickly – can hardly be taken as a firm indication that no such sacrifice was made.[381] However, since formal triumphs were not celebrated after victories in civil wars, it is likely that Constantine tactfully refrained.[382]

Whatever the truth, evidence suggests that Constantine soon developed a personal aversion to animal sacrifice, although this would only become obvious to all in 326. When he marked the beginning of the tenth year of his reign (*decennalia*) in Rome on 25 July 315, Constantine would have been expected to sacrifice to the gods. Indeed (as we have seen), roundels on the Arch of Constantine, which was dedicated at this time, apparently show the emperor engaged in blood sacrifices, and an attic panel shows him overseeing the sacrifice of a bull, pig, and sheep. Yet there is reason to wonder whether these reused sculptures are misleading, since Eusebius mentions only prayers and bloodless sacrifices, saying that on this occasion Constantine "celebrated popular festivals everywhere, and offered up prayers of thanksgiving to God the King of all like sacrifices without fire and smoke."[383]

The Christians showed deep antipathy towards blood sacrifice (and, indeed, other forms of material sacrifice, such as fruit and vegetable offerings), but from the second century onwards, they were not entirely alone.[384] Some traditional civic cults are known to have practised bloodless sacrifices involving the lighting of lamps, the burning of incense, the singing of hymns, or praying.[385] In the third century, the pagan philosopher Porphyry, who attacked Christianity in his writings, claimed in his *On Abstinence* that the only offering worthy of a philosopher was a spiritual offering, and advanced various arguments against blood sacrifice. He believed that different forms of sacrifice were appropriate to different grades of divinity. The Supreme God, he wrote, should be offered only pure thoughts conceived in deep silence; the intelligible gods should be offered prayers and hymns; and the visible gods should be offered grain, fruit, and flowers. Blood sacrifices might occasionally be necessary for the placation of demons, but citizens should be wary, Porphyry explained, since the demons are fed by the sacrificial smoke and fumes, and they hope to become gods themselves.[386] Neoplatonists, Neopythagoreans, and Hermetists generally held such views and practised accordingly. Their philosophy influenced, to take one example, the cult of Apollo at Didyma, where, in a late third-century inscription, the god declared his preference for old-fashioned hymns of praise over golden statues and sacrifices of cattle.[387]

Such pagan views, although not widely held, should cause us at least to consider the possibility, suggested by Eusebius, that Constantine did not partake in blood sacrifice in 315. But even if the emperor could be shown to have declined, the question would remain whether he had done so having been influenced by pagan intellectual thinking or as a concession to the Christians.[388] And even if it could be shown to have been the latter, it still would not necessarily follow from his decision that he himself had turned to Christianity.[389] Constantine, it could be argued, refrained from sacrifice simply to avoid

offending Christians. In the wake of persecutions during which Christians had been targeted for their refusal to sacrifice to the traditional deities, Constantine might have considered it prudent for the head of state not to appear to be aligning himself with either the traditionalists or the Christians. Avoidance of sacrifice in 315 would have given Christians some assurance that the emperor was unlikely to reverse his policy of religious freedom.

From Eusebius' words concerning the celebration of the *decennalia* in Rome in 315 it has occasionally been inferred that Constantine must already have implemented a complete prohibition of sacrifice. John Curran, however, points out that this is an unsafe deduction, and that Eusebius may be contrasting the festivals attended by the people, which would have involved sacrificial rites, with those celebrated by the emperor, which did not.[390] In fact, the claim that a complete ban on blood sacrifice was in force in 315 is untenable, first because two laws passed as late as 319 ruled that sacrifice and divination were not outlawed if conducted in public, and, second because it was not until 323 that Constantine legislated against senior civil servants offering public sacrifices in the course of their duties.[391]

The laws of 319 prohibited soothsayers from practising their art in private houses on pain of being burned alive.[392] In this way the emperor attempted to prevent the secret practice of magic for evil purposes. Although Constantine was careful to make it clear that he did not outlaw sacrifice in public, he nevertheless expressed scorn towards the practice. In one law he wrote: "But you who believe that such practices are of value to you, may still visit the altars and shrines erected in public places and may still perform your solemn rites in the traditional manner . . . we do not hinder you from practising in public the religious obligations inherited from a past superseded practice."[393] In the other, he grudgingly conceded: "Those persons who wish to serve their own *superstitio* will be able to perform their own ceremonies publicly."[394]

The laws therefore portray private blood sacrifice and the examination of entrails for divinatory purposes as an old-fashioned *superstitio* (here meaning "a magical practice"),[395] but they give no unambiguous indication whether Constantine harboured a dislike of polytheism as a whole.[396] Since other evidence suggests that before 324 Constantine was not outspoken in his opinion on polytheism, the words of the laws of 319 may well have been meant to convey the emperor's distaste for blood sacrifice alone, but ambiguity regarding a wider aversion to paganism may have been thought useful in placating intolerant Christian groups.

The public (as opposed to private) practice of sacrifice by *haruspices* continued to be permitted by Constantine until at least 321, since in that year he decreed that the consultation of soothsayers was not only legal but also necessary if a state building suffered a lightning strike. Thus, Constantine continued to allow public respect to be shown for pagan traditions when the well-being of the state was in question. Nevertheless, in the same law he was careful once again to outlaw private divination.[397]

While the suggestion that Constantine had imposed a complete ban on blood sacrifice as early as the *decennalia* celebrations of 315 is unacceptable, there is also reason to doubt that Constantine personally rejected blood sacrifice at that time. Even if we are to trust Eusebius' claim that Constantine "offered up prayers of thanksgiving to God the King of all like sacrifices without fire and smoke," this does not rule out the possibility that he also partook in blood sacrifice: there might, after all, have been a combination of prayers and sacrifice, and Eusebius may, understandably, have chosen not to mention the latter. When the emperor returned to Rome to celebrate his *vicennalia* in 326, he refused to make any sacrifice at the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, arousing hostility among the Senate and people. Since we have no evidence for such hostility being shown towards Constantine during the *decennalia* celebrations, there is some reason to suspect that on that occasion the emperor in fact upheld the tradition.

Legislation

Constantine believed that it was his duty – as it was the duty of the ideal ruler of the philosophical treatises – to establish and uphold justice in order to retain the favour of the Supreme Deity and ensure the security of the state. He said as much in a constitution of 325 urging persons of any rank to approach him personally with proof of misconduct by any of his

retainers.[398] Constantinian legislation has often been described as having been influenced by Christian morality. Certainly, the emperor passed laws granting Christians powers and privileges that enabled the Church to increase its wealth and influence. For instance, as mentioned previously, Constantine granted clergymen immunity from public duties so that they should not be distracted from ensuring the security of the state by worshipping God. Nevertheless, it is in fact difficult to demonstrate – except in a small number of cases – that anything other than an adherence to a very ancient moral code lay behind Constantine's laws.[399]

One of the laws that might have been motivated by Christian sympathies was passed as early as 316. This prohibited branding on the face, on the grounds that the face had been created in the likeness of the heavenly beauty. Those who had been condemned to the mines or the gladiatorial schools were instead to be branded with their crimes on their hands or legs.[400] It is conceivable that this law was inspired by the text of Genesis, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."[401] If so, the influence may have been indirect, perhaps by way of Lactantius, who frequently referred to the book of Genesis in his *Divine Institutes*, a work completed in 311. There he asserted that "man alone of all living things is so shaped that his eyes are directed at heaven, his face gazes at God, and his countenance is shared with his creator."[402]

Another law, which is not preserved in our legal codes and is unfortunately undated, outlawed crucifixion. Aurelius Victor saw it as demonstrative of Constantine's humanity in contrast to Licinius' tyrannical acts; it might, however, be interpreted – as Sozomen later did – as reflecting Constantine's reverence for the cross.[403]

A law issued by Licinius in 318 apparently imitated an earlier Constantinian enactment that had placed new powers and greater wealth in the hands of the Church. We can gain an indication of the intent of Constantine's original legislation not only from Licinius' law but also from a clarification that Constantine issued to his Praetorian Prefect Ablabius in 333. The legislation allowed either party in a civil suit to elect to have the case tried by a bishop, even if the opposing party objected, and even if the case had already begun in an imperial court. It also declared that the decision of the bishop was to be considered final and to be respected by the civil authority.[404] Constantine's words suggest that his primary concern was not to increase the power of bishops but to ensure that litigants of the lower classes had somewhere to turn if a rich opponent hindered the trial with repeated appeals. In this way Constantine made allowances for the fact that judges outside the Church might not apply Christian morality when making their decisions, but at the same time avoided the necessity of altering the existing organization of Roman law to take account of Christian teaching. Thus, we see the emperor's ability to accommodate both traditionalists and Christians.[405]

Perhaps following the precedent of the Greek practice of freeing slaves in a public assembly or during a festival, Constantine made it legal for a slave to be freed (manumitted) in a church on condition that the act was performed before a bishop. The earliest law on the subject is lost, but it was reaffirmed in surviving laws dating to 316 and 321. The last law also recognized that bishops might free their slaves in their will, whether in writing or merely by word of mouth on their deathbed.[406]

Another law, published in Rome on 3 July 321, extended the existing methods by which bequests could be made to the Church. Christians were now permitted to leave their legacy to the Church merely by expressing this as their dying wish – rather like soldiers, who had long been able to make verbal wills as they lay dying, even if they did not speak Greek or Latin. The usual legal documents were no longer required to make a bequest to the Church, and the new legislation doubtless assured the institution considerable future revenues from the wealthy faithful. However, the law should not be seen as a special concession to the Christians, but rather as "a tidying-up operation, enabling the application of a long-held legal principle to a new kind of testator."[407]

In the *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius reports that the emperor changed the law so that any dying person could express his will in plain and simple words, without the necessity of employing prescribed verbal formulae.[408] The law he seems to be referring to was in fact much more limited, cautiously discussing the validity of written wills should their language

appear to be incompatible with strict legal usage: a will that was unfinished or did not conform to legal requirements would stand, but only if it benefited those who would have inherited by default had no will been made.[409]

The year 321 also saw the publication of a law concerning the observation of Sunday as a holiday.[410] On that day, state and judicial activities were forbidden and children and slaves could be set free, but agricultural work could continue to take advantage of the weather. In his legislation, Constantine referred to the day by its pagan name, *dies solis*, "The Day of the Sun." No reference was made to Christianity or to the *dies dominicus*, "The day of the Lord," which was the name that Christians gave to their day of rest. Yet the idea that Sunday should be a holiday was not connected with solar worship; rather, it was based on Biblical authority (God having rested on the seventh day of the Creation, and Christ having been resurrected on the seventh day of the week).[411] So, despite the terminology that Constantine chose to use, there can be little doubt that the creation of this holiday was a concession to the Christians – and Eusebius, as we would have expected, interpreted these laws in precisely that way.[412]

No doubt Constantine considered the language of paganism desirable to avoid this measure being construed as a singularly pro-Christian one: by speaking of the "Day of the Sun," the emperor could pass a law that would favour Christians and pagans at the same time, whilst giving no indication of his personal religious inclination.[413] On the one hand, resting on the day sacred to Sol would be pleasing for all pagans; on the other, a Christian such as Jerome could detect in the name *dies Solis* a reference to brilliance of the risen Lord: "And it is called the Day of the Lord because on this day the Lord rose victorious to the presence of the Father. When the pagans call it the Day of the Sun we welcome the name, for today the Light of the World has arisen, today the Sun of Righteousness has arisen with healing in his wings."[414] Thus, a Christian magistrate in Oxyrhynchus in 325 had no hesitation in understanding the Day of the Sun as the "sacred day of the Lord" (*hiera kuriakē*) when, at sundown on Saturday, he deferred hearing his case until Monday.[415]

In 320, Constantine began comprehensively rewriting the existing marriage laws to reflect the severity with which he regarded sexual crimes and the importance he gave to confining sex to marriage. Augustus had prevented unmarried men and women inheriting from relatives beyond the sixth degree of kinship, and had decreed that the childless could only take half of what had been willed to them, or a tenth of their spouse's property. Constantine removed the restrictions.[416] Eusebius, who describes the emperor's regulation, claims that it was inspired by Christian morality. He asserts that the emperor considered many of the celibate to be acting out of love of the Supreme Deity, and many of the childless to be physically incapable of reproduction and therefore deserving of pity.[417] But this is Eusebius' personal opinion of Constantine's thinking, and can tell us nothing about the emperor's real motivation. Indeed, when Licinius enacted similar legislation, Eusebius criticized him for altering ancient and prudent laws.[418]

In fact, the removal of restrictions on inheritance by the unmarried and childless was just one part of a larger edict by means of which Constantine hoped to free some of his people from a number of outdated and oppressive laws inhibiting their property rights.[419] Those who benefited would have been members of the senatorial aristocracy and upper classes in the West whose wealth and status made it likely that they would inherit from beyond the sixth degree of kinship. Certainly there would have been some unmarried Christians amongst this group, but it seems most unlikely that we would be justified in deducing with Eusebius that this was a purely pro-Christian law. Even if Constantine was partly motivated by a concern for Christian values, it is clear that the law was intended to benefit all members of the wealthy upper classes.[420] Whatever Constantine's motives, Eusebius' comments demonstrate that the emperor's actions could, if desired, be interpreted as addressing a matter of Christian principle, even if those who benefited were few and wealthy.[421]

Over a number of years, Constantine also legislated to prohibit unions between people of different social status, particularly between freeborn people and slaves.[422] However, these were not laws intended to halt a perceived moral decline by preventing

extramarital affairs, and therefore no specifically Christian influence should be inferred.[423] Rather, his laws sought to check the mixing of social classes and to reestablish traditional social and legal distinctions that had become increasingly indistinct during the third century. His purpose was to prevent children of slaves or others of the lower classes inheriting the rights and property of decent, freeborn people.

Christian influences might, however, be perceived in some of Constantine's laws concerning the sale and abandonment of children. In 322, it came to the emperor's attention that parents who were too poor to raise their offspring were selling or pledging their children. In two laws he instructed officials all over Africa to ensure that the parents be provided with food and clothing necessary for raising their children.[424] Christians had long denounced infant exposure, and Constantine's laws may to some extent have been influenced by their views. Yet in 331, a law was passed stating that once a father had rejected his child, all his rights and powers over that child ceased, and the rescuer could raise the child as a slave or as his own child without fear of reclamation.[425] This may have made parents think hard before exposing their child, and may have encouraged potential rescuers by reassuring them that they could not lose the investment necessary to raise the child. However, the emperor did not ban infant exposure outright, nor did he address the main concern of Christians on this issue – that the rescuer might raise the child as a slave prostitute.[426]

The Panegyric of 321

In the year that Constantine repealed the Augustan marriage laws, an orator named Nazarius addressed a panegyric to the emperor, describing, as we have seen in Chapter 5, a startling vision of Constantius leading heaven-sent armies to support his son at the Milvian Bridge.[427] As in the case of the panegyric of 313, it is difficult to make any deduction from the text about the orator's religious beliefs, let alone about Constantine's. The panegyrist frequently refers to a singular deity, and although the names of traditional gods occur in his speech, they are used merely for rhetorical ornament.[428] It is, therefore, not clear whether Nazarius was a monotheist, henotheist, pagan, or Christian.[429] Furthermore, we cannot determine how closely the orator's words reflect his own faith or his perception of the faith of the emperor. The most that can be said is that Nazarius is most unlikely to have promoted a view to which the emperor could not subscribe, but since the unspecific religious stance expressed in the oration is likely to have had broad appeal, that observation does not get us very far.

Conclusion (306–324)

The evidence we have assembled shows that between 306 and 324 Constantine implemented the principle of freedom of worship expressed in the policy agreed at Milan in 313. To satisfy both pagans and Christians, he referred to the Supreme Deity. At the same time, he did not openly equate the Highest God with the Christian God, and he made no explicit denial of the existence of lesser gods. When addressing Christian bishops, Constantine could emphasize the compatibility of his faith with Christianity, but the extent to which the Church would have considered his faith Christian is unclear.[430] Constantine initiated no persecution of the pagans, but in his quest to achieve universal recognition of the Supreme God, he was prepared to take firm action against any who threatened unity within the Christian Church. He continued to appoint pagans to the highest offices, although the selection of a Christian as City Prefect of Rome in 316–317 marked the beginning of a gradual change. He did not ban pagan sacrifice outright and may even have participated in bloody sacrifice, but he did legislate against sacrifice and divination being conducted in private. While some of Constantine's laws may have been influenced by Christian morality, few can be said to have been devised specifically for the benefit of the Christian community alone.

Keeping pagans satisfied was an astute strategy, since it has been estimated, on the basis of a theoretical model, that Christians, although they were growing quickly in number, did not constitute the majority of the population until around 350.[431] It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Constantine was prepared to retain the traditional title of Highest Priest (*Pontifex Maximus*), which would have implied to pagans that he continued to take responsibility for the pagan cults. In reality, the emperor may have delegated the traditional duties of the post, and, if so, the title and ritual functions associated with it must to some extent be distinguished from each other. Furthermore, if the title was understood as signifying the emperor's role in maintaining the *pax deorum*, then its use might have been considered entirely appropriate whether the ruler considered the state to be protected by traditional gods, the Christian God, or all of them. Constantine, therefore, may have retained the title for pragmatic reasons, since it was both familiar to the pagan majority but could nevertheless express his role as guardian of all the faiths that he held to contribute to the maintenance of the welfare of the empire, including both traditional religion and Christianity.[432] The fact that the title (or a modified form of it, *Pontifex Inclitus*) continued to be used by Christian emperors into the sixth century suggests that it was not inseparably linked with traditional religion, but was also considered an appropriate label for the highest priest of a Christian empire.[433]

After the Defeat of Licinius in 324

Examination of the written sources suggests that it was only after Constantine had achieved unrivalled control of the Roman world in 324 that his preference for, and indeed personal adherence to Christianity was expressed unequivocally in public. Licinius had decided to ally himself firmly with Jupiter, the traditional Supreme God of Rome (Figure 179),[434] whereas Constantine had chosen to represent his protector as the god Sol, whom he apparently connected with the Christian God. Never before had the religious propaganda on Roman coinage displayed such a sharp contrast.[435] After defeating Licinius, therefore, Constantine could condemn the traditional Roman religion as the religion of an enemy of the state. He no longer had any immediate rivals for power within the empire, and could therefore be much more open regarding his religious stance.

Significantly, Licinius turned against the Christians in his domains after 321 (if not after 317).[436] In particular, Eusebius alleges that he banned meetings of Christian bishops, exiled the Christians at court, prohibited Christian men and women from worshipping together, attempted to force Christians to meet outside the cities, and ordered commanders in the army to be demoted if they refused to sacrifice.[437] Exactly why Licinius changed his earlier position with regard to the Christians is unclear. A. H. M. Jones suggested that he had only been humouring Constantine when, in 313, he ceased the persecution and restored Christian property in the East; and Barnes described him as having had an ambivalent attitude, unable to commit himself firmly to either paganism or Christianity, ultimately losing the support of wary Christians.[438] It is certainly possible that Licinius gradually became concerned that those who had adopted the Christian faith might, in the event of war, prefer to support Constantine rather than himself.[439] If so, his apprehension is an indication of the strength of the Christian community at the time.

The fact that Constantine defeated an enemy who had adopted an anti-Christian stance allowed him to present his opposition to Licinius as a moral and religious crusade against a cruel and oppressive persecuting tyrant.[440] The pagan poet Palladas sarcastically explained the fate of Licinius by expressing the Christian perspective on the matter: "When a certain person [i.e., Licinius] hates the man whom God loves [i.e., Constantine], he exhibits the height of folly. For he clearly girds himself for battle against God himself, incurring supreme wrath for his envy; for one must love the man whom God loves."[441] By openly embracing Christianity, Constantine could present himself – just as Elagabalus and Aurelian had earlier tried to do – as the champion of a dynamic, enigmatic religion that might attract many converts. And since love and nonviolence were central tenets of the faith, Constantine could hope to establish on Christianity's foundations a peaceful empire.[442] One of the emperor's first acts was to order the burning of all copies of Porphyry's *Against the Christians* – a work apparently composed to justify the Diocletianic persecution – and to make it a capital offence to retain a copy.[443]

If Eusebius is to be trusted, Constantine prayed to the Christian God throughout the year at fixed times

each day, and marked Easter by holding a private vigil and by lighting the city.[444] Eusebius does not mention the emperor attending church, however, and one is left with the impression that his prayers were largely conducted in private within the palace.[445] Constantine is also said to have encouraged conversion. He allegedly tutored his own bodyguards in the faith, and, on Sundays, while allowing his Christian troops to attend church, he required those who did not believe to join together to say a prayer to an unspecified unique God, requesting safety and victory for their emperor.[446] This requirement demonstrates clearly that Constantine saw monotheism (or henotheism) as an important step towards accepting the Christian faith. It may have been the route he himself had taken.

Constantine's new openness about his preference for Christianity in the period after Licinius' defeat may partly explain why, in their writings, the pagans Julian, Zosimus, and Libanius present Constantine as converting to Christianity at about this time, whereas in reality the emperor's affinity with the faith may have been growing over a long period. Julian and Zosimus cynically attribute the conversion to the emperor's quest for purification after the crisis of 326, the year of the trial and execution of Crispus, his eldest son, and the suspicious death of the empress Fausta.[447] Libanius, although putting Constantine's conversion in the same period, provided a different reason: he claimed that Constantine realized that it would be advantageous for him to worship another god because funds could be raised for building Constantinople by plundering the pagan temples.[448]

The *Life of Constantine* leaves the reader with the impression that for much of his time following the victory of 324 the emperor was occupied with affairs of the Church. This no doubt results from the fact that, as bishop of Caesarea, Eusebius' personal concern was with ecclesiastical events. But although there may have been an increase in the proportion of time that Constantine devoted to such matters, there were certainly many other affairs to deal with, although most of them clearly did not interest Eusebius and are not relevant in this chapter. In particular, Constantine built a stone bridge over the Danube in 328 and began to reconquer lost territory beyond the river, taking the title *Gothicus Maximus*.[449] He conducted three further campaigns against the Goths and Sarmatians: the first in the winter of 332, after which he took the title *Gothicus Maximus* for the second time; the second in 334, after which he took the title *Sarmaticus Maximus* for the second time; and the third in 336, after which he adopted the title *Dacicus Maximus*, suggesting at least a partial reconquest of Dacia.[450]

Letters to the East

Soon after the victory of 324, Constantine wrote a long letter to be published as an edict throughout the eastern empire.[451] The letter is preserved by Eusebius in the *Life of Constantine*, and contains the passages discussed in Chapter 3 in which the emperor attributes his military successes to his observation of the Nomos, and the downfall of his enemies to their contempt for it. Such assertions reflect Constantine's view that all traditional ancestral cults were false religions, and that it was the emperor's role to show his people their folly and return them to the authentic religion of the one true God.[452] The letter orders exiled Christians to be recalled, and those who have been forced to serve on city councils to be relieved of the duty. Those condemned to forced labour are granted a normal life. Liberty, wealth, property, homes, and former social status are restored to all persecuted Christians, not only to the Church as an institution.[453] Although Constantine's behaviour towards the Christians accords with the policy agreed with Licinius in 313, we can detect in this letter an admiration for the Christian martyrs that was not evident in the wording of that policy:

> For a long time past it has been obvious to those of right and sound views about the Supreme, and to the absolute exclusion of all doubt, how great that difference is which distinguishes the correct observance of the most sacred cult of Christianity from those who are violently hostile and adopt a contemptuous attitude to it ...
>
> ... any who while undergoing the highest and divine conflict of martyrdom with fearless and courageous resolution were deprived of their property ... we decree that their estates should attach to their next of kin. ... But if no relative of any of the aforesaid should remain to become the rightful heir, whether of the martyrs, I mean, or of the confessors, or indeed of those who lived abroad after moving for such a reason, let the Church in every particular place be appointed to receive the inheritance. It will surely be no injustice to those who went away, if she for whom they underwent all their labours enjoys this inheritance.[454]

Figure 179. Gold *aureus* of Licinius minted in Nicomedia. Obverse shows frontal portrait of Licinius. Reverse shows Jupiter enthroned. A.D. 321. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1867,0101.886).

At about this time, too, Constantine wrote to every diocese in the East urging bishops, presbyters, and deacons to build new churches, or to restore or enlarge existing ones, and to request all the necessary supplies from the Prefect.[455]

In another roughly contemporary letter to the East, the emperor set forth a policy of maintaining a peaceful coexistence between pagans and Christians and of forbidding religious coercion and persecution.[456] This letter reasserts what had been agreed with Licinius in Milan in 313 but in quite different language:

> For the general good of the world and of all mankind I desire that your people be at peace and stay free from strife. Let those in error, as well as the believers, gladly receive the benefit of peace and quiet. For this sweetness of fellowship will be effective for correcting them and bringing them the right way. May none molest another; may each retain what his soul desires, and practise it. But persons of good sense ought to be convinced that those alone will live a holy and pure life, whom you call to rely on your holy laws. Those who hold themselves back, let them keep if they wish their sanctuaries of falsehood. To us belongs the shining house of truth ...[457]
>
> However let no one use what he has received by inner conviction as a means to harm his neighbour. What each has seen and understood, he must use, if possible, to help the other; but if that is impossible, the matter should be dropped. It is one thing to take on willingly the contest for immortality, quite another to enforce it with sanctions.[458]

It seems from Constantine's words that many Christians felt that Constantine's victory warranted the immediate repression of traditional religion, and that the tables should now be turned on those who

had formerly persecuted them. The emperor's rejection of such calls may well suggest that he looked for guidance to the philosophy of the Christian rhetorician Lactantius.[459] In his *Divine Institutes*, Lactantius argued against Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles*, in which the author found justification for the use of force against the Christians in the fact that they worshipped a human being.[460] Appealing to Roman philosophical tradition, Lactantius asserted that no threats of force should be used to defend any form of religious worship, since a true deity would expect voluntary devotion and reject forced worship, and since a true god would have no reason to love a person who did not feel love in return.[461] Pagans, Lactantius claimed, were demonstrating the bankruptcy of traditional cults by opposing Christians, who for their part should concede revenge to God.[462] Constantine seems to have been persuaded by such arguments, but whereas Lactantius had been urging pagans to refrain from coercing Christians, Constantine was now in the position of having to persuade aggressive Christians that true piety could not be forced on their former persecutors.[463]

Like the policy on religious freedom agreed in Milan in 313, this letter to the East refers to an unspecified Supreme or Most High Deity, and even its reference to the Son of God would have made sense to Christians, Neoplatonists, and Hermetists alike.[464] In contrast to the policy, however, the letter firmly rejects the "error" of polytheism and its "sanctuaries of falsehood" in favour of the "contest for immortality" and the "shining house of truth." Indeed, at the climax of the letter Constantine expresses an explicit wish that the stubborn pagans should see sense and be converted:

> I have said these things and explained them at greater length than the purpose of my clemency requires, because I did not wish to conceal my belief in the truth; especially since (so I hear) some persons are saying that the customs of the temples and the agency of darkness have been removed altogether. I would indeed have recommended that to all mankind, were it not that the violent rebelliousness of injurious error is so obstinately fixed in the minds of some, to the detriment of the common weal.[465]

Constantine's goal, like Lactantius', was worldwide unity of belief in a single Supreme Divinity, but he rejected coercion.[466] Rather, he urged: "Let those in error, as well as believers, gladly receive the benefit of peace and quiet. For this sweetness of fellowship will be effective for correcting them and bringing them to the right way."[467] In this way, whilst hoping that polytheists would eventually come to worship the one God and His Son of their own volition, Constantine strived to reduce religious tension.[468] Belief in the Supreme Deity, Constantine explained, was "neither new nor revolutionary"; rather, he believed, it had been required by God "ever since the structure of the universe was . . . solidly made . . . but the human race fell, led astray by various errors. But you [God] through your Son, lest the evil press down still more, held up a pure light and put all men in mind of yourself."[469] Constantine, like Lactantius in the *Divine Institutes*, expresses the belief that all traditional pagan religions represent perversions of the authentic religion of the One God, a religion that had existed since the beginning of time.[470] The emperor's personal belief in the error of paganism and in the saving power of the Son of a unique deity could not be clearer – and now these views were being openly expressed in a letter that was intended for publication throughout the East.

Sacrifice

Because of the tolerance for paganism expressed by Constantine in this letter, which explicitly (but grudgingly) allows pagans to "keep if they wish their sanctuaries of falsehood," some scholars have found it difficult to believe Eusebius' assertion that shortly after the victory over Licinius in 324, the emperor promulgated a law "so that no one should presume to set up cult-objects, or practise divination or other occult arts, or even to sacrifice at all."[471] We can accept as broadly true Eusebius' reference to a ban on "divination or other occult arts," since the *Theodosian Code* preserves a Constantinian law dated around 317–319 banning evil magic. However, it should be noted that this law explicitly permitted magic for positive purposes, such as to prevent rain and hail damaging vines, so it is not indicative of determined action against all traditional religion.[472] But what of Eusebius' assertion that Constantine also prohibited "sacrifice at all" after 324? Can we believe, as Eusebius claims, that Constantinople was purged of all idol worship "so that nowhere in it appeared those images of the supposed gods which are worshipped in temples, nor altars foul with bloody slaughter, nor sacrifice offered as holocaust in fire, nor feasts of demons, nor any of the other customs of the superstitious"?[473]

The assertion is problematic, since the *Code* contains no such Constantinian law, and since the pagan Libanius (who wrote around 386) claimed that Constantine "made absolutely no alteration in the traditional forms of worship" apart from confiscating temple treasures, so that "though poverty reigned in the temples, one could see that all the rest of the ritual was fulfilled."[474] The absence from the *Code* of a Constantinian law banning sacrifice cannot, however, be taken as an indication that no such law ever existed, since those entrusted with the task of compiling the *Code* for Theodosius II in the 430s failed to include much Constantinian material, and since the *Code* itself has not been transmitted to us in its entirety.[475] As for Libanius' claim, it might be rejected as a deliberate misrepresentation of the truth in the hope of influencing the Christian emperor of the time (Theodosius I).[476] Much ink has been spilled arguing this issue to-and-fro, but Barnes has defended the attention that the problem has attracted, observing that "a great deal depends on whether we accept Eusebius' clear statement that he [i.e., Constantine] prohibited pagan sacrifice. If he did so, then it is plausible to speak of the establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, even of a Constantinian reformation comparable in significance with the great religious movement of the sixteenth century."[477]

A number of laws relating to pagan sacrifice and temples in the *Theodosian Code* were evidently repeated in the now lost first edition of the *Justinianic Code*. This is demonstrated by an index to the relevant chapter of the *Justinianic Code*, which has been discovered on a papyrus. It lists six laws.[478] The first law that is listed must be of an earlier date than the second law (a law of Constantius II). However, this first law is not known from the *Theodosian Code* or from the surviving second edition of the *Justinianic Code*. It is tempting to suggest that this fragmentary index entry refers to Constantine's lost law banning sacrifice after 324, thus proving its existence. Unfortunately, however, there is no way of knowing to which law the index entry refers, nor of knowing whether that law banned public as well as private sacrifice.[479]

A law of Constans dated 341 on the subject of sacrifice is often adduced in support of Eusebius' claim that Constantine prohibited sacrifice entirely after 324, since it mentions an earlier law of Constantine as a precedent: "Let superstition cease; let the madness of sacrifices be abolished. For whoever, against the law of the divine prince, our parent [i.e., Constantine] and this command of our clemency, shall celebrate sacrifices, let a punishment appropriate to him and this present decision be issued." One interpretation of Constans' law is that it extended Constantine's earlier prohibition of 324 to the western empire, because the latter had never been enforced, and possibly never promulgated there.[480] While some scholars have claimed that Constans (like Eusebius) might have been prepared to overstate his father's resistance to paganism by citing a plausible but nonexistent precedent for his own law to give it greater force,[481] others have argued that Constans' ban in 341 on *superstitio* was directed at evil magic and private sacrifice, not public sacrifice, and that Constans was in fact reiterating his father's laws to the same effect.[482] This would explain why Firmicus Maternus, writing between 343 and 350, found it necessary to urge Constans and Constantius II to suppress sacrifice and to close the temples – a pointless request had Constans already banned sacrifice outright in 341.[483] It would also explain the fact that, in 353, Constantius explicitly banned nocturnal sacrifice (a practice that had been briefly authorized by Magnentius) without reasserting any general ban on public sacrifice.[484] And it would explain Ammianus' reference to the Prefect of Rome sacrificing at the temple of Castor and Pollux in Ostia in 359.[485]

Other evidence that has been advanced to support Eusebius' claim for a complete ban comes from Libanius' *Autobiography*. Writing of events that can be dated to 339 or 340, Libanius refers to the uncle of his

good friend Crispinus of Heraclea who "consorted more with gods than men on earth; despite the law which banned it and the death penalty inflicted on any who dared to do so, he yet went his way through life in the company of the gods, and he laughed to scorn that evil law and its sacrilegious enactor."[486] This has been understood to mean that Crispinus' uncle had been sacrificing to the gods throughout his life, and that the "evil law" is the one that Eusebius mentions as having been passed by Constantine after his victory of 324.[487] If that is correct, Libanius was lying when he claimed in 386 that Constantine "made absolutely no alteration in the traditional forms of worship" and here we have an example of Constantine's ban on sacrifice being flouted.[488] But the interpretation of Libanius' story is unfortunately not so certain. Libanius suggests that Crispinus' uncle led a secluded life, and it might be more plausibly inferred that he had been undertaking not public sacrifice but private sacrifice and divination, which we know to have been outlawed by Constantine on penalty of death in 319.[489] If so, the text is irrelevant to the question we are trying to answer.

Two other pieces of evidence taken to support the case for a complete outlawing of sacrifice after 324 are also subject to interpretation. It has been argued that the emperor's words in a letter he wrote after 324 to Macarius of Jerusalem imply that a ban was in force. Writing about the sacrifices being made at Mamre, Constantine asserted that the practice was "contrary to the character of our times." But again there is uncertainty as to what can be inferred, since this phrase need not mean "contrary to law"; it might simply mean "unacceptable."[490] As for Palladas' lament that under Constantine, pagans had been "reduced to ashes, holding to our hopes in the dead; for everything has now been turned on its head,"[491] it certainly reflects a reversal in the state's attitude to traditional religion and its followers, who are now perceived as irrational and foolish, but it makes no specific claim of a ban on blood sacrifice.[492]

It is not unlikely that Eusebius, in his *Life of Constantine*, sought to exaggerate the extent of the emperor's opposition to paganism after Licinius' defeat, and so made a fraudulent claim of a complete ban on sacrifice.[493] Indeed, it may be significant that the final edition of Eusebius' *Church History*, updated and published soon after the victory over Licinius in 324, makes no mention of the promulgation of blanket legislation against sacrifice. The reality may be that after Licinius' defeat Constantine passed legislation that banned only private sacrifices for purposes of divination. If that is the case, then he was merely extending to the newly conquered eastern provinces laws against private sacrifice and divination that he had already passed in the West in 319, probably in part to discourage dangerous predictions about the future of the state and the emperor.[494] This possibility would require us to believe that Eusebius was being dishonest, since the bishop clearly states that sacrifice was banned outright.

In support of claims that Constantine did not impose a total ban is evidence for public sacrifice having continued in both East and West after the alleged prohibition of 324.[495] For example, in a rescript dated between May and September 337, the Caesar Constans felt it was necessary to stipulate that a new temple to be dedicated to the imperial family at Hispellum in Italy "should not be defiled by the evils of any contagious *superstitio*."[496] Would such a clause have been thought necessary had Constantine already outlawed sacrifice in the West? As we have seen, the term *superstitio* was ambiguous, referring both to evil magic and more broadly to paganism.[497] Constans would have preferred no sacrificial act to take place in the temple, but he perhaps deliberately left the wording of his rescript open to interpretation, resigned to the reality that sacrifice could not be prevented. If so, the rescript could be understood by Christians as a ban on blood sacrifice at the temple, and by pagans as a bar only to evil magic.[498]

The evidence from the Hispellum rescript together with Firmicus Maternus' request to Constans and Constantius in 343–350 that sacrifice be banned has led some scholars to suggest that Constantine's alleged law against sacrifice in 324 was either not promulgated or not enforced in the West.[499] However, there is evidence indicating that even in the East sacrifice continued to be practised after 324 – although the examples are few and probably exceptional. For example, when the future emperor Julian visited Ilion (Troy) in late 354, the local Christian bishop showed him the altars burning in the temple of Hector and explained that the locals still honoured the hero with sacrifices. The bishop unlocked the temple of Athena where the cult statues were still safe and sound, and he reverently approached the temple of Achilles, which he had not damaged, contrary to rumours Julian had heard.[500] We also read in Eunapius that around 359 Anatolius, the Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum, visited Athens, where he "with great courage offered sacrifices and formally visited all the temples." The same author also records how Justus, the *vicarius* of Asia under Theodosius I (378–395), set up altars at Sardis, aimed to rebuild the temples there, and practised sacrifice and divination in public.[501]

It must be recognized that laws exist precisely because they are likely to be broken and are renewed because they continue to be flouted. Legislation and observation of the law are quite different matters. Thus, the instances of public sacrifice noted previously do not on their own rule out the possibility that both Constantine, after 324, and Constans, in 341, banned sacrifice outright.

Those scholars who have accepted Eusebius' claim of a prohibition on sacrifice have sought to reconcile it with the evidence of the letter that Constantine wrote to the eastern provinces soon after the victory of 324. Barnes, for instance, argues that there is no reason why the letter could not have been written whilst a complete ban on sacrifice was in force because it expresses not an acceptance but a scornful tolerance of paganism. The letter's guarantee that the pagans in the East could "keep if they wish their sanctuaries of falsehood" meant, according to Barnes, only that their traditional places of worship would not be destroyed; it did not grant them the right to continue sacrificing there. The fact that the letter makes no explicit reference to a ban on sacrifice is insignificant, Barnes contends, since sacrifice is not the subject of the letter, and the issue has been introduced incidentally. According to this interpretation of the evidence, while Constantine held paganism in contempt, he allowed pagan temples to remain standing and worship to continue – but only so long as it did not involve bloody sacrifice, which had been outlawed.[502]

Less convincingly, others have reconciled the law and the letter by claiming that, having banned sacrifice, Constantine was forced to rethink his hard-line approach following protests from influential pagans in the property-owning classes: the letter's statement that pagans could "keep if they wish their sanctuaries of falsehood" was a roundabout way of saying that not only the temples but also all the associated traditional aspects of pagan religion, including sacrifice, would now be tolerated.[503] If so, the law against sacrifice was only valid for a short period between the defeat of Licinius in September 324 and the writing of the letter, which appears to have taken place after Licinius' execution around April 325.[504]

The case for such a swift volte-face on Constantine's part presupposes a serious misjudgement and seems rather forced, but the observation that Constantine's words "let them keep if they wish their sanctuaries of falsehood" could refer not merely to pagans retaining the temple structures but more broadly to their continuing to practise traditional rites including sacrifice is particularly important. Indeed, in the letter, Constantine contrasts the "sanctuaries of falsehood" with the "shining house of your truth," clearly using both phrases to refer very broadly to pagan worship and Christian worship respectively, rather than specifically to the physical structures of temples and churches. Furthermore, Constantine asserts that "some persons are saying that the customs of the temples and the agency of darkness have been removed altogether." Here it is clear that Constantine is not referring merely to the temple buildings: these "customs" are traditional pagan rites, and Constantine says unambiguously that he has not put an end to such practices even though he earnestly wished to do so, and even though the likes of Eusebius were claiming he had.[505] Constantine expresses a similar resignation to inevitability of sacrifice in his *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, a speech that is generally dated after 324.[506] Therefore, although Eusebius wishfully claims that Constantine forbade anyone "even to sacrifice at all," it seems that he failed to realize that the letter to the eastern provincials, which he chose to quote soon after, provided opposing evidence from the emperor's own pen, and that in reality Constantine grudgingly allowed pagan worship to continue as it always had. Libanius may have been telling the truth when he asserted that, under Constantine, "though poverty reigned in the

temples, one could see that all the rest of the ritual was fulfilled."

In the absence of the alleged law and until further evidence emerges, it seems we must trust Constantine's own words and understand that he did not impose a complete ban on sacrifice. Barnes' claim that "after he conquered the East in 324 Constantine pursued aggressively Christian policies" should be tempered:[507] Constantine wished to pursue such policies, but realized the strength of pagan tradition and the likelihood of provoking Christian reprisals made it unwise to do so. Although it would appear that Constantine did not ban sacrifice outright, it is nevertheless conceivable that he issued a strong moral statement against sacrifice without ordering vigorous action against those who persisted in following tradition.[508]

Whatever the precise legal situation, it is clear that pagan sacrifice continued in both East and West long after Constantine's victory of 324. It is also clear that Constantine earnestly hoped that all his citizens would abandon the temples and the worship of pagan gods, and choose to join the ranks of the Christian faithful. If we cannot certainly speak of a Constantinian "reformation" – a disestablishment of the pagan cults by the banning of sacrifice – we can nevertheless speak of a significant reversal of circumstances with regard to the respective fortunes of the pagans and Christians. Describing the position in which he and his fellow pagans found themselves after Constantine's victory of 324, the poet Palladas blamed their situation on their decision to support Licinius, who had dared to oppose Constantine, the God-beloved emperor: "We Hellenes [i.e., pagans] are men reduced to ashes, holding to our buried hopes in the dead [i.e., the pagan gods]; for everything has now been turned on its head."[509] The tables had been turned, Palladas observed: it was now the pagans, not the Christians, who were being scorned for the irrationality and folly of their beliefs.[510]

As for Constantine's personal attitude to blood sacrifice, there is no doubt that he developed an aversion to it, which, after 324, we find expressed as an abhorrence. In a letter written to Sapor II of Persia, Constantine wrote: "I call upon Him [i.e., God] with bended knee, shunning all abominable blood and foul hateful odours."[511] Further evidence for this personal rejection of sacrifice comes from Zosimus' *New History*. The pagan historian claims that Constantine had the deaths of Crispus and Fausta on his conscience, and that an "Egyptian" who had come to Rome from Spain – presumably a derogatory or even truthful reference to the emperor's advisor Ossius of Córdoba – persuaded the emperor that he would be purged of his crimes if he adopted the Christian faith. Constantine took the advice and resolved to bring an end to divination in case it might be used to predict his own future. Zosimus then reports

> When the traditional feast-day arrived, during the course of which the army had to climb up to the Capitol and carry out the traditional rites, Constantine feared the soldiers and took part in the celebration; but when the Egyptian sent an apparition which unreservedly condemned the ascent of the Capitol, he withdrew from the holy ceremony and aroused the hatred of the Senate and people.[512]

After this, Zosimus says that Constantine could not bear to be insulted by the Romans and looked for a place to found a new city, at first building walls near Troy, and then, after a change of heart, at Byzantium.

Although doubt has been expressed about the date of the occasion on which Constantine refused to sacrifice at the Capitol in Rome, the context of the account leaves little doubt. The deaths of Crispus and Fausta, which preceded the event, occurred in the year 326, and the foundation and dedication of Constantinople, which followed the event, took place in 324 and 330 respectively. The occasion to which Zosimus refers clearly cannot be Constantine's entrance into Rome after the victory over Maxentius in 312 because the chronology forbids it, because it was not a "traditional feast-day," and because the arrival of a new ruler is hardly likely to have been an occasion on which the Romans would have heckled him.[513] The chronology similarly rules out Constantine's visit to Rome to celebrate his *decennalia* in 315 (even though Eusebius refers to "sacrifices without fire and smoke" in that year).[514] The occasion must therefore have been July 326, when the emperor returned to Rome to mark his *vicennalia*.[515]

If Zosimus is to be trusted, Constantine's refusal to sacrifice in this year marked a turning-point in his relationship with Rome.

Cities Favoured

In about 325 the inhabitants of Orcistus took advantage of Constantine's presence in the East to petition him.[516] They claimed that Orcistus had once held the status of city but had later been annexed to neighbouring Nakoleia and demoted to a village, losing its privileges and amenities. They asked for its independence to be restored, taking care to point out that their forum was decorated with statues of former emperors, implying that if the petition were granted a statue of Constantine would join them. In 331, Constantine formally allowed Orcistus to be reinstated as a city and granted it relief from the financial responsibilities its annexation to Nakoleia had imposed upon it – in particular the taxes for the maintenance of pagan cult.[517] In respect of this last concession, Constantine acknowledged in his response to the people of Orcistus that they claimed to be "supporters of the most holy religion." Although these words have generally been taken to mean that the people of Orcistus were Christians, they are in fact ambiguous. Perhaps in their original petition to the emperor, the people of Orcistus had been deliberately vague "to let Constantine understand their religious affiliation to be whatever he wanted to think."[518] Even if their community was largely Christian, they may have been uncertain about Constantine's own commitment to the faith: recent history had demonstrated that emperors could be fickle.[519] Whatever their faith, there was justification for cautious ambiguity. Constantine was possibly playing the same game, since there is no indication he probed the matter. He was obliged to be tolerant (but not approving) of pagans and was perhaps less concerned with promoting Christianity than with the prospect of promoting his dynasty by having a statue of himself erected amongst those of his predecessors in Orcistus' forum.

To be considered alongside Orcistus is Maiuma, the Christian port-town of pagan Gaza in Palestine. According to Eusebius, the town "formerly consisted of absurdly superstitious men" but "had in a movement of godly religion turned from its former idolatrous error." As its prize, Maiuma, like Orcistus, was designated a city, and it was even renamed Constantia after Constantine's sister.[520] The reality, however, was that paganism was not suppressed at Maiuma and the temple of Zeus Marnas was not destroyed until the early fifth century.[521]

Legislation

Eusebius claimed that Constantine took action against "defiling the cities by the carnage of gladiatorial combat." In reality, however, the emperor's legislation was less absolute than this suggests.[522] In 325, Constantine prohibited criminals from being condemned to the games and ordered that instead they were to be sentenced to work in the mines.[523] Since most gladiators were slaves or free-born volunteers rather than criminals, the measure would not have brought an end to the games, although it would have reduced the number of gladiators. In the East, Libanius seems to have seen no gladiatorial shows after 328, but in the West in 337, Constans permitted the people of Hispellum to celebrate the imperial cult with festivities that included gladiatorial games, and the practice continued for an uncertain period thereafter. Constantine perhaps shared the strong disapproval many Christians expressed for gladiatorial shows, but it is important to note that in the law of 325 he did not take the opportunity to ban the condemnation of criminals to death by wild beasts or by burning at the stake, as might have been expected if the decree had been primarily a product of Christian morality.[524] The final disappearance of gladiatorial entertainment may largely reflect a change in popular taste, and the gap was filled by chariot races, which became increasingly important.[525]

Among the Constantinian laws passed after the defeat of Licinius, a number governed the behaviour and treatment of women. The emperor decreed that rapists were to be burned alive without the right of appeal. A man who eloped with a girl against her parents' wishes would be unable to marry her, and she was liable to be burned alive along with anyone who aided the lovers. A nurse who encouraged her ward to elope was to have boiling lead poured down her throat. Parents who attempted to conceal that their daughter had consensually lost her virginity outside marriage were liable to deportation, and any slave

who exposed their deceit was to be rewarded. Girls who had been raped were also to be punished, since they could have chosen to remain in the safety of their home: they would be prevented from inheriting from their parents.[526] Married men were forbidden from having adulterous relationships.[527] A guardian had to demonstrate the virginity of his female ward before her marriage; if he could not do so, and could not also prove himself innocent of seducing her, he would have his property confiscated and suffer deportation.[528]

Some scholars have claimed that, in his self-righteous and angry insistence that sex be confined to marriage, Constantine was influenced by the high regard in which chastity was held within the monastic community.[529] However, Christian attitudes towards women were themselves a reinforcement of much older Mediterranean attitudes, which held that women should be constantly supervised to protect their virtue. Unsurprisingly, therefore, such an outlook can also be found in pagan literature and in pre-Constantinian legislation that was uninfluenced by Christian thinking, such as laws of Alexander Severus and the Tetrarchs.[530] In particular, such expressions of moral outrage are to be found in Diocletian's edict on marriage, in which incest was condemned as an atrocity fitting only for beasts and barbarians.[531] Thus, Judith Evans Grubbs has concluded that "Constantine was not trying to introduce a new morality, rather, he was giving official recognition to (and hence subjecting to legal regulation) a very ancient moral code which had persisted in many, mostly rural, areas of the Mediterranean for a millennium, and which can still be found in some areas today."[532] We must ask, however, why Constantine wished to promote this morality, and whether Christianity was a motivating factor. Although the possibility cannot be ruled out that Constantine was influenced in some way by specifically Christian opinions about the behaviour of women, it is clear that the harsh penalties for the crimes addressed by these laws are incompatible with the Christian religion.[533]

In 331, Constantine passed a law restricting the possibilities for unilateral divorce.[534] A man could only divorce his wife if she were an adulterer, a poisoner, or a brothel madam. A woman, on the other hand, faced the task of having to prove that her husband was a murderer, an employer of magic, or a destroyer of tombs. Again, some scholars have attributed this law to Christian influence, since the Christians were outspoken opponents of divorce.[535] It may be the case that Constantine was somehow influenced by Christian values,[536] but the fact remains that the most upright Christians believed that there was only one justification for divorce – adultery; and, indeed, that adultery *necessitated* separation. Christians would not have approved of divorce by mutual consent, which was something that Constantine failed to ban. Even if many Christians are likely to have considered Constantine's law broadly consonant with their own beliefs, the fact cannot be overlooked that most pagans did not approve of divorce either. Thus, this law may have addressed general popular concerns rather than issues that affected specifically either pagans or Christians.[537] It is possible that after the passing of a law in 320 abolishing penalties on the unmarried and childless, there had been an increase in the dissolution of unhappy marriages that had been forged to escape those penalties. With his law of 331, therefore, Constantine may have been attempting to slow the rise in the divorce rate.[538]

In the totality of Constantinian legislation known to us, both before and after 324, it is difficult to discern a general pro-Christian thrust, although a small number of laws may have been influenced by Christian thinking. It might be suggested that Constantine wanted to pass more pro-Christian laws than he did but trod carefully to avoid violent clashes between pagans and Christians. There was certainly a need for caution even after Constantine's victory over Licinius in 324, as is clearly demonstrated by the emperor's letter to the eastern provinces in which he explained that he would have ordered an end to pagan customs altogether were it not for the fact that "the violent rebelliousness of injurious error is so obstinately fixed in the minds of some."[539]

The Arian Controversy, Church Unity, and the Council of Nicaea

After the victory over Licinius, divisions that had long been developing within the Christian Church quickly opened.[540] The focus of a serious disagreement was a Libyan presbyter named Arius, who

was teaching that, while God was without beginning or end (and therefore neither born nor brought into being), His Son could not be without beginning since He had been created by God. Therefore, according to Arius, there had been a time when the Son had not existed. The Son was not of the same substance as the Father, and could only to a certain degree be called "Logos" ("Word") or "Sophia" ("Wisdom") because these were qualities that only God possessed to the degree of perfection. The Son was free to do good or evil, but in human form had achieved ethical perfection and could be designated "son of God" and "god," even if not true God. Like the Son, humans could potentially achieve perfection, become divine, and receive sonship.[541]

Several clerics objected to Arius' teaching and complained to Alexander, bishop of Alexandria. They argued, in particular, that if it were the case that the Son was not of the same substance as Father and not coeternal with Him, it would follow that He could not possess full knowledge of the Father to impart to mankind, and so could not accomplish salvation. Furthermore, they maintained that Arius' viewpoint was polytheistic, for if the Son was divine but not of the same substance as the Father then He was a second god. In addition, by reducing the Son to the level of a created being, Arius and his followers demeaned Him and overestimated themselves.[542]

The charge of polytheism was one that had been levelled at the entire Christian community by certain pagan critics. Celsus, for instance, had claimed that Jesus was not worthy of divine status and that Christians, through their excessive worship of Him, had in effect created a second high god.[543] Constantine's victory over Licinius may have brought an end to the persecutions, but Christians were keenly aware that the victory over polytheism remained to be won. It was therefore of serious concern to many Christians that Arius' views appeared to be polytheistic. Constantine, too, would have been worried: from his point of view a rift within the Church threatened the worship due to the Supreme Deity, and hence both his own position as the Deity's chosen ruler and the security of the empire. The question of the relationship between Father and Son needed to be resolved.[544]

In the spring of 322, Alexander convened a Church council of Egyptian and Libyan bishops at which Arius was condemned for refusing to accept that the Son was coeternal with the Father. Arius' supporters then began a letter campaign, urging as many bishops as possible to write to Alexander to protest against his treatment of Arius. Amongst those who wrote in support were some Libyan bishops, others in the provinces of Oriens, and those who attended counter-councils in Bithynia and in Neocaesarea. The Arians then produced a written statement of their faith and circulated it in the East to collect signatures in support. In the spring of 323, Alexander fought back by circulating a letter (called after its opening words the *Henos Sōmatos*) to bishops of Egypt and the Thebaid who had condemned Arius at the council held a year earlier. When they had signed, he used their support to persuade as many Libyan bishops as possible to sign a more carefully worded version of the letter, the *Hē Philarchos* or *Tome to All the Bishops*. The *Henos Sōmatos* was also sent to the clergy of Alexandria and the Mareotis to sign. Once signatures had been gathered from the most likely supporters, the letters were sent to more remote regions and to more reluctant signatories in the hope that they would be persuaded to add their names to the imposing number of signatures already obtained.[545]

After his defeat of Licinius on 18 September 324, Constantine was no doubt presented with petitions from, on the one hand, Alexander and his supporters, who may have requested another synod in Ancyra (modern Ankara),[546] and, on the other, Arius and his allies. Constantine, who aimed above all to establish religious harmony amongst all men, set about trying to heal the rift.

In late 324, the emperor sent his advisors Marianus and Ossius, bishop of Córdoba, to Alexandria bearing a letter addressed to Alexander and Arius.[547] In the letter, Constantine claimed that the differences provoking the dispute were trivial and ought never to have been expressed: "It was neither right to ask about such things in the first place, nor to answer when asked . . . it is our duty to shut them up inside the mind and not casually produce them in public synods, nor incautiously commit them to the hearing of the laity."[548] He offered his services as arbitrator,

since, with the help of the Supreme Deity he believed he could help shift the positions of either side so that they could reach agreement. For Constantine, unity of belief was the issue at stake, since the security of his rule, and hence of the empire itself, depended on it; he had no concern for the nuances of doctrine that had caused the rift. Constantine chose to place the greatest emphasis on the importance of shared belief in a single Supreme Being, urging that inner convictions on other matters be left unspoken and that individual differences be respected. The letter is lengthy, but the following quotations convey the essence of Constantine's point of view, and what he expected Alexander and Arius to do:[549]

> My first concern was that the attitude towards the Divinity of all the provinces should be united in one consistent view, and my second that I might restore and heal the body of the republic which lay severely wounded. In making provision for these objects, I began to think out the former with the hidden eye of reason, and I tried to rectify the latter by the power of the military arm. I knew that if I were to establish a general concord among the servants of God in accordance with my prayers, the course of public affairs would also enjoy the change consonant with the pious desires of all.

Here, then, Constantine indicates that, to ensure the empire's security, he wishes to unite "all the provinces," by which he means all men, in a single faith, and that he intends to begin by establishing unity within the Christian Church. Keen to find a solution to the dispute within the Church, Constantine next offers his services to Alexander and Arius.

> Calling first on the divine Providence to support my action, I offer my modest services as a peaceful arbitrator between you in your dispute. With the help of the Supreme, even if the cause of the dispute were of greater moment, I would still be able without difficulty to entrust the discussion to the holy intentions of my hearers, and so to shift each of them towards a more helpful position. The same approach, when the issue constituting a general obstacle is small and utterly trivial, must surely guarantee me a more manageable and far easier settlement of the affair ...
>
> ... the impulse of your quarrel did not arise over the chief point of the precepts in the Law, nor are you faced with the intrusion of a new doctrine concerning the worship of God, but you have one and the same mind, so that you should be able to come together in compact of fellowship. That so many of God's people, who ought to be subject to the direction of your minds, are at variance because you are quarrelling with each other about small and quite minute points, is deemed to be neither fitting nor in any way legitimate ...
>
> ... Our Great God, the Saviour of all, has extended the light to all alike; under his providence make it possible for me, the worshipper of the Supreme, to bring this effort to a conclusion, so that I may lead back his congregations themselves by my own address and ministration and earnest admonition to synodical fellowship ...
>
> ... On the subject of divine Providence therefore let there be one faith among you, one understanding, one agreement about the Supreme; the precise details about these minimal disputes among yourselves, even if you cannot bring yourselves to a single point of view, ought to remain in the mind, guarded in the hidden recesses of thought. But let the excellence of general love, and faith in the truth, and reverence for God and the religion of the Law, remain undisturbed among you. Return to mutual love and kindness, restore the whole people to proper bonds of affection, and you yourselves, as having purified your own souls, recognize each other again.

Such comments reveal that Constantine's personal Christianity was pragmatic. It appears to have

concentrated on the basics of monotheism, and the importance of ensuring the security of the ruler and the unity of the empire through correct worship of the One God. It was not concerned with the nuances of doctrinal issues: for Constantine there was room for differences of opinion about issues of faith, so long as those differences remained unspoken and did not become a source of division.[550]

Similar views on the importance of empire-wide unity under God were expressed by Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine*, a fact that again raises the issue of the extent to which the propaganda of Eusebius and that emanating from the Constantinian court were connected. Eusebius explained that Alexander of Macedon "died an early death, carried off by revelry and drunken orgies," and added, "At once his empire was divided, as each of his servants tore off a portion and seized it for himself." By contrast, however, God had honoured Constantine with a life of sixty years and a reign of thirty, and, with God's support, Constantine had tripled the size of Alexander's empire by defeating the "tyrants" who had rejected the Christian faith (Maxentius and Licinius), and by spreading the word of God throughout the world. Furthermore, unlike Alexander's, Constantine's empire would survive his death, since it would pass into the hands of his sons.[551]

Constantine perceived the threat of religious division as being as great as that of the recent political unrest that had ended with Licinius' defeat. In an attempt to resolve the Arian dispute once and for all, he decided to convene a council to be attended by representatives of the whole Christian Church in both East and West. Constantine's goal was therefore the ambitious one of achieving agreement and understanding throughout the Christian Church. He would attend in person, as in the case of the Council of Arles in 314, because his participation was crucial if he was to control proceedings and see to it that a consensus was reached.[552] The venue would not be Ancyra, the seat of a bishop who strongly opposed Arius, but Nicaea (modern İznik), which was convenient for the emperor and for participants from both halves of the empire: Constantine clearly considered broad representation preferable to the one-sided synod Alexander would have preferred.[553] In the event, up to three hundred persons – bishops, their secretaries, and associates – largely from the eastern provinces and the Danubian region, attended the council.[554] Among these were just two priests representing the bishop of Rome, who had himself claimed to be too old to travel, and who probably had far less interest in this controversy than the easterners. Of all of these, it has been calculated that eight bishops (including Eusebius of Caesarea) firmly supported Arius, and another ten were prepared to speak in favour of his views.[555] But support for Alexander, who was backed by almost all the eastern provinces, was overwhelming.[556]

That Constantine's primary concern was for agreement within the Church and for worldwide religious unity is indicated again by the speech he gave at the opening of the Council at Nicaea, a summary of which is preserved by Eusebius. The emperor claimed that the disagreement had grown out of blasphemous beliefs, and that these beliefs endangered the security of the empire. The rift had to be healed so that the clergy could attend to its task of announcing its faith in God to the unconverted:

> Let no jealous enemy ruin our prosperity; now that the war of the tyrants against God has been swept away by the power of God the Saviour, let not the malignant demon encompass the divine law with blasphemies by other means. For to me internal division in the Church of God is graver than any war or fierce battle, and these things appear to cause more pain than secular affairs. When therefore I won victories over enemies through the favour and support of the Supreme, I considered that nothing remained but to give thanks to God, and to rejoice also with those who had been liberated by him through our agency. When contrary to all expectation I learnt of your division, I did not defer attention to the report, but, praying that this too might be healed through my ministration, I immediately sent for you all. I rejoice to see your gathering, and I consider that I shall be acting most in accordance with my prayers, when I see you all with your souls in communion, and one common, peaceful harmony

prevailing among you all, which you, as persons consecrated to God, ought yourselves to be announcing to others. So do not delay, my friends, ministers of God, and good servants of the common Lord and Saviour of us all, to begin now to bring the causes of division between you into the open, and to loosen all shackles of dispute by the laws of peace. Thus you will both achieve what is pleasing to the God of all, and you will give extreme gratification to me, your fellow servant.[557]

The ecclesiastical historians Eusebius, Socrates, and Sozomen all indicate that Constantine's presence at the council prevented the proceedings from breaking down completely and ensured that a compromise was finally reached. With the exception of Eusebius, they also record that Constantine, in his eagerness to reconcile the two sides, pointedly refused to read the petitions either side had lodged against the other, and had them destroyed.[558]

Eusebius, who had been provisionally excommunicated by Alexander for refusing to support the creed proclaimed at a council in Antioch in early 325, brought with him to Nicaea the creed of his own Church of Caesarea. This creed, Eusebius implies, formed the basis of the Nicene Creed, but was accepted by Constantine and the majority of the bishops only after some crucial amendments.[559] These differences are best appreciated by comparing the two texts:

Eusebius' Creed

We believe in one God, Father, ruler of all, maker of all things visible and also invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God from God, light from light, life from life, Only-begotten Son, First-born of all creation before all the ages begotten from the Father, through whom also all things came to be, who because of our salvation was enfleshed and lived a life among humankind and suffered, and rose on the third day and ascended to the Father, and he shall come again in glory to judge living and dead. And we believe also in one Holy Spirit.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, Father, ruler of all, maker of all things visible and also invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, begotten from the Father as Only-begotten – that is, from the substance of the Father – God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of the same substance as the Father, through whom all things came to be – both the things which are in the heavens and the things which are in the earth – who because of human beings and because of our salvation came down and was enfleshed, became a human being, suffered, and rose on the third day, ascended into the heavens, is coming to judge living and dead. And in the Holy Spirit.

But those who say, "There was when He was not," and, "Before being begotten He was not," and, "He came to be from what was not," or assert that the Son of God is from another existence or substance, or created or alterable or changeable, these the universal Church condemns.

The revised text stated that the Son was "from the substance (*ek tēs ousias*) of the Father – God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of the same substance (*homoousios*) as the Father" and that He was coeternal with the Father.[560] It seems that almost all of the bishops who were present, beginning with Ossius of Córdoba and the two priests representing the bishop of Rome, signed the creed. Arius, however, found it wholly unacceptable, and he was anathematized together with two Libyan bishops and a few priests.

Eusebius of Caesarea, under threat of excommunication, was persuaded to sign. However, he then faced the embarrassing task of justifying to his congregation back home his acceptance of the revisions that had been made to his creed. Constantine, Eusebius claimed, had allowed room for interpretation of the terminology to ensure as broad an agreement as possible. That the Son was said to be "from the substance of the Father" meant, according to

Eusebius, only that He was from the Father, not that He was part of Him or part of His substance. And that the Son was "of the same substance" as the Father merely emphasized that the Son was of a completely different substance from created matter.[561] This was a tortured interpretation of the creed, but, Eusebius claimed, it was one with which Constantine himself had shown some agreement, and it allowed Eusebius to sign whilst retaining his fundamental view that the Son was subordinate to the Father. Constantinian ambiguity was a critical tool in the quest to achieve unity in the Church.

After the council had been concluded, Constantine wrote a report to the Church of Alexandria. It is significant that in it the emperor concentrated not on the details of doctrine that had caused the dispute but on the much broader issue of a unified belief in one God, which the dispute had threatened.

> Beloved brethren, hail! We have received from Divine Providence the inestimable blessing of being relieved from all error, and united in the acknowledgment of one and the same faith. The devil will no longer have any power against us, since all that which he had malignantly devised for our destruction has been entirely overthrown from the foundations. The splendor of truth has dissipated at the command of God those dissensions, schisms, tumults, and so to speak, deadly poisons of discord. Wherefore we all worship one true God, and believe that he is. . . . And may the Divine Majesty pardon the fearful enormity of the blasphemies which some were shamelessly uttering concerning the mighty Saviour, our life and hope; declaring and confessing that they believe things contrary to the divinely inspired Scriptures. While more than three hundred bishops remarkable for their moderation and intellectual keenness, were unanimous in their confirmation of one and the same faith, which according to the truth and legitimate construction of the law of God can only be *the* faith; Arius alone beguiled by the subtlety of the devil, was discovered to be the sole disseminator of this mischief, first among you, and afterwards with unhallowed purposes among others also. Let us therefore embrace that doctrine which the Almighty has presented to us. . . . For that which has commended itself to the judgment of three hundred bishops cannot be other than the doctrine of God; seeing that the Holy Spirit dwelling in the minds of so many dignified persons has effectually enlightened them respecting the Divine will.[562]

This letter, like the imperial speech at the opening of the Council of Nicaea, concentrates on the issue of united worship of the one true God, and on the disputes that had endangered that unified belief. Constantine was concerned not with the doctrinal issues (which he saw as trivial quarrels) but with the much more weighty issue of the stability of the empire. He was clearly not so much troubled by the claims made by Alexander and his supporters that Arius' stance rendered Christ incapable of salvation as he was by their accusations that Arianism, because of the radical difference it proposed between Father and Son, was a polytheistic doctrine.[563] Constantine believed that earthly government should imitate heavenly government. Since he was a monarch, claims that there was more than one God endangered his unique position and the stability of the empire. For this reason, Constantine may have been minded to give his support to Alexander rather than Arius. Constantine firmly believed that maintaining common worship of the single Supreme Deity was essential, since by failing to do so he would lose the favour of his protective god, and the security of the Roman world would be compromised.

There may also have been political reasons for Constantine giving his support to Alexander. Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicaea, two bishops who had firmly supported Arius, had signed the creed settled at Nicaea but had nevertheless continued to communicate with Arius and had offered hospitality to his deposed followers. Evidently feeling betrayed by their actions, some three months after the council Constantine exiled them. As bishop of the city in which Licinius established his primary residence in 317, Eusebius of Nicomedia had acquired considerable political influence. Constantine alleged

that Eusebius had been an "accomplice in the tyrant's cruelty," sending spies to his court and helping Licinius recruit supporters.[564] This claim has given rise to the suggestion that Constantine opposed Arius at Nicaea in part as a reprisal for Eusebius' collaboration with Licinius.[565]

The opening words of the letter Constantine wrote to the Church of Alexandria show that he was prepared to construe the Council of Nicaea as a complete success: "We have received from Divine Providence the inestimable blessing of being relieved from all error, and united in the acknowledgment of one and the same faith." The letter also reveals that Constantine believed the agreement reached at Nicaea had been inspired by God Himself: "That which has commended itself to the judgment of three hundred bishops cannot be other than the doctrine of God." The creed would therefore ensure the salvation of the Church: "The devil will no longer have any power against us."

In another letter to the churches, Constantine reported the success of the council in settling the dispute over the date of Easter.[566] The emperor was doubtless delighted that the unification of the Church had been marked not only by the settlement over orthodoxy but also by the establishment of a synchronized Easter celebration. In the letter he argued that it was immoral for Christians to celebrate Easter when the Jews, "that nation of parricides and Lord-killers," celebrated Passover. The same attitude is reflected in a law, probably of 329, in which Jews are threatened with being burned alive for punishing members of their community who converted to Christianity.[567] The law is perhaps indicative more of Constantine's desire to protect Christian converts than of his determination to punish Jews, since at the same time he was prepared to extend to Jewish leaders certain exemptions similar to those granted to Christian clerics. While the emperor loathed the Jews, an attitude clearly fuelled by his personal belief in Christ,[568] he nevertheless granted everyone – Christians, Jews, and others – liberty to worship as they might choose.

It was apparently in the period after the Council of Nicaea that Constantine published his decree against schismatics and heretics.[569] In this, the emperor complained that the Christian sects called Novatians, Valentinians, Marcionites, Paulians, and Cataphrygians "deny light to believers" and "rob human eyes of daylight itself." He stated that their actions could no longer be tolerated, and therefore prohibited them from assembling, urging them instead to join the universal Church. "The best thing would be for as many as are concerned for true and pure religion to come to the universal Church and share in the sanctity of that by which you will also be able to attain the truth. . . . It is in keeping with our present blessedness, which under God we enjoy, that those who live in good hopes should be led from all disorderly error into the right path, from darkness to light, from vanity to truth, from death to salvation."[570] Again we see the emperor's constant concern for unity of belief within the Christian community. We also see a refusal to recognize that absolute unity was a practical impossibility, a refusal that became manifest in Constantine's eventual decision to resort to persecution to achieve his ends, as earlier in the case of the Donatists.

Even though the agreement achieved at the Council of Nicaea was broad, it was not complete. Arius and his followers were still a cause for Constantine's concern, and the emperor earnestly wanted to see these lost sheep return to the fold. In the summer of 327, the supporters of Arius hatched a plot to unseat Eustathius of Antioch, who had been a firm supporter of Alexander. When rumours of a sexual transgression reached Constantine, possibly in October of that year, the horrified emperor had no hesitation in arranging for the bishop to be deposed at a synod headed by Eusebius of Caesarea. Eustathius was exiled swiftly to Illyricum, probably in great secrecy to avoid news of the scandal spreading and damaging the Church's reputation. There were riots in Antioch in protest against the bishop's expulsion, and rumours began to spread about what might have happened. Constantine, it seems, now began to doubt the whole settlement reached at Nicaea.[571]

The Arians took their chance and claimed that their leader had been misunderstood. Constantine wrote to Arius on 27 November 327, instructing him to come to court immediately by imperial post, expressing surprise that he had not responded to an earlier summons that had perhaps been made in mid-September.[572] When Arius arrived, Constantine demanded written proof of his orthodoxy. Arius and his supporter Euzoius wrote explaining their beliefs, emphasizing the unity of God and making carefully phrased statements about the Son's birth before time and His relationship to the Father. Astutely, they echoed Constantine's own appeal that "superfluous questions and disputes be cast aside," and reminded him that if they were readmitted to the Church they could participate in prayers for the welfare of the imperial family and the empire. They would be answerable to God for their faith at the Last Judgement.[573] Constantine recalled them from exile and considered their request that he negotiate their reinstatement into the Church. He summoned a provincial synod in Nicomedia in the autumn of 327, and the two clergymen were accepted back into communion at the emperor's instigation. Constantine's decision clearly demonstrates the extent of his theological flexibility: he was prepared to accept Arius' own formulation of the creed and to engineer his readmission to the Church despite the effort that had gone into establishing an agreed text at Nicaea.

Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicaea, the pro-Arian bishops who had been exiled some three months after the council, now felt encouraged to obtain their own reinstatement.[574] Their petition to the next council held in Nicomedia in the spring of 328 was successful, and they returned to their sees late in the summer of 328 having spent about three years in exile.[575] Eusebius possessed great influence and lost no time in rallying support against some of the staunchest upholders of the Nicene Creed.

Unlike Constantine, Alexander of Alexandria was not prepared to accept Arius' formulation of the creed, and Constantine wrote angrily to him in November of that year, claiming that he was both opposing the Nicene Creed and questioning the role of the emperor as the legitimate interpreter of that creed. He pointed out that as emperor he had been charged by God to work for peace and unity in the Church, and that the bishop should cooperate with him in achieving such concord.[576]

Although Alexander died on 17 April 328, his successor as bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, who was appointed on 8 June, continued to block Arius' reinstatement into the Church.[577] Arius became impatient, and wrote to Constantine attempting to force him into action by threatening that a full schism would develop if nothing was done. In Constantine's thinking, schism in the Church would endanger the stability of his rule, and Arius' threat caused the emperor to reply in fury and frustration. He accused Arius of deceitfully misrepresenting his doctrinal position in order to obtain reinstatement,[578] and he made it clear that he could not accept Arius' claim that he believed in just one God unless he could profess that the Son (the Logos) was coeternal with the Father. The emperor summoned Arius to an interview to investigate his true faith, claiming to have a Christlike capacity to detect and heal any aberrations of faith.[579] Arius failed to attend, and Constantine condemned Arianism as anti-Christian.[580]

The emperor's stance was to alter again, however. Just a year later in 334 he called a council at Caesarea to investigate serious accusations made by pro-Arians against Athanasius. These accusations appear to have been directed at Athanasius' character rather than at his theological stance; nevertheless they threatened the unity of the Church. Athanasius, who was apparently accused of sacrilege, fornication, and murder, refused to attend the council,[581] and when Arius and others wrote to Constantine with further charges of violence and intimidation, the emperor felt compelled to arrange another council the following year, this time at Tyre.[582]

The year 335 was Constantine's thirtieth anniversary year, and he wished to see religious unification at all costs. In the letter summoning the council, he again remarked on the dangers of divisions in the Church. If the emperor was to be freed from his worries about the empire, God had to be pleased, and this required both harmony within the Church and integration of those who stood outside the Church. Constantine was blunt about what he expected the bishops to accomplish:

> Finally it shall be your Holiness' task, by unanimous verdict, pursuing neither enmity nor favour but in accordance with the ecclesiastical and apostolic canon, to discover the proper remedy for the offences committed or mistakes if they have been made, so that

you may free the Church of all malicious criticism, relieve my anxiety, and, by restoring the blessing of peace to those now at variance, win for yourselves highest fame.[583]

For the sake of establishing unity, the emperor insisted that the council accept the reinstatement of the Arians, whose faith, he asserted, was orthodox, despite attempts by enemies to discredit it. Again, it is clear that Constantine saw himself as the interpreter and arbitrator of doctrine. However, his task was made much easier by the fact that most of the attendant bishops were sympathetic to the Arian cause. A list of those to be invited to the council had been drawn up for the emperor by Eusebius of Caesarea or one of his pro-Arian friends, so that the attendees were partisan, having been carefully chosen to secure the reinstatement of Arius and the condemnation of Athanasius.[584]

A degree of concord having been reached, the synod was suspended in September 335 whilst the delegates travelled to Jerusalem to dedicate the church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was now complete, having been under construction for almost a decade. There, numerous orations were delivered concerning the emperor's devotion to Christ and the magnificence of the newly completed church.[585] The ceremonies may well have begun on 13 September, the ancient Roman festival of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, to demonstrate that the completion of the building project marked Christ's victory over the traditional Supreme Deity of Rome. The symbolic connection between the agreement achieved at Tyre and the dedication of the church at the heart of the Holy Land was not lost on Eusebius, who wrote that the assembly "beautified the third decade [of the emperor's rule], as the Emperor consecrated the martyrion to God, the Giver of all good things, as a peace-time dedication around the Saviour's tomb."[586]

When the bishops returned to Tyre, they found Athanasius guilty. Athanasius, however, fled to Constantinople for a personal audience with the emperor, and in his absence the bishops removed him from his see. Athanasius claimed that the resolutions passed at Tyre were unjust and based on false accusations, and Constantine, concerned to achieve unity within the Church, summoned the bishops from Tyre to Constantinople to debate the matter.[587] The Fathers, however, decided that only six of them should go to the capital, including Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea. The bishops apparently presented an extremely strong case against Athanasius, including a new accusation that he had threatened to stop the vital Alexandrian grain ships sailing to Constantinople.[588] The emperor, convinced Athanasius was a threat to political and religious stability, exiled him to Gaul on 7 November 335.[589] On this visit to Constantinople, Eusebius of Caesarea read an oration on the church of the Holy Sepulchre in the presence of the emperor, and it may have been at this time (if not at the earlier Council of Nicaea) that he heard Constantine's accounts of his vision and of the creation of his standard.[590]

Even with Athanasius in exile, it proved impossible for Arius to be reinstated in Alexandria, so Constantine summoned him to Constantinople. Arius gave further professions of his orthodoxy to the emperor, who then asked the bishop of Constantinople to accept him into the Church. Although the bishop at first refused, he was forced to acquiesce by Eusebius of Nicomedia.[591] However, on 24 July 336, the day before his reinstatement ceremony, Arius died miserably in a public lavatory near the Forum of Constantine.

The Arian controversy deserves close attention because it gives clear insight into Constantine's personal faith. The emperor had no desire to take sides in the doctrinal dispute between Alexander and Arius, since he perceived most of the issues at stake to be trivial matters of philosophy that were hardly a cause for serious disagreement. His personal concern was to resolve the dispute and establish a Church united in the worship of a single Supreme Deity. This was imperative for two reasons: first, because the Deity ensured the security of both the empire and the emperor, and second because any suggestion of the existence of a plurality of deities threatened Constantine's earthly monarchy, which claimed to be modelled on heavenly government. The difficulty for Constantine was that Arius, Alexander, and their respective supporters took the nuances of doctrine far more seriously, so that, although Constantine could perceive common ground sufficient for concord, they could not. Although Constantine presented the council as a success, his hope that all the bishops would achieve complete agreement failed. Arius' condemnation remained problematic, and Constantine still hoped to win him round. He required only that Arius convince him that he was a monotheist, which would have obliged Arius to state that the Son was coeternal with the Father. Ultimately, Arius was readmitted to the Church, but this was largely because of the emperor's own unilateral actions, his personal interpretation of the creed, and his influence over the unrepresentative Council of Tyre in 335, rather than because he had achieved the universal agreement of bishops that he had initially hoped to achieve.

The *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*

In this discussion of the evidence for Constantine's personal beliefs I have left until now the important and lengthy *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints* because its date is the subject of scholarly controversy. The disagreement is unfortunate, since, despite earlier doubts, most scholars now accept the speech as a genuine work of Constantine himself, and if we knew its historical context we could more easily trace the development of Constantine's thought.[592] The oration begins by extolling monotheism on the grounds that it maintains harmony in the universe; it goes on to describe how Christ directed mankind to heaven through His teaching, suffering, and resurrection; next Constantine describes how the persecuting emperors were punished by God, and he concludes by praising Christ.

Hints within the speech about the historical context in which it was written have been interpreted in different ways by different scholars, who have consequently proposed various venues for its presentation and diverse dates for its composition. Eusebius mentions that this oration was composed in Latin and then translated into Greek, and he says that this process was usual at Constantine's court.[593] He does not, however, clearly indicate whether the speech was first delivered in Latin, or whether the emperor composed it in Latin for his own convenience before having the Greek translation made immediately for delivery. Mark Edwards argues that, since the theology is western and since the speech contains a text of, and commentary on, Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*, it was almost certainly read in Latin to a Latin audience.[594] If that inference were correct, it would suggest that the oration was written at an early date, probably before Constantine shifted his residence from Rome to Serdica in 316, and almost certainly before he moved to Constantinople in 324, although it must be recognized that Constantine did visit Rome for his *vicennalia* in 326. On the other hand, the speech's content and the fact that it was composed in Latin may say more about the author's own interests and his inability to write sophisticated Greek than about the audience for whom it was intended. In that case, the translation into Greek preserved by Eusebius may have been made immediately after the speech was composed in preparation for its delivery to an eastern audience.[595]

Without entering into a detailed discussion of the evidence bearing on the speech's date, we may mention the most significant clues. In Chapter 25 of the oration we hear how "the whole army of the aforesaid king [i.e., Diocletian], having been subjected to the authority of some good-for-nothing who had seized the Roman rulership by force, was exterminated by many wars of all kinds when the great city was being delivered by God's providence."[596] An understanding of this passage is crucial for establishing the earliest date at which the oration might have been delivered.

The identifications of both the "good-for-nothing" and the "great city" are uncertain.[597] Is the "good-for-nothing" – as argued by Edwards – Maximinus Daza, who ruled Syria and Egypt as Caesar to Galerius from 305 and who also controlled Asia Minor from Galerius' death in May 311 until his defeat by Licinius in 313?[598] Or is he – as claimed by Barnes, Robin Lane Fox, and Bruno Bleckmann – Licinius, who won from Maximinus all the territory that Diocletian and Galerius had ruled between 293 and 305 and who was finally defeated by Constantine in 324?[599]

Taking the historical details literally, it appears that Licinius is more likely to be the usurper alluded to. The part of Diocletian's army that had come under Maximinus' control was not "exterminated" when Licinius defeated him in 313; rather, it passed into Licinius' hands. Licinius, therefore,

might be said to have controlled "the whole army" of Diocletian, and this army might be said to have been "exterminated" when Constantine defeated Licinius at Chrysopolis in 324. After his defeat, Licinius' memory was damned and he might therefore have been said to have "seized the Roman rulership by force," particularly since he had overthrown Maximinus, a legitimate Augustus in the East, in 313. If, therefore, the "good-for-nothing" is indeed to be identified as Licinius, then the "great city" might well be the imperial capital at Nicomedia, liberated soon after Constantine's victory.[600]

However, despite Barnes' bold assertion that it is "pointless to waste space" considering other possibilities, it must be acknowledged that we cannot be absolutely confident that the allusion has been correctly understood.[601] We must be alert to potential exaggeration in this passage of the oration, for which reason the possibility that Maximinus is the "good-for-nothing" cannot be absolutely ruled out. Maximinus did, after all, command a portion of Diocletian's forces, and those forces were defeated (if not completely "exterminated") by Licinius in the summer of 313. Furthermore, Constantine and Licinius perceived Maximinus as a common enemy, demonstrating their joint opposition by the marriage of Constantine's sister, Constantia, to Licinius in Milan in early 313.[602] After his defeat, Maximinus' memory was damned and it is not unlikely that he would have been described as having "seized the Roman rulership by force."

The case for Maximinus may appear weaker, yet by identifying him as the "good-for-nothing" it would seem that we can more easily suggest a solution to the reference to the "great city." It is clearly stated that the extermination of the army of the "good-for-nothing" took place "when the great city was being delivered by God's providence." The exterminator of the army of the "good-for-nothing" has generally been assumed to be the same as the liberator of the "great city,"[603] but this is not necessarily the case. Assuming the "good-for-nothing" is Maximinus, Constantine's observation that his defeat occurred "when the great city was being delivered by God's providence" could plausibly be explained as a comparison of events in the eastern and western parts of the empire. The delivery of the "great city" might well refer to Constantine's own liberation of Rome from Maxentius, which had taken place in 312 just six months before Licinius defeated Maximinus in the East. Rome was indeed "delivered by God's providence," for the victory was commemorated with a statue of the emperor inscribed to the effect that the liberation of the city had been achieved with the aid of the "saving sign" of Constantine's protective deity.[604]

In conclusion, if the "good-for-nothing" of Chapter 25 of the *Oration* is Licinius, as the greater weight of scholarly opinion currently believes, then Constantine's speech can be dated no earlier than the former's overthrow in 324. On the other hand, if the usurper is Maximinus, a much earlier date would be possible.

Attention must therefore turn to Chapter 22 of the *Oration*. Here the "great city" is mentioned again, and its people are said to praise Constantine's victories over his enemies with acclamations. Constantine adds:

> The people of the most dear city approve, even if it was deceived by unsafe hopes into choosing a protector unworthy of it, who was suddenly overtaken in a fitting manner worthy of his atrocities, one that it is not right to recall, least of all for me as I speak with you and strive with all solicitude to address you with holy and auspicious speech.[605]

The "unworthy protector" is identified in the chapter heading as Maximinus. Assuming that the heading is reliable (and Barnes has argued for its authenticity and historical accuracy),[606] it seems likely that "the most dear city" is to be identified as Nicomedia, which welcomed Maximinus in the summer of 311 and hosted him until January 312.[607] Since Constantine gives the impression that he is addressing the people of "the most dear city," it would seem that the speech was delivered in Nicomedia. And since Constantine controlled Nicomedia only after his defeat of Licinius in 324, this passage, if correctly interpreted, provides crucial evidence for the earliest date at which the speech could have been written. The speech's opening lines indicate it was read at Easter ("the day of the passion is here") and Barnes has argued for its delivery before Nicomedia's bishop and Christian congregation on 16 or 17 April in 325.[608]

The question of date is important because in the oration Constantine openly professes his Christian faith in passages such as these:

> But when, of a sudden, the Saviour made his brilliant sojourn, righteousness came into being in place of unrighteous work, and peace in place of the multitudinous wave; and everything that the prophets had predicted came to pass. Therefore, lifted up high to his paternal hearth, having compassed the inhabited world with the rays of awe and temperance, he established the Church on the earth to be, as it were, a sacred temple of virtue, eternal, indestructible, in which the things due to God his most exalted Father and those proper to himself were reverently performed.[609]
>
> Nor was there any measure in his acts of benevolence. Instead of blindness there was sight, instead of paralysis health, instead of death resurrection to life. For I leave aside the unstinting provision of necessities in the wilderness, and the fact that a little field repeatedly yielded every kind of abundance to large crowds. This thanks I give you according to my ability, Christ our God and saviour, the supreme providence of the Great God, because you save us from evils and teach us the most blessed teaching – yes, it is not as praise but as thanks that I say these things.[610]

Constantine's faith is illustrated further in Chapters 18–21 of the same speech, where he quotes thirty-four lines of Greek from Book 8 of the *Sibylline Oracles*. The initial letters of these lines form an acrostic in Greek reading "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, Cross" (*Iēsous Chreistos, Theou Huios, Sōtēr, Stauros*). This is followed by the text of Vergil's fourth *Eclogue* (in Greek translation) together with a commentary in which the emperor claims that the poet was foretelling the birth of Christ. Vergil, he claims, had deliberately cloaked his prediction in terms of traditional pagan religion to avoid persecution.[611] The Golden Age predicted by Vergil in this *Eclogue* was understood to be the age of Augustus, and the coincidence of the birth of Christ with Augustus' reign had been pointed out by others before Constantine: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Melito of Sardis, and Origen. It was the last of these who expressed the significance of the coincidence most clearly: God had prepared the way for the Apostles to disseminate Christ's teaching by creating the Roman monarchy (with Augustus as the first emperor) and by establishing peace (the *pax Augusta*) throughout the Roman world.[612]

In addition to the overt Christian sentiments, we also find, in Chapter 11 of the oration, an attack on paganism:

> Away with you, impious ones (for this command is laid on you on account of your incorrigible sin) to the slaughter of nations and sacrifices, your revelry and feasting and carousing, as you profess to offer worship while you devise unbridled pleasures and debaucheries, and pretend to make sacrifice while you are in thrall to your own pleasures.[613]

In this speech, Constantine not only expresses his resignation to the inevitability of pagan sacrifice, however distasteful, but he also argues against coercion of pagans, just as he and Licinius had agreed in Milan in 313 and as Constantine had done in his second letter to the eastern provinces. Constantine recognizes that even God Himself "has not availed himself of his great power to requite the insult, but has forgiven humans for their foolish thoughts, reckoning folly and error intrinsic to humanity."[614] Edwards draws attention to Constantine's reluctant acceptance that pagan sacrifice would continue and argues that this would not have been his stance after the defeat of Licinius in 324.[615] Yet, as we have seen, it seems unlikely that after 324 Constantine instituted

a complete ban on sacrifice. In a letter to the eastern provinces, Constantine wrote grudgingly that pagans could "keep if they wish their sanctuaries of falsehood," pointing out that he had been forced to hold back from completely removing the "customs of the temples" because of the violence he might have provoked. Thus, in the *Oration*, Constantine's contemptuous dismissal of pagans to attend their sacrifices cannot be taken as a firm indication that the speech was composed before 324.

In the *Oration*, as in his letters relating to the Arian controversy, Constantine shows little interest in doctrine.[616] But he is firm in his rejection of polytheism and in his conviction that there is only one God. Constantine explains that traditional pagan cults are mere superstitions. As proof of this he points to God's destruction of Memphis and Babylon as punishment for the adherence of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar to customary worship. In a reversal of the common claim that Christians had abandoned traditional religion, Constantine argues that the persecutors were insane for having adhered to native customs and for warring against God. Diocletian's madness in particular resulted in his home and palace being struck by fire from heaven immediately after the first persecuting edicts were issued.[617]

Constantine explains that the Greek philosophers expressed certain religious truths but never grasped the reality entirely.[618] He is therefore able to make the case for monotheism by citing the authority of Plato: God and the Logos (Christ) are the same as Plato's "one God" or "one perfection." Constantine goes on, however, to criticize Plato for postulating the existence of lesser gods.[619] Again, this insistence on monotheism and rejection of polytheism is exactly what we would have expected from the emperor's other writings, and the reason for it is to be found in Constantine's conviction that the unity of the godhead was responsible for the stability of the universe:

> What then does the argument show? That there is one overseer for all existent things, and that everything is subjected to his sole rulership, both things in heaven and those on earth, both natural objects and organic bodies. For if there were not one but many authorities over these innumerable things, there would be share-outs and divisions of elements and [things told in] ancient myths; envy and avarice, dominating according to their power, would mar the harmonious concord of the whole . . .[620]

Here, although it is not explicit, the listener was meant to infer that just as only one God controlled heaven and earth, only one ruler had been elected as God's deputy on earth. Therefore worldly power could not be shared if stability were to be guaranteed.[621]

Thus, in the *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, Constantine's Christian faith is laid bare at length to a Christian audience. Even if parts of this speech were written on the emperor's behalf rather than by Constantine himself, attempts to reject his profession as insincere, having been spoken merely for the benefit of a Christian audience without any personal conviction, are unconvincing.

Official Appointments

Further evidence for Constantine's faith may be found, Barnes argues, in the appointments made to the most senior ranks in government after 324. He claims that the selection of Acilius Severus as City Prefect in Rome from 325–326 heralded a series of other Christian holders of the post: Amnius Anicius Julianus (326–329); Publilius Optatianus (to be identified with the poet Porfyrius; 329, 333); Sextus Anicius Paulinus (331–333); and Amnius Manius Caesonius Nicomachus Anicius Paulinus (334–335). Another two – Locrius Verinus (323–325) and Petronius Probianus (329–331) – are, Barnes claims, likely to have been Christians. By contrast, only two holders of the same post in this period were certainly or probably pagan: M. Ceionius Julianus (333–334) and Ceionius Rufius Albinus (335–337). However, Alan Cameron points out that the evidence adduced for the Christianity of these City Prefects is insufficiently secure, and that we can in fact only categorically assert that Publilius Optatianus was a believer. The religious beliefs of the Praetorian Prefects between 324 and 337 are also unclear, since the religious

affiliations of six office-holders cannot be established. Nevertheless, Barnes observes that Flavius Ablabius (329–337) was Christian and that five others were probably Christian.[622]

Despite the difficulty of determining the faith of individuals in Constantine's government, it can at least be shown, Cameron argues, that by Constantine's time there were already large numbers of Christians in the property-owning classes at Rome. Cameron points to the evidence of sarcophagi found in and around Rome, which are roughly dated on stylistic grounds. Dated to the period 300–330 are 317 sarcophagi decorated with traditional pagan themes, and 463 decorated with Christian themes. Whereas a Christian might have commissioned a sarcophagus with traditional decoration, no pagan would have requested Christian themes. The statistics suggest that Christianity rapidly increased in popularity among the middle classes from the beginning of the fourth century.[623]

Eusebius says that, before the persecution began, the Tetrarchs accepted Christians as members of the imperial household, and on occasion even favoured them above other servants.[624] He also asserts, after describing Licinius' defeat, that Constantine "first sent governors to the peoples in their various provinces, for the most part men consecrated to the saving faith" and that "the same applied also to the ranks above provincial government, the highest of all, who held offices as prefects."[625] These claims are not unreasonable given the religious mix in Roman society suggested by the middle-class sarcophagi. However, it is impossible to be certain whether, as Eusebius claims, Constantine showed favouritism to Christians when making appointments or whether the religious constitution of his government simply reflected that of society.[626]

The Letter to Sapor II

Among the imperial letters preserved in the *Life of Constantine* is one written after 324 to Sapor II, king of Persia, in which Constantine attempts to persuade the king of the benefits of respecting the Christians living in his lands.[627] Constantine begins his letter by stressing his firm commitment to the worship of God and participation in "the light of truth." He asserts that his armies have won victories over tyrants by fighting with the sign of God on their shoulders, and that he has become the saviour of the Roman world with God as his ally.

By contrast, Constantine claims, those Roman rulers who have denied God have suffered fates that serve as examples to others. The emperor singles out not his contemporaries, such as Galerius, Maxentius, Maximinus, and Licinius, but Valerian, who had persecuted the Church and had been defeated by Sapor I in 260. He suggests that Valerian's lack of faith had caused divine wrath to drive him into Persian hands.[628] The persecuting emperors would have fared much better if they had allowed the Christians freedom to worship and adopted Christianity themselves, because Constantine has discovered that "everything is at its best and most secure when through their pure and excellent religion and as a result of their concord on matters divine he [the Supreme Deity] deigns to gather all men to himself."

At the end of his letter, Constantine leaves the reader with no doubt about the identity of this Deity – it is the Christian God; and the emperor urges Sapor to respect the many Christians living in Persian territory to please God and thereby ensure his own continuing hold on power.[629] Constantine writes:

> With this class of persons – I mean of course the Christians, my whole concern being for them – how pleasing it is for me to hear that the most important parts of Persia are richly adorned! May the very best come to you therefore, and at the same time the best for them, since they are also yours. For so you will keep the sovereign Lord of the Universe kind, merciful and benevolent. These therefore, since you are so great, I entrust to you, putting their very persons in your hands, because you too are renowned for piety. Love them in accordance with your own humanity. For you will give enormous satisfaction both to yourself and to us by keeping faith.

With this letter, Constantine not only sought to secure the well-being of Christians in Persian

territory but also made a barely veiled attempt at proselytism by sharing the secret of his military success at some length with the Persian king. By extolling the enormous benefits of worshipping the God of the Christians to Sapor, the emperor doubtless hoped not merely to make the king think twice before allowing any harm to come to the Christians in his lands but even to ignite his personal interest in the Christian religion. Constantine sought unity of belief not just amongst the factions of the Christian Church and between pagan and Christian Romans, but ultimately throughout the world.

Pagans at Court

Constantine is known to have shown generosity to prominent pagans. For instance, in 326, Nicagoras, an Athenian priest of the Eleusinian mysteries, was granted permission to visit Egypt at imperial expense,[630] and an inscription of 341 granting protection to a former priest of the shrine of Apollo at Delphi acknowledged that he had been honoured by Constantine.[631] Even at the imperial court, a pagan philosopher, Sopater, was able to have considerable influence, a fact that should be considered when assessing the extent of Constantine's repression of paganism after the defeat of Licinius.

In November 324, it is claimed that Sopater was involved in the foundation rites of Constantinople,[632] but at an uncertain date before Constantine's death, he was executed. The *Suda*, a late tenth-century encyclopaedia, claims that Constantine condemned Sopater to demonstrate that he was no longer pagan in his sympathies.[633] Bearing in mind the fates of Crispus and Fausta, and the cruel punishments laid down in many Constantinian laws, we cannot rule out such a scenario, although it would seem difficult to believe that paganism alone was Sopater's crime, given that the emperor urged Christians to live in peace with pagans.

Eunapius, however, claims that superstitious courtiers brought Sopater to his death. Adverse winds had prevented the grain fleet from arriving in Constantinople, and the starving crowds clamoured for a scapegoat. Sopater was accused of having "chained the winds" by casting a magical spell to detain the fleet.[634] Even if the precise circumstances are not necessarily to be believed, there may be an element of truth in the tale. Sopater was the most outstanding pupil of Iamblichus, and is therefore likely to have practised theurgical divination, in which the operant used "symbols" such as sacred names, animals, plants, stones, and images to call on the Deity to illuminate him, thereby aiding his progress towards union with the Deity.[635] Sopater is said to have exerted great influence over Constantine, and this no doubt aroused envy among courtiers. It may not have been difficult for a high-ranking official such as the Praetorian Prefect Ablabius to claim that Sopater engaged in harmful magical activities and to convince the emperor that he should be convicted in accordance with legislation against evil magic and private divination.[636]

Even as Constantine's death approached in 337, it is evident that there were pagans at court. Eusebius reveals that Constantine appeared to criticize them by making anti-pagan remarks when delivering what was effectively his own funeral oration. The emperor even asked a polytheist philosopher in his audience to comment on the wisdom of his argument, putting the philosopher in the position of having to praise his condemnation of paganism.[637]

Baptism

According to Eusebius, it was only as death approached that Constantine decided to be baptized into the Christian faith.[638] After invading Armenia and placing their nominee on the throne, the Persians sent ambassadors to Constantine shortly before Easter in April 337 hoping to avoid conflict.[639] Constantine rejected their overtures and made preparations for war. However, his plans to expand the empire further eastward were to come to nothing since he soon fell ill. He first visited the hot baths of Constantinople and then travelled to Helenopolis, a city on the Gulf of İzmit named after his mother. There he prayed in a martyr's chapel and confessed his sins. Next he proceeded to the suburbs of Nicomedia, where he called the bishops together and asked them to perform the baptismal rites. Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia, whose orthodoxy had been questioned at the Council of Nicaea when he repudiated the term *homoousios* proposed by Constantine, was now in the position of baptizing the emperor.

In the Church of the early fourth century, catechumens (those wishing to become members) would undergo baptism after a period of instruction lasting up to three years. However, it was not thought appropriate for the rite to be administered to those in professions that were considered incompatible with Christianity. The emperor's role as commander-in-chief of the army was not consistent with Christian tenets of nonviolence, which placed him in this category until he was in a position to confess his sins and adopt a Christian lifestyle.

Eusebius of Caesarea plausibly explains the emperor's reason for delaying baptism until death in this way: "When he became aware that his life was ending, he perceived that this was the time to purify himself from the offences which he had at any time committed, trusting that whatever sins it had been his lot as a mortal to commit, he could wash them from his soul by the power of the secret words and the saving bath."[640] Furthermore, Eusebius reports words that the emperor allegedly spoke at the time, in which he recognized that, should his life by chance be spared, he would nevertheless from then on be committed to a Christian lifestyle.[641]

The delay in submitting to baptism was therefore pragmatic, ensuring that the emperor would die without sin and enter the Kingdom of God.[642] Such postponement was typical of the times, other illustrious persons having similarly delayed the rite – Basil the Great until the age of twenty-seven; Ambrose of Milan until the age of forty.[643] Thus, the timing of Constantine's baptism should not in itself be taken to cast any doubt on his belief in Christ in earlier years.[644]

Conclusion (324–337)

The evidence presented for the period after Licinius' defeat suggests that having achieved sole control of the Roman world, Constantine was more confident with regard to the prominence he could give to his Christian faith, a faith he professed but in which he had not been formally instructed, and which he seems to have practised in private rather than in public. His letters to the eastern provinces, written shortly after his victory over Licinius, continue to talk of a desire for peace between pagans and Christians but now also display an admiration for the Christian community and open scorn for the followers of traditional religion. Constantine had written to Aelafius in 314 and Domitius Celsus in 316 of his dream to unite all men in the worship of one God, but after 324 he wrote publicly to all the people of the East, no longer wishing to conceal his "belief in the truth." He expressed an earnest hope that his people would reject the "error" of paganism and its "sanctuaries of falsehood" and unite in the worship not merely of one Supreme God, but more specifically of the one Christian God who had sent His Son to save mankind.[645] The fulfilment of this dream was crucial if Constantine was to preserve his hold on power, since by establishing that there was a monarchy in heaven he could justify his own monarchy on earth.

However, Constantine was cautious in pursuing his goal. Even when he founded Constantinople, a city described by the pagan Palladas as "Christ-loving," he was not starting with a fresh canvas and he did not attempt to create one. The major pagan temples of Byzantium were not torn down, and many pagan statues were not destroyed outright but publicly displayed for their artistic merit and propagandist value.

Beyond its insistence on global monotheism, the emperor's Christianity seems to have been unsophisticated. He appears (at least initially) to have had no interest in doctrinal issues for their own sake, and to have believed that the Church was foolish in raising them at all. He addressed them only out of necessity, in a desperate attempt to find some common ground to reconcile the Christian factions in unified worship. Constantine doubtless learned a great deal about the complexities of Christian theology during his involvement in the Council of Nicaea, although it is not easy to trace precisely how his personal beliefs were affected by the experience.

After 324, the emperor publicly rejected blood sacrifice, although it seems he did not ban the practice by law, stopping short of doing so in order to avoid antagonizing pagans and in the hope that they might change their ways through persuasion rather than coercion. Taken as a whole, Constantine's legislation cannot be said to have been greatly influenced by Christian thinking, perhaps because he realized that he should not push reform too fast if peace was to be maintained. The fact that there were by

now many Christians in the property-owning classes increases the likelihood that a significant proportion of Constantine's court and of those appointed to consulates and prefectures was Christian. However, it is not demonstrable that Constantine preferred to promote Christians rather than pagans to the highest positions, and the influence of Christian courtiers would perhaps have been tempered by the presence of powerful pagans such as Sopater.

NOTES

1 The claim was made by Elliott 1987, 420–38. Against: Smith, M. 1997; Drake 2000, 189; Odahl 2005, 317 n. 1; Bremmer 2006, 69.

2 Eusebius, *Life* 3.47.2, ed. p. 103, trans. p. 139. On this claim, see Drijvers 1992, 35–38; Stephenson 2009, 3, 269–70.

3 Stephenson 2009, 3, has suggested that Constantius' reluctance to persecute Christians in 303 and Constantine's early actions in favour of Christians might be explained by the influence of Helena if she were Christian. Barnes 2011, 44–45, 52 approves of the theory.

4 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints* 11, ed. Heikel 1902, 166.7–13, trans. Edwards 2003, 20.

5 Eusebius, *Life* 2.51.1, ed. p. 69, trans. p. 112; Barnes 2011, 2–4, 54–55.

6 Drake 2000, 187–91, for instance, talks of a "conversion" in 312 but imagines "a number of progressive awakenings." Van Dam 2003, 137, argues that "Constantine may have had many conversion moments, and that his religious beliefs throughout his reign were not as consistent as Eusebius presented them." Veyne 2007, 118 (= 2010, 58), writes of conversion after "a long period of unconscious maturation."

7 On this issue, see Hunt 1997, 406–408, who reminds us that at the time Constantine was "in the company of a pagan court," and Van Dam 2007, 291–92. For the dates (Babylon in autumn 297; Memphis in the winter of 301–302), see Barnes 1976b, 250–51; 1996, 544; 2011, 51–53.

8 Hunt 1997, 408, thinks "he is unlikely at the time to have dissented from the anti-Christian policy of Diocletian and his colleagues – especially if at this stage Constantine was riding high on the prospects of imperial succession." Compare Barnes 2011, 3, 54–55.

9 Eusebius, *Life* 1.32, ed. pp. 31–32, trans. p. 82.

10 He was present when Constantine wrote to Caecilian, bishop of Carthage, making grants of money to Christian priests in Africa: Eusebius, *Church History* 10.6, ed. p. 890, trans. pp. 326–27. Alföldi 1948, 14; Jones 1948, 82 (= 1962, 75); Lane Fox 1986, 612, 617.

11 On Lactantius' career, see Barnes 1981, 13–14; Pohlsander 1984, 82–83; DePalma Digeser 2000, 133–35; Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 2–3; Odahl 2005, 125–26, 328 n. 8; Schott 2008, 79–80; Leadbetter 2009, 7–8; Barnes 2011, 8–9, 176–78.

12 Eusebius, *Life* 1999, 4.18, ed. p. 126, trans. p. 159. The men from his "familiar circle" sent out to strip the temples were, we are to suppose, Christians: Eusebius, *Life* 3.54.5, ed. p. 108, trans. p. 143.

13 Barnes 1989, 334–35, plays down pagan influence at court.

14 Barnes 1981, 48, boldly asserts that soon after the victory of 312 there was no "doubt or hesitation" in Constantine's mind, although he was cautious in implementing his desires. Similarly, Veyne 2007, 20 (= 2010, 7) states, "As early as the first year after his 312 victory, the religious policy of the emperor had been made clear and it was not to change." Such assertions leave no possibility that Constantine's understanding of the Christian faith and his intolerance of paganism grew gradually. As for the claim that Constantine's faith was a sham for political purposes, see Burckhardt 1949, 292: "In a genius driven without surcease by ambition and lust for power there can be no question of Christianity and paganism, of conscious religiosity or irreligiosity; such a man is essentially unreligious." For a less polarized combination of such views, see the comments of Jones 1948, 79–80 (= 1962, 73) and Edwards 2006b, 224, who rightly rejects an antithesis between policy and religious conviction: "There are men in whom sincere and scrupulous piety conspires with the most incontinent of political and material ambitions. Constantine's religion shaped his policy and his policy shaped religion."

15 Nevertheless McCormick 1986, 101–102, assumes Christian symbols were prominent in the triumphal procession that entered Rome in 312.

16 Bruun 1962, 31–32. See also *RIC* VII, 62 and Antioch nos. 98–110; Odahl 1982–1983, 71.

17 Bruun 1997, 43–44. Note also: Burzachechi 1955–1956; Cecchelli 1954, 73–79, 164–65. Sulzberger 1925, 401, had claimed that there was little if any evidence for the Christians having adopted the symbol before Constantine.

18 On the use of the chi-rho in pagan contexts, see Gardthausen 1924, 81–82; Leclercq 1948, 1482–84 (illustrating a medallion of Decius with *archontos*); Dölger 1920, 308 with n. 1; Sulzberger 1926, 397–98; Dinkler-von Schubert 1995, 34; Turner and Parsons 1987, 102–103 no. 60 (for *chronos*), 54–55 no. 24, 56–57 no. 27, 98–99 no. 58 (for *chrēstos*, *chrēsimon*, or *chrēsis*), as explained on p. 15).

19 Compare Bruun 1997, 42, 45: "The prime element connected with the sign of the Milvian bridge was not the name of Christ, nor the Christian creed, but the force of the divinely inspired Constantine. . . . Only later did the undisputable Christian significance of the victorious sign become clear beyond doubt" (p. 42). Grigg 1977, 18–21 sees the chi-rho as part of a tradition of Christian symbols and considers that "it is not unlikely that the chi-rho symbol was adopted simply as a graphic interpretation of the symbol [of the cross, whether vertical or slanted like a chi] that Christians used to sign their foreheads in times of danger."

20 *ICVR* I, 39 = *ILCV* I, no. 1545; Bruun 1997, 43, 53.

21 *RIC* VIII, 252 no. 71. It seems likely that the combination of the chi-rho monogram with the letters alpha and omega was popular because together they might be read as ἄρχω ("I rule"), emphasizing the power of the Christian God.

22 *RIC* VIII, 43, 123 (and pl. 1 no. 34), 163 (and pl. 3 no. 319), 188, 217 (and pl. 7 no. 193); Bruun 1997, 43, 52. MacMullen 1984, 48 claims that Magnentius was a pagan and deduces that the symbol was therefore "empty of religious meaning." Indeed, Magnentius favoured the pagans enough to permit nocturnal sacrifice (*Theodosian Code* 16.10.5 [A.D. 353], ed. p. 898, trans. p. 472). But Athanasius (*Apology to Constantius* 6–7, ed. and trans. Szymusiak 1987, 98–101, trans. Robertson 1891, 240–41) states Magnentius was baptized. Philostorgius (*Church History*, 3.26, ed. Bidez and Winkelmann 1981, 52, trans. Walford 1855, 460, trans. Amidon 2007, 59), however, says he was addicted to superstitious practices. The two claims may not be irreconcilable. Shotter 1979, 55, sees the coins as "a determined attempt to secure the support of the Church's now impressive and influential organization." Bastien 1983, 8, sees "constant opportunisme." See also MacMullen 1984, 140 n. 23.

23 Vágó and Bóna 1976, 186 (Grab 1023) with pl. XXII.1; Lengyel and Radnan 1980, 169; MacMullen 1984, 78.

24 Finney 1994, 189; Jensen 2000, 41–42; Nicolai and others 2002, 103.

25 *RIC* VII, 197 no. 372 with note.

26 Althaus and Sutcliffe 2006, 96, 147 no. 62.

27 Tomlin 1998, 25–26, 36. Singor 2003, 489–90, observes the absence of evidence for the Lactantian symbol on shields but suggests that the élite force of fifty men that guarded Constantine's standard did have the symbol on their shields. Lane Fox 1986, 620 claims that the absence of the symbol from the Arch of Constantine is best understood "as a reflection on its pagan patrons and the pagan public in Rome."

28 Tomlin 1998, 23–28; MacMullen 1981, 132; MacMullen 1984, 44–47, 80–81, 102; Lee 1998, 226; Van Dam 2007, 37 on barbarian recruits.

29 Writing of it in Christian terms: Barnes 1992, 646; Veyne 2007, 141 (= 2010, 73).

30 Compare Bruun 1997, 45: "Whatever the sign originally meant in the eyes of Constantine, it underwent a long development until it was accepted as a Christian sign and symbol, and until it achieved the distinction of a Christogram." Grigg 1977, 22, whilst imagining that the sign had a specifically Christian import, does not see in it "a desire to proclaim a personal allegiance to Christ."

31 Compare Harris 2005, 493.

32 Bruun 1962, 9–10, 31–32; *RIC* VII, 63, Ticinum no. 36. See also Leeb 1992, 39–42 and very briefly Bastien 1992–1994, I, 222. For the date, see Alföldi 1951. Eusebius confirms that Constantine did indeed use the sign on his helmet after the battle of the Milvian Bridge: *Life* 1.31.1, ed. pp. 30–31.

33 *RIC* VII, 63, Ticinum no. 36; Overbeck 2005.

34 See Bruun 1962, 17–18 n. 2, 31–32. The rarity of these coins must be taken into account when we are confronted with claims that they serve as an illustration of how Constantine "began to proffer less ambiguous expressions of his private faith in the public arena" (Odahl 2005, 144).

35 *RIC* VII, 62–63, 417–18. Also Bruun 1962, 10–18, 31; Odahl 1977, who also observes (p. 57): "The variations in the helmet engravings must have originated in the local mint rather than at the imperial court." Grigg 1977, 19 n. 102, imagines the engraver transposing the symbol from the helmet of the Ticinum medallion to the cross-bar of the helmet on these coins. Even if this were the case, the presence of the symbol would not reflect imperial propaganda policy.

36 *RIC* VII Arles nos. 381–86, 394–401, Ticinum nos. 118–21, 125–26, 129, Aquileia nos. 58–62, Siscia nos. 138–39, Thessaloniki nos. 82–83. For the analysis, see *RIC* VII, 62. Odahl 2005, 169, however, comments to the contrary: "The appearance of the same Christian sign on this coin type from several mints probably indicates that the decision to use it came from the imperial court itself."

37 Gold: *RIC* VII, Siscia no. 207 with the legend GLORIA SECVLI (where it is stated that the symbol is "more likely star or wreath" than chi-rho), illustrated with clear chi-rho in Girardet 2007, 236 fig. 9 and Spier 2007a, 91 fig. 65. Silver medallion: Bellinger 1958, 135–36 = Odahl 1982–1983, 69 with fig. 6 = Odahl 2005, 208 ill. 61.

38 *RIC* VII, 64 with Constantinople nos. 19, 26. See Bruun 1962, 21–23.

39 See Bruun 1962, 24–25.

40 In addition to references previously cited, see Veyne 2007, 162–63 n. 2 (= 2010, 86 n. 6), who explains the occasional occurrences of Christian symbols either as

rare indications of Constantine's personal faith (rather than an attempt at religious propaganda) or the result of excessive zeal on the part of Christian workers in the mint.

41 Amongst the discussions, I mention Alföldi 1948, 72; Bergmann 1997, 121–23; Brandt 1998, 133–35 (M21); Krautheimer 2000, 28–30; Krautheimer 1983, 32–33 with n. 27; Jones Hall 1998; Drake 2000, 180–81, 199.

42 On the issue of whether Constantine was entitled to a triumphal arch: Frothingham 1912, 368, 375 with n. 1. Deducing that the impetus to commemorate a civil war came from Constantine: Mayer 2006, 145–52, esp. 149 ("it is highly unlikely that such a problematic theme as civil war could be addressed if imperial consent was not assured. Therefore it is most likely that Constantine himself suggested this break with three centuries of tradition").

43 Holloway 2004, 50–52, following a suggestion of S. E. Knudsen.

44 Jones 1964, 1080 n. 5, claims that the inscription on the arch "must have been composed or at any rate approved by Constantine." Peirce 1989, 406, comments on the roles of Constantine and the Senate that "presumably neither would have done anything to offend the other." Meier 2001, 64, considers imperial input likely. On Senatorial input, see Elsner 2000, 171 n. 28.

45 *Pan. Lat.* XII.11.4, ed. and trans. pp. 312, 600; *Pan. Lat.* IV.17.1, ed. and trans. pp. 362, 617.

46 Thus, Grünewald 1990, 78, writes: "Mit dieser Formel signalisiert die Inschrift des Triumphbogens, daß Constantin den Sieg nicht allein seiner eigenen Genialität, der *magnitudo mentis*, verdankte, sondern neben ihr auch dem Wirken einer göttlichen Macht." Brandt 1998, 134, writes of a "hilfreichen Gottheit." Jones Hall 1998, 670, explains: "*Divinitatis* clearly referred to a Supreme Deity, as both the writings of Lactantius and the speech of the panegyrist of 313 demonstrate." Barnes 2011, 19, follows Jones Hall.

47 Eusebius, *Life* 2.12.2, ed. p. 53, trans. p. 100.

48 Lenski 2008, 222.

49 Lenski 2008, 224–26.

50 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 7.18.1, eds. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 427 (adjusted).

51 Lenski 2008, 229–31.

52 Lenski 2008, 231–47. Cameron 2011, 610–11, observes that *evocatio* had become an obsolete practice by the time Macrobius was writing in the first half of the fifth century.

53 Livy, *History of Rome* 5.21.2–3, ed. and trans. Foster 1919, III, 72–73.

54 *Pan. Lat.* XII.15.1, ed. and trans. pp. 316, 602.

55 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 48.2–12, ed. and trans. pp. 70–73; see also Eusebius, *Church History* 10.5.2–14, ed. pp. 883–87, trans p. 322.

56 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 46.1–7, ed. and trans. pp. 66–67. It has been suggested that Licinius' prayer, being similar to one ascribed by Eusebius to Constantine, was in fact composed by Constantine, or jointly by Constantine and Licinius when they met in Milan: Piganiol 1932, 75–78; Barnes 1981, 63; Van Dam 2007, 128.

57 *RIC* VII, 591–98 (minted in Nicomedia 313–24).

58 Helgeland 1979, 808–809; Mitchell 2007, 242: "a deliberate formula of generalized monotheism."

59 Constantine's prayer: Eusebius, *Life* 2.18.3–20.2, ed. pp. 126–27, trans. pp. 159–60 with 318.

60 MacMullen 1984, 45–46 with n. 10. Odahl's claim (2005, 173) that "everyone clearly knew" that this unnamed Supreme Deity "was the God of the Christians" neglects any consideration of Constantinian ambiguity or of the personal perceptions of those praying. In fact, Eusebius makes it quite clear that those who said this prayer had not yet adopted the Christian faith. If Constantine had wanted an unambiguously Christian prayer, he might have included mentions of Christ and the Holy Spirit. DePalma Digeser 2000, 128–29, suggests that "it may well not have seemed offensive to an army that had fought – and won – under the sign of the One God to pray to that god as well." But that is to assume that the majority of Constantine's troops really *had* fought under the sign of a single Supreme Deity.

61 Jones 1948, 91 (= 1962, 81–82) unjustifiably infers from the inscription that Constantine's God must have been the Christian God. Peirce 1989, 407 writes of the inscription: "It reveals a deliberate ambiguity designed to achieve reconciliation and tolerance." Jones Hall 1998, 670 comments: "This reference to monotheism may have seemed vague enough to accommodate the emerging Christian faith of the emperor and the entrenched pagan belief of the Roman senate." Veyne 2007, 148 (= 2010 77) agrees with Pietri's conclusion that it represents "a neutral kind of monotheism." Barnes 2011, 19 refers to "a deliberately ambiguous phrase."

62 Kolb 2001, 65, and Kolb 2004, 34–35, has reached a similar conclusion, though his proposed linguistic distinction between *instinctu dei* (the impulse from an external god) and *instinctu divinitatis* (the impulse of inherent divinity) does not stand up in the light of the use of *divinitas* to refer to the Supreme Deity in the "Edict of Milan."

63 *Pan. Lat.* XII.2.5, ed. and trans. pp. 296, 595.

64 Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 292–93, 313–14 n. 80.

65 *Pan. Lat.* XII.26.1, ed. and trans. pp. 332, 607.

66 As assumed by Bowersock 1986, 302–303.

67 *sua enim cuique prudentia deus est*: *Pan. Lat.* XII.4.2, ed. and trans. pp. 299, 596.

68 *divino consilio, imperator, (hoc est, tuo) non militum multitudinem sed partium merita numerasti*: *Pan. Lat.* XII.4.5, ed. and trans. pp. 302, 596. It would appear that Baynes 1972, 66–68 (n. 36), was wrong to reject this conclusion, and that Alföldi 1948, 71, was also wrong in claiming that the orator "supplies no answer to his own question." I am less certain than Jones that we can infer Constantine's Christianity from this oration. Jones (1948, 92 = 1962, 82–3) writes of "the pagan orator, forced to avoid all mention of the immortal gods, but averse from sullying his lips with any allusion to the God of the Christians."

69 *Pan. Lat.* XII.25.4, ed. and trans. pp. 331–32, 607. Whether the statue of Constantine mentioned by the panegyrist had the attributes of a particular deity – such as Sol (Alföldi 1948, 69) – is uncertain. All that is certain is that the orator believed the emperor to be divine.

70 Whitmarsh 2001, 208–210.

71 *Pan. Lat.* VIII.4.3, ed. and trans. pp. 114, 545.

72 Lactantius, *On the Workmanship of God* 8.3, ed. and trans. Perrin 1974, I, 150–51.

73 Lactantius, *On the Workmanship of God* 1.4, ed. and trans. Perrin 1974, I, 108–109.

74 Lactantius, *On the Workmanship of God* 8.11–12, ed. and trans. Perrin 1974, I, 154–55.

75 Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis* 4.2, trans. Marcus 1953, 270–71.

76 Baynes 1972, 10, followed by Barnes 2011, 19–20.

77 L'Orange 1935, 339.

78 For detailed illustrations of the recut heads on the medallions and reliefs in the central arch, see: L'Orange and von Gerkan 1939, pls. 43–45, 50; L'Orange and Unger 1984, pls. 28–29, 32–34, 36–37; Walter 2006, figs. 175–78. The heads of Constantine are the earliest and most accurately dated portraits of the emperor but may be influenced by the heads from which they were recut: Harrison 1967, 91; Wright 1987, 493. The heads of Constantius Chlorus have sometimes been identified instead as Licinius, but this view has been rejected by Calza 1959–60, 133–61 with the approval of Smith, R. R. R. 1997, 185 n. 78 and Curran 2000, 88 n. 97. See also Peirce 1989, 412–13, explaining the political reasons why this should be Constantius rather than Licinius. Curran 2000, 90, notes that the appearance of Chlorus on the arch "added the legitimacy of succession and emphasized Maxentius as usurper."

79 Peirce 1989, whose general conclusion (p. 389) is: "By replacing their heads with his, Constantine crudely appropriated the celebration of their deeds as the celebration of his own." Compare Stewart 2003, 281–82.

80 Peirce 1989, 411.

81 Hannestad 1988, 204–206; Peirce 1989, 413; Smith, R. 2007, 222–25.

82 Peirce 1989, 410.

83 L'Orange and von Gerkan 1939, pls. 39b, 40b; Peirce 1989, pls. 9–10; Panella 1999, 64–65 figs. 19–20; Holloway 2004, 22–23, figs. 2.4 and 2.6.

84 L'Orange and von Gerkan 1939, pls. 41b, 42b; L'Orange 1965, 85–88 and fig. 31; Peirce 1989, pls. 7–8; Holloway 2004, 24–25, figs. 2.8, 2.10.

85 L'Orange and von Gerkan 1939, pl. 46d; Peirce 1989, pl. 14; Pensabene 1999, 153 fig. 10; Holloway 2004, 27, fig. 2.13.

86 Eusebius, *Life* 1.48, ed. p. 40, trans. p. 89.

87 Ruysschaert 1962–1963a, 96–100 and 1962–1963b, 108 Figure b.

88 Hekster 1999, 739, quoting Künzl; Barnes 2011, 83, 99–100. The fact that this was a victory over Roman forces has also raised the issue of whether Constantine was entitled to a triumphal arch: Frothingham 1912, 368, 375 with n. 1. Frothingham's contention (further developed in Frothingham 1913, 1915a, 1915b) that the arch was in fact built for Domitian cannot be accepted given the mixture of white marble in the structure, which suggests a Late Antique date.

89 This is the solution proposed by Wilson Jones 2000, 70–72.

90 Straub 1967, 42–43, observes that "we have a cautious attempt to reconcile the pagan demand with the Emperor's new kind of *pietas*." Van Dam 2007, 30, suggests the Senate and people "wanted to represent Constantine and his father upholding and respecting the traditional sacrifices."

91 Ward-Perkins 1954, 79–81; Krautheimer 1986, 23–37; White 1990, 103–26; Blue 1994; Snyder 2003, 127–53.

92 For the range of meanings of the Latin, see *TLL* II, 1761–67 s.v. *basilica*. The particular connotation of the Greek term *basilikē* that the Latin was originally intended to convey is not certain. See Ward-Perkins 1954, 69–71. Downey 1937 explains that the Greek term could be used not only of a roofed building but also of covered colonnades, and even of an open space surrounded by colonnades.

93 On the origin of the Christian basilica, see especially Ward-Perkins 1954 and Krautheimer 1967.

94 Ward-Perkins 1981, 442–45.

95 Ward-Perkins 1981, 426–28; Claridge 2010, 115–17.

96 Ward-Perkins 1981, 86–87, 94–95 (Basilica Ulpia), 386–89 (Leptis Magna); Claridge 2010, 92–93 (Basilica Julia), 184–86 (Basilica Ulpia).

97 See Beskow 1962, 13–15.

98 *Psalms of Solomon* 17, ed. and trans. Harris 1909, 152–54; Dvornik 1966, 396–402.

99 Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38.

100 Matthew 19:28; 26:31–46; John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42; 17:31.

101 *Imperator omnium*: Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 5.19.25, 6.8.12, 7.27.15, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 466, 509, 671, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 322,

346, 442 (who render "commander"). On the problem of determining whether the term has an imperial or military connotation, see Beskow 1962, 182–84. *Megas basileus*: e.g. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 15.2, ed. Heikel 1902, 244, trans. Drake 1976, 117 (rendering "great sovereign"). *Pambasileus*: e.g. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 3.3, ed. Heikel 1902, 201, trans. Drake 1976, 87 (rendering "Ruler of All"). *Ho basileus tōn holōn*: e.g. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 5.2, ed. Heikel 1902, 203, trans. Drake 1976, 89 (rendering "Universal Sovereign"). See Farina 1966, 33–35 (regal titles of God in Eusebius), 72–73, 103–104 (regal titles of the Logos and Christ in Eusebius).

102 Krautheimer 1986, 42.

103 Krautheimer 1967, 129.

104 *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 594.2–3, ed. Cuntz 1929, 97, trans. Wilkinson 1999, 31; Ward-Perkins 1954, 78–79, explains that at this date the term "basilica" could be applied to any Christian church, whatever its architectural form. Further references to Constantinian terms for Christian cult buildings are to be found in Krautheimer 1986, 42 n. 14. See also Beskow 1962, 14 (with n. 3) and 21–22 n. 4.

105 Ward-Perkins 1981, 421 with figs. 59, 284; Claridge 2010, 118–21.

106 Lindros Wohl 2001, 105–106, suggests symbolic reasons for the use of columnar architecture, since the column is used to represent stability in the New Testament.

107 The so-called Edict of Milan: Lactantius, *Persecutors* 48.2–12, ed. and trans. pp. 70–73; see also Eusebius, *Church History* 10.5.2–14, ed. pp. 883–87, trans. pp. 322–32. Barnes 2011, 96–97.

108 Spain Alexander 1971, 312–14; Krautheimer 1986, 44–45. Eusebius' speech at the dedication is preserved in his *Church History* 10.4, ed. pp. 862–83, trans. pp. 306–22.

109 Spain Alexander 1971, 301–302; Krautheimer 1986, 43; Doig 2008, 46–48.

110 Eusebius, *Life* 2.45.2–2.46.4, ed. pp. 67–68, trans. pp. 110–11; Corcoran 2000, 316; Barnes 2011, 135 (no. 6).

111 Eusebius, *Life* 3.50, ed. pp. 104–105, trans. p. 140. For discussion, Spain Alexander 1971, 314–17; Kleinbauer 1973, 111–14; Krautheimer 1986, 76–78; Kleinbauer 1987, 288–89; Henck 2001, 295–97.

112 Spain Alexander 1971, 303–304; Krautheimer 1986, 48.

113 Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, Appendix 10, ed. Ziwsa 1893, 215.11–18, trans. Edwards 1997, 200. On the significance of this regarding the Donatist triumph, see Frend 1971, 162–63; Barnes 2011, 105.

114 Eusebius, *Life* 3.58, trans. pp. 146–47; Spain Alexander 1971, 314.

115 Alföldi 1948, 51; Spain Alexander 1971, 284–90; Krautheimer and others 1937–1977, V, 1–92; Krautheimer 1983, 12–20; Krautheimer 1986, 46–48; Brandt 1998, 137–40 (M23); Krautheimer 2000, 21–24; Curran 2000, 93–96; Holloway 2004, 57–61; Odahl 2005, 146, 149–51; Johnson 2006, 282–84; Doig 2008, 24–27; Claridge 2010, 373–77; Barnes 2011, 86 (no. 1).

116 Lindros Wohl 2001, 87–91.

117 Ward-Perkins 1999, 227–33; Lindros Wohl 2001, 98–106; Kinney 2005, all with references to earlier literature.

118 *Liber Pontificalis* 34.12–14, ed. Duchesne 1955–1957, I, 174–75, trans. Davis 2000, 17–19 with Duchesne's introduction pp. cxlix–cl.

119 On such buildings, see La Rocca 2000; Lehmann 2004; Doig 2008, 41–42.

120 For this suggestion see n. 146 on pp. 200-201 and the references in Drijvers 1992, 74–75 with n. 10.

121 Spain Alexander 1971, 298–99; Krautheimer and others 1937–1977, II, 191–204; Krautheimer 1983, 23; Krautheimer 1986, 52; Brubaker 1997, 57; Krautheimer 2000, 25; Curran 2000, 99–102; Webb 2001, 279–82; Snyder 2003, 178–80; Holloway 2004, 86–93 (arguing for contemporaneity of basilica and mausoleum); Brandenburg 2004, 55–60; Johnson 2006, 289–90; Doig 2008, 39; Barnes 2011, 86–87 (no. 2).

122 Spain Alexander 1971, 295–96; Krautheimer and others 1937–1977, IV, 99–147; Krautheimer 1986, 33, 52; Krautheimer 2000, 19, 24–25; Curran 2000, 97–99; Webb 2001, 224–28; Snyder 2003, 180–89; Holloway 2004, 105–109, 146–55; Brandenburg 2004, 63–69; Johnson 2006, 288–89; Drijvers 2007, 26 (suggesting that the church was founded by Maxentius and that Constantine was continuing a Maxentian policy of church building); Nieddu 2009; Barnes 2011, 87 (no. 5).

123 Holloway 2004, 146–55.

124 Barnes 2011, 87 (no. 5) with n. 38.

125 Spain Alexander 1971, 296–97; Krautheimer and others 1937–1977, II, 1–144; Krautheimer 1986, 52; Curran 2000, 102–105; Webb 2001, 240–45; Snyder 2003, 175–77; Holloway 2004, 110–11; Brandenburg 2004, 87–89; Johnson 2006, 290; Barnes 2011, 87 (no. 3).

126 Cecchelli 1932; Krautheimer and others 1937–1977, I, 14–39; Frutaz 1969; Spain Alexander 1971, 299–301; Webb 2001, 246–48; Snyder 2003, 173–75; Brandenburg 2004, 69–86; Doig 2008, 39–41; Claridge 2010, 439–41; Barnes 2011, 88 (no. 7). See further bibliography in n. 138 on p. 200.

127 Bowersock 2005, citing, amongst other indications, crucial evidence of brickstamps naming Constans, which were found in the apse. Further evidence is adduced by Barnes 2011, 88–89 (nos. 8 and 9). Mathews 2009–2010, 6–8, assumes that the mosaic inscription ascribing the foundation of the church to Constantine is original, without acknowledging the possibility advanced by Bowersock that it was put up under the influence of later tradition.

128 Spain Alexander 1971, 292–95; Krautheimer and others 1937–1977, V, 165–279; Krautheimer 1983, 23; Krautheimer 1986, 32, 54–59; Krautheimer 2000, 19–20, 26–28; Curran 2000, 109–114; Webb 2001, 14–18; Snyder 2003, 189–205; Holloway 2004, 77–86; Brandenburg 2004, 91–102; Odahl 2005, 153–56; Johnson 2006, 286–87; Doig 2008, 28–29.

129 Lindros Wohl 2001, 92–98; Kinney 2005.

130 Carpiceci and Krautheimer 1995, 6–7.

131 Johnson 2009, 167–74.

132 Compare the remarks of Bowersock 2005, 12–13.

133 Curran 2000, 146–47; Holloway 2004, 151–54; Barnes 2007, 208; Barnes 2011, 88–89 (nos. 8 and 9).

134 Spain Alexander 1971, 290–91; Krautheimer and others 1937–1977, I, 165–94; Krautheimer 1983, 23; Krautheimer 1986, 50; Drijvers 1992, 32–34; Brubaker 1997, 58; Davis 2000, xxxiii; Webb 2001, 52–55; Holloway 2004, 67–69; Brandenburg 2004, 103–108; Odahl 2005, 151–53; Johnson 2006, 285–86; Doig 2008, 38–39; Claridge 2010, 381–82; Barnes 2011, 87 (no. 4).

135 Drijvers 1992, 30–34; Hekster 1999, 741–42.

136 Beard, North, and Price 1998, I, 267–70

137 Hunt 2003, 117.

138 Salzman 1990, 188; Curran 2000, 221–30; Compare Hunt 2003, 118.

139 On house churches (*domus ecclesiae*) and *tituli*, see Ward-Perkins 1954, 79–81; Krautheimer 1986, 23–37; White 1990, 103–26; Blue 1994; Snyder 2003, 127–53; Doig 2008, 1–19.

140 Alföldi 1948, 50–51; Spain Alexander 1973, 40–42; Krautheimer 2000, 30–31; Krautheimer 1983, 26–31; Krautheimer 1993, 531; Ward-Perkins 1998, 396–98; Beard, North, and Price 1998, I, 368–69; Wallraff 2001a, 129–30; Brandt 2001, 109; Odahl 2005, 147.

141 Curran 2000, 96 followed by Hunt 2003, 117.

142 Such an inference is made by Curran 2000, 94–96 with regard to the Lateran.

143 Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40.26, ed. Dufraigne 1975, 57, trans. Bird 1994, 49 (*urbis fanum*).

144 Sozomen 1.6.1, ed. Bidez and Hansen 1995, 14, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 243.

145 *Liber Pontificalis* 34, ed. Duchesne 1955–1957, I, 170–201, trans. Davis 2000, 14–27.

146 On the *Liber Pontificalis*' accounts of these, see Davis 2000, xxx–xxxv. For the church at Ostia, see Bauer and Heinzelmann 2001.

147 On the date, see briefly Davis 2000, xlvi–xlviii; Barnes 2011, 85

148 Davis 2000, xxix; Barnes 2011, 85.

149 Barnes 2011, 86.

150 Davis 2000, xxxii; Krautheimer 2000, 42–43; Grigg 1977, 9–12.

151 Jones 1964, 90; Depeyrot 2006, 248.

152 Elsner 2006, 266. Compare also the comments of Hekster 1999, 747–48.

153 Lee 2006, 170. Compare Liebeschuetz 1979, 291: "Constantine made no attempt to hide his personal allegiance; it suffices to recall the great basilicas founded in Rome itself . . . "; 299: "The size and rich decoration of these buildings proclaimed far and wide that Christianity was the religion of the emperor." Compare Veyne 2007, 143–44 (= 2010, 74).

154 Eusebius, *Life* 1.55; 3.1.7, ed. pp. 43–44, 81, trans. pp. 92, 121.

155 Jones 1964, 110, 431–32; Dagron 1984b, 34–35; Hendy 1985, 284–85.

156 Dagron 1984, 29–31; Barnes 1981, 377–78 n. 18. Cameron 2011, 654, claims the story of Constantine building at Troy is "not likely to be earlier than the fifth century." On Ilion and Alexander: La Rocca 1993, 553–57.

157 Mango 1986, 119.

158 Mango 2003, 607. On Licinius' involvement, Stephenson 2009, 193–94; Barnes 2011, 112–13.

159 *ILS* no. 6091, trans. Jones 1964, 719, ed. and trans. Van Dam 2007, 370–71.

160 Compare Van Dam 2007, 198–99.

161 Gurval 1995, 69–70.

162 For these and other instances, see Van Dam 2007, 112–17.

163 Dagron 1984b, 26.

164 Alföldi 1947, 11 (who dates the medallions to 324); Bühl 1995, 15 with fig. 7; *RIC* VII Rome 301.

165 *Origin of Constantine* 29, ed. Mommsen 1892, I, 10, trans. Stevenson in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 47–8; Dagron 1984b, 26.

166 *Romae desideravit aequari*: *Origin of Constantine* 30, ed. Mommsen 1892, I, 10 and trans. Stevenson in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 48. For other such claims, see Dagron 1984b, 45–47.

167 Dagron 1984b, 46.

168 Potter 2004, 383–84 rightly points out that the comparison with Rome does not mean Constantinople was known by the name "New Rome."

169 Hekster 1999, 742–45. He even suggests that Rome was a lost cause because Maxentius had done too good a job of being a traditional ruler of Rome for Constantine to make a favourable impact. On lack of new building in Rome: Potter 2004, 382.

170 *Theodosian Code* 13.5.7 (A.D. 334), ed. p. 749, trans. p. 392.

171 Van Dam 2007, 58, wrongly understands from the words "eternal name" that Constantine originally intended Constantinople to be called "New Rome" or "Second Rome." Rome may have been the

"Eternal City," but the "eternal name" was the name of a member of the imperial family. Thus, Hispellum was granted the *aeternum nomen* of Constans (see Van Dam 2007, 366).

172 Eusebius, *Life* 3.48.1, ed. p. 104, trans. p. 140. Van Dam 2007, 299, accepts Eusebius' claim uncritically.

173 *Planudean Anthology* 282, trans. Wilkinson 2010, 185–89; Barnes 2011, 128.

174 *Parastaseis* 56, ed. and trans. Cameron and Herrin 1984, 130–31. The commentators (p. 242–43, 244) express the opinion that the Christian ceremonies are anachronistic.

175 As observed by Frolow 1944, 83–84.

176 Malalas, *Chronicle* 13.7, ed. Dindorf 1831, 320, ed. Thurn 2000, 246, trans. Jeffreys 1986, 174.

177 On the distinction between Tyche-Fortuna and city Tychai, see Shelton 1979, 29. For specific discussion of Tyche in the context of Constantinople's foundation, see Dagron 1984b, 43–45.

178 Malalas, *Chronicle* 13.7, ed. Dindorf 1831, 320, ed. Thurn 2000, 246, trans. Jeffreys 1986, 174. For this and other sources on the Palladium in the Forum, see Bassett 2004, 192–93, 198, 205–206 (no. 114). On pp. 68–69, Bassett accepts the presence of this statue uncritically. Wortley 2004, 496, argues that of all the relics allegedly obtained in Constantine's reign, only the Palladium is likely to have been acquired at the emperor's own instigation. Oddly, he does not consider the question of whether the relics of Andrew and Luke were acquired in 336. Cameron 2011, 610, argues that the emergence in the sixth century of the claim that the Palladium had been transferred to Constantinople reflects the belief that the power of the New Rome had eclipsed that of the Old.

179 Socrates, *Church History* 1.17.7–8, ed. Hansen 1995, 56–57, trans. Zenos 1891, 21.

180 Frolow 1944, 76–78 (esp. 77 n. 1); Stichel 1994, 325–26. For translations of the relevant sources, see Bassett 2004, 192–99.

181 Frolow 1944, 83, preferred the pagan tradition.

182 Frolow 1944, 67–68, believes the inscriptions to be forgeries, as does Dagron 1984b, 38–39. See also Bauer 1996, 176–77.

183 On the changing name of Hagia Eirene, see Feissel 2005, 245–52.

184 Krautheimer 1993, 548–50 (with Spain Alexander 1971, 319–24 and Odahl 2005, 237–38), insists on ascribing the foundation of the first Great Church (later Hagia Sophia) to Constantine, but this does not stand up to scrutiny. See Bardill 2004, 54.

185 Dagron 1984b, 376 and 395

186 See Dagron 1984b, 391–401 and Mango 1990, 35–36. On Mokios, see Wortley 2001, 363–38. Woods 2001 ascribes the church of Acacius to a senior official of that name, but this is incorrect: see Wortley 2001, 357–63, who discusses whether the church was located at Karua or Heptascalon, opting for the latter.

187 Eusebius, *Life* 4.60.3, ed. p. 144, trans. p. 176.

188 Robbins 1989.

189 Eusebius, *Life* 4.36, ed. pp. 133–34, trans. pp. 166–67.

190 Jones 1964, 83 claims, "The city was provided with a galaxy of magnificent churches."

191 Eusebius, *Life* 3.48.1, ed. p. 104, trans. p. 140.

192 For references to these churches, see Dagron 1984b, 391–401. Wortley 2004, 488–92, however, is not convinced by the evidence of Constantine's letter and stresses that Eusebius "does not record a single unequivocally ecclesiastical foundation at Constantinople."

193 Van Dam 2007, 297.

194 Eusebius, *Life* 2.46.1–4, ed. pp. 67–68, trans. pp. 110–11.

195 Hunt 1997, 410–11.

196 Eusebius, *Life* 3.30–32, ed. pp. 97–99, trans. pp. 134–35.

197 Hunt 1982, 7–8.

198 The similar suggestion that the cathedral in Antioch was dedicated to Concord (*homonoia*) so as to reflect the empire's political and religious unity (Grabar 1946, I, 222–26) is incorrect: see Deichmann 1972, 42–44, 50–52.

199 Eusebius, *Life* 3.30.1, ed. pp. 97, trans. pp. 134; Schott 2008, 129–30.

200 On the persistence to Constantine's day of a tradition regarding the site of the crucifixion and Christ's tomb, see Walker 1990, 241–47; Biddle 1999, 53–73; Morris 2005, 7–13.

201 Eusebius, *Life* 3.30.4 and 3.31.1, ed. p. 98, trans. p. 134.

202 On the complex, see Eusebius, *Life* 3.25–40, ed. pp. 94–101, trans. pp. 132–37 with Spain Alexander 1971, 307–10; Hunt 1982, 8–14; Krautheimer 1986, 60–63; Walker 1990, 235–81; Taylor 1993, 113–42; Stemberger 2000, 55–64; Odahl 2005, 212–17; Morris 2005, 31–37; Doig 2008, 34–37; Leithart 2010, 136–39.

203 Eusebius tells us only that, "As the principal item he first decked out the sacred cave" and that, "This then was the first thing, like a head of the whole, which the Emperor's munificence decorated with superb columns and full ornamentation, brightening the solemn cave with all kinds of artwork" (*Life* 3.33.3–3.34.1, ed. pp. 99–100, trans. p. 135). But is Eusebius referring here to the construction of the Rotunda or to some earlier adornment of the cave? It seems likely that the Rotunda existed by 348–350, when Cyril of Jerusalem seems to have preached inside it (Krautheimer 1986, 74 and esp. 462–63 n. 45). Egeria, writing between 381 and 387, provides the first firm evidence for the existence of the Rotunda, claiming, reliably or not, that both it and the church had been dedicated at the same time (i.e., under Constantine; 48.1, trans. Wilkinson 1999, 164). The archaeological evidence for the date of the Rotunda is disputed, and depends on the date ascribed to the structures found beneath it. Coüasnon 1974, 21–23 (followed by Krautheimer 1986, 462–63 n. 45) argues that the remains beneath the Rotunda are Constantinian and relate to the initial architectural adornment of the Constantinian Golgotha complex, when the cave was still exposed. Corbo 1982, I, 33–37, 221, dates the remains below the Rotunda to the Roman period and associates them with the Capitolium of Aelia; he rejects Coüasnon's views on an earlier Constantinian portico (I, 61–68, 224). Johnson 2006, 294, follows Corbo.

204 Hunt 1997, 414.

205 Eusebius, *Life* 3.25–27, ed. pp. 94–96, trans. pp. 132–33.

206 On Helena's pilgrimage, see Hunt 1982, 28–49; Holum 1990; Drijvers 1992, 55–72; Potter 2004, 437–39.

207 Barnes 2011, 30–33, argues that she was the daughter of the owner of an inn where Constantius lodged.

208 On the question of whether Helena was Constantius' concubine or wife, see Barnes 1982, 36; 2011, 33–35 (arguing for marriage); Drijvers 1992, 17–19; Leadbetter 1998b; Leadbetter 2009, 60–61 (arguing against marriage). See also Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 49 n. 5. On the date of the separation and marriage, see Barnes 2011, 38–42. On Theodora's parentage, see Barnes 1982, 33.

209 Drijvers 1992, 22–33; Leadbetter 1998b, 78; Barnes 2011, 42–43.

210 Van Dam 2007, 306, observes that, having pushed his father into the background, Constantine "seemed to be the son of a virgin birth."

211 Drijvers 1992, 41–43; Van Dam 2007, 302–303; Barnes 2011, 43.

212 See *RIC* VII, index on p. 750 under the legend SECVRITAS REIPVLICE; Donati and Gentili 2005, 218–19 nos. 17–18; Drijvers 1992, 41–42; Brubaker 1997, 57–58.

213 Eusebius, *Life* 3.42.1, ed. p. 101, trans. p. 137.

214 Telfer 1957; Holum 1990, 74–76; Drijvers 1992, 65.

215 Eusebius, *Life* 2.72.2, ed. p. 78, trans. pp. 119 with 252–53 on the dispute as to whether Constantine reached Antioch. See also Hunt 1997, 409–10.

216 Drijvers 1992, 65–72. A suggestion has even been put forward that the emperor intended to visit Egypt in the hope of sighting the phoenix, the mythical bird that was due to be reborn from its own ashes and inaugurate a new age: Lane Fox 1986, 638–41.

217 Hunt 1982, 33–34; Drijvers 1992, 59–63; Hunt 1997, 418–19.

218 On the contradictory and biased sources, see Pohlsander 1984, 99–106; Potter 2004, 380–82; Barnes 2011, 144–50. Barnes 1998a, 276–77; 2009, 377, emphasizes that our more reliable sources indicate that Crispus was not murdered but formally tried. Woods 1998 tries to argue that Fausta died during a botched abortion, and that Crispus committed suicide by poison. See also Odahl 2005, 202–207; Stephenson 2009, 219–23; Leithart 2010, 227–30.

219 Eusebius, *Life* 3.47.2, ed. p. 103, trans. p. 139. On this claim, see Drijvers 1992, 35–38.

220 Walker 1990, 171–84, on Eusebius' attitude to the cave.

221 Spain Alexander 1971, 305–306; Hunt 1982, 14–15; Krautheimer 1986, 60; Taylor 1993, 96–112; Caseau 2004, 122–23; Doig 2008, 33–34.

222 Eusebius, *Life* 3.43, trans. pp. 137–38; Spain Alexander 1971, 310–11; Hunt 1982, 15; Walker 1990, 199–234; Taylor 1993, 143–56. For the Imbomon structures of the 370s, see Krautheimer 1986, 74–75.

223 Eusebius, *Life* 3.43.2, 3.43.4, ed. p. 102, trans. pp. 137, 138; Hunt 1982, 37–38; Drijvers 1992, 63–65; Hunt 1997, 416–17.

224 See, e.g., Cameron 2006b, 100.

225 Eusebius, *Life* 3.51–53, trans. pp. 141–43; Spain Alexander 1971, 311–12; Hunt 1982, 15–16; Krautheimer 1986, 59; Taylor 1993, 86–95; Hunt 1997, 416; Doig 2008, 32.

226 Schott 2008, 130–31.

227 Genesis 18:18. Constantine makes the allusion in his letter preserved by Eusebius, *Life* 3.53.3, ed. p. 107, trans. pp. 142–43.

228 *Pan. Lat.* VI. 22.6, ed. and trans. Nixon and Rodgers 1994, 252–53, 584.

229 Barnes 2007, 209.

230 Barnes 2011, 111.

231 Mango 2004, 24–25.

232 Mango 2004, 19.

233 Dagron 1984b, 376, 395.

234 Malalas, *Chronicle*, 12.20 ed. Dindorf 1831, 291–92, ed. Thurn 2000, 221–22, trans. Jeffreys and others 1986, 155; *Chronicon Paschale* ed. Dindorf 1832, I, 494–95; Hesychius, 15 ed. Preger 1901–1907, 6–7. Mango 2004, 18.

235 Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.13 ed. Dindorf 1831, 324, ed. Thurn 2000, 248, trans. Jeffreys and others 1986, 176. See Dagron 1984b, 375–76.

236 Libanius, *Orations* 30.6.37, ed. and trans. Norman 1969–1977, II, 104–105; Libanius, *Orations* 62.8, ed. Foerster 1903–1915, IV, 350, trans. Norman 2001, 91; Jones 1964, 732.

237 Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.39 ed. Dindorf 1831, 345, ed. Thurn 2000, 267, trans. Jeffreys and others 1986, 187; Cameron 2011, 84–85.

238 Eusebius, *Life* 3.48.2, ed. p. 104, trans. p. 140. Note, however, Jones 1964, 83: "There is no reason to doubt Eusebius' assertion that it [i.e., Constantinople] was never sullied by pagan worship."

239 Barnes 2002, 115 with n. 81; 2007, 209 n. 80; 2011, 127.

240 See Himerius, *Orations* 41.8, ed. Colonna 1951, 162, trans. Penella 2007, 62 (with n. 69).
241 Barnes 2011, 127.
242 Zosimus, *New History* 2.31.1, ed. Paschoud 2000, 103, trans. Ridley 1982, 38; Bassett 2004, 63, 215 (no. 128).
243 Humphrey 1986, 260; Dagron 1984b, 339–41.
244 Zosimus, *New History* 2.31.2–3, ed. Paschoud 2000, 103, trans. Ridley 1982, 38; Dagron 1984b, 44 no. 2.
245 Cameron 1976b, 269–72. Dagron 1984b, 44 no. 3; Dagron 1984b, 373–74 has deduced (like Schneider and Guilland) that the Tetrastoon and the Basilica must have covered broadly the same area, but see Mango 1959, 42–47, who believes the Tetrastoon later became the Augustaion. Odahl 2005, 240 errs in claiming that these temples were on the acropolis.
246 Mango 1959, 44; Dagron 1984b, 373–74.
247 Hesychius 15, ed. Preger 1901–1907, 6; Dagron 1984b, 368.
248 *Palatine Anthology* 9.180, 181, 182, 183, ed., trans., and comm. Wilkinson 2010, 181–85.
249 As Jones 1948, 235 (= 1962, 191); Meier 2001, 70. On the distinction between Tyche-Fortuna and city Tychai, see Shelton 1979, 29.
250 Zosimus, *New History* 2.31.2–3, ed. Paschoud 2000, 103, trans. Ridley 1982, 38. On the statue, see Gramaccini 1996, 22; Meier 2001, 74; Bassett 2004, 155 (no. 22).
251 Compare Jacobs 2010, 280–81, for the conversion of a statue of a priestess of Aphrodite by removing an accompanying statue (presumably depicting Eros) to conceal the priestess' connection with the goddess.
252 See the comments of Toynbee 1947, 136; Bühl 1995, 30–34; Chuvin 2004, 36. Bassett 2004, 155 (no. 22) discusses the statue of Rhea-Cybele (but mention of the connection with the Tyche of Constantinople is lacking).
253 Vickers 1986, 302 nos. 3, 5; *RIC* VII, 340, 356, 578; Dagron 1984b, 43 no. 1, 49–50; Toynbee 1947, 137 with pl. X no. 1; Bühl 1995, figs. 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8; Pentcheva 2006, 17–18.
254 Dagron 1984b, 45.
255 Shelton 1979, 33; Donati and Gentili 2005, 252–54 no. 83.
256 Mango 2004, 30; Mango 2000, 177.
257 On the absence of capitolia after the Severans, see Cagiano de Azevedo 1941, 66.
258 *Chronicon Paschale* A.D. 407, ed. Dindorf 1832, 570, trans. Whitby and Whitby 1989, 61 (who refer [n. 203] to the Capitol as an "originally pagan temple").
259 Bassett 2004, 35.
260 La Rocca 1993, 571–77 argues for the prominence of the Capitol. On the problem of the route taken by the two main roads in the reign of Constantine, see Mango 2001, 26–28 with fig. 1.
261 Date: Barnes 2011, 20–23, correcting Van Dam 2007, 363–67.
262 Although they assume a Constantinian date, see Tabata 1997, 387–90, 400–401; Van Dam 2007, 22–34.
263 A point made by Mango 2003, 607.
264 Eusebius, *Life* 3.54.2, ed. pp. 107–108, trans. pp. 143–44; Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 8.1–4, ed. Heikel 1902, 216.1–26, trans. Drake 1976, 97–98.
265 Libanius, *Orations* 30.6, ed. and trans. Norman 1969–1977, II, 104–107. Compare Libanius, *Orations* 62.8, ed. Foerster 1903–1915, IV, 350, trans. Norman 2001, 91. See also the comments of MacMullen 1984, 49–50 with n. 35; Cameron and Hall 1999, 301. In contrast to Libanius, a panegyric preserved fragmentarily on papyrus appears to put a positive gloss on Constantine's confiscation of the wealth of temples: "Whenever they [i.e., the temple inspectors] are once sent out, it is similarly laid down that both the spoliation of shrines and illicit gains from their administration must be avoided" (Barnes 1997; 2007, 193–94; 2011, 130, 198–200).
266 Jones 1964, 92, 108–109; King 1993, 3–9, esp. pp. 8–9.
267 On the decay of temples, see Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, 49; Delmaire 2004, 320–21, 329.
268 Geffcken 1978, 25–29; Bagnall 1988.
269 Arnobius, *Against the Nations* 1.24.3, ed. Reifferscheid 1875, 16, trans. Bryce and Campbell 1871, 18.
270 Alföldi 1948, 107.
271 *Origin of Constantine* 34, ed. Mommsen 1892, I, 11, trans. Stevenson in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 48; Jerome, *Chronicle*, ed. Helm 1984, 233, trans. Donalson 1996; *Theodosian Code* 16.10.4, ed. p. 898, trans. p. 472, on which see Jones 1964, 938 and Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, 48–49.
272 Lane Fox 1986, 671–72; Cameron and Hall 1999, 278–79; 299–305; Barnes 2002a, 201–205; Chuvin 2004, 39–40; Schott 2008, 128–35.
273 Theotecnus at Antioch: Eusebius, *Church History* 9.11.5–6, ed. p. 850, trans. p. 301; Barnes 2011, 98. Delphi was evidently already closed when Eusebius wrote *Preparation for the Gospel* 4.2.8, ed. Des Places 1982–1983, I, 167–68, trans. Gifford 1903, III, 133–36. Mitchell 1988, 120.
274 Eusebius, *Life* 3.26, ed. pp. 95–96, trans. pp. 132–33.
275 Eusebius, *Life* 3.51–53, ed. pp. 105–107, trans. pp. 141–43. Caseau 2004: 123–26. Abraham: Genesis 13:18 and 18:1–15.
276 Caseau 2004: 122; Potter 2004, 432.
277 Eusebius, *Life* 3.55 and 3.58, ed. pp. 109, 111, trans. pp. 144–45, 146–47; Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 8.5–7, ed. Heikel 1902, 216.26–217.16, trans. Drake 1976, 98.
278 Eusebius, *Life* 3.56, ed. p. 110, trans. p. 145; Lane Fox 1986, 671–72; DePalma Digeser 2000, 131; Barnes 2002a, 203–204; Chuvin 2004, 40–41.

279 Cameron and Hall 1999, 303–304; Chuvin 2004, 41; Caseau 2004: 121–22.
280 Cameron and Hall 1999, 304–305.
281 Bassett 2004, 50–78 with catalogue. For a summary, see Bassett 2007. Further on the statues of the forum: Bauer 1996, 178–79. Further on the statues of the Hippodrome: Bardill 2010b, 167–71, 179–82.
282 See p. 34 with n. 19.
283 Hallett 2005, 268.
284 A statue's nudity was not sufficient reason for it to be destroyed, although in many cases the genitals were removed and breasts damaged. See Jacobs 2010, 278–79, 281–82, 288.
285 Eusebius, *Life* 3.54, ed. pp. 107–108, trans. pp. 143–44. For similar views expressed in other authors, see Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, 50; Bassett 2004, 48, 107–108, 114–15.
286 Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, 50.
287 Robert 1969; Bassett 2004, 64, 65, 230 no. 144; Potter 2004, 384; Bardill 2010b, 170–71.
288 *Palatine Anthology* 9.528, ed. and trans. in Wilkinson 2010, 180–81, 193–94 and Barnes 2011, 130. Might Palladas be thinking of the crosses that were often applied to the foreheads of statues, apparently to assimilate them into Christian society (Jacobs 2010, 279–80)? A legendary reference to Constantine ordering that a cross be inscribed on a statue of the Tyche of Constantinople at the Milion (Dagron 1984a, 45; Dagron 1984b, 309 n. 1; Bassett 2004, 240–41) is realistic if not true.
289 Eusebius, *Life* 3.54.2–6, ed. pp. 107–108, trans. pp. 143–44; Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 8, ed. Heikel 1902, 216.1–26, trans. Drake 1976, 97–98.
290 Eusebius, *Life* 3.54.6, ed. p. 108, trans. pp. 143–44.
291 Stewart 1999, esp. 177–78; Stewart 2003, 296–97.
292 As also concluded by Curran 1996, 75–76; Curran 2000, 179–80.
293 Eusebius, *Life* 3.54.2–3, ed. pp. 107–108, trans. p. 143.
294 See Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, 56, and the discussions of Curran 1994, 50–53, and Curran 2000, 240–44.
295 Curran 1994, 54–55.
296 Curran 1994, 51–52.
297 Curran 2000, 239–44.
298 Zosimus, *New History* 5.24.7–8, ed. and trans. Paschoud 1986, 37–38, trans. Ridley 1982, 112; Bassett 2004, 149 (no. 17), 151–52 (no. 19).
299 Athanassiadi 1993, 122–23; Turcan 1996, 287–88.
300 Mango 1963, 59.
301 Bassett 2004, 14–15.
302 *Theodosian Code* 16.10.8 (A.D. 382), ed. p. 899, trans. p. 473. For this and further examples, see Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, 51–52; Alchermes 1994, 170–72.
303 Zosimus, *New History* 2.31.2, ed. Paschoud 2000, 103, trans. Ridley 1982, 38. On the statue, see Gramaccini 1996, 22; Meier 2001, 74; Bassett 2004, 155 (no. 22).
304 Eusebius, *Life* 3.49, ed. p. 104, trans. p. 140 with comments on 298.
305 Grigg 1977, especially 6–7, suggests that by creating a symbol of Christ rather than a true likeness, Constantine may have been showing sensitivity to the desire of Christian leaders for their religion to be an aniconic cult.
306 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 24.9, ed. and trans. pp. 38–39, and the allusion at Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 1.1.13, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 4, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 59. Corcoran 2000, 185 no. 21a. For discussion of the value of Lactantius' account of Constantine's first act as emperor, see Barnes 1973, 43–46; 1981, 14 ("He [Lactantius] deserves to be believed"), 28; 2011, 64–66. Contrast Cameron 2005, 91 ("We are not therefore compelled to follow Lactantius"). Further: DePalma Digeser 2000, 121; Clarke 2005, 652–53.
307 Barnes 1973, 44; Barnes 1981, 38; Corcoran 2000, 144–45 no. 52 (Italy), 185 no. 21b (Africa); Curran 2000, 63–65.
308 *Pan. Lat.* 5.8.4, ed. and trans. pp. 278, 590.
309 *Theodosian Code* 7.20.2, ed. pp. 350–51, trans. p. 179; Barnes 1982, 69 n. 102; 1998b, 148–49; Corcoran 2000, 257–59. Connolly 2010 explains the uncertainty about the date of the law (suggestions being 307, 312, 313, 320 [the transmitted date], and 326) and also discusses the phrase "*dii te servent*" on p. 102.
310 Clarke 2005, 653–57.
311 Barnes 2002a, 193–94. Leadbetter 2009, 123–34, 226 sees the persecution as Diocletian's programme, which Galerius dutifully pursued.
312 De Ste. Croix 1954, 100–103 (= 2006, 43–45); Barnes 1981, 151–54; Keresztes 1983, 384–85, 388–89. Barnes 1992, 641–43; Corcoran 2000, 185–86 no. 24.
313 On the circumstances of Galerius' death, see Leadbetter 2009, 116–18, 224.
314 DePalma Digeser 2000, 56, 120; Leadbetter 2009, 224–25.
315 Barnes 2007, 189.
316 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.1.1–7, ed. pp. 802–804, trans. pp. 282–83; Mitchell 1988, 113 (I); Corcoran 2000, 148–49 no. 54. In general on Maximinus and the Christians, see Barnes 1981, 158–62; Davies 1989, 72–74; Potter 2004, 364–67; Van Dam 2007, 164–69; Leadbetter 2009, 223.
317 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 37.1, ed. and trans. pp. 54–55. For the date, see Barnes 1973, 44–45.
318 Barnes 1981, 40, 160; Mitchell 1988, 114 (K), 117; Barnes 1992, 642; Barnes 1998a, 276; Barnes 2002a, 194; Clarke 2005, 660.

319 Mitchell 1988, 118–19; Price 1984, 124 on the petition of Lycia-Pamphylia.
320 Mitchell 1988, 121–24.
321 For the three surviving texts of this rescript, see Mitchell 1988 and Corcoran 2000, 149–51, no. 55.
322 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.7.15, ed. p. 820, trans. p. 289.
323 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.7.8–9, ed. p. 816, trans. p. 288.
324 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.9.12–13, 9.9a.12, ed. pp. 832–34, 838, trans. pp. 294, 296; Barnes 1981, 48–49; Mitchell 1988, 114 (L); Corcoran 2000, 187–88 no. 29; Barnes 2011, 90.
325 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.9a.1–9, ed. pp. 834–38, trans. pp. 294–96; Barnes 1981, 62; Mitchell 1988, 114–15 (M); Corcoran 2000, 152 no. 57, 188 no. 30; Clarke 2005, 661–62.
326 Barnes 1981, 56; 2011, 84.
327 Eusebius, *Church History* 10.5.15–17, ed. p. 887, trans. p. 324; Corcoran 2000, 153 no. 59.
328 Eusebius, *Church History* 10.6, ed. p. 890, trans. pp. 326–27; Barnes 1981, 49; Corcoran 2000, 153 no. 60; Barnes 2011, 84, 132–33 (no. 2).
329 Eusebius, *Church History* 10.7, ed. p. 891, trans. p. 327; Barnes 1981, 50; Corcoran 2000, 155 no. 63; Potter 2004, 315.
330 *Theodosian Code* 16.2.1 (A.D. 313) and 16.2.2 (A.D. 319), ed. p. 835, trans. pp. 440–41. On these laws, see Gaudemet 1947, 27–32.
331 Corcoran 1993, 112.
332 Barnes 1989, 308. Note the earlier contrary opinion of Jones 1964, 81, who wrote: "Christians were still a tiny minority, especially in the West, and they were on the whole people of no importance."
333 Drake 2000, 152–53, concludes that "Galerius' edict indicated the decisive failure of persecution as a means of dealing with the Christians." His "hard-line paganism" was "now thoroughly discredited," thereby "focusing attention on the need for change." Constantine, says Drake (p. 157), "realized the need for a more flexible and imaginative approach to 'the Christian question' than the traditional policy of periodic pogrom allowed."
334 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.10.7–11, ed. pp. 842–44, trans. pp. 298–99; Mitchell 1988, 115 (N); Corcoran 2000, 189 no. 33; Barnes 1981, 63–64.
335 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.11.2–8, ed. pp. 848–52, trans. pp. 300–301; Barnes 1981, 64; Barnes 2002a, 196–98; Humphries 2008, 98; Leadbetter 2009, 243; Barnes 2011, 98.
336 Potter 2004, 373.
337 There does not appear to be firm evidence to support the claim that it was written "at the insistence of Constantine" (Barnes 1992, 645).
338 Lactantius, *Persecutors* 48.2–12, ed. and trans. pp. 70–73 (quoted in Clarke 2005, 662–63); see also Eusebius, *Church History* 10.5.2–14, ed. pp. 883–87, trans. pp. 322–24. On the content, see Barnes 1981, 64–65; Mitchell 1988, 116 (O); Barnes 1998b, 147–48; Odahl 2005, 324–25 n. 33; Barnes 2002a, 199; Barnes 2007, 186–89; Barnes 2011, 90–97.
339 Corcoran 2000, 158–60 no. 66, 189 no. 34.
340 Compare Straub 1967, 46–47: "By these donations the same importance was attributed to the cult of the Christian God as was attributed to the traditional cults supported by the government."
341 Drake 2006, 122, reads too much into the "Edict" when he writes: "The Edict of Milan defines Constantine's religious policy. . . . he was himself a Christian and made no effort to hide his allegiance to that faith."
342 Licinius' coins: Christodoulou 1998, 61.
343 Contrary to Jones 1948, 88 (= 1962, 80): "It must then have been Licinius who insisted on a strict impartiality" and Jones 1964, 80–81: "The wording of the edict suggests it was a compromise, and if so there can be little doubt that it was Constantine who pressed the claims of the Christians." Lenski 2008, 231, suggests that the language of the "Edict" reflects Licinius' choice, hence the use of the word *divinitas*, which would not have alienated a pagan audience. Constantine, as a Christian, he claims, would have preferred the term "*deus*." We cannot know.
344 On the Donatist controversy, see Frend 1971, 1–24, 141–68; Barnes 1981, 54–61; Millar 1992, 584–90; Potter 2004, 402–10; Leithart 2010, 153–63; Barnes 2011, 100, 105. Barnes 1982, 238–47, provides a list of the relevant documents.
345 Potter 2004, 406, suggests Ossius' involvement.
346 Eusebius, *Church History* 10.6, ed. p. 890, trans. pp. 326–27; Barnes 1981, 49; Corcoran 2000, 153 no. 60; Barnes 2011, 84, 132–33 (no. 2).
347 Eusebius, *Church History* 10.7, ed. p. 891, trans. p. 327; Corcoran 2000, 155 no. 63; Barnes 2011, 135 (no. 6).
348 Frend 1971, 145–50. Appeal: Corcoran 2000, 156–57 no. 63b.
349 Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, appendix 3, ed. Ziwsa 1893, 206, trans. Edwards 1997, 183–84; Corcoran 2000, 304, 331 n. 2. Dvornik 1966, II, 635, observes: "This was the Hellenistic conception of the absolute royal power over all things material and spiritual, including the duty of enforcing the correct manner of worship, accompanied by a sincere conviction that this worship was addressed to the only true God." See also Fears 1977, 313–14.
350 Origen, *Against Celsus* 8.68, ed. Koetschau 1899, II, 285, trans. Crombie 1872–1878, II, 552; Dvornik 1966, 604–605.

351 Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, Appendix 7, ed. Ziwsa 1893, 212.9–13, trans. Edwards 1997, 194; Dvornik 1966, 636; Frend 1971, 157–58.
352 Straub 1967, 49; Drake 2000, 283.
353 Frend 1971, 150–52.
354 Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, 1.23 and Appendix 5, ed. Ziwsa 1893, 26.6–9 and 208–10, trans. Edwards 1997, 23–24, 189–91; Corcoran 2000, 157 no. 63c, 304; Frend 1971, 152–53 with n. 6; Odahl 2005, 332–33 n. 33.
355 See also Seston 1947, esp. 128; Dvornik 1966, 639, 642; Leithart 2010, 150–53.
356 Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 25 (= Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaenae synodi* 38, ed. Opitz 1934–1941, II, 37; Socrates, *Church History* 1.9.17–25, ed. Hansen 1995, 31–32, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 13–14; Gelasius, *Church History* 2.37.1–9, ed. Hansen 2002, 105–106).
357 Eusebius, *Life* 4.24, ed. p. 128, trans. p. 161. On the interpretation of Constantine's words, see, for example, Seston 1947 (contrast Dvornik 1966, 752–54); De Decker and Dupuis-Masay 1980; Rapp 1998a, 294–95; Rapp 1998b; Rapp 2005, 129–31; Dagron 2003, 127–35 esp. 133–34; Veyne 2007, 155–56 (= 2010, 81–82) and more generally Alföldi 1948, 34–35; Jones 1948, 204 (= 1962, 169); Straub 1967, 50–53; Cameron and Hall 1999, 320; Van Dam 2003, 138–39 (explaining Constantine's vision as "proof that he had received his consecration as a bishop of sorts directly from God."); Mitchell 2007, 244; Cameron 2011, 23. For further implications of Constantine's description of himself as "bishop", see p. 361.
358 Eusebius, *Life* 1.44–45, ed. pp. 38–39, trans. pp. 87–88; Dvornik 1966, 751–57 (here 751–52) tries to distinguish two views of Constantine's relationship with the Church in the *Life*, one set forth by Eusebius himself, another by a later editor. The views expressed do not appear irreconcilable, however.
359 On the issue of Constantine's relationship with the Church, see Barnes 1998c.
360 Eusebius, *Life* 4.27.1, ed. p. 130, trans. p. 163; Barnes 2011, 133.
361 Edwards 2006b, 225 rightly states that from 312 "his adherence to the Christian religion was unequivocal, *at least when he was speaking to the Church*" (italics added).
362 Frend 1971, 152–53 n. 6.
363 Cameron 2011, 175–77, illustrates how some who called themselves Christian were nevertheless considered pagan by "committed" Christians. Straub 1967, 49–50, observes Eusebius' difficulty in describing Constantine's faith. Veyne sees Constantine as a self-proclaimed Christian who was not recognized by the Church, but he has no hesitation in accepting that Constantine was a genuine Christian believer (2007, 149–52 = 2010, 77–79).
364 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints* 11.2, ed. Heikel 1902, 166, trans. Edwards 2003, 20.
365 Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, Appendix 1.22, ed. Ziwsa 1893, trans. Edwards 1997, 22–23; Alföldi 1948, 24 n. 1 (citing F. Stählin). Barnes 1981, 57, would have us believe that the writers of the petition deliberately avoided reference to Constantine's Christianity.
366 A similar point is made regarding Constantine's aims at the Council of Nicaea in 325 by Drake 2000, 242: "Constantine thought of Christianity in broadly inclusive terms, as a faith for which the threshold for admission could be quite low."
367 Compare DePalma Digeser 2000, 141: "Perhaps the recurring solar imagery at imperial level and the edicts facilitating certain kinds of monotheistic worship indicate that he considered certain Greco-Roman monotheists as his natural allies or even as fellow travellers on the straight way, full partners with Christians in a community of concord."
368 On the following events, see Frend 1971, 159–62; Barnes 2011, 105.
369 Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, Appendix 7, ed. Ziwsa 1893, 211–12, trans. Edwards 1997, 193–94.
370 Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, Appendix 9, ed. Ziwsa 1893, 212–13, trans. Edwards 1997, 196–97.
371 *Pan. Lat.* XII, ed. and trans. pp. 288–333, 594–607.
372 *Pan. Lat.* XII.26.1, ed. and trans. pp. 332, 607 (corrected by Barnes 2011, 99 with n. 11).
373 For other discussions of this text, see Liebeschuetz 1979, 285–88; Odahl 2005, 326 n. 5; Barnes 2011, 98–99 (who advances an unconvincing Biblical connection).
374 Lenski 2008, 210–13; Barnes 2011, 83.
375 *PLRE* I, C. Annius Anullinus 3.
376 *PLRE* I, Aradius Rufinus 10.
377 *PLRE* I, C. Ceionius Rufius Volusianus 4.
378 *PLRE* I, C. Vettius Cossinius Rufinus 15.
379 Barnes 1995 esp. 142–43, 146–47 concerning Table III. For a full account of the sources of data, see Barnes 1994a (which corrects and updates Barnes 1989, 311–21). Cameron 2011, 177–87, emphasizes that a number of officials classified as Christian by Barnes cannot be shown to be so.
380 *Pan. Lat.* XII.2.4, ed. and trans. pp. 295, 595.
381 *Pan. Lat.* XII.19.3, ed. and trans. pp. 322–23, 604. Straub 1967, 41–42, argued on the basis of this text that Constantine refused to sacrifice in 312. Contrast McCormick 1986, 101 n. 93. See also the comments of Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 323–24 n. 119.
382 Barnes 2011, 83, 99–100.
383 Eusebius, *Life* 1.48, ed. p. 40, trans. p. 89.
384 Petropoulou 2008, 290–95, has suggested that those Jews who had been in contact with Jesus found it easier to abolish ancestral customs. The destruction of

the Temple in A.D. 70 was seen by Christians as a sign of divine preference. Judaism was now obsolete, and the new Christian Law did not require animal sacrifice (Petropoulou 2008, 246–74).

385 Bradbury 1995, 335–36. Gradel 2002, 15–18, discusses the different types of sacrifice and comments (p. 15): "Bloody and bloodless sacrifices differed in degree, but not in kind; the main difference in their use was simply that blood sacrifice was more costly and prestigious." Veyne 2007, 176 n. 1 (= 2010, 93 n. 29), notes pagan condemnation of blood sacrifice but sees no historical connection with the Christian horror of the rite.

386 Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 2.33–34, 2.42–43, ed. Bouffartigue and others 1977–1995, II, 100–101; 109–10, trans. Taylor 1994, 64–65, 70–71.

387 Bradbury 1995, 332–38.

388 Curran 2000, 171, asserts, "It was irregular but not unknown, for emperors to loathe blood sacrifices," quoting Orosius, *Against the Pagans* 7.20.3, ed. Zangemeister 1882, 479, trans. Deferrari 1964, 315, where it is claimed that Philip the Arab abhorred sacrifice. It is difficult to assess the truth of this claim, which was part of a legend (also known from Eusebius, *Church History* 6.34, ed. pp. 588–90, trans. pp. 206–207; Jerome, *Chronicle* ed. Helm 1984, 217, trans. Donalson 1996) that Philip had been the first emperor to convert to Christianity (as noted by Straub 1967, 46 and Barnes 1985a, 134).

389 The inference is, however, made by Straub 1967, 41 and Veyne 2007, 150 (= 2010, 78–79; writing of the period around 311–312).

390 Curran 1996, 69–70; Curran 2000, 171.

391 *Theodosian Code* 9.16.1 (A.D. 319) and 9.16.2 (A.D. 319), ed. pp. 459, 460, trans. p. 237. Also *Theodosian Code* 16.2.5 (A.D. 323), ed. p. 836, trans. p. 441. See Barnes 1981, 52; Veyne 2007, 181–82 (= 2010, 96).

392 Curran 1996, 70–71; Curran 2000, 172–74; Corcoran 2000, 193–94 no. 45; Veyne 2007, 170 with n. 2 (= 2010, 90 with n. 18).

393 *Theodosian Code* 9.16.2 (A.D. 319), ed. p. 460, trans. p. 237 (here corrected).

394 *Theodosian Code* 9.16.1 (A.D. 319), ed. p. 459, trans. p. 237.

395 Salzman 1987, 177.

396 Alföldi 1948, 83, who translates the law differently from most commentators, does not hesitate in interpreting this as a condemnation of polytheism: "Constantine defines paganism in set terms as a 'perquisite of the bygone usurpation.'"

397 *Theodosian Code* 16.10.1 (A.D. 320/1), ed. p. 897, trans. p. 472; Barnes 1981, 52–53; Curran 1996, 71; Curran 2000, 174; Veyne 2007, 178–79 (= 2010, 94–95).

398 *Theodosian Code* 9.1.4, ed. p. 431, trans. p. 224; Drake 2000, 335–36.

399 On the laws relating to the family, see the comments of Evans Grubbs 1993, 140–42. For further bibliography, see Humfress 2006, 222–23.

400 *Theodosian Code* 9.40.2 (A.D. 315 [316?]), ed. p. 501, trans. p. 255; Barnes 1981, 51; Corcoran 2000, 306; Harries 1999, 139; Potter 2010, 602; Barnes 2011, 136 (no. 7).

401 Genesis 1:26. See Rivière 2002, 353–54.

402 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 7.5.6, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 597, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 399.

403 Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 41.4, ed. Dufraigne 1975, 58, trans. Bird 1994, 49, who notes (p. 189 n. 4) a number of other merciful legislative acts; Sozomen, *Church History* 1.8.13, ed. Bidez and Hansen 1995, 19, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 245. For discussion, see Harries 1999, 138–39; Rivière 2002, 358–61; Potter 2004, 429. Against the case for a late date for this law, see Barnes 1981, 312 n. 83 (observing that it was Licinius, not Constantine, who prescribed crucifixion as a punishment soon after 312) and Barnes 2011, 136 (no. 7).

404 *Theodosian Code* 1.27.1, ed. p. 62, trans. p. 31, and the later law of 333 in *Sirmondian Constitutions* 1, ed. pp. 907–908, trans. p. 477. See Gaudemet 1947, 32–38; Barnes 1981, 51; Hunt 1998b, 272–76; Brown 1998, 658–59; Corcoran 2000, 284–86 no. 3; Drake 2000, 322–36; DePalma Digeser 2000, 139–40; Rapp 2005, 243; Leithart 2010, 216–18; Barnes 2011, 134 (no. 5, *episcopalis audentia*).

405 Drake 2000, 325–36. Note also DePalma Digeser 2000, 139–40, who sees the privileges granted to clerics not as a reward but as consistent with Roman tradition.

406 *Justinianic Code* 1.13.1 (316), 1.13.2 (321; = *Theodosian Code* 4.7.1), ed. Krueger 1954, 67, trans. Scott 1932, XII, 85; Barnes 1981, 311–12 n. 76; Barnes 2011, 134 (no. 5, *manumissio in ecclesia*).

407 *Theodosian Code* 16.2.4 (A.D. 321), ed. p. 836, trans. p. 441, trans. Barnes 2011, 139. See Gaudemet 1947, 41–43; Barnes 1981, 50; Salzman 1993, 367; Barnes 1998a, 280; Corcoran 2000, 196 no. 51; Humfress 2006, 218; Barnes 2007, 204–205; Harries 2010, 92 (quoted); Barnes 2011, 139–40 (no. 11).

408 Eusebius, *Life* 4.26.5–6, ed. pp. 129–30, trans. pp. 162–63.

409 *Theodosian Code* 2.24.1, ed. pp. 112–13, trans. p. 56; Harries 2010, 83–86.

410 *Theodosian Code* 2.8.1 (A.D. 321), ed. p. 87, trans. p. 44; *Justinianic Code* 3.12.2 (A.D. 321), ed. Krueger 1954, 127, trans. Scott 1932, XII, 275. See Gaudamet 1947, 43–48; Barnes 1981, 51–52; Corcoran 2000, 312; Barnes 2011, 132 (no. 1).

411 Alföldi 1948, 48.

412 Eusebius, *Life* 4.18, 23, ed. pp. 126, 128, trans. pp. 159–60. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 9.10 and 17.14, ed. Heikel 1902, 219, 258.16–20, trans. Drake 1976, 100, 126.

413 See also Veyne 2007, 171–75 (= 2010, 91–93).

414 Morin 1893–1897, III/2, 418, trans. Baynes 1972, 100.

415 *P. Oxy.* LIV, 3759; Potter 2004, 426–27.

416 *Theodosian Code* 8.16.1 (A.D. 320), ed. pp. 418–19, trans. pp. 217–18, trans. Barnes 2011, 137.

417 Eusebius, *Life* 4.26.2, ed. p. 129, trans. p. 162. Grigg 1977, 29–30, accepts the Christian motives presented by Eusebius, claiming the repeal was chiefly of value to Christian clergymen.

418 Corcoran 1993, 102.

419 See also *Justinianic Code* 6.9.9 (A.D. 339), 6.23.15 (A.D. 339), 6.37.21 (A.D. 339), ed. Krueger 1954, 248, 254, 269, trans. Scott 1932, XIII, 308, 331–32; XIV, 36; *Theodosian Code* 3.2.1 and 11.7.3, ed. pp. 130–31, 585–86, trans. pp. 65, 299.

420 See Evans Grubbs 1993, 122–26.

421 Giardina 2000, 394–95; Potter 2004, 429–31; Barnes 2011, 137.

422 *Theodosian Code* 4.6.2 (A.D. 336) and 3 (A.D. 336); 4.12.1 (A.D. 314), 2 (A.D. 317), 3 (A.D. 320 [?]), 4 (A.D. 331); 9.9.1 (A.D. 326); 12.1.6 (A.D. 319), ed. pp. 175, 176, 189–90, 451–52, 663–64, trans. pp. 86, 92–93, 233, 342–43; *Justinianic Code* 5.27.5 (A.D. 477), ed. Krueger 1954, 217, trans. Scott 1932, XIII, 216–17.

423 See Evans Grubbs 1993, 130–33.

424 *Theodosian Code* 11.27.1 (A.D 315), 11.27.2 (A.D. 322), ed. pp. 616–17, trans. p. 318.

425 *Theodosian Code* 5.9.1 (A.D. 331), ed. p. 225, trans. p. 109.

426 Evans Grubbs 1993, 133–36, 2009; Tate 2008, especially 103–107 (Christian writings) and 108–10 (Constantine's legislation); Leithart 2010, 220–21.

427 *Pan. Lat.* IV, text and trans. Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 334–85, 608–28.

428 Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 335–36.

429 Liebeschuetz 1979, 289–91, claims that there are hints that the orator had the Christian God in mind (compare also Lane Fox 1986, 618–19). If that is so, he may have been unwilling to declare it openly: Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 335–36.

430 Veyne 2007, 145 (= 2010, 75), goes too far when he suggests that already in 312–313 Constantine was firmly Christian, harbouring plans to establish the faith, and had duped the pagan majority into thinking his faith was a purely personal matter. I prefer to see a development in Constantine's personal beliefs, beginning with a conviction that his own beliefs were compatible with Christianity.

431 Stark 1996, 7 with Table 1.1, 12–13, arguing that these projections are accurate to around 350. Barnes 2007, 200–201, questions the model.

432 Cameron 2011, 55, observes: "While Constantine and his Christian successors did not (of course) invoke their pontifical authority, it was in effect in this capacity that they legislated about church affairs, endowed churches and convoked councils to deliberate church doctrine."

433 See the discussions in Calderone 1973, 264–69; Millar 1992, 359–61; De Decker and Dupuis-Masay 1980, 137–52; Barnes 2007, 202; Cameron 2011, 51–56 (arguing that it was Gratian who altered the title to Pontifex Inclitus in 382); Barnes 2011, 25.

434 *RIC* VII, 411–21 (Siscia), 481–82 (Thessaloniki), 532–34 (Heraclea), 591–98 (Nicomedia), 661–74 (Antioch), 698–701 (Alexandria). Christodoulou 1998, 61.

435 Berrens 2004, 161.

436 Helgeland 1979, 807–11; Barnes 1981, 70–72; Van Dam 2007, 171, 172–73.

437 Eusebius, *Life* 1.51.1–1.54.1 and 2.1–2, ed. pp. 42–43, 47–48, trans. pp. 90–91, 94–95; Eusebius, *Church History* 10.8.7–9.3, ed. pp. 894–900, trans. pp. 328–31; Corcoran 2000, 195.

438 Jones 1964, 81: "His later career shows that he remained a pagan at heart"; Barnes 1981, 70.

439 For discussion of Licinius' shift with regard to the Christians, see Corcoran 1993 esp. 97–102; Cameron and Hall 1999, 224, 227–29; Corcoran 2000, 195; Mitchell 2007, 242; Barnes 2011, 105–106.

440 *Theodosian Code* 15.14.1 (A.D. 324), ed. p. 828, trans. p. 437; Eusebius, *Life* 2.46.1, ed. p. 67, trans. pp. 110–11. On Constantine's and Eusebius' change in attitude to Licinius, see Avery 1940, 44; Helgeland 1979, 762; Corcoran 1993.

441 *Palatine Anthology* 10.91, ed. and trans. Wilkinson 2009, 43.

442 See the attractions of the faith discussed by Veyne 2007, 35–65, 117–37 (= 2010, 17–32, 58–72). Veyne sees Constantine as unquestionably Christian from soon after 310.

443 Barnes 1981, 211, 377 n. 14; 2011, 110.

444 Eusebius, *Life* 4.17, 22, ed. pp. 126, 128, trans. pp. 159, 160–61.

445 Straub 1967, 49–50.

446 Bodyguards: Eusebius, *Life* 4.18.1, ed. p. 126, trans. p. 159. Troops: Eusebius, *Life* 4.18.3–4.20.2, ed. pp. 126–27, trans. pp. 159–60.

447 Julian, *Caesars* 336a–b, ed. and trans. Wright 1913–1923, II, 412–13; Zosimus 2.29.1–4, ed. Paschoud 2000, 100–101, trans. Ridley 1982, 36–37 on which, see Pohlsander 1984, 101–102; Potter 2004, 380–82.

448 Libanius, *Orations* 30.6, ed. and trans. Norman 1969–1977, II, 104–105. See the comments of Seston 1936a, 256–58; Wiemer 1994a, 521–22.

449 It was perhaps after this victory or that of 332 that the column inscribed *Fortunae reduci ob devictos Gothos* was erected on the acropolis in Constantinople and topped with a statue of Tyche. Mathews 2009–2010, 8–14, however, attempts to connect the column with the victory over Licinius in 324, on the weak grounds that

Licinius made a final stand at Chrysopolis with Gothic support. Had the monument really marked Licinius' defeat, the inscription would doubtless have referred to a victory over a tyrant.

450 Barnes 1981, 250.

451 Eusebius, *Life* 2.24–42, ed. pp. 58–66, trans. pp. 104–109; Corcoran 2000, 315. See the comments of Barnes 1981, 208–209 with n. 6; Cameron and Hall 1999, 239; Barnes 2011, 107–108.

452 Schott 2008, 125–26.

453 Barnes 2002a, 199.

454 Eusebius, *Life* 2.35, ed. p. 63, trans. pp. 107–108. On this letter, see Barnes 1981, 208–10, who rightly observes, "The letter does not disguise the religious sympathies of Constantine, who takes every opportunity to stress the truth of Christianity." However, Drake 2000, 242–44, correctly states that Constantine's main emphasis is not on Christianity *per se*, but on the worship of a "Supreme God."

455 Eusebius, *Life* 2.45.2–46.4, ed. p. 67, trans. pp. 110–11. Corcoran 2000, 316.

456 Eusebius, *Life* 2.48–60, ed. pp. 68–72, trans. pp. 111–14; Cameron and Hall 1999, 244; Corcoran 2000, 316; Drake 2000, 244–45, 286–87, 299–300; DePalma Digeser 2000, 126–28, 136–38; Odahl 2005, 187–89.

457 Eusebius, *Life* 2.56, ed. pp. 70–71, trans. p. 113.

458 Eusebius, *Life* 2.60.1, ed. p. 72, trans. p. 114.

459 See DePalma Digeser 1998, esp. 142–43; DePalma Digeser 2000, 115–43 (pp. 126–28, 136–38 on this letter).

460 On Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* as a rejoinder to Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles*, see DePalma Digeser 2000, 12, 19–114; Leithart 2010, 107–10.

461 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 5.19.26; 5.20.3–8, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 466, 468–69, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 322, 323–24.

462 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 5.20.9–11, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 469–70, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 324. See also DePalma Digeser 2000, 62; Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 46–48; Leithart 2010, 107–10.

463 DePalma Digeser 2000, 136–38.

464 Neoplatonists usually identified the second, consubstantial god as Mind (*nous*), whereas the Hermetists referred to the Reason or Word (*logos*) of God. See DePalma Digeser 2000, 70–71.

465 Eusebius, *Life* 2.60.2, ed. p. 72, trans. p. 114.

466 Drake 2000, 244–45, 286–87, 299–300; Leithart 2010, 110–12, 139–40.

467 Eusebius, *Life* 2.56.1, ed. p. 70, trans. p. 113.

468 An inscription from Delphi dated to 341 illustrates how this approach was continued after Constantine's death. Constantine's sons promised protection from harassment to a former priest of Apollo who had been honoured by Constantine. See Barnes 2011, 142–43.

469 Eusebius, *Life* 2.57, ed. p. 71, trans. pp. 113–14.

470 Schott 2008, 126–28.

471 The complete ban is alleged by Eusebius, *Life* 2.45.1, ed. p. 66, trans. p. 110. A ban on sacrifice by officials is mentioned at Eusebius, *Life* 2.44, ed. p. 66, trans. p. 110. Amongst those scholars rejecting the complete ban are Lane Fox 1986, 669; Drake 1982 (questioning Barnes 1981); Salzman 1993, 367 n. 30; DePalma Digeser 2000, 129–33 with 167–69; Delmaire 2004; Sandwell 2005; Veyne 2007, 180–81 (= 2010, 95–96). See also Corcoran 2000, 315–16.

472 *Theodosian Code* 9.16.3 (A.D. 321/4 [317–319]), ed. pp. 460–61, trans. p. 237; Barnes 1981, 52; Curran 2000, 172; Potter 2004, 432.

473 Eusebius, *Life* 3.48.2, ed. p. 104, trans. p. 140.

474 Libanius, *Orations* 30.6, ed. and trans. Norman 1969–1977, II, 104–107.

475 Matthews 2000, 291; Evans Grubbs 1993, 120 with n. 1, observes that we know of about 330 laws of Constantine, but only 276 are contained in the *Theodosian Code*.

476 Barnes 1989, 324; Wiemer 1994a, 522, concludes that Libanius reflects a pagan tradition that Constantine was tolerant of paganism.

477 Barnes 1989, 322.

478 *P. Oxy* XV 1814, recto, lines 3–19.

479 Corcoran 2000, 315–16, thinks this is unlikely to be Constantine's law.

480 *Theodosian Code* 16.10.2 (A.D. 341), ed. p. 897, trans. p. 472; Bradbury 1994, 126–27; Barnes 1981, 246; 2002a, 206.

481 Barnes 2011, 109 (an "absurd claim").

482 Curran 2000, 183–86; Delmaire 2004, 325–26. But note Baynes 1972, 45–47.

483 Firmicus Maternus, *On the Error of Profane Religions* 16.3–4, 20.7, 29, ed. and trans. Turcan 1982, 112–13, 125–26, 153–54; Barnes 1989, 331–32; Cameron 2011, 174.

484 *Theodosian Code* 16.10.5, ed. p. 898, trans. p. 472.

485 Ammianus Marcellinus, *History* 19.10.5, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1939–1940, I, 522–23; Cameron 2011, 66.

486 Libanius, *Autobiography* 27, ed. and trans. Norman 1992, I, 84–85.

487 Barnes 1994c, 9; Bradbury 1994, 127–29; Sandwell 2005, 98–99; Barnes 2011, 6, 175.

488 On Libanius' "barefaced lie": Barnes 2011, 6. "Constantine," it has been claimed by Barnes 1989, 330, "could easily tolerate such harmless bravado" on the part of Crispinus' uncle – although one wonders why he would have bothered passing a law banning all sacrifice if that were the case, unless it was largely a symbolic gesture intended to appease hard-line Christians.

489 Wiemer 1994a, 522 n. 54; Delmaire 2004, 325.

490 Eusebius, *Life* 3.53, ed. pp. 106–107, trans. pp. 141–42; Bradbury 1994, 131–32.

491 *Palatine Anthology* 10.90, ed. and trans. Wilkinson 2009, 43.

492 Neverthess Barnes 2011, 16, 110, claims that Palladas' words confirm Constantine made sacrifice illegal.

493 Curran 1996, 74; Curran 2000, 175–78.

494 Delmaire 2004; Sandwell 2005, 101–102. The Western laws are *Theodosian Code* 9.16.2 (A.D. 319), 9.16.1 (A.D. 319), ed. pp. 459–60, trans. p. 237.

495 Drake 1982, 465.

496 For the date, see Barnes 2011, 20–23. For the text and a translation, see Van Dam 2007, 363–67.

497 Salzman 1987, 177.

498 On the ambiguity of the term, see Salzman 1987 esp. 178. Other discussions include: Baynes 1972, 47; Bradbury 1994, 130; Curran 1996, 76; Curran 2000, 180–81; Potter 2004, 432–34; Edwards 2006a, 154. Sandwell 2005, 90, attempts to argue that the ambiguity in the term was unintentional.

499 Barnes 1981, 246; 1989, 331; 2002a, 206.

500 Julian, *Letters* 19, ed. and trans. Wright 1913–1923, III, 48–55.

501 Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists* 10.6.8; 23.4.2–3, ed. and trans. Wright 1921, 502–503, 552–55.

502 Barnes 1981, 210–12 with esp. nn. 11 and 15; Barnes 1984; Bradbury 1994, 124–26; Curran 1996, 73; Barnes 1998a, 289–90; Barnes 2009, 375; Barnes 2011, 110. A late assertion (of around 384) that under Constantine "the pagans were not allowed to perform their sacrilegious rites" occurs in Optatus, *Against the Donatists* 2.15, ed. Ziwsa 1893, 50.15–16, trans. Edwards 1997, 44. See also Corcoran 2000, 315–16.

503 Errington 1988, 315; Wiemer 1994a, 523. Barnes 1994c, 8–9, points out that the Greek is probably a translation of the Latin *fana falsitatis*, but it cannot be inferred from this that the dispensation implied retaining the temples but banning the associated ritual.

504 Barnes 1981, 377 n. 12, suggests the letter was written after Licinius' execution, since Eusebius, *Life* 2.54, ed. p. 70, trans. p. 113, suggests that all of Constantine's enemies were now dead.

505 Barnes 2011, 110–11, attempts to sustain his argument for a Constantinian ban on sacrifice by interpreting the reference to Constantine's inability to remove "the customs of the temples" as meaning only that Constantine was "restrained from destroying . . . cult places."

506 *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints* 11, ed. Heikel 1902, 167.29–168.5, trans. Edwards 2003, 22–23.

507 Barnes 2011, 11.

508 Bradbury 1994, esp. 134–39; Leithart 2010, 126–29.

509 *Palatine Anthology* 10.90, lines 1–2 (Licinius blamed), lines 5–7 (quoted), ed. and trans. Wilkinson 2009, 43 with commentary on p. 48.

510 *Palatine Anthology* 10.90, lines 3–4: "Thus we are irrationally deceived by envy, and thus we are readily enslaved to folly," ed. and trans. Wilkinson 2009, 43.

511 Eusebius, *Life* 4.10.1, ed. p. 123, trans. p. 157 (adapted; also trans. Dodgeon and Lieu 1991, 150–52 (no. 6.2.5)).

512 Zosimus, *New History* 2.29.5, ed. and trans. Paschoud 2000, 101–102, trans. Ridley 1982, 37, trans. Lieu in Lieu and Montserrat 1996, 17.

513 However, Fowden 2005b, 560, and Leithart 2010, 328, accept that the refusal took place in 312.

514 Paschoud detects in Zosimus references to two occasions, at the first of which Constantine sacrificed ("Constantine feared the soldiers and took part in the celebration") and at the second of which he refused to do so. He would date the first procession to 312 and the second to 315. See Paschoud 1971, 344–53 and Paschoud 1993. However, this is unnecessary: Zosimus refers to one occasion on which the emperor was at first persuaded to go ahead with the sacrifice but later had a change of heart during the proceedings.

515 Alföldi 1948, 62 with n. 2, 73 with n. 2. Wiemer 1994a, 516–18 and 1994b finds support for this dating of Zosimus' account by connecting it with Libanius *Orations* 19.18–19, ed. and trans. Norman 1969–1977, II, 278–81, which describes an incident when Constantine was heckled by the Roman people, asked his two brothers for advice, chose to ignore the behaviour, and so "put himself on good terms with Rome by ordaining that emperors might have fun poked at them in this way." Wiemer dates this incident to 326, on the grounds that the two brothers were probably Dalmatius the elder and Julius Constantius, of whom the latter is likely to have been in central Italy around 325/6. Curran 1996, 74 assumes a date of 326 for Constantine's refusal to sacrifice.

516 Van Dam 2007, 150–83, 368–72.

517 On Nakoleia's demands and its cult, see Van Dam 2007, 159–60.

518 Van Dam 2007, 183.

519 Van Dam 2007, 176–78.

520 Eusebius, *Life* 4.37–38, ed. pp. 134–35; Cameron and Hall 1999, 167.

521 Cameron and Hall 1999, 327–28.

522 Eusebius, *Life* 4.25.1, ed. p. 128, trans. p. 161.

523 *Theodosian Code* 15.12.1, ed. p. 827, trans. p. 436.

524 Jones 1964, 977; Barnes 1981, 53; Barnes 1989, 329. See also Bradbury 1994, 135; Harries 1999, 138–39; Rivière 2002, 354–58; Potter 2004, 428–29; Harries 2010, 83; Leithart 2010, 196–97, 202–204; Potter 2010.

525 Cameron 1976a, 216–17.
526 *Theodosian Code* 9.24.1 (1 April 320), ed. pp. 476–77, trans. pp. 244–45; Evans Grubbs 1995, 183–93. Potter 2004, 381–82, warns against assuming that Constantine composed this law himself and deducing he was unbalanced and irrational. He was doubtless ruthless, however.
527 *Justinianic Code* 5.26.1, ed. Krueger 1954, 216, trans. Scott 1932, XIII, 213.
528 *Theodosian Code* 9.8.1 (4 April 326 [?]), ed. p. 450, trans. p. 233; Evans Grubbs 1995, 193–202.
529 Barnes 1981, 220; Odahl 2005, 350–51 n. 5.
530 See Evans Grubbs 1993, 136–37; 1995, 330–42.
531 See Evans Grubbs 1993, 121; Corcoran 2000, 173–74; Barnes 2005.
532 Evans Grubbs 1995, 338.
533 Hunt 1993, 144; Harries 1999, 139–42. Constantine's more severe punishments are illustrated by *Justinianic Code* 9.11.1 (A.D. 326), 12.35(36).9, ed. Krueger 1954, 377, 470 and trans. Scott 1932, XV, 19, 281; *Theodosian Code* 2.30.1, 7.1.1, 9.15.1, 9.16.1, 9.18.1, 9.22.1, and 9.24.1, ed. pp. 121–22, 309, 458–59, 466, 474–75, 476–77, trans. pp. 60, 155, 237, 237, 240, 244, 244–45.
534 *Theodosian Code* 3.16.1, ed. pp. 155–56, trans. pp. 76–77; Evans Grubbs 1995, 228–37; Leithart 2010, 206; Barnes 2011, 137–38 (no. 9).
535 Barnes 1998a, 290; 2011, 137–38 (no. 9) and further references in Evans Grubbs 1995, 253 n. 176.
536 Evans Grubbs 1995, 256–57, wonders whether the law "shows the influence of eastern Christian leaders" and believes that it "can fairly be considered Constantine's response, however imperfectly it may have been framed, to concerns put forth by Christians."
537 See Evans Grubbs 1993, 127–30. Giardina 2000, 396, observes that Constantine "was the first to legislate against a practice that was taken for granted not only by the whole of contemporary society but also in all the societies of preceding ages." Taken for granted, maybe, but not necessarily approved of.
538 Evans Grubbs 1995, 259–60.
539 Eusebius, *Life* 2.60.2, ed. p. 72, trans. p. 114; Barnes 1998a, 290.
540 On the Arian controversy, see, e.g., Barnes 1981, 202–207, 212–19; Norderval 1988; Millar 1992, 590–607; Drake 2000, 238–72; Potter 2004, 410–20; Odahl 2005, 189–201; Ayres 2004, esp. 11–20; Parvis 2006; Leithart 2010, 82–88, 164–75; Barnes 2011, 120–26.
541 On Arius' views, see Hanson 1988, 3–18, 99–128; Norderval 1988, 117–18; Ayres 2004, 54–57.
542 Gregg and Groh 1981, 44–48; Ayres 2004, 43–45.
543 Wilken 2003, 104–108.
544 Van Dam 2007, 265, asks: "Why was the dispute about these particular issues? Why did it happen at this particular time?" He claims that, besides being a theological dispute, "the controversy over Arian and Nicene Christianity was also a political dispute over the representation of a Christian emperor" (p. 256) and asserts: "Early theologians . . . had no explicitly Christian notions ready to help articulate the idea of a Christian emperor. Until they developed that sort of separate Christian political philosophy, theological debates would have to substitute as a symbolic medium" (p. 269). Van Dam's view is not particularly clearly expounded, but I find it difficult to see any evidence that the theological disputes were in fact a symbolic cypher for tackling the issue of the relationship between the emperor and God, nor do I see why it would have been necessary to tackle the issue indirectly. If Van Dam were correct, we might have expected to detect some hints as to the true meaning of the symbolism in the disputes themselves. It is, however, not until 336, when Eusebius delivered his *In Praise of Constantine*, that we find the relationship between Father and Son being explicitly brought into connection with imperial ideology. Also, if Van Dam were right, we might have expected Constantine to have shown more interest in the details of the debate, whereas he dismissed the theological questions, seeking only unity in the Church. This is not to say, however, that the theological issue did not have implications for the question of the status of the emperor: Eusebius' speech suggests it did.
545 I have followed Parvis 2006, 68–75.
546 Parvis 2006, 75–77.
547 Parvis 2006, 77.
548 Eusebius, *Life* 2.69.2, ed. pp. 75–76, trans. p. 117.
549 The following quotations are selected from Eusebius, *Life* 2.64–72, ed. pp. 74–79, trans. pp. 116–20. Drake 2000, 240–42.
550 Compare the comments of Barnes 1981, 212–13; Drake 2000, 285–86 ("noncoercive and inclusive" Christianity); Odahl 2005, 347 n. 46.
551 Eusebius, *Life* 1.4–9, ed. pp. 17–19, trans. pp. 69–71. Briefly on universalism, Dagron 1968, 85–88.
552 Drake 2000, 287–91.
553 Drake 2000, 251–52; Van Dam 2007, 270–71, notes the choice of Nicaea despite its association with Tetrarchic emperors.
554 Parvis 2006, 81 with n. 199.
555 Parvis 2006, 39–50 (conclusion on p. 49).
556 Parvis 2006, 50–68 (conclusion on pp. 66–68).
557 Eusebius, *Life* 3.12.2–5, ed. pp. 87–88, trans. p. 126.
558 Socrates, *Church History* 1.8.18–19, ed. Hansen 1995, 20, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 9; Sozomen, *Church History* 1.17.4–5, ed. Bidez and Hansen 1995, 37–38, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 253.
559 Parvis 2006, 85–91. Contrast Hanson 1988, 163–72.
560 For discussion, see Parvis 2006, 83–91.

561 Eusebius' letter: Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 22 (= Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaenae synodis* 33, ed. Opitz 1934–1941, II, 28–31; Socrates, *Church History* 1.8.35–54, ed. Hansen 1995, 23–27, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 10–12; Gelasius, *Church History* 2.35, ed. Hansen 2002, 101–105; Theodoret, *Church History* 1.12, ed. Parmentier and Hansen 1998, 48–54, trans. Jackson 1892, 51). Barnes 1981, 226; Chadwick 1998, 565; Drake 2000, 254–57, 263–65.
562 Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 25 (= Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaenae synodi* 38, ed. Opitz 1934–1941, II, 37; Socrates, *Church History* 1.9.17–25, ed. Hansen 1995, 31–32, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 13–14; Gelasius, *Church History* 2.37.1–9, ed. Hansen 2002, 105–106).
563 Athanasius, *Discourses Against the Arians* 3.15–16; 64, ed. Metzler and Savvidis 2000, 323–26, trans. Robertson 1891, 402–403, 428–29; *De synodis* 50, ed. Opitz 1934–1941, II, 274, trans. Robertson 1891, 476–77.
564 Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 27 (= Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaenae synodi* 41, ed. Opitz 1934–1941, II).
565 Van Dam 2007, 273–74.
566 Eusebius, *Life* 3.18–19, ed. pp. 90–92, trans. pp. 128–29 with 268–69; Barnes 2011, 122–26,185–91.
567 *Theodosian Code* 16.8.1 (ed. p. 887, trans. p. 467) = *Justinianic Code* 1.9.3 (A.D. 329; ed. Krueger 1954, 61, trans. Scott 1932, XII, 76); Potter 2004, 424–26; Leithart 2010, 131–36; Barnes 2011, 138–39 (no. 10).
568 DePalma Digeser 2000, 124.
569 See Cameron and Hall 1999, 306–308; Leithart 2010, 129–31.
570 Eusebius, *Life* 3.65.2, ed. p. 118, trans. p. 152 (adapted).
571 Parvis 2006, 101–107.
572 Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 29 (= Socrates, *Church History* 1.25.7–8, ed. Hansen 1995, 73, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 28); Barnes 1981, 229; Parvis 2006, 104–107.
573 Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 30 (= Socrates, *Church History* 1.26, ed. Hansen 1995, 73–75, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 28–29; Sozomen, *Church History* 2.27.6–10, ed. Bidez and Hansen 1995, 89–90, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 277–78). On this letter, see Barnes 1981, 229; Norderval 1988, 131–32; Drake 2000, 259–60.
574 Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 31 (= Socrates, *Church History* 1.14.2–6, ed. Hansen 1995, 52–53, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 20; Gelasius, *Church History* 3.13.1–5, ed. Hansen 2002, 133); Parvis 2006, 94–95.
575 Parvis 2006, 103–104.
576 Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 32 (= Gelasius, *Church History* 3.15.1–5, ed. Hansen 2002, 136–37). On this letter, see Norderval 1988, 132–33.
577 Barnes 1993, 18, 20; Parvis 2006, 110–11.
578 Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 34 (= Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaenae synodi* 40, ed. Opitz 1934–1941, II, 38–43). On this letter, see Norderval 1988, 135–37.
579 Van Dam 2007, 307.
580 Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 33 (= Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaenae synodi* 39, ed. Opitz 1934–1941, II, 37–38; Socrates, *Church History* 1.9.30–31, ed. Hansen 1995, 33–34, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 14; Sozomen, *Church History* 1.21.4, ed. Bidez and Hansen 1995, 42–43, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 255–56; Gelasius, *Church History* 2.36.1–2, ed. Hansen 2002, 105).
581 Sozomen, *Church History* 2.25, ed. Bidez and Hansen 1995, 84–87, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 275–76.
582 Barnes 1993, 21–22; Parvis 2006, 123–27.
583 Eusebius, *Life* 4.42.5, ed. p. 137, trans. pp. 169–70.
584 Parvis 2006, 124–27.
585 Eusebius, *Life* 4.45–46, ed. p. 139, trans. pp. 170–71.
586 Eusebius, *Life* 4.47, ed. p. 140, trans. pp. 171–72; Hunt 1997, 419–23.
587 Athanasius, *Apologia secunda* 86, ed. Opitz 1934–1941, II, 164–65, trans. Robertson 1891, 145–46 (= Socrates, *Church History* 1.34, ed. Hansen 1995, 83–85, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 32–33; Sozomen, *Church History* 2.28.2–12, ed. Bidez and Hansen 1995, 91–93, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 278–79; Gelasius, *Church History* 3.18.1–13, ed. Hansen 2002, 150–52). On this letter, see Norderval 1988, 140–41.
588 On Athanasius and the grain supply, see Barnes 2011, 135–36.
589 Athanasius, *Apologia secunda* 9 and 87, ed. Opitz 1934–1941, II, 95, 165–66, trans. Robertson 1891, 105, 146; Socrates, *Church History* 1.35, ed. Hansen 1995, 85–86, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 33; Parvis 2006, 127.
590 Eusebius, *Life* 4.33 and 4.46, ed. pp. 132–33, 139–40, trans. pp. 165, 171 with commentary on pp. 325–26, 331–32.
591 Socrates, *Church History* 1.37–38, ed. Hansen 1995, 87–90, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 34.
592 On the authorship, see Baynes 1972, 51–54 (points [ii] and [iii]); Drake 1985, 335 n. 1; Edwards 2003, xviii–xxii; Barnes 2011, 113–14. On the content, see Edwards 2003, xvii–xviii; Leithart 2010, 90–93, 94–96; Barnes 2011, 118–20.
593 Eusebius, *Life* 4.8 and 4.32, ed. pp. 122–23, 132, trans. pp. 156, 165.
594 Edwards 1999, 254–62; Edwards 2003, xvii, xix–xx, xxvi; Edwards 2007, 150, 168.
595 Lane Fox 1986, 629–30, argues for delivery to a Greek audience.
596 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints*, 25.4, ed. Heikel 1902, 191. See the translations in Barnes 1976a, 422; Barnes 2001a, 28; Edwards 1999, 263. Note that in

the translation of Edwards 2003, 61, the crucial phrase "when the great city was being delivered by God's providence" has by oversight been omitted, and this error has also been transmitted to Edwards 2007, 164, leading to the omission in that article of any discussion of this crucial chronological indicator.

597 Barnes 1976a argued that the "great city" was Serdica, and that the speech was delivered there on 12 April 317. Lane Fox 1986, 633–34, argued that the "great city" was Antioch, and that the speech was read on Good Friday, April 325. Barnes 2001a (restated in Barnes 2011, 113–20) suggested that the "great city" was Nicomedia, liberated by Constantine, and that the speech was delivered there at Easter in 325. Edwards 1999, 263–64, identified the "great city" as Nicomedia, believing the liberation mentioned to be that achieved by Licinius from Maximinus in 313, and he claimed (Edwards 2003, xxix) that the oration was delivered in Latin by Constantine as a sermon in a church in Rome on Good Friday in 315 (correcting Edwards 1999, 268 where Good Friday 314 was suggested). Edwards 2007, 162–67, has argued in greater detail that the speech was delivered in Rome on a Good Friday soon after 313, and possibly in 315.

598 Edwards 1999, 263–64; Edwards 2003, xxiv with n. 1, xxix, and 61 with n. 1.

599 Barnes 1981, 323; 2001a, 28; 2011, 115; Lane Fox 1986, 632; Bleckmann 2006, 23.

600 The case for Nicomedia is argued by Barnes 2001a.

601 Barnes 2011, 115.

602 Barnes 2011, 91.

603 Barnes 2001a, 28–29, understanding the exterminator to be Constantine, assumed that the "great city" was one he had recently liberated from Licinius – Serdica, Thessaloniki, or Nicomedia. Understanding the reference to the extermination to refer to Licinius' defeat of Maximinus, Edwards 1999, 263–64, recognized in the reference to the deliverance of the "great city" an allusion to Licinius' liberation of Nicomedia from Maximinus in 313. Unfortunately, Edwards 2007, 164, omits any discussion of the identification of the "great city," the reference to it having been accidentally omitted from his translation.

604 Barnes 1976a and 2001 assumed that the city liberated by Constantine must be the same as the city in which the speech was delivered. That is possible but not certain.

605 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints*, 22, ed. Heikel 1902, 187–88, trans. Edwards 2003, 53–54, Barnes 2011, 116.

606 Barnes 1976a, 418–21.

607 Barnes 2001a, 30–31.

608 Barnes 2001a; 2011, 113–18.

609 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints*, 1.4, ed. Heikel 1902, 155, trans. Edwards 2003, 2–3.

610 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints*, 11, ed. Heikel 1902, 169, trans. Edwards 2003, 25.

611 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints*, 18–21, ed. Heikel 1902, 179–87. See Edwards 2003, 40–53; Benko 1980, esp. 671–72; Lane Fox 1986, 649–52; Schott 2008, 119–22.

612 Dvornik 1966, 603–604.

613 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints* 11, ed. Heikel 1902, 167.29–168.5, trans. Edwards 2003, 22–23; Edwards 1999, 268; Edwards 2006a, 154; Edwards 2007, 161.

614 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints* 11, ed. Heikel 1902, 167, trans. Edwards 2003, 22; Drake 2000, 298–305.

615 Edwards 2007, 161–62.

616 Compare the comments of Edwards 2003, xxi–xxii.

617 Schott 2008, 113–17.

618 Schott 2008, 118–19.

619 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints*, 9, ed. Heikel 1902, 162–64, trans. Edwards 2003, 13–17.

620 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints*, 3, ed. Heikel 1902, 156, trans. Edwards 2003, 5 with xxi–xxii.

621 Edwards 2003, xxi–xxii; Schott 2008, 112.

622 Barnes 1995, 142–43, 146–47 concerning Table III. For a full account of the sources of data, see Barnes 1994a (which corrects and updates Barnes 1989, 311–21). Important corrections to Barnes in Cameron 2011, 177–87. Note also Potter 2004, 388–89; Leithart 2010, 225–27.

623 Cameron 2011, 183–85; Barnes 2011, 25.

624 Eusebius, *Church History* 8.1.2, ed. p. 736, trans. p. 256; Van Dam 2007, 6–7 n. 7.

625 Eusebius, *Life* 2.44, ed. p. 66, trans. p. 110.

626 Salzman 2002, 99–101, argues that Constantine's preference for promoting new men (*novi homines*) into the aristocracy was connected with a desire to promote Christians. Nevertheless, men from the old aristocratic families were not overlooked, suggesting that "religious affiliation was not the sole consideration in choosing appointees."

627 Eusebius, *Life* 4.9–13, ed. pp. 123–25, trans. pp. 156–58. Also trans. Dodgeon and Lieu 1991, 150–52 (no. 6.2.5). On the significance of this letter, see Barnes 1985a, 131–32; Frendo 2001; Barnes 2002, 112–13; Potter 2004, 446–47; Leithart 2010, 245–47.

628 By making the suggestion that Valerian, because of his foolish choice of god, had played into Persian hands, Constantine denied any recognition of the might of Persian arms, and by doing so may have annoyed the Persian king. See Frendo 2001, 63.

629 In another letter, Constantine wrote of the shameful fact that persecuted Christians had been forced to seek safety in barbarian lands (such as Persia): Eusebius, *Life* 2.53, ed. p. 70, trans. pp. 112–13.

630 Fowden 1987, 55 (followed by Potter 2004, 384–85), has attempted to connect Nicagoras' visit to Thebes with the attempted appropriation of the Lateran obelisk, which was only later successfully transported to Rome in 357 by Constantius II, who erected it in the Circus Maximus. Fowden argues that: Constantine would have promised the obelisk to Rome when he visited the city in 326 to commemorate his twentieth anniversary year; it might have been seen as "a pagan monument" (p. 55) "to conciliate the pagan Establishment" (p. 56); it was, in the event, Constantius who fulfilled the promise in 357. However, it seems to me more likely that the claim made in the inscription on the base of the obelisk (that Constantine had intended the obelisk for Constantinople) is true. See also Grünewald 1990, 155–56; Bassett 2004, 43; Bardill 2010b, 153. Furthermore, Barnes 2011, 192–94, has observed that it was probably Nicagoras who had petitioned the emperor for permission to make the trip, in which case he was not on an imperial mission.

631 Barnes 2011, 142–43.

632 Lydus, *De Mensibus* 4.2, ed. Wuensch 1898, 65.20–66.3; Dagron 1984b, 32.

633 *Suda* s.v. "Σώπατρος," ed. Adler 1928–1938, IV, 407 (S845).

634 Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists* 462–63, ed. and trans. Wright 1921, 382–85.

635 Fowden 1982, 37; Harl 1990, 12–13; Athanassiadi 1993, 120; Bradbury 1995, 339–40; Turcan 1996, 279–90; Fowden 2005a: 529–33.

636 For the legislation, see *Theodosian Code* 9.16.3 (magic), 9.16.1, 9.16.2 (divination), ed. pp. 459–60, trans. p. 237, with Curran 2000, 172–74. Turcan 1996, 287 writes: "With its appearances of magic, theurgy at the time seemed like a kind of thanksgiving or act of pantheistic piety." Fowden 2005a, 532 notes: "Their enemies accused the theurgists of being just magicians – after all, theurgy and magic manipulate the same network of universal sympathy by closely parallel techniques." Leadbetter 2009, 124, comments: "Christianity and the discipline of theurgy were natural enemies."

637 Eusebius, *Life* 4.55.2–3, ed. p. 143, trans. p. 175.

638 On Eusebius' account of the baptism, see Yarnold 1993; Burgess 1999, 219–32; Amerise 2005.

639 Barnes 1981, 259; 2011, 166–67.

640 Eusebius, *Life* 4.61.2, ed. p. 145, trans. p. 177.

641 Eusebius, *Life* 4.61.3, ed. p. 146, trans. p. 177–78.

642 Veyne 2007, 114 (= 2010, 56–57).

643 For these and other examples, which fall into the period of about 330–365, see Jeremias 1960, 87–97.

644 See the comments of Baynes 1972, 92–93 (n. 78); Jones 1948, 246–47 (= 1962, 196); Cameron and Hall 1999, 340–41.

645 Compare the comments of DePalma Digeser 2000, 125.

8

SOL AND CHRISTIANITY

The Use of Sol's Image

According to Eusebius, Constantine's conversion to Christianity had been sudden and prompted by a celestial vision and dream. Whatever doubts we may have about Eusebius' account of an overnight revelation, his chronology, which would place the emperor's growing interest in the faith in the years before the battle of 312, may not be far off the mark. Constantine's letter written to the bishops who had gathered at Arles in 314 reveals that already at this early date in his reign the emperor believed himself to be a Christian. But, as we have seen in Chapter 7, one wonders whether at this time the Church would have recognized his faith as orthodox or whether it might be more appropriate to speak of Constantine's faith as having a degree of compatibility with Christianity. From about 319 the pagan gods – including Sol Invictus – appeared less frequently on the reverses of Constantinian coins. Nevertheless, the emperor continued to allow his protective solar deity to appear on his coinage until late in 324 or early in 325.[1] If Constantine had determined that the pagan gods were no longer to be recognized, why was Sol retained?

Norman Baynes suggested that Sol's image continued to be used after 312 because Constantine was "unable to adopt definitely Christian types for his coinage,"[2] and that he was prevented from doing so because Licinius, alongside whom Constantine ruled from 313 until 324, did not share his religious convictions.[3] This explanation is not satisfactory, however, because relations between Constantine and Licinius soon started to break down and coinage was used to declare their independent religious allegiances. Thus, while coins and medallions minted by Licinius might show Jupiter as his *conservator* (Figure 179), those struck in mints under Constantine's control could demonstrate his adherence to Sol (Figures 75, 91, and 92). Constantine clearly had no hesitation in publicly demonstrating his religious disagreement with Licinius. For this reason, I do not think we can conclude that Constantine's use of Sol Invictus imagery results from any kind of constraint; rather it reflects Constantine's own free choice. Given that Constantine was professing his Christian faith to bishops in 314 (whichever form that faith may have taken), I can conclude only that he believed that the Unconquered Sun was compatible with the Christian God. How could this be so?

Baynes observed that there is much solar symbolism in Christianity.[4] The claim of Malachi that "Unto you shall the sun of righteousness arise, and healing is in his wings," together with verses of Zacharias announcing the appearance of one named "Rising," promoted a solar conception of the messiah amongst Christians.[5] Jesus Himself proclaimed, "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."[6] During the transfiguration, His face was said to "shine as the sun,"[7] and before the crucifixion, a crown of thorns was placed on Jesus' head in jest by Roman soldiers who thought a radiate crown necessary for a man claiming to be the Son of God and

King of the Jews.[8] In the gospel of Luke, in which Jesus is cast as the bringer of a Golden Age, He is described as "the dayspring [dawn, sunrise] (*anatolē*) from on high" who has visited mankind "to give light (*epiphanai*) to them that sit in darkness."[9] It is a striking indication of Christ's solar aspect that the author of Revelation turned for inspiration to the myth of Apollo's victory over Python to describe His victory over evil and His earthly rule for one thousand years before the end of time.[10] The author of *On the Calculation of Easter*, writing in 243, calculated that Christ's nativity had occurred on the anniversary of the creation of the sun, thus explaining Malachi's prophecy just quoted.[11] Eusebius, in his oration *In Praise of Constantine*, claimed that, because Christ "is a good offspring of a Good Father, the common Savior of All, He makes Himself a channel for everything, pouring forth from His personal fullness life and logic and wisdom and light and all good things for everybody." He added, "By an active power He is present in all and moves through all, yet still pours forth for the sun itself, the moon, and the stars, eternal light from His personal fount."[12] Elsewhere, Eusebius proclaimed: "He, like a sun of intelligent and rational souls, spread abroad the beams of His own light: He translated us all, of every race of mankind, barbarians and Greeks alike, as it were from a terrible darkness and most gloomy and obscure night of superstitious error into the bright and shining day of the true worship of God the King of all."[13]

It is possible that in Christian art, too, the brilliance of Christ was evoked by a metaphorical connection with the sun. Most well known in this regard is a damaged ceiling mosaic in the tomb of the Julii (Mausoleum M) beneath the Vatican, which dates between the mid-third century and the time of the construction of St. Peter's Basilica, probably in the period 337–350 (Figure 180). The mosaic was damaged when, in 1574, the mausoleum was entered by breaking through the vault. However, enough survives to show one wheel and two horses of a four-horse chariot, which is driven by a robed figure who raises his right hand, holds a globe in his left, and is shown with a nimbus from which emanate seven rays of light. The whole scene is surrounded by roving vines on a gold background.[14]

The long robe (*chlamys*), nimbus with rays, globe, raised right arm, and four-horse chariot are the trademarks of Sol, and the image might therefore be interpreted as pagan. However, consideration of three other mosaics on the walls of the tomb raises the possibility that this was a Christian mausoleum. These mosaics show a shepherd carrying a sheep, a fisherman, and a large sea-monster devouring a man. The image of the good shepherd, we have noted, was pagan in origin but had passed into Christian art. This image, like that of the fisherman, would therefore have been appropriate in both pagan and Christian contexts. The mosaic of the sea-monster, however, is likely to have referred to the Old Testament story of Jonah and the whale.[15] If the mausoleum is indeed Christian, then it would seem that the pagan imagery of Sol-Helios was appropriated for the vault mosaic to represent God or Christ as ruler of the heavens.[16]

Christ, it should be noted, was frequently described as a charioteer in Christian theology, and if in this case the imagery of Sol as charioteer was appropriated to depict Christ, the surrounding vine-scroll could be understood as an allusion to Jesus' claim that He was the "true vine."[17] Since in political philosophy the ideal king had been described as a charioteer guiding the state, it is possible that here we have an early depiction of Christ as the true king.[18] Comparable with the mosaic in Mausoleum M are seven zodiac pavements in early Byzantine synagogues in Palestine that illustrate the appropriation of the pagan imagery of Sol-Helios by the Jews. The radiate and nimbate charioteer at the centre of these mosaics is presumably not only a representation of the physical sun but also of the Logos or even God.[19] Also relevant in this context is the tale of the martyrdom of five Christian sculptors during the reign of Diocletian. The story goes that they agreed to carve images of Victory, Cupid, and the Sun in his chariot but refused to make an image of Asclepius that was destined to adorn a temple. Whatever the truth of the tale, it illustrates the fact that Christians might consider an image of the sun-god to be acceptable, since it could serve as a symbol of the physical sun or, in their eyes, of the power of God or Christ.[20]

With such texts and images in mind, Baynes suggested that when Sol Invictus appeared on

Constantine's coins he might have stood for Christ.[21] I would agree with Baynes that the solar imagery present in Christianity is the key to reconciling Constantine's coins with his Christian faith, but the solution, I would suggest, is different.[22] Sol Invictus, as I have shown in Chapter 2, appeared on Constantine's coins as a representation of the Supreme God and therefore ought to be equated with the Christian God rather than with Christ. As we shall see in Chapter 9, Constantine, as the earthly representative of the Christian God, perceived himself, rather than Sol, in the role of Christ.

Although the Israelites distinguished firmly between their God and the physical sun, Yahweh acquired some of the characteristics of the Near Eastern sun-gods.[23] In the Old Testament, He is metaphorically "a sun and shield," "my light and my salvation," He shines, He flashes, and His face is expected at dawn by a suppliant hoping to be released from his trials.[24] Christians denied a physical equation between God and the sun,[25] but this did not prevent them from using the sun as a metaphor for God.[26] This and other aspects of Christian belief led to confusion. In the second century, for instance, Tertullian remarked that many pagans "suppose that the sun is the god of the Christians, because it is a well-known fact that we pray towards the east, or because we make Sunday a day of festivity."[27]

It was because God the Father was considered luminous that Christ the Son also acquired solar attributes. The Book of Proverbs says that God created Wisdom "before time was in the beginning, before he made the earth," and also explains that Wisdom sat beside God when the heavens were created.[28] Because of this text, Christ came to be known as the Wisdom (Sophia) of God. According to the Book of Wisdom, Wisdom is "the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness."[29] Thus, Christ was believed to reflect the light of the Father.

Justin Martyr (who died around 163–167) applied Platonic theory to Christianity and chose to identify Plato's First God with God the Father and his Second God with Christ the Logos. Consequently, Justin needed to avoid being accused of believing in two gods (ditheism). To emphasize that the Logos was nevertheless one with the Father, he chose to describe Christ in terms of light from the sun.[30] The light (Christ) proceeded from the sun (God) but had no independent existence, so when the sun set, the light vanished. Consequently, Justin explained, the Logos did not exist independently of the Father.[31] Writing around the time Justin died, Tatian described the Father as the First Principle (*archē*) and the Logos as His firstborn son, who was inseparable from Him. He proposed as an analogy a burning torch that creates a second one through contact but is not weakened by the process of creation.[32] In the late second century, Athenagoras described the Son as "Mind, Logos, Wisdom" and the Holy Spirit as an emanation (*aporroē*) of God "as light from fire" and "like the rays of the sun."[33] Origen, writing early in the third century, explained that because the light of God's glory is eternal, so too must be God's wisdom, since it is the brightness of God's light.[34]

We find a similar philosophy expressed from a pagan perspective in the *Enneads* of the mid-third century Neoplatonist Plotinus. He emphasized an inner experience that led the individual to unity with the First Principle, the ultimate principle of reality. This First Principle generated order in the cosmos, and from it all other powers derived. Using the sun as a metaphor, Plotinus wrote thus of the relationship between the First and Second Principles or Gods:

> Who then is He [i.e., the First God] that begat Him [i.e., the Second God]? He who is simple, and prior to a plurality of this kind, who is the cause both of His being, and of His plurality. For number came not first: since before the duad [i.e., the Second God] is the one; and the duad is second, and produced from the one. . . . How then and what must we conceive concerning that abiding substance? A light shining around and proceeding from it [i.e., the First God], while it remains itself unchanged, as from the sun proceeds the bright surrounding light that runs around it, ever produced out of it, while it remains unchanged itself.[35]

The preceding passage is preserved today because it is quoted in Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel*,

Figure 180. Radiant charioteer in a ceiling mosaic in the Tomb of the Julii (Mausoleum M) beneath St. Peter's basilica, Rome. Mid-third to early fourth century A.D. © 2003 Topham Picturepoint/TopFoto.co.uk.

in which Eusebius argued that Greek philosophical thought had paved the way for the gospel. To this end, he exploited Plotinus' views when attempting to explain the relationship of the Son to the Father.[36] For Eusebius, the imagery of light proved valuable in avoiding the suggestion that the Logos was a being created by the Father rather than an emanation from the Father.[37] For instance, in the creed he presented to the Council of Nicaea in 325, Christ was described as "the Word of God, God from God, light from light, life from life."[38] In his *Ecclesiastical Theology* (written after Constantine's death), Eusebius described how God "begot the Son before all things that were going to be, like a ray of light and a source of life and a treasury of goods, 'in which all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden'."[39] To give another example, in his oration *In Praise of Constantine*, written in 336, Eusebius represented Christ reflecting the light of the Father on earth;[40] he also described the brightness of God in a way that recalls Ecphantus on the nature of royalty: "Would that one were able adequately to envision Him, but light flashing forth about Him shields the sight of His divinity from all with the sacred sparkle of its rays."[41]

Eusebius' contemporary Lactantius, explaining that the light of God is more powerful than that of the sun, described the benefits of Christian devotion thus: "If you kept your gaze fixed on heaven" – and here we are instantly reminded of Constantine's portraits showing him with eyes turned upwards – "and watched where the sun rises, using it as your life's pilot, your feet will find their path of their own accord, and that light of heaven which is a far brighter sun to sane minds than this sun we see in our mortal flesh will so guide you and steer you that it will bring you without any straying at all to the ultimate haven of wisdom and virtue."[42]

That Constantine likewise perceived the Christian God as a solar deity whose light was reflected on earth by His Son is strongly suggested in his letters, as preserved in Optatus and Eusebius. The emperor often draws general contrasts between the brightness of orthodox Christianity and the darkness of paganism or Christian heresy.[43] More specifically, however, in the letter he wrote in 314 to the bishops assembled at Arles, Constantine described God as the source of saving light, referring to His "most brilliant beams" as "a way of salvation" by which men might be converted to righteousness.[44] The emperor also believed that God's light was reflected on earth by Christ. Writing around 324 to the Eastern provinces, Constantine addressed God with the words: "But you through your Son, lest the evil press down still more, held up a pure light and put all men in mind of yourself."[45] A similar expression is found in a letter he apparently wrote to the Council of Antioch in 325: "Our great God, the Saviour of all, has extended the light to all alike."[46]

Given Constantine's solar perception of the Christian God (which was clearly inspired by the works of Christian theologians and the Old Testament), it is not unlikely that he would have thought it justifiable to exploit the traditional imagery of Sol Invictus to stand for Him.[47]

A ruler whose legitimacy rested on divine election required his citizens to recognize and worship his protective deity.[48] Constantine's decision in 310 to reject the Tetrarchic deities and choose Sol as his guardian was, therefore, either an inspired one or a most fortuitous one, since it was at least conceivable that both pagan henotheists and Christians could somehow be united in their worship of this supreme solar god.[49] Constantine knew that a proportion of his pagan subjects had a henotheistic outlook (as his own father may have had) and could imagine the sun-god as the Supreme Deity to whom all other gods were subordinate. He may also have expected many Christians to interpret the imagery of Sol as a metaphor for the brilliant power of either God or Christ. However, it is likely that some Christians would have found the imagery of Sol Invictus – particularly when accompanied by an explicit legend on a coin – so firmly associated with traditional polytheism that they rejected it.

The gradual disappearance of the pagan gods from Constantine's coins may reflect Constantine promoting and tending towards monotheism. By 316, both Mars and the Genius Populi had been removed,[50] and from then until 324, Sol Invictus, the emperor's *comes*, remained as the last pagan deity to be depicted on his coins. The emperor perhaps thought that, once the old gods had disappeared from the coinage, the way would be clear for equating the one remaining deity – Sol Invictus – directly with the Christian God.

It is uncertain whether Constantine already considered himself a Christian when he decided in 310 to proclaim Sol Invictus as his protector on coins. If he did, then his references to the solar philosophy of kingship and the use of its associated imagery were a deliberate choice, a masterstroke, helping him portray his Christian faith in a manner more palatable to his pagan subjects. It is, however, easier to imagine that it was an initial belief that Sol was the Supreme God and his protector that paved the way for Constantine's acceptance (apparently by 314) of Christianity, a religion that also described its God in luminous terms. But even if that is so, Constantine's continued use of Sol's image after he had recognized the compatibility of his beliefs with the Christian faith suggests that he hoped others would find Christianity by the same route, and that the ultimate result would be the unification of the Roman people behind a single God and a single ruler.

The Disappearance of Sol

Constantine's promotion of Sol may have been instrumental in moving some pagans closer to the Christian position by encouraging them to adopt a henotheistic outlook and to worship Sol as the Supreme Deity. But the emperor would not have been able to alter the Christian position on the demonic nature of existing pagan deities – including Sol Invictus. Perhaps Constantine failed to appreciate fully the jealousy of the Christian God, who would tolerate no others.

Whether or not Constantine had adopted the imagery of Sol Invictus in the hope of persuading his pagan subjects to worship one Supreme Deity, and whether or not he had adopted it naïvely thinking that all Christians might eventually accept it, evidence suggests that he soon decided Sol had to go. By 318–319, Sol had been removed from copper alloy coinage, and in late 324 or early 325, the god made his last appearance on gold.[51] As one scholar remarks, "The Christian evangelist preached not monotheism, but God; if others too adored a single deity, that did not mean that their god was the same as his." Or, to put it another way, "Two monotheists are no more bound to be allies than two monarchists who favour different monarchs."[52] For orthodox Christians, the name of Sol Invictus is likely to have been tainted by its association with traditional Roman religion and with the concept of henotheism. While Sol's power as a solar symbol may have served Constantine's purposes well for several years, it seems that, as his understanding of Christianity grew, he realized the image of this pagan god was only superficially compatible with the unique Christian deity. Furthermore, Constantine may have been persuaded by Christian churchmen, including perhaps his advisor Ossius of Córdoba, that Christianity should be a cult without images, on the grounds that images are works of man, not of God, that they will decay, and that they may even be deliberately desecrated.[53] Consequently, for official purposes Sol was dispensed with, although he was retained (with his counterpart, Luna) well into the Middle Ages in a purely symbolic role, representing cosmic light and renewal.[54] It is notable that, after Licinius' defeat in 324, Constantine altered his official titulature so that it no longer referred to him as *invictus* ("unconquered") but as *victor* ("conqueror").[55] The change was no doubt intended to reflect the fact that Constantine had now vanquished all his rivals, but it is also significant that the discarded epithet, *invictus*, was intimately associated with Sol.

From this evidence, Andreas Alföldi deduced that the emperor had degraded the sun-god and distanced himself from that god.[56] Rudolf Leeb agreed, and claimed that Constantine's later employment of solar imagery (illustrated by the radiate statue and the consecration coins) was for a new reason: Constantine was now, like other emperors before him, adopting solar symbolism because of its intimate connection with the ideology of victory.[57] These claims seem untenable. After all, the erection of the globe-holding, radiate statue in 330 clearly demonstrates that Constantine continued to believe and to publicly imply that he owed his power to the supreme solar god, his protector (*comes*), whose light he radiated upon his citizens. I believe that we are seeing in the numismatic evidence not a rejection of the concept of a supreme solar deity but an avoidance of verbal and visual references to Sol Invictus.[58]

Apparently, Constantine had come to accept that the name of Sol Invictus was firmly associated with the traditional Roman pantheon, and that therefore the proposed equation of Sol with the Christian deity was not acceptable to all Christians. By leaving his protective solar deity unnamed and undepicted, the emperor not only respected the Christian belief that God should be invisible but also rendered his god of light ambiguous and therefore acceptable to both pagans and Christians.

The Christian Attitude to Constantine's Radiate Statue

Although after 324 Constantine could send letters to the East openly expressing disapproval of paganism, it is striking that we can detect no overt signs of Constantine's Christian faith through the media of monuments and coins. There was, it seems, still a reluctance to flaunt his faith in public.[59] The statue on the porphyry column was an excellent example of the lack of religious specificity in Constantinian public art: the viewer had no indication of the identity of the solar deity whose light the emperor radiated through his crown. The nature of the deity was deliberately left open to the viewer's interpretation, and so the statue would have been acceptable to pagans and Christians alike. Cyril Mango has suggested that Eusebius' failure to mention the statue may indicate that, as a Christian, he was embarrassed by it.[60] I suspect that he may have found its ambiguity embarrassing, but nevertheless, I would suggest that, had he wished to do so, Eusebius could have presented it as a good illustration of the emperor's close relationship with the radiant Christian God. That would have been entirely compatible with Eusebius' solar conception of Constantine, Christ, and God, and with the philosophy of kingship advanced in his orations *In Praise of Constantine* and *On Christ's Sepulchre.*

There is good evidence that the statue was acceptable to at least some Christians. Philostorgius, writing in the mid-fifth century, accused the Christians of "propitiating with sacrifices the image of Constantine standing on the porphyry column, of honouring it with lights and incense, of offering vows to it as though it were a god, and of offering prayers and intercession to avert impending disasters."[61] We should read these remarks with a degree of scepticism but we should not reject Philostorgius' claim completely as does the ninth-century Patriarch Photius, who attributes the allegation to an "impious enemy of God."[62] It is possible that Christians gathered at the column, although we may reasonably wonder whether Philostorgius deliberately chose to exaggerate their actions and construe them in the most negative way – after all, rather than worshipping the emperor as a deity, any Christians who visited the column may have been venerating Constantine in his imperial status.[63]

Christ Himself had said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's,"[64] thereby recognizing the rights of the state but drawing a clear distinction between what was owed to the Divinity and what was owed to the mortal ruler.[65] Christians were provided with clearer guidance regarding the status of their rulers by St. Paul in his Epistles. Paul held that kings had been elected by the Supreme Deity, writing that "the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God."[66] He also believed that Christians should pray for rulers and state officials to ensure that the community could lead a godly and peaceful life. However, contrary to the Hellenistic belief in the saviour-king, he asserted that it was Christ who was the saviour of mankind, and he made it clear that no other ruler deserved divine honours, since there was only one God and only one mediator between God and men – Jesus Christ:

> I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour (*sōtēros*); Who will have all men to be saved (*sōthēnai*), and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.[67]

Paul's writings implicitly denied not only the claim of the emperor to be *sōtēr* (saviour) but also his claim to the title *epiphanēs*, a title suggesting that he had manifested himself as a god among men. While acknowledging the need for Christians to submit to civil authorities, Paul stressed in his epistle to Titus that it was Christ, not the emperor, who appeared amongst men as their Saviour:

> But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour (*sōtēros*) toward man appeared (*epephanē*), Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved (*esōsen*) us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour (*sōtēros*); That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.[68]

Thus, the emperor could be viewed positively by Christians unless he interfered with God's sphere of activity by forbidding Christian worship or by claiming the ability to save and the right to be worshipped.

The Old Testament book of Daniel provided Nebuchadnezzar as an example of a king who had insulted God by claiming divine status. He had set up a golden image of himself, ordering that those who refused to worship it be cast into a furnace. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were seen to walk in the flames without injury, the king was persuaded to recognize their God.[69] Nebuchadnezzar also dreamt that a colossal statue was smashed, and Daniel explained to him that the monument was to be interpreted as a symbol of the power of kings on earth. It was, he said, God in heaven who bestowed power, strength, and glory on earthly kings, but eventually God would set up an eternal kingdom under His own rule, and it would destroy and consume all the kingdoms.[70]

In the New Testament, the book of Revelation delivered a terrifying warning against emperor worship.[71] Writing during the persecutions of Domitian, its author described an apocalyptic vision in which a dragon (representing Satan) caused a beast from the sea (representing the Roman Empire and its ruler) to wage war on the Kingdom of God. He also spoke of a second beast, this one coming from the land. The second beast, which represents the priesthood of the imperial cult, led men astray, making them worship an image of the first beast. This image had the power to speak and could bring about the deaths of all of those who refused to worship it. The author of Revelation thus predicted the rise of emperor worship, claiming that those who were unwilling to worship the beast (that is, the Christians) would be put to death. But he foresaw that, despite Satan's opposition, the Kingdom of God would triumph in the end. He described a procession of angels crossing the sky, each bearing a message. One urged the worship of God alone; another proclaimed the fall of Babylon the Great (a metaphor for the Roman Empire); a third threatened worshippers of the beast and his image with doom.

Although worship of the emperor was incompatible with Christianity, the scriptures were clear that respect and veneration were necessary. Consequently, a Christian martyr such as St. Polycarp could show surprising deference to the power of Rome even when threatened with execution for refusing either to swear an oath in the emperor's name or to burn incense before his image. At his trial, having been asked by the proconsul to address the people, Polycarp replied: "With you I think it proper to discuss these things; for we have been taught to render as their due to rulers and powers ordained by God such honour as casts no stain on us: to the people I do not feel it my duty to make any defence."[72]

Tertullian expressed the situation well, pointing out that whilst a Christian should not take the military oath,[73] he should be loyal to the emperor and honour him:

> There is no agreement between the divine and the human sacrament, the standard of Christ and the standard of the devil, the camp of light and the camp of darkness. One soul cannot serve two masters – God and Caesar.[74]

> A Christian is no-one's enemy, far less the emperor's. Knowing him to be appointed by God, he must love and reverence and honor

> him with the rest of the Roman Empire as long as time endures. . . . We therefore respect the emperor as is permissible to us and serviceable to him, that is, as a man second to God, who from God obtained his position, inferior to God alone. He wishes it so; for he is greater than all, because he is smaller than the only true God; and is greater than even the gods themselves because they themselves are in God's power. Thus we sacrifice for the emperor's welfare by sacrificing to our own and his God, and this we do only as God will have it, namely with pure prayers. . . . That is how we pray for the emperor's welfare: by invoking it from Him who can provide it.[75]

Similar views are expressed in Irenaeus, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, and Justin Martyr.[76] Justin, explaining that Christians serve the king with pleasure but worship only God, mocks the Roman tradition of deifying dead emperors: "You always consider it proper to consecrate the immortality of your dead emperors by producing a man who will declare on oath that he saw the cremated Caesar ascending to heaven."[77] Origen, too, observed that in accordance with St. Paul's words, Christians should respect the emperor; however, he was adamant that they should not take the oath necessary to join the armed forces, since they should "never swear by 'the fortune (*tychē*) of the king,' nor by aught else that is considered equivalent to God."[78] Origen was thus careful to distinguish between *proskynēsis*, a mark of traditional reverence, and *latreia*, an expression of religious adoration.[79] A tale of martyrdom dating to the fourth century or later describes a dialogue that allegedly took place in the early second century between a Christian, one Phocas, and the governor of Pontus, one Africanus. Asked if he considered the emperor a god, Phocas replied, "Is it not enough for Trajan to be called king, without you also giving him the incomparable name?"[80]

When considering Philostorgius' account of worship at Constantine's column, we must consider that in the ancient world honours offered to a worthy individual and those offered to a god differed only in degree, not in kind.[81] Assessing from Philostorgius the status accorded to Constantine by those who gathered at the column is therefore extremely difficult for us and may not have been easy for contemporary observers either.[82] On the one hand, it might be suggested that Philostorgius was (perhaps deliberately) confusing Christian veneration of Constantine in his status as emperor with emperor worship. On the other hand, Philostorgius may have been correct in claiming that the Christians were worshipping Constantine, since some may have believed that the emperor was Christ returned.

The statue on the column, even if a reused bronze of a Hellenistic king or a god, was recognized as a representation of Constantine and was presumably identified as such by an inscription. It was radiate and probably naked, so there is no possibility that the iconography conformed with representations of Jesus philosophizing or performing miracles. Yet the radiate crown indicated Constantine's relationship with the supreme solar deity, a relationship that paralleled Christ's relationship with God. The crown also suggested that Constantine's light shone over his people, as the Son reflected the saving light of the Father on earth. We saw in Chapter 3 that successful rulers were often acknowledged as saviours: Augustus in particular had been hailed by the Romans as their saviour and as the founder of a Golden Age; after his death they adorned a statue commemorating his victory at Actium with a radiate crown. Constantine had saved the Christians from persecution and had restored peace and security to the empire under his sole rule. It is entirely plausible, therefore, that some Christians believed his reign to be the beginning of Christ's 1,000-year reign on earth, as predicted in the Bible. If so, the beneficial luminosity represented by his statue's radiate crown could have been interpreted as showing him as Christ returning to earth in a blaze of glory – not as a philosopher or miracle worker as before, but as a king ruling over a Christian Golden Age. It is possible (as we will see in Chapter 9) that Constantine was making provision for Christians inclined to such a belief when he assimilated himself to Christ by erecting an altar beside his sarcophagus and surrounding his body with the tombs of the Apostles.

Although it is now impossible to determine precisely what was going on at the porphyry column in the fourth century, we can at least say that Philostorgius' evidence is important for

understanding the origin of Christian liturgical celebrations in honour of Constantine, which are first reliably attested in the ninth century. At this time, a chapel of St. Constantine was built on the monument's pedestal (probably on its north side).[83]

If we accept Philostorgius' claim that Christians gathered at the porphyry column, we must conclude that they were not offended by the monument. Either they did not infer from it that the emperor was claiming divine status, and venerated him in his imperial status, or they equated the emperor with Christ at the Second Coming and were therefore justified in lauding him. The presence of Christians at the column suggests that Mango cannot be correct when he claims that the radiate crown and solar imagery had become awkward in a Christian context.[84] Indeed, if Constantine had removed his radiate image from coins by 326 because it was offensive to his Christian faith, why would he have allowed himself to be depicted with a radiate crown atop the porphyry column in 330? It may be that the statue was reused and already equipped with the crown, or that it had been begun a few years before 330 when radiate imagery was still acceptable. But if before 330 the crown had become offensive, Constantine would have ordered it removed before the monument was publicly displayed. The use of the radiate crown in 330 suggests that its removal from coinage by 326 must have been for reasons other than its offensiveness.[85] Since the statue continued to stand unaltered throughout Constantine's reign (indeed until 1106, when it was blown down in high winds), it is reasonable to conclude that its crown was not considered inappropriate by the Christian emperor. As for the coins, it may be that, following the victory of 324, Constantine decided that they should stress his newly established monarchy rather than his adherence to the sun-god. Therefore, he substituted the diadem (with its connotations of conquest and kingship) for the radiate crown.

Notes

1. *RIC* VII, 48 (where n. 5 gives corrections to Bruun 1958, 15–37), Antioch no. 49. Also Alföldi 1948, 55; Leeb 1992, 11–12, 24; Berrens 2004, 167.
2. Baynes 1972, 103.
3. Baynes 1972, 95–96.
4. Baynes 1972, 95–103; Alföldi 1948, 57.
5. Malachi 4:2; Zacharias 6:12. On the solar conception of the Messiah, see, e.g., Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 11.15.5–6, ed. Des Places 1982–1983, II, 36, trans. Gifford 1903, III, 533. See also Dölger 1920, 259–318; Kantorowicz 1963, 135–49; Wallraff 2001a, 41–59.
6. John 8:12, cp. 12:46; Dvornik 1966, 412.
7. Matthew 17:2 (compare Mark 9:3, Luke 9:29).
8. Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2; Weinstock 1971, 330.
9. Luke 2:78–79; Baynes 1972, 99.
10. Yarbro Collins 1976.
11. *De Pascha Computus* 18–19, trans. Ogg 1955, 16–17.
12. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 12.4 and 12.16, ed. Heikel 1902, 230.22–26, 234.29–235.1, trans. Drake 1976, 108, 110.
13. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 2.5.2, ed. Des Places 1982–1983, trans. Gifford 1903, III, 69b–71a. For this and other Eusebian references to Christ as the sun, see Farina 1966, 88–89.
14. Perler 1953, pls. 2–3; Toynbee and Ward-Perkins 1956, 116–17 with pl. 32; Charles Murray 1981, 64–97; Peirce 1989, 408 with pl. 21; Jensen 2000, 42–44; Snyder 2003, 73, 120–22, 191; Brandenburg 2004, pl. 45; Bowersock 2005, 13 with fig. 4; Walter 2006, 24, fig. 23; Hijmans 2009, 567–82.
15. Hijmans 2009, 571–72.
16. However, Hijmans (2009, 575–78) denies that Sol might have been used to stand for Christ. In his opinion, if the mausoleum was Christian, the imagery represented the sun.
17. Christ as charioteer: Beskow 1962, 200–206. True vine: John 15:1–11.
18. Beskow 1962, 205–206.
19. On these mosaic depictions, see Magness 2003. Goodman suggests a possible association between Helios and the Israelite God (Goodman 2007, 572–73; also noted by Magness 2003, 375). However, Beskow 1962, 202, asks: "Is it not much more likely that the artist intended to portray the Logos, rather than paint an image of God?" Magness 2005, 30–34, suggests the solar figure in the synagogue mosaics is both Helios and Metatron/Sar ha-Torah (the lesser deity). She observes (pp. 45–46) that the Jewish concept of Metatron was applied to Christ in early Christianity. Also on Metatron, see Beskow 1962, 128–31. Weiss 2005, 1129, asserts: "The zodiac depictions do not intend to portray God anthropomorphically; rather they allegorically symbolize God's power to perform in our world." Hijmans 2009, 607–608, explains that here Sol is "a cosmic symbol rather than a polytheist god" (p. 608).
20. Delehaye 1910, 748–84. The significance of this text was pointed out by Baynes 1972, 102–103.
21. Baynes 1972, 95–103. Barnes 2011, 18, follows Baynes: "Christians could identify Sol as Christ, the sun of righteousness."

22 Also in disagreement with Baynes is Alföldi 1948, 56.
23 See Wallraff 2001a, 19–26.
24 Sun and shield: Psalms 84:11. Light and salvation: Psalms 27:1. Shines: Deuteronomy 33:2; 2 Samuel 22:29; Isaiah 4:5. Flashes: Isaiah 60:2. Dawn: Psalms 17:15.
25 E.g., Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 6.2.1–8, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 481–83, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 331–32. Compare the comments on the creation of the heavenly bodies by God in Constantine, *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints* 6, ed. Heikel 1902, 160.12–161.18, trans. Edwards 2003, 10–11.
26 Dvornik 1966, 631, with references in n. 70.
27 Tertullian, *Ad Nationes* 1.13, ed. Reifferscheid and Wissowa 1890, 83, trans. Holmes and others 1869–1870, I, 449–50.
28 Proverbs 8.22–23.
29 Wisdom 7.26. The passages from Proverbs and Wisdom are quoted by Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 11.14.7–10, ed. Des Places 1982–1983, II, 35, trans. Gifford 1903, III, 532.
30 Goodenough 1923, 148–51; Wallraff 2001a, 44–47. For other analogies adopted when describing the relationship of the Father to the Son, see Van Dam 2007, 269–70, regrettably failing to discuss the solar analogy, which is crucial in understanding the connection between theology and imperial ideology.
31 Goodenough 1923, 148.
32 Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 5, ed. and trans. Whittaker 1982, 10–11; Brent 1999, 301–303.
33 Athenagoras, *Legatio* 10.4–5, 24.2, ed. and trans. Schoedel 1972; Brent 1999, 305–307.
34 Origen, *On First Principles* 1.2.11, ed. and trans. Koetschau and Butterworth 1936, 26; Ayres 2004, 23.
35 Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.1.5–6, as preserved in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 11.17.2–3, ed. Des Places 1982–1983, II, 38–39, trans. Gifford 1903, III, 535. See also Brent 1999, 276–77.
36 Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 11.17, ed. Des Places 1982–1983, II, 38–40, trans. Gifford 1903, III, 535–36.
37 Farina 1966, 39–40.
38 Socrates, *Church History* 1.8.38, ed. Hansen 1995, 24, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 10–11, and Pohlsander 2004, 109.
39 Ayres 2004, 58.
40 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 3.6, ed. Heikel 1902, 202.4: φωτός τε ἀπαύγασμα πατρικοῦ ("Radiance of the Paternal Light," trans. Drake 1976, 87); 12.8, ed. Heikel 1902, 232.4: τὸν αὐτον δὲ φῶς καὶ γέννημα νοερὸν φωτὸς ("being Himself light and the intellectual offspring of indescribable light," trans. Drake 1976, 108). Farina 1966, 64–65.
41 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 1.1, ed. Heikel 1902, 196.21–23, trans. Drake 1976, 84.
42 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 6.8.5, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 507–508, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 345–46; Liebeschuetz 1979, 284.
43 On paganism: "looked up out of deepest darkness," "the customs of the temples and the agency of darkness." On Arianism: "the power of the light and the law of holy religion," "the clear light." On heretics and schismatics: "from darkness to light." On his own faith: "I participate in the light of truth. Led by the light of truth I recognize the divine faith" (Eusebius, *Life* 2.42, 2.60.2, 2.67, 2.72.1, 3.65.2, 4.9 ed. pp. 66, 72, 74, 78, 118, 123, trans. pp. 109, 114, 116, 119, 152, 156–57). On true faith: "the exceeding brilliance of the catholic religion." On heretics and schismatics: "having cleansed the mists from their eyes would open them to the true vision of the light" (Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, Appendix 5, Appendix 10, ed. Ziwsa 1893, 209.4–5, 215.33–35, trans. Edwards 1997, 189, 201). See also Tantillo 2003, 1035–1039.
44 Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, Appendix 5, ed. Ziwsa 1893, 208.19–23, trans. Edwards 1997, 189.
45 Eusebius, *Life* 2.57, ed. p. 71, trans. p. 114.
46 Eusebius, *Life* 2.71.4, ed. p. 77, trans. p. 118.
47 Thus, I cannot agree with Veyne 2007, 318–20 (= 2010, 240–41). Veyne claims that Constantine "became totally and purely Christian" around 311–312, whereas I would infer from the evidence that Constantine initially perceived a certain compatibility between Sol Invictus and the Christian God before abandoning the imagery of Sol. To substantiate his view, Veyne is forced to reject the possibility that the coins give any insight into imperial thinking or belief, saying, "In short, if the Sun, along with other pagan deities, appears on the reverse sides of a few coins, that is not so much because of solar piety but rather because, for Constantine, the *Sol invictus* was a family emblem, a proof of legitimacy." This grossly underestimates the frequency of Sol's appearance on coins and neglects the importance that the solar aspects of Christ and the Christian God played in Constantine's conversion.
48 Compare Drake 2000, 191.
49 Compare the comments of Liebeschuetz 1979, 285: "Sol Invictus answered a need. Constantine required a symbol which would demonstrate the nature of the power which he wielded. He also wished to proclaim his confidence in the supreme God. At this stage he did not feel free to employ controversial Christian imagery. Sol Invictus provided an image acceptable to many Christians and many pagans."
50 *RIC* VII, 48.
51 *RIC* VII, 48 with n. 6. On the disappearance of Sol from coins, see Alföldi 1948, 55; Bruun 1958, 15–37; Leeb 1992, 11–12, 24.
52 Edwards 2006b, 212; Edwards 2006a, 140.

53 Grigg 1977, 23–32.
54 Briefly, Hijmans 1996, 143; Dvornik 1966, 524 with n. 239.
55 On *invictus*, see Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 230 n. 36. *Victor* had already been used by emperors before Constantine: Weinstock 1957, 242–46. The change to *victor* is noted by Eusebius, *Life* 2.19.2, ed. p. 56. For the evidence, see Barnes 1981, 77 with n. 165; Barnes 1982, 24 with n. 14; Grünewald 1990, 136–40 with the index to inscriptions on pp. 265–70. See also Alföldi 1948, 59; Leeb 1992, 11–12, 24; Kolb 2001, 72–73; Wallraff 2001a, 133.
56 Alföldi 1948, 58–59. The legend CLARITAS REIPVBLICAE around the figure of Sol, which appeared on bronze reverses from 317, suggested to Alföldi a degradation in the status of Sol: "The Sun is no longer a god, but simply the glorious fame of the State." The argument, accepted by Leeb 1992, 11, 24 n. 11 ("Sol wird zum dienstbaren Geist für das Gemeinwohl degradiert"), is unacceptable: the title in fact refers to the Caesar Constantine, and suggests the child is a somewhat paler reflection of Sol than his father, and the legend SOLI INVICTO COMITI was not superseded but continued to be applied to Constantine until 318–319. See the comments of Bruun in *RIC* VII, 49–50; also Berrens 2004, 159, 183–84.
57 Leeb 1992, 11–12, 23–26.
58 Compare also McCormick 1986, 104.
59 Compare Liebeschuetz 1979, 288: "Constantine evidently never came to hold the view that the coins, monuments, or ceremonies of the Roman state were appropriate media for displaying his adherence to Christianity."
60 Mango 1993, art. III, 6. Wallraff 2001b, 266–67, imagines "even a mere description was too offensive for Christian readers." Walter 2006, 12, states "There is nothing Christian about this figure."
61 Philostorgius, *Church History* 2.17, ed. Bidez and Winkelmann 1981, 28, trans. Walford 1855, 442, trans. Amidon 2007, 35.
62 Mango 1981, 109, takes these allegations seriously and refers to this Christian veneration as "a barely disguised pagan cult." Wallraff 2001b, 262 (compare Wallraff 2001a, 137), deduces, "The cult of the emperor (and that of the sun at the same time) . . . had now become part of Christian popular religion." Wortley 2006, 356, comments "the rite described does no credit to Christians."
63 Setton 1941, 204.
64 Luke 20:25.
65 Beskow 1962, 173–86; Dvornik 1966, 432–40.
66 Romans 13:1–2.
67 1 Timothy 2:1–6; Dvornik 1966, 448–49.
68 Titus 3:4–7; Dvornik 1966, 449–50.
69 Daniel 3.
70 Daniel 2:31–49.
71 Revelation 13–14. Dvornik 1966, 569–79; Yarbro Collins 1976; Price 1984, 196–98; Brent 1999, 164–209.
72 Eusebius, *Church History* 4.15.22, ed. p. 344, trans. p. 120, trans. Dvornik 1966, 580.
73 On the military oath (*sacramentum*), see Helgeland 1978, 1478–81.
74 Tertullian, *De idolatria* 19, ed. Reifferscheid and Wissowa 1890, 53, trans. Holmes and others 1869–1870, I, 170–71; Helgeland 1979, 738–40; Swift 1979, 846–47.
75 Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam* 2.6–9, ed. Bulhart and Borleffs 1957, 10–11, trans. Dvornik 1966, 582 and trans. Holmes and others 1869–1870, I, 47–48; Helgeland 1979, 736.
76 Dvornik 1966, 582–88.
77 Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 21.3, ed. and trans. Munier 1995, 64–65, trans. Dods and others 1867, 25–26, trans. Dvornik 1966, 588.
78 Origen, *Against Celsus* 8.65, ed. Koetschau 1899, II, 281, trans. Crombie 1872–1878, II, 549; Helgeland 1974, 153; Helgeland 1979, 750.
79 Origen, *Homily on Exodus* 8.4 ed. and trans. Borret 1985, 254–55, trans. Heine 1982, 322. On this distinction between reverence for and worship of the emperor, see Setton 1941, 186–202; Dvornik 1966, 655–56; Turcan 1978, 1074–75; Price 1984, 15.
80 *Acta Sanctorum* July, III, 640, ed. Bolland and others 1643–1940. Translation from the Armenian in Conybeare 1896, 105; Price 1984, 125–26.
81 Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 32–45.
82 Writing of Hellenistic ruler-cult, Walbank 1984, 94–95, comments that "it is not clear, and probably was not clear to contemporaries, whether the according of 'honours equivalent to those for a god' (*isotheoi timoi*) . . . implied that the person honoured was regarded as a god or not" and that "the same ritual . . . may have conveyed different meanings to different people or indeed at different periods" (p. 95).
83 Dagron 2003, 143–48. Wortley 2006, 355–61. On the chapel, see Mango 1981, 107; Mango 1993, art. III, 2.
84 *RIC* VII, 42; Mango 1993, art. III, 6.
85 Bergmann 1998, 284, suggests that the appearance of the diadem in 324 may have contributed in some way to the disappearance of the radiate crown.

9

CONSTANTINE AS CHRIST

The Divinity of the Living Emperor

Augustus and his successors, mindful of Caesar's assassination, were generally cautious about claiming divine honours in their lifetime. It therefore became the custom for an emperor who had behaved well to be recognized by the Senate as a *divus* only after his death. This traditional form of posthumous deification was termed *consecratio*. However, the people of the eastern empire were accustomed to worship the living ruler, and this practice influenced Rome, where there was an unofficial cult of the living emperor. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that some rulers were prepared to take the exceptionally bold step of promoting themselves as living divinities. Domitian (A.D. 81–96), for instance, is said to have begun formal letters of instruction with the words, "Your Lord and God (*dominus et deus*) orders this to be done." Consequently it became the custom for him to be addressed in the same way in speech.[1] Pliny expressed his relief when, after Nerva's brief reign, Trajan came to power: "An open tribute to our Emperor demands a new form.... Times are different, and our speeches must show this.... Nowhere should we flatter him as a divinity and a god; we are talking of a fellow citizen, not a tyrant, one who is our father not our over-lord."[2]

Later, however, the imperial reluctance to claim divinity began to weaken. Beginning in the Antonine period, a terminology emerged that connected the emperor, his house, and his activities with the divine realm.[3] In Greek, the emperor was described as *hierotatos* ("most holy") or *theiotatos* ("most godly"), and in Latin as *sanctissimus* or *sacratissimus*.[4] His house was a *theios oikos* or *domus divina* ("divine house"). Thus, the orator of 297 could address the emperor, referring to "the sanctuary of your palace" (*adyta palatii vestri*).[5] The emperor's finances, expeditions, orders, rescripts, constructions – everything connected with him – were sacred. From at least the time of Trajan the emperor had been hailed as eternal, but from the third century the positive attributes of his reign, such as peace, victory, good fortune, and even his name acquired this epithet: *pax aeterna, victoria aeterna, felicitas aeterna, aeternum nomen*. These descriptions were not intended to imply that the emperor himself was a living god, but they served to draw a close analogy between him and the gods. Thus when a direct comparison was drawn between a ruler and a god, he or she was said to be a "New Sun" (*neos Hēlios*), a "New Dionysus" (*neos Dionysos*) or the like, implying a close resemblance to the god.

This trend would naturally lead to the blurring of boundaries between the imperial and divine spheres. An outstandingly successful emperor such as Aurelian, for instance, could confidently take the step of proclaiming himself a living god and a born ruler (*deus et dominus natus*) on his coins.[6] This tendency is clearly demonstrated again under Diocletian, who adopted the epithet *Iovius* for himself and gave the title *Herculius* to his junior co-Augustus, suggesting an almost familial relationship with Jupiter and his son. The third-century emperors, therefore, had gradually become more closely connected with the gods, reflecting on earth something of the power and divinity of their chosen heavenly deity.

At the same time as emphasizing their proximity to the gods, the emperors had begun to distance themselves from their subjects to an increasing degree.[7] The act of *adoratio*, prostrating oneself before a god or ruler, which had been practised for some time by the Romans,[8] was formalized by the Tetrarchs, who established a much stricter court ceremonial. Diocletian, who could be addressed officially as *dominus* ("Lord"), was possibly responsible for the introduction of the *adoratio purpurae*, requiring that all his subjects, including men of rank and even family members, not only prostrate themselves in his presence but even kiss the hem or corner of his purple mantle.[9] Eusebius (reported by Jerome) records the innovation and expresses the implication simply: "Diocletian was the first to order that he be adored as a god."[10] The elevated status of the Late Antique emperors is clearly indicated by the panegyrists of the period, who, ever conscious of the need to flatter, reflected the change by employing language and imagery that placed their rulers on a higher plane of existence.[11] The panegyrist of 291, for instance, describes the adoration of Diocletian and Maximian in the palace at Milan, and notes the confusion caused by the necessity of worshipping two rulers. The significance of the act is reflected in the language, which refers to the rulers as a "twin deity" (*geminato numine*) and to the adoration occurring "as if in the inner shrine" (*velut interioribus sacrariis*) of a temple.[12] Firmicus Maternus, who wrote a guide to astrology called *Mathēsis* whilst still a pagan in 334–337, claimed that the living emperor, as ruler over the whole world, "belongs to that class of superior gods which the chief divinity has appointed for the creation and preservation of all things" and "is thus raised to the highest ranks of the gods by divine and eternal dispensation."[13] Given the increasing proximity of the living emperors to the gods, it is perhaps not surprising that the tradition of deifying them after their deaths lost its traditional importance.[14]

The problematic issue of Constantine's status during his lifetime – whether human, semidivine, or divine – has been touched upon at various points in this book, but the evidence as a whole may now be considered. Certainly the emperor could be perceived as a god by the likes of panegyrists or followers of local cults of the emperor (as in Hispellum). However, regarding Constantine's deliberately projecting an image of himself as a god, there is evidence both for and against. After 324 the emperor discouraged his new Greek-speaking subjects in the East from referring to him by using the traditional Greek translation of Augustus, *Sebastos*. Instead, the transliteration *Augoustos* was to be used. Why Constantine preferred this designation is uncertain. It has been suggested that he wished to avoid the term *Sebastos* because it was the title under which emperors both living and dead had been worshipped in the Greek-speaking world since the time of Augustus.[15] Alternatively, however, Constantine may have preferred the transliteration *Augoustos* because it served to stress his legitimacy by connecting him closely with the first Roman emperor, ruler over the Golden Age.

A much clearer denial of divinity is provided by Eusebius' claim that in Constantine's thirtieth year of rule (335), after the assembly at Jerusalem and the dedication of the Holy Sepulchre, one of the bishops declared that in the next life Constantine would rule alongside the Son of God. The emperor (despite the fact that he is known to have regularly claimed to be God's elected ruler on earth) was not prepared to accept the suggestion that he possessed heavenly power. Eusebius writes: "He was annoyed on hearing these words, and told him he should not say such rash things, but should rather pray for him, that in both this life and the next he might be found worthy to be God's slave."[16] But even though Constantine is said to have denied the bishop's assertion, the fact that a bishop was prepared to imagine Constantine exercising rule from heaven alongside Christ is in itself striking. Constantine's reluctance on this occasion to acknowledge his proximity to God would seem to be consonant with Eusebius' claim that the emperor banned the display of his image in temples. However, the assertion seems unlikely to be true in view of the fact that Constantine was prepared to allow the cult of the Flavian dynasty to continue, and it is in fact contradicted by Socrates.[17]

Eusebius indicates that after Constantine's death the military commanders, *comites*, and ruling classes

honoured the emperor as they had done while he was alive. This may refer to prostration before the emperor, because we know that this long-standing tradition continued during Constantine's lifetime.[18] However, it has been noted that Eusebius' words "γονυκλινεῖς ἠσπάζοντο" in his account of the imperial funeral may mean "with genuflections they kissed [the emperor]" rather than simply "with genuflections they honoured [the emperor]." If that is indeed Eusebius' meaning, we could only conclude that Constantine had continued during his life the practice of *adoratio purpurae* (kissing the imperial robe) that Diocletian had instituted and that had been described by Eusebius as an honour for a god.[19]

While there is uncertainty about the interpretation of Eusebius' information in this case, we have seen in earlier chapters a number of events and monuments that more clearly imply Constantine's divinity, even if they do not do so categorically. For instance, the public parade of Constantine's statue in the hippodrome in 330 (discussed in Chapter 4) probably suggested to many observers that the emperor was claiming the status of a god. In addition, imperial divinity might have been inferred from the inscription on the triumphal arch in Rome, from the radiate statue in Constantinople, and from the imperial statue in the Basilica of Maxentius. The evidence relating to these three monuments need only be briefly mentioned again.

The inscription on the arch (discussed in Chapter 7) raises the question of whether the "divine inspiration" that it mentions was granted to Constantine by the Supreme God or whether it was innate in Constantine because Constantine was himself divine. Certainly the panegyrist of 313 understood the latter, but ambiguity in the inscription probably reflects a more widespread uncertainty regarding the emperor's divine status. Furthermore, we cannot know for certain whether the inscription on the arch reflects the Senate's perception of the emperor rather than the image Constantine himself wished to project.

The radiate (and possibly naked) statue on top of the porphyry column in Constantinople has been examined in Chapters 2 and 8. It associated Constantine intimately with his Supreme Deity, whose light – and hence divine power – he reflected on earth. The precise extent to which that transmitted power was believed (by Constantine or by others) to elevate the emperor to the status of a god in his own right is unclear. It is certainly possible that some Christians who gathered at the column believed that it raised Constantine to the status of the returned Christ.

The seated, frontal pose and partial nudity of the statue in the Basilica of Maxentius (treated in Chapter 6) would have recalled cult statues such as Pheidias' statue of Zeus at Olympia or the statue of Jupiter Optimus Maximus at the Capitol. Even if this was the same statue as that described by Eusebius, to which Constantine had his standard added to credit his chosen god with the victory over Maxentius, the addition is unlikely to have prevented many observers of the statue seeing the emperor as a divinity. The statue's heavenward gaze (which was perhaps added around 330) might also have been taken to imply the emperor's divine or semidivine status, since it suggested that he looked to the heavens for inspiration from the Divinity and that he therefore possessed the *mens divina* mentioned by the panegyrists.

The gaze of Constantine's statue reminds us that any claim the emperor might make to divinity relied upon the protection and guidance he received from the Supreme Deity. Plutarch had claimed that a good king took into his mind the divine Logos, which directed him to the right course of action. By ruling virtuously as directed by the Logos, Plutarch wrote, the king could become the image of God (*eikōn theou*) on earth.[20] The poet Martial also referred to such imperial imitation of, and identification with, the Supreme Deity. He described the cult statue of Hercules in a temple on the Appian Way, observing that it had been given the features of the emperor Domitian. He went on to flatter the emperor by asserting that his deeds surpassed those of Hercules, and that therefore he should not have bestowed his visage on Hercules, the son of Jupiter, but on Jupiter himself.[21] Dio Chrysostom had advised Trajan to imitate Hercules, the Logos of Zeus, to ensure Hercules' continuing support. Dio had hinted that through imitation, the emperor might come to be identified with Hercules. In this way he suggested that the emperor should aspire to semidivine status rather than the full divinity that Domitian had arrogantly claimed.[22] Philo of

Alexandria had argued that a true king allowed himself to be directed by Right Reason (*orthos logos*),[23] citing as the supreme example Moses, who followed the guidance so perfectly that he was the incarnation of Animate and Rational Law (*nomos empsychos te kai logikos*).[24] Although according to Philo a king could never be divine in nature (*physis*) or essence (*ousia*), he could, if he endeavoured to imitate God's virtues, bring his purpose (*proairesis*) into the divine likeness. Philo explained that kings had the power to do good or evil, "but they ought to will the better, and the better is to benefit instead of injuring as many as they possibly can. For this is to follow God since He too can do both but wills the good only. . . . These things good rulers must imitate if they have any aspiration to be assimilated to God."[25] The king, Philo concluded, "is like the God of all. For there is nothing upon earth more exalted than he." However, then he reminds the reader that absolute divinity escapes the king: "For if he is honoured as being an image (*eikōn*) of God, yet he is at the same time fashioned from the dust of the earth."[26]

Eusebius was evidently drawing on such kingship philosophy when he said that God had made Constantine "the image (*eikōn*) of his own monarchical reign" and had advanced Constantine "as a lesson in the pattern of godliness to the human race" and "a clear example to all mankind of the life of godliness."[27] Elsewhere, Eusebius presented Constantine as conquering the passions that subdue the rest of mankind, and described his empire as "the imitation (*mimēma*) of [heavenly] monarchical power."[28] He claimed that "the emperor is one, an image (*eikōn*) of the one all-imperial being,"[29] and that Constantine had cleansed godless error from the earth "in imitation of the Higher Power."[30]

Eusebius' philosophizing suggests that the issue of the emperor's relationship with the divine continued to be a matter of debate during Constantine's reign as much as it had been under his predecessors – despite the fact that Constantine had begun to promote belief in a Supreme Deity and to deny the existence of other gods. If Eusebius was formulating theories on the issue, it is only reasonable to imagine that the citizens of the empire under Constantine posed questions similar to those that had been raised under earlier rulers: is the emperor divine, and – given that he promotes a Supreme Deity – how is he related to the Deity and to us?

Among Christians, as we have seen in Chapter 8, it had long been thought that the pagan emperor was to be venerated in his capacity as ruler but not worshipped as a god. Consequently, as the emperors claimed increasing degrees of divinity, it was inevitable that the firm Christian opposition to such claims would manifest itself in a backlash. The Christian God could not be seen to be outdone by the emperor, and so it was natural that the trappings traditionally associated with emperors and kings should be pointedly bestowed upon the Christian God and his Son. This rivalry would have important consequences when the emperor himself became a Christian.

The Heavenly Monarchy

God and Christ as Kings

The Jews (as we saw in Chapter 3) placed their hopes for the messiah, God's anointed saviour, in their kings. The king was the Son of God and was imagined as being enthroned on the right hand of God, conquering kings in the day of his wrath, and making them his footstool.[31] Only one Israelite king, David, had come close to meeting the criteria for the messiah. The God of Israel had made a covenant with David, assuring him of divine protection if the people obeyed His statutes, and promising that the Davidic dynasty would endure forever.[32] Later rulers of Israel failed to realize anything like such high ideals, and consequently Jewish hopes for salvation switched to the future, and David became the prototype for a coming messianic king.[33]

After the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple in about 587 B.C., Ezekiel prophesied that all Jews, both from Israel and Judah, would one day be reunited in a single kingdom, a kingdom that would be ruled forever by a second David, and in which a New Temple would be built. From the foundations of that temple would spring a river that would bring forth life wherever it flowed: the waters would teem with fish, and the evergreen trees on either side of the river would supply an inexhaustible supply of meat.[34] In another prophecy, Isaiah predicted

that the messianic king would suffer for the sins of man by being led to the slaughter like a lamb, and would thereby bring salvation to both the Israelites and the Gentiles.[35] Soon this hoped-for saviour-king was turned into an eschatological figure who would come to power, establish the New Temple, and inaugurate the new age at the end of the world. In Daniel 7, we find the Israelite God described as an enthroned king surrounded by many thousands of servants. God's kingship is exercised through the Son of Man, who comes on the clouds of heaven and derives His power from God.[36] In the Book of Enoch, which was clearly influenced by Daniel 7, we read of the Son of Man, a God-anointed king descended from David, placed by God on the throne of glory, waiting to make a divine epiphany on earth to condemn the wicked and raise the just before establishing an eternal kingdom.[37]

In the first century, the Jewish scholar Philo presented God as the supreme king.[38] He asserted, "As the King is to the State, so God is to the world,"[39] and described God as "a King invested with a kindly and law-abiding sovereignty, who governs the whole heaven and cosmos with justice."[40] Philo also adopted metaphors from the philosophy of kingship when writing of God. In the Old Testament, the title "shepherd" had been used of the king of Israel, of God, and of the Messiah. Homer had given King Agamemnon the epithet "shepherd of the people," and writers on the philosophy of kingship had frequently compared the earthly king to a shepherd caring for his flock.[41] The metaphor was therefore naturally adopted with respect to God by Philo, who wrote that every God-fearing man should join in singing Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd," because

> like a shepherd, God the Shepherd and King directs earth and water and air and fire and all the plants and animals in them, things mortal and divine; and in addition he directs the nature of heaven, the revolutions of the sun and moon, and the variations and harmonious dances of the other stars; he directs them according to Justice (*dikē*) and Law (*nomos*), for he has appointed his Right Reason (*othos logos*) and first-born son, who receives the guardianship of his sacred flock like a viceroy (*hyparchos*) of the Great King.[42]

Philo also borrowed the metaphors of "charioteer" and "helmsman," which were commonly used in political philosophy to convey the king's function as governor of the state, and applied them to God and the Logos.[43] Furthermore, he referred to the emperor, and sometimes to God, as "saviour and benefactor" (*sōtēr kai euergetēs*), drawing on the philosophical concept that it was the king's duty to be his people's saviour and benefactor.[44]

In the New Testament, Jesus is identified as the messiah of Jewish prophecy and is therefore accorded the status of a king. For example, at the time of Jesus' birth, the Magi are said to have come from the East seeking the "King of the Jews," whose star they had followed.[45] To take another example, it is written that Jesus rewarded the Apostle Peter with the keys to the Kingdom for being the first to acknowledge Him as the Son of Man for whom Israel had been waiting.[46] Furthermore, when Jesus entered Jerusalem on an ass, He was clearly fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah that "thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."[47] The crowd that greeted Jesus raised cries of, "Hosanna: Blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."[48] When Jesus was led before the high priest of the temple and was asked, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" He suggested his kingship by responding, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."[49] After his trial, at which He had indicated that His Kingdom was not an earthly kingdom (and therefore presented no threat to Roman authority), Jesus was condemned to die on a cross that bore the inscription, "This is Jesus the king of the Jews," and was taunted by onlookers who said they would believe that He was the king of Israel only if He climbed down.[50]

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus is presented as king of an eternal kingdom and bringer of a Golden Age of peace and salvation. Luke tells how an angel appeared to the Virgin Mary, announcing that she would conceive a son who would be called "Son of the Highest" and "Son of God," that God would give the child the throne of David, and that the kingdom over which the boy ruled would have no end.[51] Mary reflected on the implications of her pregnancy, observing that God had established a new era on earth: "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away."[52] And when the heavenly host appears to shepherds announcing the birth, they praise God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."[53] When Jesus is old enough to read in the synagogue at Nazareth, He explains that the Lord "hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."[54] Here, we do not find the saviour-king of Daniel 7 and Enoch, a figure who will come at the end of time; rather the saviour has already arrived and has established peace, strength, and liberty on earth. The apocalypse has been transferred to the distant future.[55] Furthermore, the saviour-king is no longer a king over the Jews alone, but a Lord over all mankind. Nor is He a human selected by God and therefore divine only in an allegorical sense; rather, He is divine by procreation.[56]

It is clear that Luke cast the story of Jesus after the model of claims, such as those made by Vergil, that a divine child born of a virgin would restore the Golden Age. Since, from the Roman perspective, it was Augustus who had inaugurated the Golden Age, Luke's theology is to be understood as a retort to and rejection of the imperial cult. It was possible for Luke to respond to pagan tradition in this way because both Judaism and the imperial cult shared the messianic tradition and tended to seek the messiah in a living being. Thus, Jesus could be hailed as a rival to Augustus within the same messianic framework. In Luke's gospel, Christianity is represented as a faith leading to the righting of injustice and to divine peace. It is shown to be a valid and better alternative to the imperial cult, not the seditious *superstitio*

leading to cosmic disorder that critics in Luke's day claimed it to be.[57]

In the book of Revelation, which describes a vision of the Second Coming of Christ, the arrival of the Kingdom of God, and the foundation of the New Jerusalem, Christ is said to wear a golden crown and to bear the title "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," both on his robe and on his thigh.[58] "King of kings" had been a divine title applied to monarchs such as the Achaemenids in Persia, and its appearance on Christ's thigh is reminiscent of the anchor birthmark on Seleucus' thigh, which marked him out as the future king (see Chapter 5). At the climax of the vision, Christ (in the form of the Lamb of God) takes His place on God's throne as ruler of the cosmos.[59]

The author of Revelation has (like Luke) deliberately drawn on aspects of the imperial cult in an attempt to create a Christian substitute for it and thereby completely supersede it. The rites that take place before the throne of the Lamb of God are described in terms of traditional pagan blood sacrifices, for there is a golden altar before the throne, and the blood of the Lamb has been spilled, purifying the robes of the participants so that they become white. Their white robes and the palm branches they carry clearly reflect the dress of those who participated in the imperial cult. The worshippers cry out, "Salvation to our Lord," and the angels pray for "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might" to be upon God forever. Similar blessings are found in inscriptions written to honour the imperial family.[60] Around the throne of the Lamb are twenty-four seats for elders, who are clothed in white and wear crowns of gold. In imitation of the custom of presenting gold crowns to the emperor's empty chair, the elders cast their crowns before the throne and again pray for the Lord to receive "glory and honour and power."[61] Their actions are described in contrast to the conduct of those who worship "the image of the beast" – an allusion to those who worship the imperial image. Thus, the author denigrates the imperial cult while describing the superior worship of the Christian God in similar terms.[62]

In various passages of the New Testament, certain words applied to God and Christ seem to have been borrowed from Hellenistic kingship philosophy

to describe their kingship in terms familiar to the audience. These words include *sōtēr* ("saviour") and *epiphainein* ("to become manifest"). Both had been applied to the Hellenistic saviour-kings, and *sōtēr* had been used to describe numerous Roman emperors in inscriptions in the East. Both could also be fittingly applied to Christ, who had made an epiphany on earth like a god-king, had become the saviour of mankind by suffering on the cross, and was expected to appear again when establishing His kingdom at the end of the world.[63]

The occurrence in the New Testament of such terms familiar from kingship ideology might in some cases be coincidental and therefore not indicative of a connection between ideas about kings and ideas about Christ.[64] However, in a number of passages several significant terms occur together, making it much more likely that, in these instances, the vocabulary of kingship was deliberately adopted and intentionally applied to God and Christ – presumably to demonstrate the inadequacy of the Roman emperor's claims to supreme rulership. Thus in his epistle to Titus, Paul writes: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation (*sōtērios*) hath appeared (*epephanē*) to all men, Teaching us that . . . we should live . . . Looking for . . . the glorious appearing (*epiphaneian*) of the Great God and our Saviour (*sōtēros*) Jesus Christ" and "the kindness and love of God our Saviour (*sōtēros*) toward man appeared (*epephanē*)."[65] Equally, in 1 Thessalonians, Paul injects language associated with kingship into his discussion of Christ's Second Coming in order, it seems, to counter claims that Augustus was the saviour of mankind.[66] He refers, for instance, to Christ's *parousia* ("coming"), a term associated with the arrival of an emperor; he describes the destruction of the proponents of "Peace and safety" (*eirēnē kai asphaleia*), a reference to the ruin of the Romans and the *pax Romana*; and he mentions the "hope of salvation" (*elpida sōtērias*) and "salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (*sōtērias dia tou kuriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou*), thereby challenging the traditional application of the title *sōtēr* to earthly rulers.[67]

Around the beginning of the second century, the names of God and Christ, which had until now been carefully preserved in their original Hebrew forms within the Greek text of the Old and New Testaments, were dropped. They were replaced by Greek titles (in abbreviated form) such as *theos* ("God") and, much more frequently, *kyrios* ("Lord"). *Kyrios* had been used as a royal title to suggest that the kings and emperors to whom it was applied were divine, and it was now given to Christ to indicate not only his divinity but also his royal status: He was the true emperor, far above any worldly ruler.[68]

The tendency to turn to kingship philosophy when attempting to describe Christ's rule can also be detected in the writings of Christian scholars and theologians, such as Origen, Lactantius, and Eusebius. Origen, writing in the early third century, often mentioned the *basileia* ("kingship") of Christ and God, and applied to Christ the royal epithets *sōtēr* and *euergetēs*, and the metaphor of "king bee," which had formerly been applied by philosophers to mortal kings.[69] On the basis of 1 Peter 2:9, where the Christians are described as "a royal priesthood," Origen concluded that Christians, being wise men who had driven the rule (*regnum*) of sin from their bodies and had accepted the rule of righteousness in their limbs, were kings. Since Christ ruled over the Christians, He was therefore "King of kings."[70]

In the fourth century, Lactantius could describe God as the "emperor of all" (*imperator omnium*)[71] and refer to Christ as "living, immediate law" or "a teacher, like a living law."[72] Eusebius could describe Christ as the "great emperor" (*megas basileus*), "all-imperial" (*pambasileus*), or "the emperor of the universe" (*ho basileus tōn holōn*),[73] and he made considerable use of traditional kingship philosophy when describing the nature of the monarchies in heaven and on earth.

Eusebius' most striking reference to the kingship of Christ is to be found in his *Church History* where he quotes a speech that he addressed to Paulinus, Bishop of Tyre, on the occasion of the dedication of the cathedral there in about 315:

> He surpasses all the hopes of ourselves or anyone else, saving us and giving us His Father's blessings without stint – He the Lifegiver, the Lightbringer, our great Physician and King and Lord, the Christ of God. . . . For which of the kings who ever lived achieved such greatness as to fill the ears and mouths of all men on earth with his name? What king established laws so just and impartial, and was strong enough to have them proclaimed in the hearing of all mankind from the ends of the earth and to the further limit of the entire world? Who made the barbarous, uncivilized customs of uncivilized races give place to his own civilized and most humane laws? Who was for whole ages attacked on every side yet displayed such super-human greatness as to be for ever in his prime and to remain young throughout his life? Who so firmly established a people unheard-of from the beginning of time that it is not hidden in some corner of the earth but is found in every place under the sun? Who so armed his soldiers with the weapons of true religion that their souls proved tougher than steel in their battles with their opponents? Which of the kings wields such power, leads his armies after death, sets up trophies over his enemies, and fills every place, district, and city, Greek or non-Greek, with votive offerings – his own royal houses and sacred temples, like this cathedral with its exquisite ornaments and offerings?
>
> These things are indeed awe-inspiring and overwhelming, astonishing and amazing, and serve as clear proofs that our Saviour is King.[74]

Hoping to reach a wide audience and win converts, Christian writers found it useful to follow Luke's lead and associate the kingdom of God with the Golden Age that had famously been predicted by Vergil in his fourth *Eclogue*. Unlike Luke, however, they might choose to do it explicitly, even quoting (or misquoting) Vergil and claiming that the poet had been a crypto-Christian. This connection was made not only by Lactantius, but even by the emperor Constantine in his *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, which contains a translation into Greek of Vergil's complete poem, together with a commentary on its supposed Christian import.[75]

Christ the King in Art

From the early fourth century, Christ had been depicted in art as a philosopher or miracle worker.[76] That is hardly surprising since Jesus appeared that way in the gospels: teaching and discussing matters of faith with the Apostles, the common people, and the Temple priests; turning water to wine; stilling storms; walking on water; healing the sick; driving out demons; and raising the dead (Figures 181, 182).[77] Jesus' reputation for performing miracles recalled the deeds of the pagan philosophers and "holy men" such as Apollonius of Tyana, who had also been credited with such achievements.[78] The similarity between Jesus and the pagan philosophers would have been highlighted, for example, by the writings of the Christian Lactantius. Lactantius, who sought to promote Christianity by establishing its compatibility with contemporary thinking on monotheism, presented Christ as a spiritual guide who had saved humanity not through suffering on the cross but through his teaching.[79] Furthermore, Christian intellectuals described their faith as the "true philosophy" when debating with pagans, and this metaphor became widely accepted. Unsurprisingly, then, scenes of Christ as the philosopher teaching his disciples came to feature frequently on the wall paintings and sarcophagi of middle-class tombs of the period.[80]

At this time, Christian artists adopted from pagan art two main ways of depicting Christ the philosopher and wonder-worker. On the one hand, He might appear as a boy or youth. This form of representation appears to be associated with the idea, particularly popular in Roman funerary art in the late third century, of the beautiful and spiritually powerful child prodigy. On the other hand, he might be portrayed with a beard and long flowing locks, an iconography that can be connected with a tradition of philosopher imagery that emerged in the age of Nero and the Flavian emperors, and which served to convey not only the dignity and wisdom of the charismatic philosophers but also their extraordinary magical and spiritual powers.[81]

In some of the earliest catacomb paintings, Christ the philosopher was shown on the same level and at about the same scale as his disciples. However, He

Figure 181. Christ as a bearded, long-haired philosopher preaching the Sermon on the Mount and performing miracles (Cure of the Paralytic, Cure of the Leper). Sarcophagus, ca. 290–310. Palazzo Massimo. © Jonathan Bardill.

soon appeared larger and elevated above them in a way that paralleled and at the same time competed with the contemporary practice in literature and portraiture of emphasizing the proximity of philosophers to the gods.[82] This change is illustrated by a scene in the Catacomb on the Via Anapo in Rome, dated to around 325 (Figure 183). It shows Christ as a philosopher amongst His Apostles. He is dressed like His followers, but is positioned centrally, shown facing frontally, and represented larger than those around Him.

The degree of Christ's elevation above and distance from His followers increased, and soon He acquired certain distinctive characteristics of Jupiter, the supreme Roman god, and of the divinized emperor, to indicate His royal status.[83] In cubiculum 74 of the Catacomb of Domitilla around A.D. 350–375, for example, a semidome was painted with a scene in which Christ is seated upon a high-backed throne upon a raised platform, teaching His Apostles who stand or sit around Him at a respectful distance (Figure 184).[84] It is disputed whether such imagery was intended to show Christ as a god or as the emperor.[85] However, rather than adopting one view or the other, it would seem more prudent to consider a fusion of several iconographical conventions. Christ is shown as a philosopher teaching His Apostles, and he has acquired something of the superior status of Late Antique philosophers. He is also shown as king of the gods, enthroned and placed centrally in the composition as if He were Jupiter surrounded by the other Olympian deities. Finally, He is also shown as the emperor, more specifically as the divine emperor, in a manner recalling Augustus enthroned in the guise of Jupiter on coins and on the Gemma Augustea (Figures 36, 143), or Diocletian and Maximian as they are shown on the Arch of Galerius, seated on the globe and accompanied on either side by other deities and personifications (Figures 63 and 198). In this catacomb painting, therefore, the enthroned Christ emerges as the supreme teacher who simultaneously challenges other philosophers, Jupiter, and the emperor.[86]

Christ's kingship is also suggested by the representations of the Magi presenting gifts to the baby Jesus, which begin to appear from the time of Constantine. These exploit the long-established iconography of oriental barbarians presenting tribute to the emperor, and in numerous depictions of the scene, the gift of gold brought by the first king is represented not by coins but by a golden wreath worthy of a ruler (Figure 185).[87]

Figure 182. Youthful Christ performing miracles. Detail from sarcophagus of Marcus Claudianus, 330–335. Centre: Miracle of Loaves and Fishes. Right: Raising of Lazarus and Cure of the Woman with Issue of Blood. Vatican Museums, Museo Pio Cristiano. © Jonathan Bardill.

Representations of Christ's ascension to heaven also became common from the fourth century, and these were adapted from the traditional iconography of the apotheosis of the deceased emperor. On coins minted posthumously to commemorate Constantine ascending to the skies, the hand of the Supreme Deity is shown, in traditional fashion, emerging from the clouds to assist the emperor's passage (Figure 186).[88] Similarly, on a late fourth- or early fifth-century ivory diptych in Munich, the hand of God emerges from a cloud to haul Christ up from his tomb into heaven (Figure 187).

Another important feature of the diptych is Christ's nimbus. He is again shown with a nimbus in a fresco from the catacomb of Domitilla (dating to 350–375) and in two mosaics in the Mausoleum of Constantina (dating to 360–390) (Figures 188 and 189). Although the nimbus had not been reserved specifically for the emperor, it was an attribute regularly bestowed upon him, implying radiance possibly derived from a close connection with Sol. Its application to Christ, therefore, not only probably conveyed Christ's radiation of divinity but also possibly suggested a royal status comparable with the emperor's.[89]

Just as Julius Caesar had been represented with his foot on the sphere of the universe and had been described as an immortal god (*divus*);[90] just as Octavian had copied the pose for his own statue, which was shown on coins that hailed him as "Caesar, son of a god" (*Caesar divi filius*) (Figure 190);[91] and just as Diocletian and Maxentius had been shown on the Arch of Galerius seated upon the globe of the cosmos in the midst of deities and personifications (Figure 63), so in 337 the deceased Constantine was portrayed – according to Eusebius – in coloured paintings "resting in an aetherial resort above the vaults of heaven."[92] Soon after, however, this particular element of royal iconography was appropriated by Christian artists and applied to Christ.[93] On the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, dated by inscription to 359, the central scene in the upper register of

Figure 183. Christ teaching, seated among His Apostles. Fresco in the catacomb on the Via Anapo, Rome. Ca. A.D. 325. Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, Vatican City.

sculptures shows Christ enthroned above Caelus, the Roman god of the heavens, who holds the canopy of the sky over his head (Figure 191).[94] Of similar date is an apse mosaic in the mausoleum of Constantina in Rome, which shows Christ bearded, with a nimbus, and in purple imperial robes, seated on the globe of the cosmos, as he presents the keys of His Kingdom to St. Peter (Figure 189).[95]

Strikingly, in the sixth century, in a mosaic in the Archiepiscopal Chapel at Ravenna, Christ, with a nimbus, is shown in the full military uniform of a Roman emperor (Figure 192).[96] The mosaic is important not only because it portrays Christ in imperial garb but also because it illustrates Psalm 91:13, and shows Christ trampling a serpent with His left foot, crushing the neck of a lion with His right foot, and carrying on His shoulder the saving sign of the cross. The mosaic provides indisputable support for the suggestion that the lost depiction from the entrance of the palace in Constantinople, which showed Constantine and his sons slaying a serpent beneath the "Saviour's sign," may have been interpreted as portraying Constantine in the role of Christ at the Second Coming.

From the time of Constantine, architecture, too, reflected Christ's imperial status. As we have seen in Chapter 7, it was the apsidal basilica, an architectural form associated with imperial audience chambers, that became the standard design for Christian halls of worship, and it is significant that in these churches the apse became the preferred place for images of Christ, since it had also been the traditional position of imperial statues (as illustrated, for instance, by Constantine's colossus in the Basilica of Maxentius).[97]

Given that Jesus had been described in royal terms as early as the writing of the New Testament, it is unclear precisely why His royal aspect came to the fore in iconography and architecture only in Constantine's reign.[98] It is perhaps possible that Christians had become acutely aware that the image of Christ as a miracle worker had fuelled the arguments of pagan critics. Opponents of Christianity had accused Jesus of being a sorcerer, not a true sage, and not the Son of God. This had been claimed not only by Celsus in the late second century but also more recently by a certain Hierocles, who had written (at some time before 303) a book that compared Jesus unfavourably with the popular wonder-worker Apollonius of Tyana and cast the former as a mere magician and the latter as a true wise man. Hierocles' charge was so serious that Eusebius had thought it necessary to write a short treatise (*Against Hierocles*) to refute it.[99] At about the same time, the pagan Porphyry, while praising Jesus as a wise man, nevertheless assigned to Him the status of a mere hero, a good man endowed with immortality by the gods.[100] Christian artists (whether or not they considered Jesus to be of precisely the same substance as God – a matter that the Church would soon need to address urgently) may have felt the time had come to move away from the image of Christ as a magician and to emphasize His royal and divine status. Given Jesus' claims to kingship, it was only fitting that He should begin to be depicted in royal attire, using iconography traditionally associated with the gods and the emperor.

Once such iconography had been applied to Christ, it could not be used by Christian emperors.[101] But the age of Constantine was an age of transition when the emperor's relation to God – like Christ's relation to God – was not precisely determined. Thus in Constantine's day we find depictions of the emperor seated on the globe of the universe and being received into heaven by the hand of God – even though Christ, the Son of the emperor's chosen God, was soon to be shown in exactly the same way. The decision to depict Christ using imperial iconography may in part have been a reaction to

Figure 184. Christ enthroned surrounded by the Apostles. Fresco in cubiculum 74 of the Catacomb of Domitilla, Rome. Watercolour by Carlo Tabanelli over photograph by Pompeo and Renato Sansaini, 1897–1903. Ca. A.D. 350–375. Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, Rome.

Figure 185. Magi presenting their gifts to the baby Jesus. Sarcophagus ca. 325–350. From the Vatican Necropolis. Vatican Museums, Museo Pio Cristiano. © Jonathan Bardill.

pagan critics of Christ, but was it also a reaction to Constantine's own claims to divine status? And if it was, should it be interpreted as a continuation of the Christian backlash against the tradition of imperial divinity as expressed, for instance, in Revelation? Or should it be seen as a positive reaction to an emperor who had liberated Christians and become a Christ-like saviour?

Figure 186. Constantine ascending in chariot, reaching out to a divine hand emerging from the clouds. Reverse of gold *solidus* minted in Constantinople in 337. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1986,0610.1).

Monarchy in Heaven and Monarchy on Earth

By applying to God and Christ both the terminology and the imagery of kingship in ways such as those just outlined, Christians could demonstrate their firm belief that there was a monarchy in heaven. Furthermore, they could justify this belief by using precisely the same reasons that were advanced for the desirability of a monarchy on earth: divided power would result in divided and depleted strength. Thus, the fact that the Roman state had been governed by what was practically a monarchy since the Golden

Figure 187. The Ascension of Christ. Ivory diptych, ca. 400. Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich.

Age of Augustus could be exploited by Lactantius as an argument in favour of Christian monotheism as opposed to traditional polytheism.[102] In his *Divine Institutes*, which was composed between 303 and 310, he put it thus:

> If the world were to be shared between more than one king, then each will certainly have a lesser portion of its wealth and strength, since each will abide within the bounds of his allotted share. In like fashion, if there were more than one god, they will all have less power, since the others will have only so much for themselves. Virtue in its perfection is sooner to be found in totality than in some small fraction of totality. If God is perfect, as he has to be, he cannot be so unless he is one, so that everything can be within him.[103]

Figure 188. Christ, beardless and with nimbus, hands the law to Peter, the first bishop of Rome. Apse mosaic from the mausoleum of Constantina (Santa Costanza). Ca. A.D. 360–390. © Jonathan Bardill.

Figure 189. Christ, bearded and with nimbus, sits on the globe of the cosmos. Apse mosaic from the mausoleum of Constantina (Santa Costanza). Ca. A.D. 360–390. © Jonathan Bardill.

Figure 190. Reverse of silver *denarius* of Octavian minted in Italy, showing a naked statue of Octavian with his foot on the sphere of the cosmos. 36–31 B.C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (2002,0102.5006).

According to Eusebius, exactly the same argument had been made by the first Christian to be martyred in Palestine after the posting of Diocletian's First Persecution Edict on 24 February 303. In June of that year, a lector from Scythopolis named Procopius was sent to Caesarea for trial by the governor. He was first asked to sacrifice to the gods and then, following his refusal, to pour a libation to the four emperors. Procopius again declined, quoting Odysseus' thoughts on monarchy: "The lordship of many is no good thing; let there be one lord, one king." While expressing his loyalty to the one God in heaven, Procopius was simultaneously criticizing the earthly Tetrarchic government. As punishment, he was condemned to death by decapitation.[104]

Eusebius expressed his personal belief in the kingship of Christ in the speech he delivered at the dedication of Paulinus' basilica in Tyre in about 315 (quoted previously).[105] In his later oration *In Praise of Constantine*, he applied theories familiar from kingship philosophy to both the heavenly and the earthly monarchies.[106] Because there is a monarchy in heaven, Eusebius explained, there must be one on earth. God's will on earth, he argued, is conducted according to the Word or Animate Law, which is not (as Plutarch had also observed) a written law:

> Monarchy excels all other kinds of constitution and government. For rather do anarchy and civil war result from the alternative, a polyarchy based on equality. For which reason there is One God, not two or three or even more. For strictly speaking, belief in

Figure 191. Beardless Christ seated above Caelus. Detail of plaster cast of sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, A.D. 359. Vatican Museums, Museo Pio Cristiano. © Jonathan Bardill.

many gods is godless. There is one Sovereign, and His Logos and royal law is one, not expressed in words or syllables nor eroded by time in books or tables, but the living and actual God the Logos, who directs His Father's kingdom for all those under and beneath Him.[107]

Constantine himself expressed similar arguments in his *Oration to the Assembly of the Saints*, where he asserted that there could be only one God in heaven, since "if there were not one but many authorities over these innumerable things, there would be share-outs and divisions of elements and [things told in] ancient myths; envy and avarice, dominating according to their power, would mar the harmonious concord of the whole."[108] For him, the Father and the Son constituted one God: "The Word is himself God and the child of God."[109] No doubt Constantine expected the listener to infer what Lactantius had stated explicitly: given that there was only one God in heaven, there should be only one ruler on earth. Again we observe the coincidence of Constantine's personal opinions concerning the nature of his rule with those of contemporary Christian thinkers. This raises the question of the extent to which he was directly influenced by the writings of the likes of Lactantius and Eusebius.

We have seen, therefore, how the New Testament's authors and later Christian theologians might draw on the existing philosophy of kingship to describe Christ in terms of the good king envisaged by the political theorists. Not only was Christ an emanation from the supreme solar deity (Chapter 8), the Logos-Nomos, and the shepherd and saviour of the people (Chapter 3), He was also a king.[110] Christ's royal status was not only expressed by writers but also – although not until the reign of Constantine – by early Christian artists who sought to depict Christ as king of heaven. Writers and artists, whilst operating in different historical contexts and with different motives, no doubt had broadly the same aim – to demonstrate that there was only one Supreme Deity who was far more powerful than any pagan god or divinized ruler. At the same time, however, by applying to Christ attributes of the divine emperor, they had opened the way for an emperor who still clung to traditions of imperial divinity to be compared, or even equated with Christ.[111]

Eusebian Rhetoric

Eusebius adopted the long-established theory that a good king should attempt to replicate on earth the heavenly rule of the Supreme Deity. This naturally caused him to hint at a direct comparison between Constantine and Christ, since the incarnate Christ had, like Constantine, been God's representative on earth.[112] It is possible that Eusebius found this analogy attractive because it could be used to support his own theological stance. Despite having signed up to the Nicene Creed, Eusebius still clung to the view that Jesus was different from and subordinate to the Father. By emphasizing the resemblance between Christ and a mortal ruler, Eusebius perhaps saw a way to promote his subordinationist view.[113] However, such a comparison could clearly be interpreted in a converse manner as raising Constantine to the status of God.[114]

In *In Praise of Constantine*, it is explained that Constantine's imitation of God involves constant reference to the Logos – a contention that accords with Plutarch's views. Eusebius envisages God working His will through two intermediary powers, one in heaven, and one on earth, both of whom are identified by the title of His "prefect" or "viceroy" (*hyparchos*). The prefect in heaven is the Logos (who is clearly Christ, although Eusebius never explicitly makes the equation in this oration), and the prefect on earth is Constantine.[115] Constantine not only has a similar status to Christ but also, like Christ, is described as defeating evil forces and saving his people. Although Christ (in the form of the Logos) is described as operating only in His heavenly realm (His messianic role on earth going unmentioned), He is certainly not without a crucial role, since it is by imitating Him that Constantine directs affairs on earth in the image of God's Kingdom.[116] So Christ and Constantine are said to share a similar status in relation to God, yet Constantine relies on Christ for guidance.

According to Plutarch, however, a good king was guided so completely by the Nomos-Logos that

Figure 192. Christ in military dress, carrying a cross, and standing upon a lion and a serpent. Mosaic in the Archiepiscopal Chapel, Ravenna. Sixth century A.D. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome; Bartl, neg. D-DAI-ROM-58.559.

he could become the image of God (*eikōn theou*) on earth. Eusebius clearly realized that if Constantine was guided completely by the Logos (Christ) to live according to the heavenly model, then he would almost be an incarnation of Christ. And Constantine certainly approached the ideal, since Eusebius describes him as "having been furnished by God with natural virtues and having received in his soul the emanations from that place. His ability to reason has come from the Universal Logos, his wisdom from communion with Wisdom, goodness from contact with the Good, and justness from his association with Justice. He is prudent in the ideal of Prudence, and from sharing in the Highest Power has he courage. For he who would bear the title of sovereign with true reason has patterned regal virtues in his soul after the model of that distant kingdom."[117]

In his *First Kingship Oration*, Dio Chrysostom had explained that Hercules was the Logos-Nomos of Zeus, and that the Emperor Trajan should take guidance from him to become the ideal ruler. Dio had also drawn a clear parallel between Trajan and Hercules, almost suggesting an identification of the two. Like Hercules, who had brought salvation to mankind by destroying tyrants, Trajan had saved the Roman people after the tyrannical rule of Domitian.[118] Four centuries earlier, in 346 B.C., Isocrates had exhorted Philip II of Macedon to take Hercules as his model. Although Isocrates had not described Hercules as the Logos-Nomos, he had implied that Philip could be raised to the rank of a god, as Hercules had been, if he succeeded in imitating Hercules' deeds.[119] Such ideas persisted so that in Late Antiquity, Neoplatonists and Hermetists held

that enlightened people could perceive the Logos within themselves and ultimately achieve unity with the One.[120] In the same way that Philip and Trajan might imitate Hercules and so become semidivine, and in the same way that Hermetists and Neoplatonists might aspire to unite with the One, so Constantine might imitate Christ and achieve divinity. Imitation could, at least potentially, result in identification.

Clearly aware of the implications of Constantine's imitation of the Logos, Eusebius felt the need to reject explicitly the possibility that Constantine was divine. He refers to Constantine as the friend and interpreter of Christ the Logos and comments: "Far from thinking his present state comparable to that of the All-Ruling God, he [Constantine] is aware that the mortal and perishable state is like a river, ever-flowing and vanishing. And so he longs for the incorruptible and spiritual kingdom of God, and he prays to come into it."[121] But whilst denying Constantine's divinity in his "present state" on earth, this statement also implies that the emperor could achieve immortality, if not divinity "comparable to that of the All-Ruling God," after death through his imitation during life of Christ the Logos.

On other occasions Eusebius draws explicit parallels between the living Constantine and Christ.[122] For instance, in *In Praise of Constantine*, the emperor is compared with the "Universal Saviour" and the "Good Shepherd" (that is, Christ) because he had saved his people from the persecuting emperors.[123] In the same oration, Christ is compared to a steersman and to a charioteer, and significantly the same metaphors (which are typical of kingship philosophy) are also applied to Constantine.[124] The speech also describes the four Caesars drawing Constantine's chariot. By appointing the Caesars, Eusebius claims, Constantine "fulfils the predictions of the divine prophets, which ages and ages ago proclaimed that 'the saints of the Most High shall take up the kingdom.'"[125] The quotation is from Daniel 7:18 and refers to a vision of the end of time when Christ as the "Ancient of Days" will descend from heaven and grant an eternal kingdom to the people of the saints. Thus, the Golden Age of Constantine and his four Caesars is implicitly compared with the everlasting rule of Christ and the saints. In the *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius describes how candles were lit throughout Constantinople at Easter, adding, "When dawn interposed, in imitation of the beneficence of the Saviour he [Constantine] opened his beneficent hand to all provinces, peoples, and cities, making rich gifts of every kind to them all."[126] Elsewhere in the *Life*, Eusebius states that the dying Helena bequeathed her possessions to her "onlybegotten son," adopting theological terminology usually used to describe the relationship of the Son to the Father.[127]

Perhaps the most revealing parallel between Constantine and Christ is found in the *Life of Constantine*, in the account of the success at the Council of Nicaea. The council took place in the twentieth year of Constantine's rule, therefore following closely after the military victory over Licinius in the previous year. The two achievements were believed to have brought unity and harmony to the Roman world, and when Eusebius describes the banquet held after the council in celebration of the imperial anniversary, he writes (quoting Homer), "It might have been supposed that it was an imaginary representation of the kingdom of Christ, and that what was happening was 'dream not fact.'"[128] Thus, Eusebius compares Constantine's earthly empire with Christ's heavenly kingdom yet to come, thereby implicitly comparing Constantine with Christ at the Second Coming.

Eusebius reports that after these events Constantine wrote to Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, ordering the construction of a basilica on the site of Christ's tomb (Figure 193). The church was to be built on the hill opposite the abandoned site of the Jewish Temple. The Jews had always felt that the Second Temple of Zerubbabel and Herod was inferior to Solomon's original shrine, and when it was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, they came to believe that their sanctuary was not destined to be restored by man. Rather, a new and better temple would descend to earth from heaven at the end of the world. Christians adopted and adapted this Jewish belief in an eschatological temple that would surpass King Solomon's original shrine. Thus, according to New Testament prophecies, a New Jerusalem would descend from heaven at the time of Christ's return to earth.[129] In the *Life of Constantine* Eusebius unashamedly describes Constantine's church of

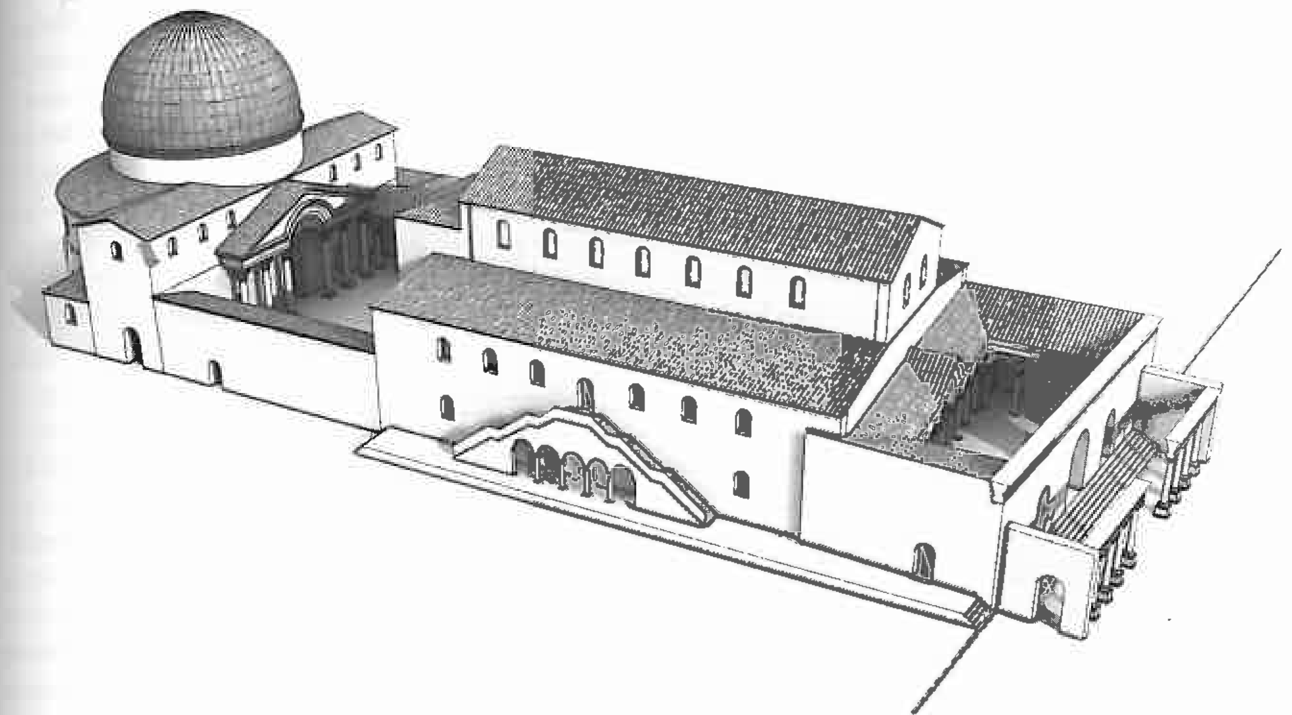


Figure 193. Reconstruction drawing of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, showing the basilica and Anastasis Rotunda. A. Tayfun Öner.

the Holy Sepulchre as if it were the New Jerusalem described in the book of Revelation:

> New Jerusalem was built at the very Testimony to the Saviour, facing the famous Jerusalem of old, which after the bloody murder of the Lord had been overthrown in utter devastation, and paid the penalty of its wicked inhabitants. Opposite this then the Emperor erected the victory of the Saviour over death with rich and abundant munificence, this being perhaps that fresh new Jerusalem proclaimed in prophetic oracles.[130]

Although it has been overlooked in discussions of the symbolism of the Holy Sepulchre,[131] Eusebius' suggestion that the church might be the long-prophesied New Temple carries the striking implication that Constantine, as the founder, might be Christ Himself, who was due to found the New Jerusalem at the time of His Second Coming.

Nor does Eusebius fail to emphasize that Constantine's illness, baptism, and death occurred at Easter – the time of Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. As he explains, the feast of Pentecost is a festival lasting "seven weeks and sealed up with a single day, during which divine words describe the ascension into Heaven of the universal Saviour and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon mankind" and "on the last day of all [i.e., Whit Sunday, 22 May 337], which one might not inaccurately call the Feast of Feasts, about the time of the midday sun the Emperor was taken up to his God."[132] As in the case of Constantine's vision, the reference to the midday sun is no doubt meant to suggest Constantine's proximity to the radiant Supreme Deity, so the precise timing need not necessarily be believed.

After Constantine had passed away, Eusebius reports that "Tribunes and centurions wept aloud for their Saviour (*sōtēr*), Protector, and Benefactor (*euergetēs*), and the rest of the troops suitably attired mourned like flocks for their Good Shepherd."[133] As we have seen, both "saviour" and "shepherd" were descriptions applied to God and the Messiah in the Old Testament, and to Jesus in the New, just as a good king had been described as the "saviour,"

"benefactor," and "shepherd" of his people in philosophies on kingship.[134]

More strikingly, Eusebius goes on to claim that Constantine had not only been rewarded with an eternal life in heaven but seemed to have been resurrected to continue to rule the empire:

> As if brought back to life he manages the whole administration, and Victor Maximus Augustus by his very name commands the government of Rome. He is not like the Egyptian bird [i.e., the phoenix], which they say has a unique nature, and dies among aromatic herbs, making itself its own sacrifice, then revives from the ash and, as it flies up, turns into what it was before. He is more like his Saviour, who after the manner of seeds of corn multiplied with the blessing of God, and instead of one grain produced an ear and filled the whole wide world with his fruit. Just like him the Thriceblessed [Constantine] instead of one became manifold by the succession of his sons, so that he is honoured also by the setting up of portraits among all the provinces along with those of his sons, and the name of Constantine is familiarly heard even after the end of his life.[135]

This "resurrection" of Constantine is apparently achieved in part through his sons and in part through the eternal maintenance of the memory of his name and deeds. Eusebius not only reports the setting up of portraits of the deceased emperor in Constantinople, but also claims that in Rome mourners cried out that Constantine was the only one who truly deserved the empire, and that they "took steps to honour him in death as if he were alive with dedications of his portrait."[136] Elsewhere, however, Eusebius is keen to stress that the physical monuments created by mortals – such as portraits, statues, and inscriptions – are transient, whereas Constantine's immortality is assured by his unwavering belief in God:

> Then finally the God he honoured, after he had struggled for a long period of years in the divine athletic contest, crowned him with the prizes of immortality, and removed him from mortal reign to that endless life which he has reserved for holy souls, having raised up a threefold offspring of sons to succeed to his Empire. Thus also did the throne of Empire descend from his father [Constantius Chlorus] to him, and by natural law it was stored up for his sons and their descendants, and extending to unaging time like paternal inheritance. So may God himself, since he both exalted the Blessed One [i.e., Constantine] when he was still among us with divine honours, and dying adorned him with exquisite perfections from himself, became also his recorder, inscribing his successful conflicts on tablets of heavenly monuments for long eternities.[137]

But despite Eusebius' assurances of heavenly monuments, Constantine was keen to take steps to ensure the preservation of his memory on earth after his demise. Eusebius explains that the emperor had not only built a shrine for the Apostles in their memory but had also intended "that his own remains should after death partake in the invocation of the Apostles, so that even after his decease he might benefit from the worship which would be conducted there in honour of the Apostles. He therefore gave instructions for services to be held there, setting up a central altar." Eusebius concludes that "their memorial would become for him a beneficial aid to his soul."[138]

Constantine's memory was to be preserved not only by his connection with the Apostles but also by certain coins that were minted after his demise and dedicated to his "venerable memory" (VN MR or IVST VENER MEMOR) or to his "eternal devotion" (AETERNA PIETAS).[139] Inscriptions, too, were dedicated to the *divus* Constantine who would be an "eternal Augustus" (SEMPER AVG).[140]

Eusebius says that even after death Constantine continued to be Victor Maximus Augustus, who "by his very name commands the government of Rome."[141] In his view, the Caesars, who had pulled Constantine's solar chariot during his lifetime,[142] did not supplant the emperor even after his death; rather, they were "like new lamps filling the whole world with his radiance."[143] Therefore the relationship

between the deceased emperor and his sons is presented in much the same way as the relationship that Constantine is said to have shared with Sol during his lifetime. At least in Eusebius' view, death had brought Constantine closer to his luminous God, so that he could now assume the inspirational role that God had performed whilst he had been emperor. Constantine was now a heavenly model for the conduct of affairs on earth, guiding his sons who had succeeded him and whose rule he had legitimated.

Constantinian Propaganda

There can be no doubt that Eusebius suggested a parallel between Constantine and Christ, but does this rhetoric reflect something of Constantine's own thinking and propaganda? Is there evidence that Constantine might have shared, been influenced by, or even influenced Eusebius' rhetorical comparison between the emperor and Christ?

We saw in Chapter 1 that Constantine's military victories, by which he was raised to become sole ruler of the empire, together with his apparent success in unifying the Church at the Council of Nicaea, were considered achievements comparable to (and, at least in Eusebius' opinion, surpassing) those of Alexander of Macedon. This is significant because Alexander had been deified in honour of his achievements.

Before Alexander's day, Plato and Aristotle had claimed that government should be entrusted to the "best man" who, because of his achievements, would be like a god.[144] Later, the orator Isocrates had written to Alexander's father, Philip, presenting Hercules, a man rewarded with divinity for his labours, as a model he should imitate. Isocrates promised the king that, if his achievements came even close to the magnitude of Hercules', he would be recognized as a god as Hercules had been.[145] Although there is little evidence for divine cults of Philip, it is certain that his son, who followed Isocrates' advice in taking Hercules as his model, was worshipped as a god during his lifetime.

Alexander was believed to be descended from Zeus – on his mother's side through Achilles and Aeacus, and on his father's side through Hercules and Perseus.[146] These last two heroes had once made the difficult journey to the temple of Ammon at the oasis of Siwah in the Sahara, and Alexander followed suit to verify the identity of his father. The oracle's confirmation that he was the son of the god Ammon, who was identified with Zeus by the Greeks, advanced Alexander towards becoming a divinity.[147] Arrian reports that at a drinking party Alexander's flatterers compared him with Hercules. They complained that only envious men stood in the way of his receiving the divine honours due to him. Among the objectors was Clitus, who asserted that his claims of divinity were an insult to the deeds of the ancient heroes, and that the successes ascribed to Alexander had in fact been achieved by the Macedonians collectively.[148] Callisthenes, too, whilst admitting that Alexander deserved the highest honours that could be bestowed on a human being, observed that Hercules had not been worshipped as a god during his lifetime, and that, even after the hero's death, divine honours had been withheld until the oracle of Delphi had decreed that men should honour him as a god.[149]

Alexander's desire to imitate and surpass the labours of his heroic ancestor, and thus to earn the epithet "unconquered" (*anikētos*) that the Delphic oracle had given him in 336 B.C., are reflected in Arrian's claim that he was driven to capture the rocky mountain of Aornos because he had heard a legend that Hercules had been unable to do so.[150] Ephippus even maintained that at banquets Alexander might appear in the dress of gods such as Ammon, Artemis, Hermes, or Hercules.[151] Later legends, too, continued to connect Alexander closely with Hercules. In the first century A.D., Statius described a statuette of Hercules belonging to a friend, and claimed that Alexander had taken it on his campaigns, and had sought courage from it before battle.[152] Seneca also recalled the connection between the general and his hero, telling how, when the people of Corinth granted Alexander citizenship, they pointed out that they had never, with the sole exception of Hercules, enrolled a stranger before. Alexander believed, according to Seneca, that "heaven, to which in supreme vanity he aspired, was now his because he was put on a level with Hercules!"[153]

Alexander's close association with Hercules (both in reality and in legend) was fitting for a number of

reasons. According to the *Iliad*, Zeus intended Hercules to be lord of all men,[154] and in Hesiod's *Shield of Hercules*, Zeus is said to have wished to beget a child to defend both men and gods against destruction.[155] According to Theocritus, the seer Teiresias explained to Alcmene, Hercules' mother, that her son would be a great hero who would rise to the heavens, surpassing all men and beasts. Teiresias also foretold that, after his twelve labours, Hercules would burn on a pyre and ascend to dwell with Zeus as an immortal god.[156] Therefore, through his labours, which he performed to atone for the murder of his wife and children, Hercules was destined to rule the world and to be rewarded with immortality.

Dio Chrysostom is explicit about Hercules' salvific role in his *First Kingship Oration*, where he says that the hero was the "saviour (*sōtēr*) of the world and of men."[157] In the play *Hercules at Oeta*, spuriously ascribed to Seneca, Hercules announces that, as a result of his labours, "Peace has been given to earth, to sky, to sea," and he asks Jupiter to lay down his thunderbolt in submission.[158] He speaks of the earth- and heaven-shattering events that will accompany his death by burning[159] and asks his father to receive him as an immortal in heaven as a reward for his labours: "If both the bounds of Phoebus sing my praise, the tribes of Scythia and every burning strand which daylight parches; if peace fills all the earth; if no cities groan and no man stains with sin his altar-fires; if crimes have ceased, admit this soul, I pray thee, to the stars. . . . This day will make me seem worthy of the stars."[160] The Chorus expresses a desire that, even after death, Hercules should continue to protect the world from monsters with thunderbolts even mightier than Jupiter's.[161]

Alexander's veneration of the divinized Hercules as the founder of his dynasty, together with the belief that he himself had a divine mission on earth, spurred him on to great military achievements.[162] Macedon extended its power not only over the Persian empire (in Anatolia and Mesopotamia) and further east in the Punjab but also over the old cities of Greece. The Greek city-states were not accustomed to monarchy, or to rule from outside the city. One way in which they came to terms with external ruling powers was by treating Alexander and the successor kings not merely as mortal heroes but rather as gods, since the gods, too, were powers outside the city.[163] Thus, Alexander was awarded divine honours by the Athenian Assembly.[164]

It would not be surprising if Constantine had considered that his own achievements were worthy of divine recognition such as Alexander had received. Rome, we have seen, had been influenced by the tendency of the Hellenistic Greeks in the East to worship living Roman politicians, generals, and governors,[165] and this development helps to explain the Senate's deification of Caesar during his lifetime and the posthumous deification of many later Roman rulers. The increasing tendency of the emperors of the later Roman period, such as Aurelian and Diocletian, to emphasize their divinity during their lifetime further strengthens the likelihood that Constantine would have been prepared to consider himself divine whilst still alive.

In his quest to become the ideal king, Alexander had modelled himself on Hercules. Inspired by the Macedonian's example, certain Roman generals and emperors, such as Pompey, Trajan, and Commodus, had also connected themselves with Hercules.[166] But Constantine, as a Christian, could not follow in this pagan tradition. However, the myth of Hercules – who had been born to the Supreme Deity and a mortal woman, who had laboured on earth to save mankind, suffered on the pyre, and been granted immortality for his deeds – had striking similarities with the story of the life, death, and ascension of Christ.[167] Furthermore, just as Hercules had been described as the Logos of Zeus, so Christ had been described as the Logos of God ruling on earth. Therefore, if Constantine, as a Christian emperor, wished to follow the advice given to earlier emperors, and strive to achieve divine status by imitating the Logos, the natural solution was to substitute Christ the Logos for Hercules the Logos and to aim, through imitation, to become not Hercules but the Son of God.[168]

There are indeed suggestions that on occasion Constantine was deliberately imitating or comparing himself to Christ.[169] For instance, if we trust Eusebius, before submitting to the baptismal rite in 337, Constantine declared that he had once intended to "enjoy the seal that brings immortality . . . at the streams of the river Jordan, where our Saviour is also

reported to have received the bath as an example to us."[170]

To give another example, Eusebius claims that Constantine once suggested that he might be described as the God-appointed *episkopos* – "overseer," or, in Christian terms, "bishop" – of those outside the Church.[171] We have already touched briefly on the fact that Constantine described himself as a bishop specifically "of those outside [the Church]" and the inferences that might be drawn from those words about Constantine's perception of his relationship to the Church.[172] Here, however, we should note the significance of the label "bishop." Claudia Rapp has explained that Moses was generally considered to be the Biblical model par excellence for bishops, philosophers, and kings, and that Eusebius regularly compared Constantine with Moses.[173] Therefore, Eusebius' decision to quote Constantine describing himself as a "bishop" suggests that he understood the emperor's words as reinforcing his own comparison of Constantine with Moses. Additionally, however, the emperor's words (if reliably reported) suggest that the same comparison was recognized by Constantine himself. Furthermore, Constantine's description of himself as a "bishop" would have implied a comparison not only with Moses but also with Christ, since Moses was regarded as a prefiguration of Christ.[174] Indeed, it is not unlikely that when Constantine made his comment he was alluding to the scriptural description of Christ as the shepherd and overseer (*episkopos*) of the souls of those who were going astray, and thereby making a clear comparison between his own role and that of Christ.[175]

Constantine's constant desire to achieve religious unity not just within the Church but rather amongst all mankind could be considered a messianic objective, since Christ was king not only over the Jews but also over the Gentiles.[176] When, in 328, the frustrated Arius wrote to Constantine threatening a schism in the Church, the furious emperor replied casting Arius in the role of a demon whose tactics were transparent to him, the all-seeing "man of God." Constantine observed that, if he chose to do so, he could overwhelm Arius and his supporters by force of arms, but he preferred instead "to heal you and yours" in a Christlike manner. The emperor closed the letter with this appeal: "Come to me, come, I say, to a man of God; believe that by my interrogations I shall search your heart's secrets; and, if any madness shall seem to be in you, I, after I having invoked divine grace, shall heal you fairer than a model. But if you shall appear to be healthy in respect to spiritual matters, I, after I have recognized the light of the truth in you, shall give thanks to God and I shall rejoice with myself for the sake of piety."[177]

Some of the Constantinian monuments to which we have already referred have a bearing on the issue of the emperor imitating Christ. First of all we should recall the radiate statue. Did Constantine expect Christians to see him as a Christlike figure radiating the light of God the Father on his people?[178] Did some of the Christians who gathered at the porphyry column not just venerate the emperor as their ruler but worship him, believing him to be Christ at the Second Coming? If so, did Constantine intend them to do so? Unfortunately, we cannot answer with certainty, but these explanations for the behaviour at the column are certainly plausible.

Secondly, the image placed above the entrance to the imperial palace in Constantinople is highly significant. This, we are told by Eusebius, showed the "Saviour's sign," and below it Constantine and his sons spearing a dragon.[179] Eusebius interpreted the scene in Christian terms as the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah 27:1: "God will bring . . . the great and fearful sword against the crooked dragon-serpent, against the dragon-serpent who flees, and will destroy the dragon that is in the sea." Although quoting Isaiah, Eusebius has substituted the last words, "that is in the sea," from Ezekiel 32:2, where they apply to the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Elsewhere, both Eusebius and Constantine apply the imagery of the serpent to Licinius, and Eusebius compares both Licinius and Maxentius to Pharaoh.[180] Thus, the serpent at the palace entrance may reasonably be understood to have been a visual metaphor for the enemies that Constantine had overcome in battle.

Eusebius' firmly Christian interpretation of the image is, of course, his own, although several modern scholars have followed him.[181] In reality, as in the case of Constantine's radiate statue, it is unlikely that such a public picture indicated unambiguously that

the emperor's protective deity was Christian. The "Saviour's sign" to which Eusebius refers may in fact have been a military standard and may or may not have been topped by the chi-rho monogram, a symbol probably open to different interpretations.[182] The scene, while illustrating Constantine's acts of salvation achieved under the protection of the sign bestowed upon him by the supreme solar deity, is unlikely to have said anything unambiguous about the nature of the emperor's chosen god.

But although perhaps publicly ambiguous, what did the image of the impaled serpent mean to the emperor privately? Given Constantine's faith, the Christian interpretation set forth by Eusebius is of crucial importance. A Christian viewer might well have been meant to connect the imagery with the eschatological events alluded to in the passage of Isaiah that Eusebius quotes when describing the depiction.[183] These events are set out at much greater length in Revelation chapters 19–20, which are a reworking of the myth of Apollo and Python. According to this prediction, at the Second Coming of Christ, the serpent (representing Satan) will be chained in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years, and the beast (the serpent's servant, representing the Roman state) will be defeated and cast into a pool of fire. When the author of this apocalyptic vision was writing at the end of the first century, the Christians had recently experienced the persecution of Nero and knew that their battle with the pagan Roman state and with emperor worship was far from over. It is therefore unsurprising that, when Constantine finally brought an end to Christian persecution upon the victory over Licinius in 324, Eusebius was prepared to interpret the turn of events as the fulfilment of the prediction in Revelation, referring to Licinius as "some wild beast, or a twisting snake coiling up on itself, breathing wrath and menace of war with God" and reporting that "this person began his headlong fall into the pit where God's enemies lie."[184] Thus, while the imagery of the impaled serpent might on the one hand have been seen as a reference to the pagan myth of Apollo and Python, it might on the other hand have been intended as a specifically Christian statement, suggesting that Constantine had fulfilled predictions of how Christ would rule during the last millennium before the coming of God's Kingdom.[185] If this was Constantine's intention, it is also likely that Eusebius' interpretation of Constantine's church of the Holy Sepulchre as the New Jerusalem was an interpretation shared by the emperor himself.

Related to the coins and the palatial depiction is the Serpent Column, which had been looted from Apollo's oracular shrine in Delphi for display in the hippodrome at Constantinople. This sculpture, I have suggested in Chapter 3, may have been meant to link Apollo's victory over Python with Constantine's victories over his serpentine enemies, Licinius and Maxentius. However, given the equation made between Apollo and Christ by the author of Revelation, it is also possible that Constantine simultaneously intended to imply a parallel between his own military successes and Christ's victory over the serpent at the beginning of the last millennium. Significantly, Constantine himself suggested that the Serpent Column had an eschatological connection when he said that the Sibyl who served Apollo at Delphi and who was "in charge of the tripod round which the snake was coiled" had made just one truthful prediction, and that this prophecy had concerned the events of the Last Days.[186] However, although a Christian interpretation might be placed on the Serpent Column, the monument itself – like Constantine's radiate statue and the depiction over the palace gate – lacked cultic specificity.

The suggestion that Constantine imagined his reign to herald the Last Days perhaps finds some support in evidence of eschatological speculation at the time. According to Lactantius, who wrote his *Divine Institutes* after 310, Christ's return at the head of a heavenly army would be presaged by the appearance of a sword falling from the sky. The Antichrist would oppose Christ and be beaten in three wars. In the fourth war he would be utterly vanquished, and peace, security, and true faith would be restored: "When evil is thus wiped out and impiety suppressed, the world will have peace again; for so many years it has been subject to error and crime, and has endured wicked servitude. There will be no more worship of gods made by hand; their images will be turned out of their temples and off their couches and burnt, and they will burn together with their extraordinary offerings."[187] Eusebius, it appears, attempted

to identify these eschatological events in the circumstances of Constantine's campaign against Maxentius.

In the first place, Eusebius' description of Constantine's heavenly vision – which, according to his account, was a vision of a cross of light – may be seen as analogous with the appearance of the sword falling from the sky as described by Lactantius. Indeed, the fact that Lactantius had asserted that the heavenly sign would precede Christ's Second Coming and his battles with the Antichrist may explain why Eusebius changed the timing of Constantine's vision and dream. Eusebius' decision (perhaps partly influenced by the pagan vision of 310) to insert the story of the heavenly apparition and the dream at the beginning of Constantine's campaign against Maxentius highlighted the parallel between that campaign and the eschatological confrontations to which Lactantius refers.[188]

In the second place, Eusebius explicitly observes that the victory at the Milvian Bridge was Constantine's fourth conflict with Maxentius (the usurper's three previous defeats having taken place in Cisalpine Gaul, at Turin, and at Verona).[189] By doing so, Eusebius may well have intended to make clear an allusion to the four eschatological battles mentioned by Lactantius.

In the third place, Eusebius draws a comparison between the drowning of Maxentius' army in the Tiber and the destruction of Pharaoh's army at the time of the Exodus from Egypt.[190] Thus, the victorious emperor is portrayed as Moses leading his people from captivity to the Promised Land.[191] In the Christian tradition, Moses, the Hebrews' mediator with God in the Old Testament, was a prefiguration of Christ, and so when Constantine is compared with Moses, he is at the same time implicitly compared with Christ the Saviour.[192] The Old Testament parallel is highly significant because the defeat of the Egyptian army and the arrival of the Hebrews in the Promised Land was, according to Lactantius, "the foreshadowing of a greater event, which God was going to accomplish at the final consummation of time: for then he will free his people from their oppressive enslavement to the world."[193] Eusebius, therefore, was implying that the victory over Maxentius was the awaited fulfilment of an event presaged in the Old Testament, and that the establishment of Constantine's kingdom should be understood as the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

A fourth indication that Eusebius interpreted the victory of 312 in apocalyptic terms is his application to Maxentius of Psalm 7:15, which states, "he dug a hole and excavated it, and will fall into the pit he made."[194] Clearly, Eusebius was drawing a parallel between the way in which Constantine defeated Maxentius by driving him into the Tiber, and the way in which Christ achieved His eschatological victory over the Antichrist by casting him into a bottomless pit.

Such eschatological interpretations of Constantine's activities are not unique to Eusebius. In the spring or summer of 337, Aphrahat, bishop of the monastery of Mar Mattai near modern Mosul, composed a chapter of his *Demonstrations* called *On Wars*. Constantine was already dead, but the news had not reached Aphrahat, who imagined that the emperor would lead a successful crusade against Persia and establish a Christian on the Persian throne. Aphrahat analysed the Old Testament vision of Daniel, in which four beasts represent four kingdoms that will exist on earth before the Second Coming of Christ. He apparently believed that the fourth kingdom – which "shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces" – was a metaphor for the pagan Roman empire. By his calculations, the empire had begun with Octavian and had ended with Philip the Arab (244–249), who was thought by many in the fourth century to have been the first Christian emperor. Thus, when applied to the vision of Daniel, Aphrahat's chronology suggested that the times in which he was living were those approaching the Second Coming of Christ. His eschatological discussion in the context of a Constantinian crusade against Persia is striking and suggests that Aphrahat believed Constantine, through victories in the East, would have a crucial role in creating the circumstances leading to Christ's return.[195]

Constantine is also prominent as an apocalyptic figure in later literature. A text written in 378–390 and ascribed to the Theodosian (or Tiburtine) Sibyl can be reconstructed from passages incorporated into the later *Oracle of Baalbek* of 502–506. In it, the Theodosian Sibyl presents her interpretation of a dream of nine suns, a dream that had been shared by

one hundred senators on the same night. The nine suns represent nine ages of the Roman empire. In the fourth age, Christ is born; in the fifth, Christ sends out two fishermen to be His Apostles; in the sixth, Jerusalem is destroyed after a siege (i.e., that of A.D. 70); in the seventh, the (Christian) faithful are persecuted by two kings with short reigns; in the eighth, Rome suffers many disasters; and in the ninth, there are kings from Egypt and Syria, and finally a king whose initial is "C," who will rule for thirty years. This last king is doubtless Constantine, and it is highly significant that his reign is placed in the ninth and final age of the Roman empire.

The author of the later *Oracle of Baalbek* shifted the end of the world to around 510, after the death of the monophysitical emperor Anastasius in 508, and made the eschatological ruler a king from the East. Nevertheless, even in this version, Constantine is given a prominent place, and in fact the account of Constantine's destruction of the pagan temples, his vision, Helena's discovery of the True Cross, and the foundation of Constantinople may all have been taken from the text of the earlier Theodosian Sibyl.[196]

Such indications that the reign of Constantine was considered the eschatological era lend support to the suggestion that some contemporaries of Constantine may have believed him to be the expected messiah. The clearest indication that Constantine himself was prepared to make such a claim is found in the arrangements he made for his burial.

Constantine's Death and Burial

Constantine's Death and the Problematic Succession

It seems that Constantine had planned that, upon his death, the empire would pass into the hands of the Caesars Constantine, Constantius, and Constans (his three surviving sons by Fausta), of his nephew, the Caesar Dalmatius (the grandson of his step-mother Theodora), and of Dalmatius' brother, Hannibalianus. Coins minted between the end of 333 and mid-337 show that the two elder Caesars, Constantine and Constantius, were promoted not only equally but also far more than Constans and Dalmatius.[197] This would appear to suggest that Constantine and Constantius were expected to become Augusti upon their father's death, and that the two younger Caesars, Constans and Dalmatius, were destined to remain in that rank and each be assigned to an Augustus. If Constantine did indeed plan for such a Tetrarchic system to be reinstituted upon his death, he may well have considered that the scheme could this time be stable because dynastic succession was a realistic proposition given that his family (unlike Diocletian's) was large.[198] It is uncertain which plans Constantine had for Hannibalianus. Our sources describe him as "king of the tribes of Pontus" or of "Armenia and the surrounding lands," indicating a Roman aspiration to control Armenian territory. But the title "King of Kings" that was granted to him may indicate that Constantine expected a victory over the Persians, following which he intended to install Hannibalianus as a monarch in Ctesiphon.[199]

Constantine died too quickly to put his plan into action. He fell ill while making preparations to invade Persia.[200] His sons were all far away, Constantius probably at Antioch, Constantine in Trier, Constans probably in Milan or Rome, and Dalmatius in Naissus. No doubt when the severity of the illness became clear, news was sent swiftly to Constantius, who, of the two elder sons, was geographically closer to his father. But Constantine, having visited the baths in Constantinople and Helenopolis, died in Nicomedia on 22 May 337 before Constantius reached him. Consequently, power was not transferred from father to son and the empire was left without an Augustus.[201] If they were to avoid accusations of usurpation, the Caesars Constantine and Constantius could now only legitimately be raised to the most senior rank by being proclaimed by the army and accepted by the Senate and people of Rome.

When he finally arrived in Constantinople, probably at the end of May or the beginning of June 337, Constantius acted swiftly to secure his position. Perceiving the sons and grandsons of Constantius Chlorus and Theodora to be a threat to his accession and the security of his future reign, Constantius used the army to commit a series of murders in and around Constantinople and dispatched assassins to execute others further afield.[202] Among those killed were the Caesar Dalmatius, his brother Hannibalianus, and other descendants of Constantius Chlorus and Theodora. Dalmatius' elevation to the rank of Caesar in September 335 had, it seems, never been recognized by his three co-Caesars, whose mints at Trier (capital of the Caesar Constantine), Rome (the major mint of Constans), and Antioch (the capital of Constantius) never struck precious metal coinage in his name.[203] The dreadful deeds were prosecuted in early June, as is revealed by the changing mint marks on *nummi* struck in Trier, Arles, and Rome (Figure 145). The chi-rho symbol and an X sign were used as marks on coins struck in the names of Constantine and all four Caesars. However, coins bearing the mark O, which was introduced only shortly before Constantine's death, not only rarely show Constantine's portrait (as is to be expected) but also seldom depict the Caesar Dalmatius, an observation that has been used to deduce that Dalmatius' assassination took place soon after Constantine died.[204]

It seems that the Caesar Constantine came to regret his actions quickly, for the mint at his capital in Trier soon began to strike large numbers of coins not only in honour of the late Helena, Constantius Chlorus' first wife and Constantine's mother, but also in honour of Theodora.[205] On the reverse of those honouring the Augusta Helena, the legend read PAX PVBLICA ("state peace") and showed a personification of Pax holding an olive branch and a transverse sceptre (Figure 194).[206] On the reverse of those commemorating Theodora Augusta, the legend read PIETAS ROMANA ("Roman dutiful conduct" or "Roman tenderness") and showed a personification of Pietas holding a baby on her left arm and her right breast in her right hand (Figure 195).[207] This type clearly alluded to Theodora's fecundity and suggested that the assassinations of her descendants were no reflection on her standing as a mother. The designs were sent out to the mints of Constantine's co-Caesars, Constans and Constantius, but there was clearly a reluctance to strike them in Rome and Constantinople, where they only appeared later, after the three brothers had been proclaimed Augusti, and then in small numbers.

Eusebius, it is clear, deliberately omitted making reference to Dalmatius and Hannibalianus to avoid the necessity of mentioning the actions of Constantius, which would have tarnished the reputation of the Constantinian House. In his version of events, at some point after the end of his thirtieth year as emperor, Constantine "divided the government of the whole Empire among his three sons, as though disposing a patrimony to those he loved best: he allocated to the eldest his grandfather's portion, to the second the government of the east, and that between them to the third." Later, when Eusebius describes Constantine on his deathbed, he reasserts this fiction, claiming that "on his sons he bestowed as a father's estate the inheritance of Empire."[208]

In reality, no such transfer of power was made by Constantine before his death. While the massacre was being carried out, the Caesar Constantine is likely to have contacted his two brothers to arrange a meeting at which the army could confirm their status as the new Augusti, and territorial divisions could be settled. This meeting, which took place in Sirmium, was not held until the end of August,[209] and it was only on 9 September, as much as three-and-a-half months after Constantine's death, that the Danubian armies proclaimed the three brothers Augusti.[210] The events demonstrate once again that the real power to choose successors lay not with the emperor or the gods, but with the army.

In the period between Constantine's death and the elevation of the Caesars to the rank of Augusti, the deceased emperor had – as Eusebius asserted – continued to rule. This is demonstrated by the heading of the Hispellum rescript, which names Constantine and his three sons but fails to designate the sons as Caesars, thereby revealing that Constantine must have been dead when it was issued.[211] It is also indicated by a law that was passed in Constantine's name in 337, and by a document referring to the impending but nonexistent thirty-second year of Constantine's reign.[212] Comparisons might be drawn with circumstances in which the deaths of earlier emperors had gone unannounced for a short time until the succession had been secured.[213] But this case was different because Constantine continued his notional reign for a considerable period.[214] The situation contrasts markedly with the quick succession of Constantine upon the death of Constantius Chlorus, about which Eusebius commented: "All

Figure 194. Copper alloy *nummus* in honour of Helena Augusta. Reverse shows Pax holding an olive branch and scepter. Minted in Trier, June 337–April 340. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1843,1024.180).

the provinces under his rule were full of happiness and unutterable joy, because not even for the briefest moment had they been deprived of orderly imperial rule."[215]

When news of Constantine's death reached Rome, the Senate apparently requested that the emperor's body be transferred to Rome.[216] Indeed, Constantine himself may at one time have planned his burial there. The mausoleum of Helena on the Via Labicana in Rome formerly housed a porphyry sarcophagus bearing carved decoration of a martial nature (Figure 196). Since the subject matter seems unfitting for an imperial lady, the casket and the mausoleum itself have been thought by some to have been

Figure 195. Copper alloy *nummus* in honour of Theodora Augusta. Reverse shows Pietas nursing a child. Minted in Trier, June 337–April 340. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (B.0827).

Figure 196. Porphyry sarcophagus formerly in the mausoleum of Helena, Via Labicana, Rome. Vatican Museums. © Jonathan Bardill.

made to house Constantine's body.[217] Whether that conjecture is right or wrong, the sarcophagus from Helena's mausoleum was certainly not, in the event, used for Constantine's burial, since the emperor had made plans to be buried in Constantinople, to the frustration of the Romans.

Eusebius describes the ceremonies surrounding Constantine's death in some detail, leaving the reader with the impression that the body was interred and not burned in the traditional manner.[218] In a golden coffin and under military guard, the body was transported from Nicomedia to Constantinople, where it lay in state in a hall in the heart of the palace until Constantius arrived in the city. In a strict order of precedence from the ruling classes to the commoners, people came to pay their respects. In Rome, the *iustitium* was proclaimed, so that baths and markets were closed and public spectacles ceased. Portraits of the emperor were also set up.[219] The funeral would have taken place soon after the Caesar's arrival at the end of May or the beginning of June.[220] Constantius and the military officers led the funeral cortège (*pompa funebris*) from the palace to the shrine of the Apostles. At this point, the traditional pagan aspects of the ceremony ended, Constantius (who was unbaptized) withdrew, and the Christian ministers conducted a service.[221]

Constantine's Burial Arrangements

Nothing survives of the funerary complex that Constantine built in Constantinople, about 400 m inside his new fortification wall, on a high hill beside the northern branch of the main road (Mese) leading towards Hadrianopolis (Figure 171). The approximate location is today marked by the Fatih Camii (the mosque of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror), but its precise position is the subject of scholarly dispute and is only likely to be resolved by excavation.[222] Therefore, all of our information about the buildings as they were in Constantine's day comes from the single surviving description, that of Eusebius of Caesarea. Constantine, Eusebius tells us, had planned that upon his death his sarcophagus should

be placed in a shrine dedicated to the memory of the Apostles:

> He therefore gave instructions for services to be held there, setting up a central altar. So he erected (*egeiras*) twelve repositories (*thēkai*) like sacred monuments (*stēlai hierai*) in honour and memory of the company of the Apostles, and put his own coffin (*autos autou larnaka*) in the middle, on either side of which six [coffins] of the Apostles were vertically disposed (*ana . . . diekeinto*).[223]

Although there is a dispute (to which we shall turn later) about the nature of the building in which the imperial coffin was located, I do not think we should doubt that Eusebius' account of the Constantinian burial scheme is truthful, even if his description is a little obscure.[224] The point of the comparison that Eusebius draws between the Apostolic *thēkai* (repositories) and *stēlai hierai* (sacred monuments) has caused scholars difficulty.[225] It has been suggested that the text has become corrupted, the words *thēkai* and *stēlai* having been accidentally transposed during the transmission of the text. In that case, Eusebius would originally have written, "So he erected twelve columns (*stēlai*) like sacred repositories (*thēkai hierai*) in honour and memory of the company of the Apostles." The theory goes that Constantine's tomb was in fact surrounded by twelve columns, and Eusebius compared these columns to the Apostles because of their number, and to "repositories" only because they surrounded the casket that contained Constantine's own remains.[226] It is certainly possible that Eusebius would have compared twelve columns to the twelve Apostles, particularly because, in the New Testament, James and John are compared to *stēlai*, and because Eusebius himself compares the twelve columns in the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre to the Apostles.[227] However, it would have made little sense for Eusebius to have compared solid columns to "repositories."[228] Indeed, the proposed change to the text of the *Life of Constantine* seems unnecessary given that the Greek makes good sense in its transmitted form.

Taking the text as it stands, I would suggest that Eusebius compares the Apostolic *thēkai* (caskets) to *stēlai*, because he considered the *thēkai* to be like gravestones or monumental markers (*stēlai*) of some kind – a comparison entirely appropriate in a funerary context. By making that comparison, Eusebius presumably meant that the *thēkai* were upright. This conclusion is confirmed, I believe, by the words *egeiras* and *ana . . . diekeinto*, both of which emphasize the erection and the vertical disposition of the Apostolic *thēkai*.[229] Thus, we should imagine Constantine's own coffin lying horizontally with six upright *thēkai* on either side of it. The upright disposition of the Apostolic monuments, it might be argued, would also have been appropriate if they had been columns. Yet twelve solid columns could only be described metaphorically as "Apostles" and with difficulty as "repositories" (*thēkai*), whereas there is good reason to think Eusebius was being literal in both respects.

In its strict sense, the word *thēkai* ought to refer to "caskets" of some sort. That Constantine's tomb was indeed surrounded by repositories, rather than by solid columns, is suggested by the emphasis placed on Constantine's own coffin (*autos autou larnaka*) before the Greek goes on to suggest that six similar objects belonging to the Apostles were placed to either side of it.[230] The inference is that Constantine's own coffin was surrounded by comparable coffins. That *larnakes* and *thēkai* were essentially interchangeable terms for funerary caskets is also indicated by the sixth-century author Procopius, who, in his description of the tombs of the emperors, refers to them as *thēkai*.[231]

When explaining these curious burial arrangements, Eusebius writes that the emperor intended "that his own remains should after death partake in the invocation of the Apostles," that "he dedicated the shrine to the Apostles, in the belief that their memorial would become for him a beneficial aid to his soul," and that he "shares the honour of the invocation of the Apostles and is numbered among the people of God."[232] These three statements make it clear that the building in which Constantine was buried was intimately connected with the Apostles. Therefore, Eusebius' repeated claims cannot be dismissed as fanciful interpretations of the building suggested to him because the structure incorporated twelve columns.[233] Furthermore, to claim that the dedication mentioned by Eusebius must be a fabrication because Eusebius does not describe in detail the building's dedication ceremony is unacceptable.[234] Not only is it possible that the ceremony was described in the now lost section of text that preceded the description of the building, but also it is noteworthy that Eusebius does not describe the dedication ceremony of Constantine's cathedral of Hagia Eirene or, indeed, of Constantinople itself. There is therefore no reason to find it strange that he also fails to describe the dedication of Constantine's burial place. The reality must be that the building was formally dedicated to the Apostles. This conclusion perhaps finds confirmation in the scornful claim of the pagan poet Palladas that an unchaste woman "can seek out twelve newer gods" to obtain forgiveness. While Palladas clearly meant that she could turn to Christianity, his comment would have been more pointed if he was also suggesting she could do so by visiting the shrine built for the twelve Apostles by Constantine.[235] If so, Palladas confirms the deduction that Constantine's burial place was formally dedicated to Christ's disciples. Exactly how the dedication was reflected in the decoration of the structure is unknown, but one may reasonably suggest that the Apostolic *thēkai* were either inscribed with the names of the Apostles or decorated with their images.

There is further reason to think that the Apostolic *thēkai* did indeed exist and were meant (eventually) to contain the remains of Christ's disciples, since it seems likely that on 22 June 336, relics of the Apostle Andrew and the Evangelist Luke arrived in Constantinople.[236] If so, those of at least Andrew might have been deposited in the funerary structure that Eusebius describes, and we may imagine that Constantine intended gradually to fill the other *thēkai* as and when his officials could obtain the corporeal vestiges of other Apostles. We do not hear of the arrival of further relics until 1 July 356, nineteen years after Constantine's death, when the remains of Timothy, disciple of Paul, were brought to Constantinople. However, when one is trying to understand the burial scheme, Constantine's *intention* to obtain the relics of the Apostles is far more important than his failure to achieve his aim.

Other than that of Eusebius, one of our most important accounts of the complex in which Constantine was buried was written by Nicholas Mesarites between 1198 and 1203. Mesarites states that Constantine's sarcophagus was located in a circular building roofed with a dome (*sphairoeidēs kai kuklikos*) located to the east of a cruciform church dedicated to the Holy Apostles.[237] Paul Speck attempted to argue that Mesarites' domed structure was to be identified as the apsed and domed eastern bay of the cruciform church, and that a separate mausoleum never existed.[238] This suggestion cannot be accepted, not only because Mesarites' description gives a clear impression that there existed a circular, domed funerary structure quite distinct from the church but also because he elsewhere describes the eastern bay as square.[239] The distinction between the mausoleum and the church is corroborated by the tenth-century *Book of Ceremonies*, which explains that when the emperor departed from the church, he passed to the left (i.e., north) and east of the sanctuary to reach the tombs.[240] A late eleventh-century westerner's account of a visit to the Church of the Apostles gives the most explicit indication that there were two structures: "At the head of that church is a small round marble church which is said to have been the chapel of the emperor Constantine, in which the same Constantine rests with his blessed mother in a large and valuable porphyry tomb. You will see in the same church of the Apostles many noble tombs of emperors and patriarchs."[241] Fourteenth-century Russian travellers to Constantinople also imply that the tombs were in a building separate from the church.[242] A much earlier reference of around 400 suggests that the tombs were near the doors of the church. Either the rear doors at the east end of the church are meant or, at this early date, the main doors were at the east end, close to where the mausoleum stood.[243] Philostorgius, too, writing in the mid-fifth century, drew a clear distinction between the church and the mausoleum, which was built near it.[244] It seems clear from these accounts that, from at least the mid-fifth century, and up to the fourteenth, Constantine's sarcophagus was not located in the cruciform church but in an adjoining mausoleum.

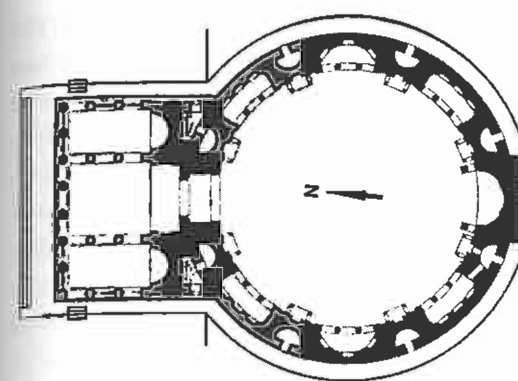
The architectural form of this "circular and domed" mausoleum may be conjectured on the basis of surviving parallels (Figure 197). It may, like the rotunda of Galerius in Thessaloniki or that of Helena

in Rome, have been a basic domed drum with niches set into the thickness of the wall. Alternatively, the niched outer shell may have enclosed a concentric internal colonnade supporting a drum with clerestory and dome, as was the case in the Anastasis Rotunda sheltering Christ's tomb in Jerusalem (Figures 172, 173, and 193) and other mausolea, such as that of Constantina in Rome (Figure 166). Such internal colonnades in mausolea seem to have been a Constantinian innovation, and they created a type of structure that architectural historians refer to as "double-shell."[245] If Constantine's mausoleum had been of the double-shell type, it is possible that its design was intended as a reference to the Rotunda above Christ's tomb in Jerusalem.[246] That possibility, however, would require us to believe that the Anastasis Rotunda was built by Constantine at the same time as the Golgotha basilica and was not an addition made after his death, which is not certain.[247] Mesarites ascribes the mausoleum in Constantinople (rightly or wrongly) to Constantius, and describes it as "divided up on all sides by numerous stoaed angles (*stōikais gōniais*), for it was built for the reception of his father's body and of his own and of the bodies of those who should rule after them."[248] Apparently, by "angles" Mesarites is referring to a series of rectangular (and possibly semicircular) niches set into the wall of the rotunda to receive sarcophagi. The description of these angles as "stoaed" should perhaps be understood to mean either that in front of each recess there was a screen – possibly a pair – of columns (if so, the arrangement was not dissimilar to Hadrian's Pantheon in Rome, but on a smaller scale) or that there were columns standing in the interior angles between the niches (as in the mausoleum of Diocletian at Split).

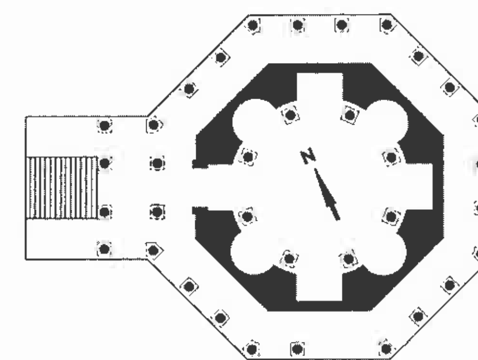
From a careful study of Mesarites and the tenth- and thirteenth-century lists of the tombs in the mausoleum, Philip Grierson has established that Constantine's body lay (at least in later centuries) in the eastern niche, Constantius' to the south, and Theodosius I's to the north. Marcian was probably laid to rest in the northeastern niche, but the precise locations of the tombs of Leo I, Zeno, and Anastasius cannot be determined. At that point, it seems that the mausoleum was considered to be full, since Justin I was buried elsewhere. His successor, Justinian (527–565), constructed a separate mausoleum, in which emperors down to Theophilus (829–842) were interred. Thus, it would appear that there had been in total seven niches in the original mausoleum. It may also be inferred that, since Mesarites locates Constantine's sarcophagus on the east side of the rotunda, its entrance was from the west, where the rotunda abutted the church.

Our literary sources do not agree regarding which of the two buildings – the rotunda or the associated, cruciform church of the Holy Apostles – should be ascribed to Constantine and which to Constantius.[249] Consequently, scholars have long disputed whether Constantine was buried in a church, possibly (like its Justinianic replacement) cruciform in plan, to which the rotunda was later attached, or whether he was laid to rest in a typical Late Antique mausoleum, to which the church was later added. The former position has been taken by many scholars, particularly Rudolf Leeb, who places Constantine's sarcophagus symbolically at the crossing of the church, thereby emphasizing the emperor's association with Christ.[250] The latter position has been argued most strongly by Cyril Mango.[251]

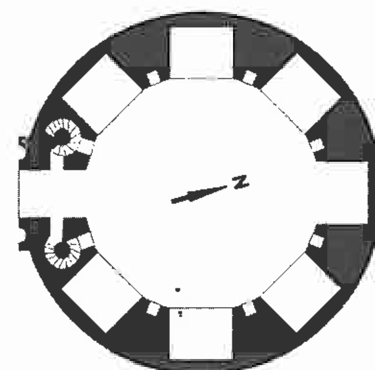
It is not easy to determine whether the rotunda was built by Constantine or by Constantius, since our earliest account of the structure in which Constantine was buried – that of Eusebius, quoted in part previously – is far from clear concerning the architectural form of the building, and is preceded in the manuscript by a half-page lacuna.[252] The chapter heading indicates that much of the missing text concerned Constantine's proposed Persian expedition, but it is also clear from the opening words of the chapter that something of the description of the structure has been lost, too.[253] Eusebius describes a tall (rather than long) building with a coffered and gilded roof and central altar, set within a large precinct surrounded by porticoes.[254] As Mango has observed, these details seem to correspond to a typical Late Antique domed mausoleum better than to a church.[255] Besides being characteristic of the period, such a mausoleum would have been highly appropriate since it would have recalled the classical *herōon*, which commemorated a hero who had done great service to a city, possibly even by founding it.[256] As the founder of Constantinople and saviour of his



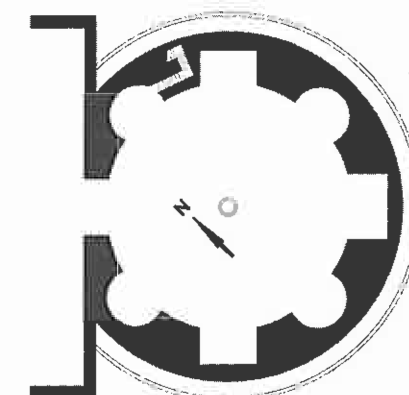
Pantheon, Rome, after 110



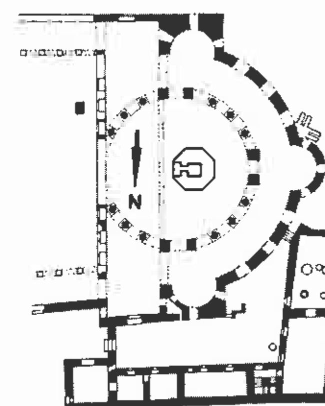
Mausoleum of Diocletian, Split, ca. 300-310



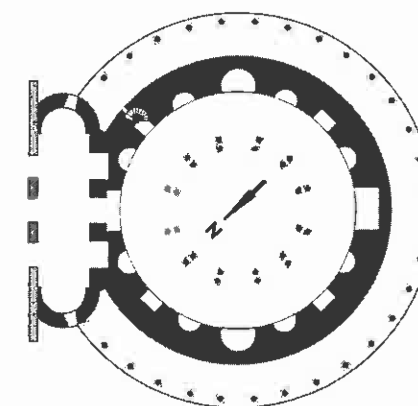
Rotunda of Galerius, Thessaloniki, ca. 300-310



Mausoleum of Helena, Rome, ca. 320-326



Anastasis Rotunda, Jerusalem, ca. 325-350



Mausoleum of Constantina, Rome, ca. 337-351

Figure 197. Comparative plans of the Pantheon and a number of late antique rotundas. A. Tayfun Öner.

people, Constantine was perhaps imitating the great hero Alexander of Macedon, who had also been buried within the city he had named after himself – Alexandria in Egypt. Yet it might equally be argued, as Leeb has done,[257] that the coffered and gilded roof described by Eusebius was a flat ceiling over the nave of a church, and if the church was cruciform it might easily have accommodated the central altar Eusebius describes. In this case, the rotunda might have been a later addition.

The possibility that the imperial burial took place in a cruciform church should be considered because such a church is known to have existed by 380, when Gregory of Nazianzus wrote that the shrine of the Apostles was cut into four by crosslike flanks.[258] However, Mango argues that, if Constantine had been buried in a cruciform building, Eusebius would not have failed to mention the symbolism.[259] This argument from silence is difficult to prove right or wrong. On the one hand, it could be argued that Eusebius shows no hesitation when he describes the daring juxtaposition of the emperor's coffin with those of the Apostles and would therefore have had no qualms about describing the plan of the church had it been cruciform. On the other, Mango himself claimed that the description of the internal arrangements in the mausoleum was written in obscure terms because "Eusebius needed to explain away an act that was far from redolent of Christian piety."[260] Was Eusebius attempting a partial cover-up when he claimed that Constantine's memorial to the Apostles was intended as a beneficial aid to the emperor's soul? Gilbert Dagron thought so, proposing that such rhetoric was an attempt to hide a scandal – the confusion of the cult of the emperor with the cult of the Apostles. If so, Eusebius might also have hesitated to mention the fact that Constantine was buried in a cruciform church.[261] But, even if there was a confusion of cults, one wonders whether such an argument for Eusebian embarrassment can really be sustained, since, had Eusebius felt it necessary, he could surely have omitted discussion of the arrangements inside the mausoleum completely.[262] Nevertheless, if Eusebius was not ashamed by Constantine's burial scheme, the fact that he fails to mention the building's cruciform shape cannot be taken as conclusive proof that it was a rotunda.

Eusebius states that Constantine, after he had built his mausoleum, "gave instructions for services to be held there, setting up a central altar." Mango has claimed that, if Eusebius had been describing a building whose primary function was that of a church, these words would have been unnecessary.[263] He therefore concludes that Constantine's building was a mausoleum. Yet, if we read Eusebius' account from the beginning, quite the opposite impression is given:

> All these things the Emperor dedicated to perpetuate for all mankind the memory of our Saviour's Apostles. But he had another object also in mind when he built, which though secret at first was towards the end surmised by everybody. He had prepared the place there for the time when it would be needed on his decease, intending with supreme eagerness of faith that his own remains should after death partake in the invocation of the Apostles, so that even after his decease he might benefit from the worship which would be conducted there in honour of the Apostles.[264]

Here it is claimed that the primary functions of the building were to commemorate and to promote worship of Christ's Apostles,[265] and that Constantine was seeking immortality by linking himself to the Apostles, who were the subject of regular liturgical ceremonies.[266] It is suggested that the funerary function of the building was secondary, only becoming evident as Constantine's death approached. Had Constantine started to build a typical Late Antique mausoleum, its funereal purpose would not have been in doubt to those who saw it. It is therefore arguable that this memorial-building in which the twelve deceased followers of Christ were to be worshipped was in fact designed as something other than a mausoleum, possibly as a church, and maybe even on a cruciform plan. Such an argument, however, requires that we trust Eusebius' account of Constantine's secret intention.

Setting aside these difficulties, let us consider what can be deduced from the information Eusebius gives concerning internal arrangements involving the

thēkai of the twelve Apostles. Since the total number of sarcophagi housed in the rotunda was seven, it seems likely that the building was designed with seven niches (apparently the "stoaed angles" referred to by Mesarites), and we know from Mesarites' account that in his day Constantine's sarcophagus was located on the east side of the building. Mango, arguing that the mausoleum was built by Constantine, has proposed that this was the position that Constantine's casket had occupied from the beginning, the other six niches – three to the north and three to the south – having originally each housed two of the twelve *thēkai* of the Apostles.[267] Although possible, that need not necessarily have been the case: the niches may originally have been left empty to receive the sarcophagi of Constantine's successors, and the *thēkai* may have stood in the body of the mausoleum, with Constantine's sarcophagus at the very centre, beside the altar. In that case, Constantine's sarcophagus must at some point have been moved from its original central position to a location on the east side of the building. Another possibility for the arrangement of the *thēkai* has been proposed by Arne Effenberger, who imagines that there were in fact fifteen niches, alternately rectangular and semicircular in plan, as in the mausoleum of Constantina in Rome (Figure 197). In his opinion, therefore, there were enough niches for each *thēkē* to stand alone.[268] Furthermore, of course, we must also bear in mind the possibility that both the imperial sarcophagus and the *thēkai* were originally located in a cruciform church.[269]

The Meaning of Constantine's Burial Arrangements

Whatever the form of the original building, Constantine's body is said to have occupied a central position in the internal arrangement, with the caskets of six Apostles to either side of it. That may mean that his sarcophagus was at the centre of a circle formed by the twelve *thēkai*, or it may mean that his tomb and the six *thēkai* to the left and right of it together formed a circle (his own tomb probably being on the axis of the structure, opposite the main doors).

Scholars have proposed two possible interpretations of this scheme.[270] Many imagine that contemporaries were meant to see Constantine as *isapostolos*, the equal of the Apostles.[271] Charles Odahl and Timothy Barnes, for example, observe that Constantine's vision recalls that of St. Paul on the road to Damascus, and consider that the emperor's burial arrangements reflect his belief that he was an heir of the Apostles, just as Paul had claimed to be an equal of the Apostles and revealer of the Christian faith to the Gentiles.[272] Yet our sources do not speak of Constantine as an equal of the Apostles until the fifth century.[273] The alternative explanation for the burial arrangements is that, by placing his body among the caskets of the Apostles, Constantine was claiming to be Christ.[274] Support for this interpretation comes from the fact that Eusebius is elsewhere prepared to make such a comparison: in particular, as we have noted, he claims that after his death Constantine seemed to be resurrected to continue to rule the empire.[275] If that is not merely a rhetorical device, visitors to Constantine's burial place may have been meant to see the deceased emperor as an equal of Christ. The very fact that there is uncertainty on this issue may suggest that we are once again dealing with a degree of ambiguity.[276] But, as we shall see, evidence suggests that there was not sufficient ambiguity for Constantine's successors to be comfortable with the burial scheme he had devised.

The burial arrangement, in which the emperor's body was surrounded by the caskets of the twelve Apostles, has analogies in art. For instance, a diadem from the time of Aurelian (270–275) shows Sol Invictus (Aurelian's protective deity) in the centre of the line of the twelve Olympian gods. Another comparable scene occurs on a frieze on the Arch of Galerius, where the four Tetrarchs are positioned centrally amongst various gods and personifications, the two Augusti being seated on the globe of the cosmos (Figure 198).[277] Christian art provides more relevant artistic parallels. A carnelian gem in the British Museum, apparently to be dated no later than the fourth century, shows Christ on the cross flanked on either side by a row of six small figures of the Apostles (Figure 199), and a similar scene is shown on a plaster cast of a lost gem once in the collection of the Reverend George Frederick Nott.[278] Clearly related to the designs on the gems are the friezes on a number of sarcophagi that show two opposed ranks of

Figure 198. Frieze showing the Tetrarchs enthroned in the centre of a gathering of gods and personifications. Arch of Galerius, Thessaloniki, Pier B, north side. Ca. A.D. 299–303. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens; Hermann Wagner, neg. D-DAI-ATH-THessaloniki 387.

Figure 199. Christ on the cross flanked by six Apostles on either side. Carnelian intaglio, British Museum. Third–fourth century. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1895,1113.1).

Figure 200. Cross topped by wreath being approached from either side by six Apostles. Sarcophagus. Musée départmental Arles antiques. Ca. A.D. 380. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome; Böhringer, neg. D-DAI-ROM-60.1699.

Apostles approaching the cross of Christ's crucifixion in the form of Constantine's standard (Figures 129, 200). Roughly contemporary are images of Christ seated among His Apostles: one thinks in particular of the paintings in the Catacombs on the Via Anapo or in the Catacombs of Domitilla in Rome, dated to around 325 and 350–375, respectively (Figures 183 and 184).[279] These depictions, in which Christ is the central figure, are clearly comparable to Constantine's funerary arrangement and suggest that the disposition of the sarcophagi in the imperial mausoleum was intended to give Constantine a position of superiority over the Apostles, rather than equality with them, and we should therefore infer an association between the emperor and Christ.

We have seen that if Constantine paid close attention to the philosophy concerning ideal kingship, he would have strived for divine status by imitating the Logos – who, from Constantine's Christian perspective, would not have been Hercules but Christ. It is not unlikely that the emperor hoped that upon death he would achieve his goal, as many of his imperial predecessors had done when the Senate or a successor had proclaimed their divinity. Therefore, for Constantine to have equated himself with Christ in the design of his own burial scheme would have been the logical manifestation of his expectation to obtain posthumous divinity. In this way, traditional emperor worship was translated into the language of Christianity.

The burial places of emperors had long been more than mere repositories for corporeal remains: both public and private cults in honour of the emperor were conducted there. In 363, for example, the pagan emperor Julian is known to have sacrificed to the deified emperor Gordion III at his tomb in Ziatha.[280] A desire on Constantine's part that he should receive posthumous worship in the place of his burial is probably to be detected in Eusebius' claim that the emperor intended "that his own remains should after death partake in the invocation of the Apostles, so that even after his decease he might benefit from the worship which would be conducted there in honour of the Apostles." These words probably reflect a lingering desire on Constantine's part that he, like his deceased imperial predecessors, and like Alexander, should become divine.[281]

Eusebius gives no indication that the place in which Constantine was laid to rest, and which was dedicated to the memory of the Apostles, was intended to serve as the mausoleum of other members of the imperial family. Rather, he gives us the impression that it was a monument whose purpose and meaning centred on this one emperor's relationship to the Apostles.[282] That seems to suggest that Constantine believed his association with the Apostles to be unique: if Constantine had seen himself as just another Apostle, other emperors might have made a similar claim, becoming fourteenth and fifteenth members of the company, but there could be

only one Christ, and in fact Constantine was claiming that unique position.[283] If this inference is correct, and if the circular mausoleum was built under Constantine and not later, it would seem that the niches were originally intended for the Apostolic *thēkai* rather than for the sarcophagi of Constantine's relatives.

It should be added that the Apostles were believed to symbolize the twelve hours, the twelve months, and the twelve signs of the zodiac,[284] so that Constantine, being at the centre of the *thēkai*, was by implication to be associated with the sun. Cosmic allegory had long been important in funerary contexts, the most striking example being the monumental Augustan solar meridian constructed in the Campus Martius close to Augustus' mausoleum.[285] Such a reference to the sun's daily rise and fall could be used to imply eternal renewal and hence the immortality of the deceased emperor and his family. If, in his mausoleum, Constantine was, as in so many other ways, suggesting an association with the sun, then, since Christ was believed to reflect the light of God on earth, the emperor was again implying a connection between himself and Christ.

While alive, so his propaganda had suggested, Constantine had imitated the Supreme Deity and reflected God's light on earth. It followed that, after his death, when he had ascended to heaven and joined with the Deity, Constantine's divine light would be reflected on earth by his sons, who would imitate their deceased father. That, at least, was Eusebius' view. He writes that, after death, Constantine, "with that part of him which is the soul's intelligence and love of God, was united to his God."[286] He also describes the deceased emperor as "the thrice-blessed soul in the presence of God, stripped of all mortal and earthly attire, and brilliant in a flashing robe of light."[287] As for Constantine's three sons, they are said to be "like new lamps filling the whole [earth] with his radiance." Constantine, despite having left his mortal body, remains "powerfully alive and directing the whole government of affairs more firmly than before, as he is multiplied in the succession of his sons."[288]

The powerful idea that the deceased Constantine continued to rule as a divinity in heaven was clearly not restricted to Eusebius' writings. In St. Peter's basilica in Rome there was once an inscription commemorating the construction of the church by one of Constantine's sons, presumably Constans, after his father's death. It read: "This [church] that you see is a seat of justice, a house of faith, and a hall of modesty, which is entirely possessed of piety, which famously rejoices in the virtues of the Father and the Son, and it makes its own builder (*auctor*) equal in the praises of his father (*genitor*)." The essential meaning is that the beauty of the completed building raises the "builder," Constantine's son, to the status of his deceased father. In addition, however, there is a clear analogy being drawn between on the one hand Constantine and his son, and on the other God and His son Jesus Christ.[289] Here the deceased Constantine has achieved divinity, and his son and successor is now his viceroy, who no doubt models his earthly rule on his father's heavenly example.

The Coins of the Divus *Constantine*

It could be useful for a new emperor to remind his subjects of the divinity of his deceased imperial predecessors to legitimize his own position.[290] Thus, to celebrate the 1,000th anniversary of Rome's foundation, Trajan Decius (249–251) issued a host of coins commemorating the consecration of selected emperors of the past.[291] Similarly, between 309 and 312, Maxentius issued consecration coins for a series of deceased emperors: the western Augustus Constantius (died 306); his son, Romulus (died 309); his father, Maximian (died 310); and the eastern Augustus Galerius (died 311). The reverses of these coins carried the legend AETERNAE MEMORIAE ("To the eternal memory") and the motif of an eagle-topped, domed mausoleum with its door ajar, to suggest the continuing presence of the deceased on earth.[292] Constantine behaved likewise. From 307 to 318, he instructed all the mints to issue coins commemorating the consecration of his father, Constantius (Figure 201). The obverses carried legends such as DIVVS CONSTANTIVS ("The divine Constantius") or DIVO CONSTANTIO PIO ("To the divine, faithful Constantius"), and the reverses bore MEM(oriae) DIVI CO(n)STANTI(i) ("To the memory of the divine Constantius"), MEMORIA FELIX ("Happy memory"), or less frequently

Figure 201. Copper alloy *nummus* minted in London ca. 307–310. Obverse shows a bust of the *divus* Constantius. Reverse shows lighted altar flanked by eagles. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1959,1010.24).

CONSECRATIO. *Solidi* minted in Trier showed on their reverse Constantius' three-tier funeral pyre, surmounted by a chariot driven by the deceased emperor wearing Sol's radiate crown and raising his right hand. This design can be traced back as far as coins of Antoninus Pius,[293] but in this case it was clearly copied from coins commemorating Claudius Gothicus' *consecratio*. Indeed, from 317, Constantine issued coins in memory of Gothicus, from whom he claimed descent.[294]

Orators, too, might dwell on the divinity of an emperor's predecessors to bolster his legitimacy. The panegyrist of 310 not only pointed to Constantine's descent from the deified Gothicus ("the divinity who is the origin of your family"),[295] but also claimed that the deceased Constantius had been asked by Jupiter who should succeed him. Constantius – who was now a god, since he had been "received by the divine conclave" (*receptusque est consessu caelitum*) – chose Constantine, and the decision was agreed by an assembly of all the gods.[296] Although the orator believed Constantius was an emperor in his lifetime and a god after death, he did not hesitate to describe Constantine as a god whilst on earth. By contrast, Eusebius, as we have seen, based Constantine's legitimacy on the words of his dying father and the assent of the army: for a Christian author like Eusebius, it was not possible to recognize the divinity of Constantine's ancestors, Constantius and Claudius Gothicus.[297]

Some three-and-a-half months after his death, Constantine's two elder sons issued coins in memory of their father. They were widely circulated by mints in both East and West.[298] In this way, the new Augusti no doubt sought to legitimize their rule, as Trajan Decius, Maxentius, and Constantine had done before them. This would have been particularly necessary given the murderous way in which the new arrangements for government had been forged in the dark days since Constantine's decease.[299]

On the coins minted after Constantine's death, we see neither the legend CONSECRATIO nor the funeral pyre, both of which had commonly appeared on such coins from the second century onwards.[300] On their obverses, all of the emissions marking Constantine's ascension to the heavens showed a bust of the emperor facing to the right with his head veiled, probably to indicate his piety and his proximity to the divine.[301] The accompanying legends regularly referred to Constantine as *divus*.[302] As for the

Figure 202. Gold *solidus* minted in Constantinople in 337. Obverse shows a veiled bust of Constantine. Reverse shows the emperor ascending in a chariot reaching out to a divine hand emerging from the clouds. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved (1986,0610.1).

reverses, they might refer to the emperor's "venerable memory" (VN MR or IVST VENER MEMOR) and show either the standing figure of Constantine veiled and raising his right hand or a personification of Aequitas holding scales and a scroll. Other reverses bore the legend "eternal devotion" (AETERNA PIETAS) and showed the standing emperor in military dress holding a globe and spear. However, the most striking reverse design was employed in mints in both the East and the West. This shows an event that some sources claim was portended by a comet: the emperor's ascent to heaven.[303] Constantine appears riding upwards in a four-horse chariot, "being taken up" – as Eusebius put it when he described the coins in his *Life of Constantine* – "by a right hand stretched out to him from above" (Figure 202).[304]

Although it has been suggested that Christians might have connected Constantine's chariot with that of Elijah's ascent, this seems unlikely.[305] In the Christian iconographic tradition Elijah was always shown allowing his cloak to fall to earth for Elisha, a feature that does not appear on the coins; and at any rate it is difficult to imagine what would have been the point of making such an allusion.[306] Furthermore, the Christian iconography of Elijah's ascent was itself indebted to the long-standing pagan imperial imagery of apotheosis, although it was combined with specific details from the Biblical narrative of the event. It is in this wider pagan context that the coins minted for Constantine should be interpreted.[307]

Figure 203. Reverse of a 30-*solidi* gold medallion in honour of the Caesar Constantius. Constantine is crowned by a hand emerging from a cloud. A.D. 333. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (RÖ 32480).

Figure 204. Hercules, riding a chariot, is received into heaven by Athena. Funerary monument of the Secundinii from the village of Igel near Trier in Germany. Ca. A.D. 200–250. Photograph with drawn outline overlaid. Reproduction from H. Dragendorff and E. Krüger, *Das Grabmal von Igel* (Trier 1924) 70 fig. 42.

The four-horse chariot that appeared on the coins honouring Constantine was not only traditional in the iconography of the emperor's ascension but also an important attribute of the sun-god. An oration delivered in 307 refers to the "Divine Constantius . . . whom the sun himself took up on a chariot almost visible, to carry you to heaven."[308] In the case of the coins minted for Constantine, the emperor is not accompanied by the sun-god, but the ascending four-horse chariot reminds the viewer of Constantine's close association with the supreme solar deity. The solar connection is further strengthened by the emperor's outstretched right hand, since the gesture had long been associated with the sun-god.[309]

The image of a hand emerging from the clouds had earlier been used on a thirty-*solidi* gold medallion minted for Constantius in the last decade of Constantine's reign. The hand appears on the reverse of the medallion and reaches down to place a crown on the head of Constantine. The emperor is flanked by the Caesars Constantine and Constantius, who are crowned by Victory and *Virtus* respectively (Figure 203).[310] In both this case and that of the coins minted after Constantine's death, the hand might have been interpreted as belonging to any deity, including the Christian God.[311] This is clear from a panegyric generally dated to 310, which describes Constantius' ascension to heaven in 306: "He was received by the divine conclave, and Jupiter himself extended his right hand to him."[312] On the funerary monument of the Secundinii from the village of Igel near Trier in Germany, a monument that dates to the first half of the third century A.D., the deceased is represented

as Hercules ascending to the heavens in a four-horse chariot whilst the helmeted goddess Athena emerges from the clouds and reaches down to assist his ascent (Figure 204).[313] Thus, the extended hand on the coins showing Constantine's ascension cannot be said to carry a specifically Christian reference.

Commenting on these coins, Martin Wallraff writes that within a period of just a few days, "Constantine had himself baptized, and he had the coin struck where he is represented as Sun god. What does this mean? Was he a schizoid person?"[314] But two unwarranted assumptions have been made here. Since these coins were in fact minted posthumously, it is impossible to know the extent to which Constantine was involved in their design. And to say that Constantine "is represented as the Sun god" reads more into the imagery than can safely be deduced from it: Constantine has acquired some of the trappings of the sun-god (the four-horse chariot and the raised right hand), but that does not mean that he is to be equated with that god, only that he shares the positive characteristics of that god. From the perspective of a Christian viewer, the application of solar imagery to the Christian God and to Christ was firmly established, and Constantine himself seems to have recognized this from an early date. Therefore, the solar chariot and the gesture of the raised right hand might have been taken by Christian viewers as an indication of the emperor's intimacy with their God.[315] The ascending chariot was, however, traditional in the iconography of consecration, and so the coins would have been devoid of any Christian connotation for a pagan observer.[316] Furthermore, the precise meaning of Constantine's ascension was also ambiguous: what exactly was the extent of Constantine's affinity with the divinity whose hand welcomed him into heaven – was he merely blessed by God, or was his relationship to God much closer, verging on equality?

On the obverse of the posthumous coins, Constantine was described, as was traditional, as *divus*. But even the import of this is uncertain, since the meaning of the title had gradually shifted. When in 44 B.C. the Senate conferred the status on Julius Caesar in the last months of his life,[317] it designated an eternal god, but by the early third century Dio regularly translated the word into Greek using *hērōs*, indicating that by this time the term meant nothing more than a dead man who was accorded worship, a second-class deity.[318] The honours for *divi* were graded from the granting merely of the title of *divus* or *diva* up to a complete set of honours, including a temple with priests, and the number of *divi* was large.[319] Between 236 and 238, the Emperor Maximinus Thrax, in desperate need for money to support the army in its defence of the empire from barbarian invasions, determined to expropriate all the money allocated for honouring the numerous *divi*, and as a result their cults ceased to function. As Gradel comments, "An institution of more than 250 years' standing, on which pious old emperors had spent enormous sums and lavished much attention, was simply abolished in one go."[320] Consequently, when gold coins were struck in the 260s to honour the memory of the Emperor Augustus, they were inscribed *deo Augusto* because his original title, *divus*, was no longer considered to refer to an eternal god with cults. The title *divus* accorded to Constantine by his sons on the coins they minted to commemorate their father's ascent was, it would seem, not indicative of absolute divinity, but rather an honorary title meaning roughly "of blessed memory."[321]

Changes to the Burial Scheme

On 1 July 356, during the reign of Constantius, the relics of Timothy arrived in Constantinople; it is said that they were buried beneath the altar of the church of the Apostles.[322] Unfortunately, the location of the altar under which Timothy was buried is uncertain. We know neither whether it was located in close proximity to Constantine's sarcophagus nor whether it was in a mausoleum or in a church. The choice of resting place may seem curious given that the *thēkai* had apparently been prepared specifically for receiving such relics. However, the decision to bury Timothy's relics might reasonably be explained by the fact that he was a disciple of Paul, not one of the twelve Apostles, and might not therefore have been accorded a place in one of the Apostolic *thēkai*. Nevertheless, it is striking that the *thēkai* are not mentioned by any source later than Eusebius, and we may wonder whether they were removed soon after his death – perhaps at Constantius' instigation.

Although it appears that relics of Andrew and Luke had already arrived in Constantinople on 22 June 336, under Constantine, certain sources claim that they were brought to the city on 3 March 357, during the reign of Constantius.[323] A further indication that Constantius had some involvement with these relics apparently comes from Procopius, who, when describing how they were rediscovered by Justinian in the sixth century, says that Constantius had failed to mark the spot of their burial.[324] The accounts giving the later date for the transferral of the relics of Andrew and Luke to Constantinople have been explained as distortions of fact, and they have been understood to preserve a faulty memory of the relics' removal from their original resting place in the *thēkai* of Constantine's mausoleum (where they had been placed in 336) to an adjacent church of the Apostles newly built by Constantius.[325] Although this is plausible, it is not the only possible explanation for the evidence. If, for example, Constantine had built a cruciform church and erected the *thēkai* in the centre of it, then, in 357, Constantius may have removed the relics of Luke and Andrew from the *thēkai* and placed them beside those of Timothy below the altar of the church.

In 359, the Arian Patriarch Macedonius observed that Constantine's resting place was in a dangerous state, perhaps having been damaged by an earthquake in the previous year. He therefore removed the emperor's remains to the church of St. Acacius. This act deeply offended many people who considered it sacrilegious to move the body, and supporters of the Nicene Creed also seized the opportunity to oppose the action. Blood was shed in St. Acacius' church. Constantius, angered by both the violence and Macedonius' failure to consult him before moving the corpse, removed the patriarch from office.[326] Later, in 361, we read that Constantius was laid to rest in Constantinople, beside his father,[327] so we might reasonably conclude that by that date Constantine's body had been brought back from the church of St. Acacius.

If we imagine with Mango that Constantius built a cruciform church adjacent to Constantine's original mausoleum (Figure 205, no. 1), we may well wonder why, in 359, Macedonius did not simply move Constantine's body from the mausoleum into the church, since the latter would presumably have been in far better structural condition than the older mausoleum. One possibility is that the earthquake severely damaged both buildings. Another is that Constantius' new church was still incomplete in 359, but in that case we would have to imagine that the burial of the relics of Timothy, Luke, and Andrew beneath the site of the altar in 356 and 357 had been undertaken not as the church reached completion but early in the construction process to sanctify the site.[328] On the other hand, if we imagine that Constantine had been buried initially in a cruciform church, it might be suggested that, after Macedonius removed his body, Constantius determined to construct beside the church a mausoleum fit for his father, for himself, and for later generations, and that his father's sarcophagus was installed in the new structure before Constantius' own death in 361 (Figure 205, no. 2).[329] At the same time, Constantius may also have started to repair or rebuild the church itself.

Whether Constantius, in 359, determined to attach a cruciform church to a free-standing Constantinian mausoleum or set about rebuilding a cruciform church that had been built by his father and adding a mausoleum, it seems that the project took a considerable time to reach completion. Our sources record the dedication ceremony of the church of the Apostles in 370.[330] The resulting complex presumably consisted of the cruciform church and the adjacent domed mausoleum described by Mesarites.

Although we have considered two main schools of thought regarding how this architectural complex of church and mausoleum came into being – one proposing that Constantine built a domed mausoleum to which Constantius attached a cruciform church, the other claiming that Constantine built a cruciform church to which Constantius attached a mausoleum – there is at least one other scenario that ought to be borne in mind. It is, I think, conceivable that Constantine built *both* a church and an adjoining mausoleum – although, given Eusebius' claim that the funerary purpose of the complex was not immediately apparent to the citizens, it may be that the emperor initiated the work on the mausoleum somewhat later than that on the church (Figure 205, no. 3). The construction of an imperial mausoleum in conjunction with a church would not

have been unusual. In Rome, for example, the mausoleum of the emperor's mother, Helena, was built ca. 324–327 on the Via Labicana, apparently at the same time as the adjoining basilica of Sts. Marcellinus and Peter (Figure 163),[331] and the mausoleum of Constantine's daughters, Constantina and Helena, on the Via Nomentana, was built probably ca. 337–354 to adjoin the slightly earlier basilica of St. Agnes (Figure 166).[332] Other relevant parallels are structures that commemorated holy sites by combining a centralized structure with a basilica. One example is the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the shell of which was complete by 333. This consisted of a basilica attached to an octagonal structure built over and around the cave believed to have been that in which Christ had been born (Figure 175). Another example is the Golgotha complex, consisting of a basilica to which was attached a rotunda over the cave traditionally associated with Christ's burial and resurrection (Figures 172, 173, 193). The basilica was certainly the work of Constantine, and some would argue that the rotunda was too, although its existence cannot be demonstrated securely until 348–350.

If Constantine did indeed build a complex consisting of both a mausoleum (for his own body and for the bodies of the Apostles) and an adjacent church in which the faithful could congregate, he would have set up the *thēkai* and his own sarcophagus in the mausoleum, and would presumably have installed the relics of Andrew (and possibly Luke) there, too. Constantius, however, would have decided to place the newly arrived relics of Timothy below the altar of the church, and soon after would have disposed of the *thēkai* and moved the relics of Andrew and Luke to join those of Timothy. The entire church–mausoleum complex may have been in disrepair when Macedonius moved Constantine's sarcophagus to the church of St. Acacius, and Constantius may have begun a complete rebuilding programme that continued until 370. How much of Constantine's original buildings would have remained by the time the reconstruction was finished cannot be known.

Despite the difficulties in determining the relative dates of the church and mausoleum in Constantinople, one important fact is certain: in 337, Constantine was buried surrounded by the *thēkai* that were ready to receive relics of the Apostles (and that may well have received relics of Andrew (and possibly Luke) in 336), yet under Constantius in 356 the relics of Timothy were not placed in a *thēkē* but underground below the altar, and those of Andrew and Luke were later placed alongside Timothy, probably in 357. It would therefore appear that Constantius completely altered the symbolism of the structure as it had been conceived by his father. I can only assume that Constantius deliberately set out (whether of his own choosing or under some pressure) to break the close link Constantine had established between himself and Christ.[333]

The motives behind Macedonius' decision to move Constantine's sarcophagus in 358 remain uncertain.[334] The most straightforward explanation is that the emperor's place of interment was in danger of collapse. But given that Macedonius was an Arian, we must consider the possibility that the issues surrounding the Arian controversy had some bearing on his decision to remove the body. It might be suggested that some Arians harboured a grudge against Constantine because of the Nicene settlement, and that the disrepair of the building provided an opportunity for them to demonstrate their resentment. But we should also consider the possibility that Constantine's highly unusual funerary arrangements were particularly offensive to the Arians. Arians held that Christ was divine only by participation in the Father, rather than divine in his own right; thus, they were criticized by their opponents for denigrating Christ and for putting themselves at His level.[335] In itself, the identification of the mortal Constantine with Christ should have raised no objection to Arians, who believed man could achieve ethical perfection and receive sonship – indeed, Eusebius, who had exploited a comparison of Constantine with Christ, was a subordinationist himself. But if, in the mausoleum, Constantine was being worshipped in traditional fashion as a divinity, then the Arians may well have seen this as suggesting that Constantine–Christ was not subordinate to the Father.

We are told that those who opposed the removal of the sarcophagus included those who supported the Nicene Creed and those who considered it sacrilegious to disturb a body. Might some supporters of the creed have construed the removal of Constantine's

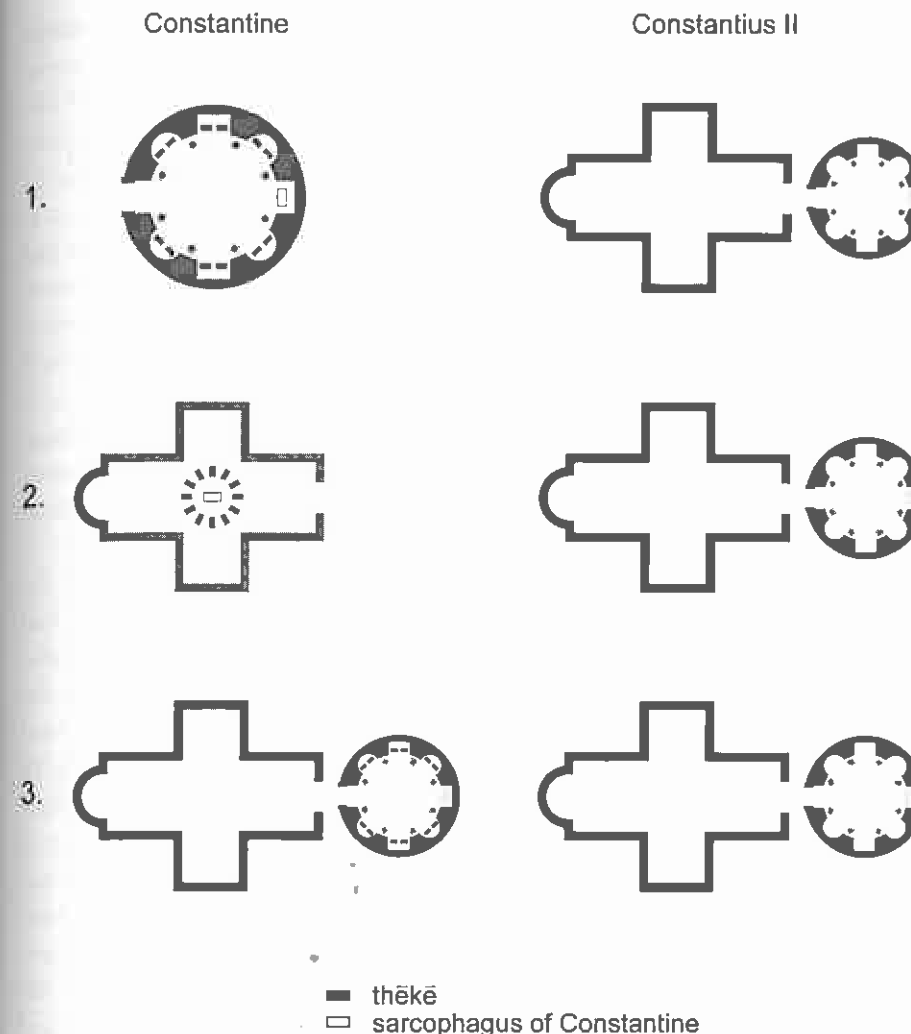


Figure 205. Schematic diagrams showing three different scenarios for the development of the Holy Apostles complex and its internal arrangements: 1. Rotunda precedes church; 2. Church precedes rotunda; 3. Rotunda and church built simultaneously. A. Tayfun Öner.

body as an attempt to bring an end to the imperial cult and thereby subordinate Christ–Constantine to God?

Constantius, for his part, may have decided that the only solution that would satisfy both parties was to dissolve the equation between the emperor and Christ completely, dissociating the vexed theological question of the Son's relationship to the Father from the question of the emperor's relationship to either. After Constantius' alterations to the building, Constantine would no longer appear to be superior to the Apostles (the *thēkai* having been removed) and would no longer be in a unique relationship with them. It seems significant that Procopius, having stated that it was Constantius who built the church of the Apostles, adds that he decreed "that tombs for himself and for all future Emperors should be placed there, and not for the rulers alone, but for their consorts as well."[336] The implication is that Constantine had intended his corpse to be the only imperial burial in the proximity of the Apostles' relics. The changes that Constantius made ensured that when he died he would share with his father the lesser privilege of being buried in a mausoleum that was located next to a church dedicated to the Apostles. There would be no suggestion that the emperors were of a higher status than Christ's disciples.

At this point we must mention remarks made at the end of the fourth century by John Chrysostom.[337] In one homily dated to 386–387, Chrysostom wrote that the emperors were "no longer near the Apostles, but are satisfied to bury their bodies outside at the porch (παρ᾽ αὐτὰ τὰ πρόθυρα ἔξω). And so the emperors have now

become the doorkeepers of the fishermen."[338] In a later text of 393, Chrysostom criticized the elevation of men to the status of gods, citing in particular the decision to recognize Alexander the Great as the thirteenth god (a decision he attributes to the Roman Senate, although it was in fact made by the Athenian Assembly at the prompting of Demades).[339] Chrysostom compared the achievements of such men unfavourably with those of Christ, pointing out that Alexander had not managed to restore his kingdom after death – indeed, his tomb was now nowhere to be seen, whereas the tombs of Christ and his followers were venerated zealously. Chrysostom observed that Constantius was greatly honouring his father by placing his body "in the porch (ἐν τοις πρόθυροις) of the fishermen" – that is, outside the resting place of the Apostles themselves. As a result, Chrysostom explained, the emperors were to the fishermen as porters were to kings. The Apostles occupied the interior like lords whilst the emperors, like visitors, were pleased to have the porch assigned to them. The arrangement, Chrysostom claimed, conveyed symbolically that at the time of the Resurrection the Apostles would be even more superior to the emperors.[340]

It has been deduced from Chrysostom's words that those emperors who reigned after Constantius but before Chrysostom was writing, and whose burial locations are uncertain – that is, Jovian (who died in 364) and Valentinian (who died in 375) – had originally been buried in Constantine's free-standing mausoleum but had later been moved to the mausoleum's entrance porch, which now served to connect the mausoleum to the adjacent church.[341] To me, that seems to be too literal an interpretation of Chrysostom's statement. Since Chrysostom indicates that Constantine himself was buried in the "porch," it would seem that he uses the term "porch" as a metaphor for the entire mausoleum, to suggest that it should be considered a structure subordinate to the church proper. This would make even more sense if, in this early period (before Justinian's rebuilding) the church had had its apse to the west and its entrance to the east: the mausoleum in front of the eastern doors might then reasonably have been metaphorically described as a "porch." It would seem that Chrysostom's words reflect his approval for a change that had been made to the funerary arrangements put in place by Constantine. Constantine had not been buried as a mere "doorkeeper" of the Apostles, but had chosen to lie surrounded by the *thēkai* of the Apostles, perhaps intending himself to be seen as a god.[342] The alterations made by Constantius had changed all that, and Chrysostom heartily approved. He would not have been alone in his appreciation of the change. Athanasius, for example, composed an oration *Against the Pagans* in which he directly compared the earthly and heavenly rulers, although he admitted that the parallel was feeble and ridiculed the practice of conferring divine status upon dead emperors.[343]

Constantius' removal of the *thēkai* and of the relics from the vicinity of the imperial tomb had apparently defused a difficult situation. He had dissociated the Christian theological question of the Son's relationship to the Father from the imperial philosophical issue of the emperor's relationship to God by creating a clear distinction between the place of Apostolic worship (the church) and the place of imperial burial (the mausoleum). By some, Constantine could now be thought to have been subordinated to the Apostles. Thus, the likes of Chrysostom could claim that the new arrangement of the mausoleum–church complex rated Constantine and the other emperors who were later buried alongside him neither as equals of Christ nor as equals of the Apostles, but only as intermediaries between men and the Apostles.[344] On the other hand, it should be recognized that, despite Constantius' alterations, his father's body lay in a mausoleum that was adjacent to the church of the Apostles. Christians who remained influenced by long-standing traditions of imperial divinity, who saw in the emperor a saviour-figure analogous to the returned Christ, and who wished to worship him as God descended to earth in mortal form could presumably continue to do so. However, the dissolution of the visual link between Constantine and the *thēkai* of the Apostles, a link that had implied Constantine's Christlike superiority over the Apostles, probably succeeded in discouraging such behaviour, paving the way for Constantine to become a blessed saint rather than a divinity.[345]

Notes

1. Suetonius, *Domitian* 13.1–2, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1997–1998, II, 346–49. See further on Domitian Brent 1999, 169–77.
2. Pliny, *Panegyricus* 2.2–3, ed. and trans. Radice 1969, II, 324–25.
3. Deissmann 1927, 351–52; Turcan 1978, 1051–56; Nixon and Rodgers 1994, 51–52 and 53 n. 1; Kolb 2001, 36–37; Canepa 2009, 100.
4. Price 1984, 246–47.
5. *Pan. Lat.* VIII.1.4, ed. and trans. pp. 109, 543; Kolb 2001, 41–42.
6. *RIC* V.1, Aurelian nos. 305–306.
7. Kolb 2004, 32.
8. The act is known as early as A.D. 260–270: Avery 1940, 67 n. 13. Doležal 2009, 143, traces it back further, to the time of Caligula (A.D. 12–41).
9. Kolb 2001, 40–41; Smith, R. 2007, 172–73, 176, 214–16; Canepa 2009, 149–53 (arguing that the Persians adopted the practice from the Romans); Doležal 2009 (arguing that the Romans adopted the practice from Iran); Leadbetter 2009, 62–63.
10. Avery 1940, esp. 69–71; Kolb 2001, 38–41; Jerome, *Chronicle*, ed. Helm 1984, 226, quoted by Avery 1940, 69.
11. Rees 2002, 186–87.
12. *Pan. Lat.* XI.11.1–3, ed. and trans. pp. 95–96, 538.
13. Firmicus Maternus, *Mathēsis* 2.30.5–6, ed. and trans. Monat 1992–1997, I, 141, trans. Dvornik 1966, 628.
14. Price 1987, 98–99.
15. Salway 2007.
16. Eusebius, *Life* 4.48, ed. p. 140, trans. p. 172.
17. Eusebius, *Life* 4.16, ed. p. 126, trans. p. 159; Socrates, *Church History* 1.18.1, ed. Hansen 1995, 57–58, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 22. On the veneration of imperial images in churches, see Dvornik 1966, 654–55.
18. *Pan. Lat.* V.1.3, 9.4 ed. and trans. pp. 264–65, 279, 585, 590; Kolb 2001, 83.
19. Avery 1940, 72–73 on Eusebius, *Life* 4.67.1, ed. p. 148, trans. pp. 179–80 (where Cameron and Hall render "saluted . . . with genuflections"). MacCormack 1981, 117–18, points out that other emperors had received honours after death. In the introduction to his *Life*, written after the emperor's death, Eusebius also enigmatically claimed that God had "exalted the Blessed One when he was still among us with divine honours": Eusebius, *Life* 1.9, ed. p. 19, trans. p. 71.
20. Plutarch, *To the Untutored Ruler* 780e–781a, ed. and trans. Fowler 1936, 58–61.
21. Martial, *Epigrams* 9.64.1–2; 9.65.1–4; 9.101.23–4 (quoted by Hallett 2005, 239).
22. Moles 1990, 330–31; Whitmarsh 2001, 214.
23. Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 3.79–80, ed. Colson and Whitaker 1929–1962, I, 352–55; Goodenough 1938, 93–94.
24. Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 1.162, ed. Colson and Whitaker 1929–1962, VI, 358–59; Beskow 1962, 214–17; Dvornik 1966, 280–81; Rapp 1998b, 689–90.
25. Philo, *Special Laws* 4.186–88, ed. and trans. Colson and Whitaker 1929–1962, VIII, 122–25.
26. Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 81, 98, 114, ed. Colson and Whitaker 1929–1962, X, 40–41, 48–49, 56–57. The quotation is from a fragment quoted and translated by Goodenough 1938, 99 with n. 72. Generally on Philo's philosophy of kingship, see Goodenough 1938, 86–120.
27. Eusebius, *Life* 1.3.4–1.5.1, ed. pp. 16–17, trans. pp. 68–69 (misleadingly rendering "model").
28. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 5.3, ed. Heikel 1902, 204.3–4 (τὸ μίμημα τῆς μοναρχικῆς ἐξουσίας), trans. Drake 1976, 89 (who renders "the likeness of monarchical authority").
29. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 7.12, ed. Heikel 1902, 215.21–22 (ὁ δ᾽ ἐξ ἑνος εἷς βασιλεύς, εἰκὼν ἑνὸς τοῦ παμβασιλέως), trans. Drake 1976, 97 (who renders "But he was from One Sovereign, the image of the One Ruler of All").
30. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 2.5, ed. Heikel 1902, 199.27–28 (ζήλῳ τοῦ κρείττονος), trans. Drake 1976, 86. On this imitation, see Farina 1966, 113–27; Kolb 2001, 68–69.
31. Psalms 45:7, 11; 2:7; 110:1.
32. II Samuel 13, 16; Psalm 2:7, 89:29, 36–37; 132:11; Beskow 1962, 90–91; Dvornik 1966, 308–309.
33. Beskow 1962, 123–27; Dvornik 1966, 314, 318–19.
34. Ezekiel 40:1–47:5 (Temple and waters); 47:6–12 (paradise). Compare Isaiah 11; 65:17–25; Amos 9:13–15; Joel 3:18; Dvornik 1966, 323–24.
35. See especially Isaiah 53; Dvornik 1966, 339–47.
36. Beskow 1962, 38, 125–26.
37. Enoch 45:3; 46; 48:2; 51:4–10; 55; 61:10–18; 62:15; 68:38–41. Beskow 1962, 127–28. Dvornik 1966, 368–78.
38. Goodenough 1935, 39–40; Beskow 1962, 189–90 notes Stoic and Pythagorean elements in Philo's writings.
39. Philo, *On Providence* 2.3, ed. and trans. Colson and Whitaker 1929–1962, IX, 460–61.
40. Philo, *On Providence* 2.2, ed. and trans. Colson and Whitaker 1929–1962, IX, 460–61.
41. See p. 139.
42. Philo, *On Husbandry* 50–51, ed. and trans. Colson and Whitaker 1929–1962, III, 134–35; trans. Goodenough 1935, 57–58.
43. Beskow 1962, 200–208.
44. Beskow 1962, 210–11.
45. Matthew 2:2.

46 Matthew 16:15–19.
47 Zechariah 9:9.
48 John 12:13.
49 Mark 14:61–62.
50 Kingdom: John 18:36. Cross: Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38. Taunts: Matthew 27:42; Mark 15:32.
51 Luke 1:30–33, 35.
52 Luke 1:51–53.
53 Luke 2:14.
54 Luke 4:18–19.
55 Brent 1999, 78–82.
56 Brent 1999, 95–98.
57 For detail, see Brent 1999, 73–139.
58 Revelation 14:14; 17:14; 19:12, 16; Deissmann 1927, 362–63; Beskow 1962, 136–41.
59 Revelation 22:1, 3.
60 Revelation 7:9–10; Brent 1999, 200–201, 205–208.
61 Revelation 4:4, 10; Brent 1999, 204–208.
62 Revelation 13:15; Brent 1999, 196–97.
63 *Sōtēr.* Luke 1:47; 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; 13:23; Ephesians 5:23; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; 2 Timothy 1:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6; 2 Peter 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18; 1 John 4:14; Jude 25. Epiphany: 2 Thessalonians 2:8; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 1:10; 4:1; Titus 2:13; 3:4. Kingdom: 2 Timothy 4:1. See Deissmann 1927, 363–64, 368–73.
64 See the comments of Meggitt 2002, 156–57. Although Meggitt mentions these coincidences of terminology when discussing the possibility that ideas about Christ were dependent on ideas about kings, they might equally be used to support the case that such ideas about Christ were forged to usurp claims made about emperors (Meggitt's "polemical parallelism," pp. 157–58).
65 Titus 2:11, 13; 3.4. In general, see Beskow 1962, 61–73, who, however, concludes that the terms were not adopted polemically to emphasize the supreme kingship of God in the face of emperor worship.
66 For such claims, see pp. 128–29.
67 Harrison 2002.
68 Howard 1977; Dvornik 1966, 591–94; Beskow 1962, 45–61; Deissmann 1927, 349–62.
69 Dvornik 1966, 600–605.
70 Beskow 1962, 219–30.
71 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 5.19.25, 6.8.12, 7.27.15, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 466, 509, 671, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 322, 346, 442, who render *imperator* as "commander." On the problem of determining whether the term has an imperial or military connotation, see Beskow 1962, 182–84.
72 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 4.17.7, 4.25.2, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 345, 375, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 255, 268; Dvornik 1966, 614.
73 Great emperor: e.g. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 15.2, ed. Heikel 1902, 244, trans. Drake 1976, 117 (rendering "great sovereign"). All-imperial: e.g. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 3.3, ed. Heikel 1902, 201, trans. Drake 1976, 87 (rendering "Ruler of All"). Emperor of the universe: e.g. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 5.2, ed. Heikel 1902, 203, trans. Drake 1976, 89 (rendering "Universal Sovereign"). See Farina 1966, 33–35 (regal titles of God in Eusebius), 72–73, 103–104 (regal titles of the Logos and Christ in Eusebius).
74 Eusebius, *Church History* 10.4.12, 17–20, ed. pp. 866, 868–69, trans. p. 308, 309–310.
75 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 7.24 ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 658–63, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 434–36. Constantine, *Oration to the Saints* 19–21, ed. Heikel 1902, 181–87, trans. Edwards 2003, 44–53. On Constantine's use of Vergil, see Benko 1980, 671–72; Lane Fox 1986, 649–52. On Lactantius and the Golden Age, see Benko 1980, 670–71; Nicholson 1998; DePalma Digeser 2000, 86–87.
76 Jensen 2000, 45–46 (philosopher), 120–24 (with magician's wand, an image that did not die out until the end of the fifth century); Snyder 2003, 108–110. Mathews 2003, 54–77, gives a survey of depictions of Christ as a miracle worker, and discusses Christ as a philosopher (pp. 109–114) – although in the context of an attack on scholarly claims of an iconographical relationship between depictions of Christ and depictions of the emperor. See also, for example, Bargebuhr 1991, pls. 20, 43, for the resurrection of Lazarus and the multiplication of the loaves and fishes as painted in the "New Catacomb" on the Via Latina, and Stevenson 1978, pl. 77, showing Christ giving the sermon on the mount in the same catacomb.
77 Wilken 2003, 98–101. Compare the comments of Dvornik 1966, 428: "Christ did not present Himself in regal attire, as the people generally imagined the founder of a mighty kingdom would do."
78 Zanker 1995, 297.
79 DePalma Digeser 2000, 74–78.
80 Zanker 1995, 292–97.
81 Zanker 1995, 297–304 with 256–66 (Charismatics), 276–77, 290–92 (child prodigy).
82 Zanker 1995, 304–305, 307–331.
83 As noted by Beskow 1962, 12–13, 22–25; Krautheimer 1986, 40. For details, see Spieser 1998, 65–66; Jensen 2000, 94–103; Deckers 2001a, 3–5; Deckers 2001b, 739–40.
84 Nicolai and others 2002, 86–87; Spier 2007, 183.
85 Mathews 1999 argues, contrary to traditional thinking, that the iconography of Christ does not draw on imperial iconography. His stance is uncompromising.

86 Mathews 1999, 97–109, discussing the depiction of Christ enthroned and surrounded by seated Apostles in the apse mosaic in St. Pudenziana in Rome (ca. 400), dwells on a contrast with representations of the *mortal* emperor (who would sit on the modest *sella curulis* and would not be surrounded by seated counsellors). However, he fails to acknowledge the parallels with images of the *divinized* emperor (who might be seated on a throne, alone or accompanied by other deities).
87 Deckers 2001a, 10–11; Deckers 2007, 105; the imperial references are questioned by Mathews 1999, 80–86.
88 *RIC* VIII, Constantinople 1 (gold *solidus*). For the bronze: *RIC* VIII, Constantinople 37; Trier 44, 68; Lyon 12, 17; Arles 42; Heraclea 14; Nicomedia 4, 18, 25; Cyzicus 4, 19, 25, 30; Antioch 37, 39; Alexandria 4, 12, 22. MacCormack 1981, 123–24; Jensen 2000, 162–64; Deckers 2001a, 10.
89 On the nimbus (especially on coins), see Bastien 1992–1994, I, 167–80. Specifically on the emperor and Christ sporting the nimbus, and the import of the nimbus, see Bruun 1992 and Ahlqvist 2001; Mathews 1999, 101. For the mosaics in the mausoleum, see Brandenburg 2004, pls. 40–41.
90 Weinstock 1957, 232–33; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 57–60.
91 The existence of Octavian's statue has been deduced from coins: Zanker 1988, 39–40 with figs. 31a, 42; Galinsky 1996, 314 with figs. 147–48.
92 Eusebius, *Life* 4.69.2, ed. p. 149, trans. p. 181. For these instances and others, see MacCormack 1981, 127–32, and Pond Rothman 1975, 27–28, on the Parabiago plate.
93 Beskow 1962, 17–31 (noting the earliest certain representations on p. 23); Pond Rothman 1975, 19–20; MacCormack 1981, 129–31.
94 Grabar 1969, 43 with pls. 109–111; Pond Rothman 1975, 19, 27–28; *Repertorium* I no. 680 = Koch 2000 pls. 64, 65.
95 Deckers 2001a, 8–10.
96 Kantorowicz 1961, 386–87.
97 Deckers 2001a, 14.
98 Beskow 1962, 17–31.
99 Barnes 1976b; Barnes 1981, 164–66; Mathews 1999, 67–68; Wilken 2003, 159.
100 Barnes 1981, 175–76; Wilken 2003, 159–60.
101 MacCormack 1981, 129–31.
102 DePalma Digeser 2000, 40–45.
103 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 1.3.6–7, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 8, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 62; Dvornik 1966, 613.
104 Eusebius, *Martyrs of Palestine* 1.1–4 (L and S), ed. Schwartz 1999, 907–908, trans. Lawlor and Oulton 1927–1928, I, 331–33; De Ste Croix 1954, 81–82 (= 2006, 43); Barnes 1981, 150–51; Van Dam 2007, 355.
105 Eusebius, *Church History* 10.4.17–20, ed. pp. 868–69, trans. pp. 309–10 (quoted previously p. 344–45). See Beskow 1962, 19–21, 263.
106 Beskow 1962, 263–68.
107 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 3.6, ed. Heikel 1902, 201.24–31, trans. Drake 1976, 87.
108 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints*, 3, ed. Heikel 1902, 156.22–25, trans. Edwards 2003, 5 with xxi–xxii. On Lactantius' influence upon this oration, see Schott 2008, 112–13.
109 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints*, 9.4, ed. Heikel 1902, 163, trans. Edwards 2003, 15.
110 Compare the comment of Kantorowicz 1963, 151: "The Christian emperor – the supreme God's *hyparchos* on earth, next to Christ as God's *hyparchos* in heaven – became the *christomimetes* above all others, that is, the one imitating and impersonating, even ceremoniously staging, Christ, the ruler of the universe."
111 For later development of this idea, see Kelly 1998, 139–50.
112 On Eusebius' philosophy, see Farina 1966, 107–27; Dvornik 1966, 614–22; Kelly 1998, 140.
113 Van Dam 2003, 141–44; Van Dam 2007, 311–12.
114 Note that in an edition of the *Church History* that was finalized after Licinius' defeat in 324, Eusebius had suggested a comparison between God and Christ on the one hand and Constantine and Crispus on the other. See *Church History* 10.9.4, ed. p. 900, trans. p. 332; Pohlsander 1984, 98; Barnes 1981, 150.
115 Drake 1976, 57. See also Drake 2000, 529 n. 98. For the Logos as the *hyparchos* of God in Philo, see Goodenough 1935, 39.
116 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 1.6, ed. Heikel 1902, 198–99, trans. Drake 1976, 85.
117 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 5.1–2, ed. Heikel 1902, 203.20–27, trans. Drake 1976, 89.
118 Moles 1990, 330–31.
119 Isocrates, *To Philip* 111–15, ed. and trans. Norlin and van Hook 1928–1945, I, 312–17; Dvornik 1966, 199.
120 Edwards 2000, vii–xxix; Edwards 2006a, 140–41; DePalma Digeser 2000, 74, 77, 81–82.
121 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 5.5, ed. Heikel 1902, trans. Drake 1976, 89.
122 In addition, the language applied to Constantine by Eusebius reflects that applied by Constantine himself to Christ: Edwards 1999, 273.
123 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 2.3–4, ed. Heikel 1902, 199, trans. Drake 1976, 85–86.
124 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 1.6, 3.4, 6.9, 7.9, ed. Heikel 1902, trans. Drake 1976, 85, 87, 92, 96.
125 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 3.4, ed. Heikel 1902, 201, trans. Drake 1976, 87.
126 Eusebius, *Life* 4.22.2, ed. p. 128, trans. p. 161.

127 Eusebius, *Life* 3.46.1, ed. p. 103, trans. p. 139; Van Dam 2007, 304–305.
128 Eusebius, *Life* 3.15.2, ed. p. 89, trans. p. 127.
129 See Bardill 2006a, 342.
130 Eusebius, *Life* 3.33.1–2, ed. p. 99, trans. p. 135. For further discussion of this passage, see Bardill 2006a, especially 342, 356. Hunt 1982, 8, complains: "It is perhaps a discouragement to the historian that a source capable of such flights of imagination is our principal witness of the appearance of Constantine's new buildings in the Holy Land." But later he observes that "this was not merely a fancy of Eusebius" (p. 17).
131 Such as Ousterhout 1990 and Hunt 1997, 422–23.
132 Eusebius, *Life* 4.64.1–2, ed. pp. 146–47, trans. p. 178.
133 Eusebius, *Life* 4.65.2, ed. p. 147, trans. p. 179. For Constantine as a shepherd in Eusebius, see Farina 1966, 196–98.
134 For references concerning the term "shepherd," see pp. 139, 342.
135 Eusebius, *Life* 4.71.2–4.72, ed. p. 150, trans. pp. 181–82. Compare also Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 6.2, ed. Heikel 1902, 206, where God is said to have rewarded Constantine with not merely thirty years on the throne but an eternal rule. On the theme of eternal rule, see Kolb 2001, 70–71.
136 Eusebius, *Life* 4.69.2, ed. p. 148, trans. pp. 180–81.
137 Eusebius, *Life* 1.3.2–9.2 (here 1.9.1–2), ed. pp. 16–19 trans. pp. 68–71.
138 Eusebius, *Life* 4.60, ed. pp. 144–45, trans. pp. 176–77.
139 Calderone 1973, 248–49; *RIC* VIII, index pp. 566, 568, 570, under the legends given in the text.
140 Grünewald 1990, nos. 225–26, 234, 237, 251, 252, 267, where nos. 225 and 226 (= *CIL* VIII, nos. 21934–35; Amici 2000, 209 nos. 8–9) also employ *semper aug*.
141 Eusebius, *Life* 4.71.2, ed. p. 150 trans. p. 181; MacCormack 1981, 121.
142 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 3.4, ed. Heikel 1902, 201, trans. Drake 1976, 87.
143 Eusebius, *Life* 1.3, ed. p. 15, trans. p. 67.
144 Dvornik 1966, 177–87.
145 Isocrates, *To Philip* 111–15, ed. and trans. Norlin and van Hook 1928–1945, I, 312–17; Dvornik 1966, 199.
146 Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 2.1, ed. and trans. Perrin 1914–1926, VII, 224–25.
147 Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 8–9.
148 Arrian 4.8.1–5, ed. and trans. Brunt 1976–1983, I, 362–65.
149 Arrian 4.10.5–11.9, ed. and trans. Brunt 1976–1983, I, 372–79.
150 Arrian 4.28.1–5, ed. and trans. Brunt 1976–1983, I, 434–37.
151 Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 12.537d–f, ed. and trans. Gulick 1927–1941, V, 428–31.
152 Statius, *Silvae* 4.6.59–74, ed. and trans. Shackleton Bailey 2003, 284–85.
153 Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 1.13, ed. and trans. Basore 1928–1935, III, 40–43.
154 Homer, *Iliad* 19.103–104, ed. and trans. Murray 1924–1925, II, 344–45.
155 Hesiod, *Shield of Hercules* 27–29, ed. and trans. Evelyn-White 1936, 222–23.
156 Theocritus, *Idyll* 24.78–85, ed. and trans. Gow 1950, I, 186–87.
157 Dio Chrysostom, *Kingship Orations* 1.84, ed. and trans. Cohoon 1932, 44–45.
158 Seneca, *Hercules on Oeta* 794–96, ed. and trans. Miller 1917, II, 248–51.
159 Seneca, *Hercules on Oeta* 1202–18, ed. and trans. Miller 1917, II, 276–79.
160 Seneca, *Hercules on Oeta* 1693–1715, ed. and trans. Miller 1917, II, 318–21.
161 Seneca, *Hercules on Oeta* 1989–96, ed. and trans. Miller 1917, II, 340–41.
162 Dvornik 1966, 209–215.
163 Price 1984, 26–35, 51–52; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 11–12.
164 References in Price 1984, 26 n. 10; Fishwick 1987–2005, I.1, 9–11.
165 Price 1984, 42–47.
166 Weinstock 1957, 212–15 (Alexander), 228–29 (Pompey), 242 (Commodus); Moles 1990, 330–31 and Shotter 1979, 51 (Trajan).
167 Simon 1955, 127–202.
168 Kolb 2001, 72 rightly states: "Constantin war sich bewußt, daß die Christen keinen Gottkaiser akzeptieren konnten. Andererseits war er selbst noch zu sehr in einer Vorstellungswelt verhaftet, für die das Numinöse der kaiserlichen Würde selbstverständlich war."
169 For general comments, see Van Dam 2003, 140.
170 Eusebius, *Life* 4.62.1–2, ed. pp. 145–46, trans. p. 177. Van Dam 2007, 314–15, observes that if Constantine had been baptized in the Jordan, it would probably have been Eusebius, as bishop of Caesarea, who would have presided over the ceremony. "In that case Eusebius would have played the role of John the Baptist."
171 Eusebius, *Life* 4.24, ed. p. 128, trans. p. 161.
172 See p. 273.
173 Rapp 1998a, esp. 292–97; Rapp 1998b.
174 For Moses as a prefiguration of Christ, see: Beskow 1962, 213–19; Rapp 1998b, 693–94, who observes, "The Moses comparison which is so prominent in Eusebius also hints at a parallel between Constantine and Christ."
175 I Peter 2.25. Eusebius, too, refers to Christ as the "overseer" of the Church (Farina 1966, 104) and makes an explicit connection between Moses and Jesus in his *Proof of the Gospel* (Cameron and Hall 1999, 37).

176 Beskow 1962, 97.
177 Opitz 1934–1941, III, Urkunde 34 (= Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaenae synodi* 40, ed. Opitz 1934–1941, II, 38–43), trans. Coleman-Norton 1966, 67. See also Baynes 1972, 22–23.
178 See Straub 1967, 44; Leeb 1992, 25; Speck 1995, 167.
179 Eusebius, *Life* 3.3, ed. p. 82, trans. p. 122; Mango 1959, 23–24. On the basis of this description and the comparable coins, Bisconti 2005, fig. 8, has dared to draw a hypothetical reconstruction. See also Leeb 1992, 49–52; Canepa 2009, 105–106.
180 Licinius as serpent: Eusebius, *Life* 2.1 and 2.46, ed. pp. 45, 67. Licinius as Pharaoh: Eusebius, *Life* 2.11.2, ed. p. 53. Maxentius as Pharaoh: Eusebius, *Church History* 9.9.5–8. ed. pp. 828–30, trans. pp. 291–94.
181 Odahl 1975, 47–48 with discussion of earlier views.
182 For these coins, see *RIC* VII, 64 with Constantinople nos. 19, 26.
183 Noting the eschatological significance, Odahl 1975; Odahl 1982–1983, 69.
184 Eusebius, *Life* 2.1.2 and 2.1.1, ed. p. 47.
185 Leeb 1992, 49–52 concludes (p. 52): "Konstantin sich auf dem Bild in Konstantinopel an die Stelle Christi setzt."
186 Constantine, *Oration to the Saints* 18, ed. Heikel 1902, 179, trans. Edwards 2003, 40–43.
187 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 7.19.4–9 (quote from 7.19.8–9), ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 645–47 (quote from 646), trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 428–29. Compare Lactantius, *Epitome* 67.1, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 758–59, trans. Fletcher 1871–1886, II, 161 (here *Epitome* 72.1).
188 I have here largely followed Nicholson 2000, 318–19. Nicholson's claim (pp. 320–21) that the compressed account in the *Epitome* may preserve a trace of an account of Constantine's vision (hence an account earlier than that of Eusebius) is to me unconvincing.
189 Eusebius, *Church History* 9.9.3, ed. p. 828, trans. p. 292; Eusebius, *Life* 1.37.2, ed. p. 34, trans. p. 84.
190 Eusebius, *Life* 1.38.2–5, ed. pp. 34–35, trans. pp. 84–85.
191 On Constantine as Moses, see Farina 1966, 189–90; Hollerich 1989; Rapp 1998a, esp. 292–97; Rapp 1998b; Cameron and Hall 1999, 35–39; Bleckmann 2007, 101–104.
192 On the parallelism between Moses and Christ, see Beskow 1962, 213–19; Rapp 1998b, 693–94.
193 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 7.15.4, ed. Brandt and Laubmann 1890–1897, I, 631, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003, 421.
194 Eusebius, *Life* 1.38.3, ed. p. 35, trans. p. 84.
195 See the discussions of Barnes 1985a, 133–35 and Potter 2004, 469–71, and the partial trans. in Dodgeon and Lieu 1991, 162–63 (no. 6.4.3).
196 Leadbetter 2006, 378–79.
197 Burgess 2008, 43–45.
198 Burgess 2008, 8–9; Barnes 2011, 157–63, 164–65.
199 Barnes 1981, 259 with n. 151; Barnes 2011, 166. Potter 2004, 459–61 also suggests Hannibalianus was appointed to rule Pontus and Armenia "with a view to placing him on the throne of Persia." See also Wirth 1990; Burgess 1999, 230; Frendo 2001, 64; Leithart 2010, 244–49.
200 For the sources suggesting Constantine had been planning an expedition against Persia, see Dodgeon and Lieu 1991, 155–62 (no. 6.4.2); Barnes 2011, 166–67.
201 Barnes 2011, 166, suggests that Constantine had intended to promote Constantius to Augustus when his expeditionary force reached Antioch.
202 On these events, see Burgess 2008, esp. 24–29; Barnes 2011, 168
203 Burgess 2008, 21–22.
204 Burgess 2008, 33–35, 45–49.
205 Burgess 2008, 22–24; Drijvers 1992, 43–44.
206 *RIC* VIII, Trier nos. 42, 47, 55, 63, 64, 78, 90; Rome nos. 27, 53; Constantinople nos. 33–35, 38, 48, 49.
207 *RIC* VIII, Trier nos. 43, 48, 56, 65, 79, 91; Rome nos. 28, 54; Constantinople nos. 36, 50, 51.
208 Eusebius, *Life* 4.51.1, 4.63.3, ed. pp. 141, 146, trans. pp. 172–73, 178.
209 Burgess 2008, 39–40.
210 Eusebius, *Life* 4.68, ed. p. 148, trans. p. 180. *Consularia Constantinopolitana* 337, ed. Burgess 1993, 236–37, with Burgess 2008, 29–30 on the accuracy of this date.
211 Barnes 2011, 22, 167.
212 *Theodosian Code* 13.4.2 (A.D. 337), ed. p. 746, trans. pp. 390–91. *P. Oxy.* XLV, 3266 line 11; Barnes 1981, 267; 2011, 167
213 MacCormack 1981, 118–19.
214 Arce 2000, 124, rightly rejects MacCormack's interpretation of the evidence.
215 Eusebius, *Life* 1.22.2, ed. p. 27, trans. p. 78.
216 Eusebius, *Life* 4.69.2, ed. p. 149, trans. p. 181; Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 41.17, ed. Dufraigne 1975, 59–60, trans. Bird 1994, 51.
217 For the sarcophagus, see Delbrueck 1932, 215–16 with pl. 100. On the original intention to use the mausoleum and sarcophagus for Constantine, see Alföldi 1948, 104; Deichmann and Tschira 1957, 74; Holloway 2004, 87; Van Dam 2007, 59. Helena died, probably in Nicomedia, in 327–329, so if Constantine's sarcophagus and mausoleum were used for her burial in Rome, it would suggest that the emperor had by that date already decided that he would be buried in Constantinople, a city he had founded in 324. However,

Johnson 2009, 118, argues that it is unlikely Constantine had ever had any intention of being buried in Rome, and that the sarcophagus might originally have been made for Maxentius.

218 Stephenson 2009, 285, believes that Eusebius hints that a traditional ceremony of apotheosis took place. However, Eusebius' denial that Constantine was like the phoenix rising from the ashes could equally be interpreted as drawing attention to the fact that the traditional rite did not occur. Also, posthumously minted coins showing Constantine's ascension did not show the funeral pyre, as had been common on such coins from the second century until the time of Constantius Chlorus (Bruun 1954).

219 On the *iustitium* as a period of mourning see Cameron 2011, 288–89.

220 For calculations of the time of Constantius' arrival in Constantinople, see Burgess 2008, 35–40, 49–51 (in preference to Stephenson 2009, 281–83).

221 Eusebius, *Life* 4.65–71, ed. pp. 147–50, trans. pp. 179–81; Johnson 2009, 14.

222 We know that close to the apse of the Holy Apostles, Leo VI built a church of the All Saints (see Downey 1956, 301–302). The suggested identification of an extant cistern as the substructures of Leo's church would, if correct, suggest that the Holy Apostles was located west of that cistern (hence east of the Fatih complex): see Müller-Wiener 1985; Berger in Speck 2000, 157–58; Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 134–41. However, I am not entirely certain that the cistern belongs between the seventh and eleventh centuries, since the masons' marks on the capitals are typical of the Early Byzantine period – although it is certainly possible that the capitals were reused. The cistern requires a more detailed structural examination. Featherstone 2010, nn. 5, 41, 51, fig. 1, suggests, on the basis of evidence from the *Book of Ceremonies*, that All Saints was southeast of the Holy Apostles. I must add that recent claims (Dark and Özgümüş 2002) that the rough stone foundation courses of the Fatih Camii relate to the cruciform church of the Apostles are incredible, in the first place because (as Mango 2004, 76 has noted) the church of Constantine or Constantius is most unlikely to have been built by chance on the exact alignment (about 141°) that would later be required for the qibla of the Fatih Mosque (and about forty-five other Istanbul mosques of the Fatih period; Barmore 1985, 87); and in the second place because it is not uncommon to see projecting courses of rougher stone in the foundations of Ottoman mosques: the foundations are therefore contemporary with the mosque and do not belong to an earlier structure. Doubts are also voiced by Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 141 n. 729, who rightly observe that excavations would be required to firmly establish the site of the Byzantine church. Long 1987, 315–16, is probably right to reject the fourteenth-century claim of Nicephorus Callistus that the mausoleum was built on the site of an altar to the Twelve Gods: it is unlikely that such an altar would have been located outside the city of Byzantium (compare Baynes 1972, 93–94; Mango 1990, 58). Wilkinson 2010, 189–91, suggests Palladas' sarcastic reference to "twelve newer gods" (i.e, the Apostles) in *Palatine Anthology* 10.56.17–18 supports Nicephorus' assertion. Palladas may indeed be alluding to the shrine of the Apostles built by Constantine, but his description of the Apostles as "twelve newer gods" may imply nothing more than that he considered Christianity no less polytheistic than the traditional religion it was replacing.

223 Eusebius, *Life* 4.60.3, ed. pp. 144–45, trans. p. 176 adapted.

224 Regrettably Dvornik 1966, 649, 758–59 with n. 147, rejected the account as fictional, having been introduced into the text of the *Life* by an interpolator. He claimed that Constantine was first buried in the church of St. Acacius.

225 See the comments of Mango 1990, 59.

226 Woods 2006b, 434–35.

227 Galatians 2:9; Eusebius, *Life* 3.38, ed. p. 100, trans. p. 136.

228 The fictional account of the eighth to tenth centuries describing the construction of Hagia Sophia, which claims that there were relics in all the columns of the church (trans. Dagron 1984a, 206 with n. 164), does not increase the likelihood of the proposal that Eusebius compared columns to *thēkai*.

229 Neither Mango 1990, 55 nor Cameron and Hall 1999, 176, capture the full force of *ana . . . diekeinto* in their translations. Mango renders "stood," Cameron and Hall "ranged." I do not find Mango's (1990a, 55) suggested translation of *stēlai hierai* as "sacred statues" convincing: the *thēkai* could hardly be statues, although each coffin may have had the outline of a human form.

230 Dagron 2003, 139, leaves their form open, asking: "burial sites, 'cenotaphs' or simply commemorative plaques?"

231 Procopius, *Buildings* 1.4.19 (imperial sarcophagi), 21 (buried wooden coffins of Andrew, Luke, and Timothy), ed. and trans. Dewing and Downey 1954, 52–53.

232 Eusebius, *Life* 4.60.2, 4; 4.71.2, ed. pp. 144, 145, 150, trans. pp. 176, 177, 181.

233 As claimed by Woods 2006b, 434–35.

234 As claimed by Woods 2006b, 437–38.

235 *Palatine Anthology* 10.56.17–18; Wilkinson 2010, 189–91; Barnes 2011, 128–29.

236 On the reliability of the sources that describe the translation on this date, see Burgess 2003, 24–28, responding to Woods 1991. Wortley 2004, without mentioning the possibility of the arrival of relics of Andrew and Luke in 336, argues that the Palladium is the only relic that Constantine might conceivably have acquired.

237 Mesarites, *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople*, 39.1–2, ed. and trans. Downey 1957, 891, 915. The mausoleum is again distinguished from the cruciform church at 3.1, ed. and trans. Downey 1957, 862, 897, where it is said to be "a kind of wing (*pterugion*) of the church."

238 Speck 2000, 141–43.

239 As observed by Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 115–18.

240 Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Book of Ceremonies* ed. Reiske 1829–1830, I, 533.3–5.

241 Ciggaar 1995, 121 (as noted by Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 148).

242 Stephen of Novgorod, trans. Majeska 1984, 42; *Anonymous Russian Description*, trans. Majeska 1984, 148, as noted by Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 132–33.

243 John Chrysostom, *Adversus Judaeos et Gentiles Demonstratio* 9, ed. Migne 1862b, 825; *Homilies on 2 Corinthians* 26, *PG* 61, 582, trans. Chambers 1889, 402. Johnson 1986, 90–91, 200, suggests that, at this early date, the front doors of the church were at the east end, close to the mausoleum, but that they were later moved to the west. This proposed original arrangement would find a parallel in the basilica of Sts. Marcellinus and Peter, which had its entrance at the east end, where the mausoleum of Helena stood. If the doors of the Holy Apostles were later shifted to the west, this most likely occurred when Justinian demolished and rebuilt the church (Procopius, *Buildings* 1.4.9–24, ed. and trans. Dewing and Downey 1954, 48–55). See also Johnson 2009, 126–27, with diagrams.

244 Philostorgius, *Church History* 3.2, ed. Bidez and Winkelmann 1981, 31–32, trans. Walford 1855, 443, trans. Amidon 2007, 38–39 (who ascribes the building of both to Constantius).

245 On the importance of the Anastasis rotunda as the model for centralized (or double-shell) churches, see Ward-Perkins 1981, 431, 438; Kleinbauer 1973 and 1987.

246 Dagron 1984b, 406, follows Heisenberg and Grabar in accepting a link.

247 For the dispute, see p. 255 with n. 203.

248 Mesarites, *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople*, 39.2, ed. and trans. Downey 1957, 891, 915.

249 The discrepancies between the sources regarding the builder of the mausoleum and the builder of the church, and some of the scholarly interpretations, are summarized by Downey 1951, 53–57; Dagron 1984b, 401–402; Henck 2001, 289–91; Johnson 2009, 119–29. An additional text to be taken into consideration is Libanius, *Autobiography* (= *Orations* 1) 39, 41, ed. and trans. Norman 1992, I, 100–101, 102–103. Woods 2006 is probably right to connect this text with Constantine's burial place, although he fails (pp. 437–38) to set out all the relevant historical circumstances when considering why the building is ascribed to Constantius. Libanius was writing in A.D. 374, fifteen years after Constantine's burial place had fallen into such poor repair that Macedonius had thought it necessary to remove the emperor's body. Clearly, Libanius says that Constantius built the structure either because Constantius substantially repaired it or because he built a new structure adjacent to Constantine's original burial place and had his father's body moved into it.

250 Leeb 1992, 93–120.

251 Mango 1990. Effenberger 2000, 68–69, follows Mango. Dagron 2003, 138–39 (esp. n. 43) and 141 n. 48, firmly rejects Leeb's interpretation in favour of Mango's without adding further argumentation. Johnson 2008, 259, follows Mango.

252 Eusebius, *Life* 4.58–60, ed. pp. 144–45, trans. pp. 176–77.

253 See the comments of Cameron and Hall 1999, 335–37.

254 Eusebius, *Life* 4.58, ed. p. 144, trans. p. 176.

255 Mango 1990, 57.

256 Johnson 1986, 205–10 and 2009, 186–88, with corrections to Grabar 1946, 227–34.

257 Leeb 1992, 93–120.

258 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Insomnium de Anastasiae ecclesia*, ed. Migne 1862a, 1258, vv. 59–60. On the terminology, see Cameron 1976a, 49.

259 Mango 1990, 57.

260 Mango 1990, 58.

261 Also Drake 2000, 275, 378. Cameron and Hall 1999, 339, by contrast deny that Eusebius was troubled by Constantine's proximity to the Apostles.

262 Dagron 1984b, 407.

263 Mango 1990, 57.

264 Eusebius, *Life* 4.60.1–2, trans. p. 176, ed. p. 144.

265 As observed by Krautheimer 1971, 29.

266 Dagron 2003, 141.

267 Mango 1990, 57–58.

268 Effenberger 2000, 71–72. Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 53 (with text figs. 10–12), 99–104.

269 Writing before the publication of Mango 1990 (the conclusions of which he later accepted), Dagron 1984b, 406, suggested the possible arrangement in a cruciform church.

270 Generally on this debate and its bibliography, see Stockmeier 1980, 105–109; Dagron 1984b, 406–407; Leeb 1992, 103–104.

271 Baynes 1972, 94–95, argues, on the basis of Eusebius' account of the mausoleum, that Constantine, "as an apostle, might share with the Apostles in the prayers which were addressed to them." Alföldi 1948,

35 describes Constantine as "the thirteenth Apostle." Like Baynes, Dörries 1972, 196 n. 35, argues: "Constantine's only thought was that the steles of the Apostles would ensure prayers on his behalf, not that he was to be rated above the Apostles." Kraft 1955, 158, claims the emperor is not represented as the equal of God, but as the ruler chosen by God, who is raised above all mortals. Krautheimer 1971, 30 describes Constantine as "equal to the Apostles and thirteenth among them." Bickerman in Calderone 1973, 263, states: "Constantine became ἰσαπόστολος but not a god." Fowden 1993, 89, sees Constantine as "the thirteenth." Drake 2000, 377 describes Constantine as "laying visual claim to the title by which he soon became known, *Isapostolos*." Effenberger 2000, 73–75, refers to the "Apostelgleichheit Konstantins" and the "Gleichsetzung Konstantins mit den Aposteln," although Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 56, write of "Christus- bzw. Apostelgleichheit" without entering into discussion. Elsner 2000, 159, describes Constantine as "the thirteenth apostle." Barnes 2002a, 205, states, "Constantine aspired to earn a place among the Apostles," and adds, 2011, 217 n. 43, that an equation with Christ is an implausible suggestion because, "That would have constituted blasphemy, as Constantine well knew." Holloway 2004, 15, also sees Constantine as equal of the Apostles.

272 Odahl 2005, 270; Barnes 2007, 208, 219.

273 For Constantine as the equal of the Apostles, see Theodoret, *Church History* 1.1, ed. Parmentier and Hansen 1998, 4, trans. Jackson 1892, 33 (Constantine has a calling from heaven like that of the divine Apostle) and Mesarites, *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople* 39.3, ed. and trans. Downey 1957, 891, 915.

274 For Constantine as the equal of Christ, see: Heisenberg 1908, 115 (an inference made on the assumption that the Holy Apostles was built on the same architectural plan as the Holy Sepulchre complex in Jerusalem – an assumption rightly questioned by Baynes 1972, 94–95); Mango 1990, 58; Leeb 1992, 103–106; Speck 1995, 144–45; Clauss 1999, 458–60; Speck 2000, 121; Rebenich 2000, 311–17; Kolb 2001, 70; Wallraff 2001a, 136 and 2001b, 264; Mitchell 2007, 244; Van Dam 2007, 309, 338, 341 (where, like Heisenberg, he claims that the Holy Apostles was modelled on the Holy Sepulchre); Stephenson 2009, 288–89; Leithart 2010, 93–94. Dagron 1974, 407, claims that Constantine "se veut l'égal du Christ" whereas Dagron 2003, 141, discusses the possible meanings of the arrangement but cannot decide what Constantine's intention was. Bleckmann 2007, 94–95, notes the difficulty of reaching a decision, and Johnson 2009, 188, simply mentions the two possibilities.

275 Compare also Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 6.2, ed. Heikel 1902, 206, where God is said to have rewarded Constantine with not merely thirty years on the throne but an eternal rule.

276 Straub 1967, 45 n. 44, opts for ambiguity: "Constantine ... left the visitors to his tomb free to decide whether he was to be counted as τρισκαιδέκατος ἀπόστολος among the Apostles, or to be seen as ἰσόχριστος."

277 For the comparisons, see Long 1987, 316. On the Arch frieze, see Kolb 2001, 158–62 (M 5).

278 Spier 1997, 33 with fig. 6, and 39 with fig. 12; Spier 2007a, 229 no. 56 with fig. 1; Spier 2007b, nos. 444 and 445.

279 Rebenich 2000, 311–12 (no. 1) notes the parallel between these depictions and Constantine's funerary arrangement. Spieser 1998, 65 with fig. 1, considering depictions in church apses, notes that the imagery of Christ seated among the Apostles disappeared after the mid-fifth century.

280 Johnson 2009, 180–94.

281 Stockmeier 1980, 109–113.

282 Van Dam 2007, 60, refers to "a mausoleum for his family," and Johnson 2008, 258–59, alleges that Socrates and Procopius support this view. But in fact, Procopius states that it was Constantius (not Constantine) who determined that all future emperors should be buried there.

283 Compare Rebenich 2000, 313 (no. 5).

284 *De Pascha Computus* 19, trans. Ogg 1955, 17; Daniélou 1964, 124–35.

285 Davies 2000, 13–19, 76–78, 93–101; Rehak 2006, 62–95.

286 Eusebius, *Life* 4.64.2, ed. p. 147, trans. p. 179.

287 Eusebius, *Life* 1.2.2, ed. pp. 15–16, trans. pp. 67–68. In his earlier writing, Eusebius had suggested a parallel between Constantine and God even while he was alive. At the climax of the *Church History*, the defeat of Licinius by Constantine and Crispus is described thus: "Taking God the universal King, and God's Son the Saviour of all, as Guide and Ally, father and son together divided their battle array against God's enemies on every side, and easily carried off the victory": Eusebius, *Church History* 10.9.4, ed. p. 900, trans. p. 332.

288 Eusebius, *Life* 1.1.3, ed. p. 15, trans. p. 67.

289 On the inscription, see Bowersock 2005, 11–12; Krautheimer 1987; Krautheimer 1989, 4 (where it is said to be irrelevant for dating the original construction). On the date of the church, see Bowersock 2005 with Barnes 2011, 88–89 (nos. 8 and 9). Van Dam 2007, 222–23, sees this inscription as a "Christian response to that on the Arch of Constantine – but it should not be forgotten that the inscription on the Arch likewise credits divine leadership, although ambiguously, with the words *instinctu divinitatis*.

290 MacCormack 1981, 104–106; Price 1987, 92–93.

291 MacCormack 1981, 99–100, 104–106.

292 MacCormack 1981, 112–113; Mackay 1999, 202–203.

293 Bruun 1954, 20 n. 4.

294 MacCormack 1981, 102, 111–12.

295 *Pan. Lat.* VI.2.1, ed. and trans. pp. 219, 573.

296 *Pan. Lat.* VI.7.3–4, ed. and trans. pp. 227–28, 575; MacCormack 1981, 108–110, 119–20. For Constantius' ascension to the pagan Olympus, compare also *Pan. Lat.* VII.3.3, ed. and trans. pp. 194, 565.

297 MacCormack 1981, 115–17.

298 Bruun 1954; Koep 1958; Calderone 1973, 248–61; Grünewald 1990, 161–62; Bruun 1997, 48. Also Leeb 1992, 21–22; Kolb 2001, 253–54 (M27); Donati and Gentili 2005, 238 no. 57; Walter 2006, 27–28, figs. 199–200.

299 Kötzsche-Breitenbruch 1982, 220–21.

300 See the remarks of Bruun 1954, 19–25.

301 Bruun 1954, 27, connects the draped head on the *consecratio* coins with "the well known reproductions of the emperor sacrificing as *Pontifex Maximus*" but admits the significance "is not quite clear." Calderone 1973, 259–60, objects to a connection with sacrifice. Hallett 2005, 160, 257, 259, sees the veiled portrait expressing the emperor's "respect for the cult of the gods, and his pre-eminent role in public religion." However, Kötzsche-Breitenbruch 1982, 218–19, sees it as a symbol of death. See also MacCormack 1981, 122; Bastien 1992–1994, I, 181–99. Examples of other veiled emperors: *RIC* V.1, Claudius Gothicus nos. 297–99; *RIC* VII, Trier nos. 200–207, Arles nos. 173–78, Rome nos. 104–109, Siscia nos. 41–46, Thessaloniki nos. 24–26.

302 E.g. DIVO CONSTANTINO AVG, DIVO CONSTANTINO P, DIVVS CONSTANTINVS AVG PATER AVGG, DV CONSTANTINVS PT AVGG, and DIV CONSTANTINVS PT AVGG. Calderone 1973, 248–49.

303 Comet: Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 41.16, ed. Dufraigne 1975, 59, trans. Bird 1994, 50–51; Eutropius 10.8, ed. Verheyk 1821, 250–51, trans. Bird 1993, 66; Burgess 1999, 218.

304 For this last type, see Eusebius, *Life* 4.73, ed. p. 150, trans. p. 182; *RIC* VIII, Constantinople 1 (gold *solidus*); Constantinople 37; Trier 44, 68; Lyon 12, 17; Arles 42; Heraclea 14; Nicomedia 4, 18, 25; Cyzicus 4, 19, 25, 30; Antioch 37, 39; Alexandria 4, 12, 22 (all bronze); Engemann 2007, 207 fig. 18. The same imagery of the divine hand is invoked by Eusebius in *In Praise of Constantine* 10.7, ed. Heikel 1902, 223, trans. Drake 1976, 102: "God Himself, the Supreme Sovereign, stretches out His right hand to him [i.e., Constantine] from above, and confirms him victor over every pretender and aggressor." It is also found at Eusebius, *Life* 1.28.1, ed. p. 29, trans. p. 80: "This God he began to invoke in prayer, beseeching and imploring him to show him who he was, and to stretch out his right hand to assist him in his plans."

305 Making a connection with Elijah, see Bruun 1954, 27, 30, following earlier scholars.

306 Perler 1953, 40 with pl. 7; Calderone 1973, 257–58; Dagron 2003, 137 n. 39. For the painting of the ascent of Elijah in the "New Catacomb" on the Via Latina, see Bargebuhr 1991, 71–74 with pl. 36. See also Jensen 2000, 162–64.

307 MacCormack 1981, 123–27; Kötzsche-Breitenbruch 1982, 216–17.

308 *Pan. Lat.* VII.14.3, ed. and trans. pp. 209 with n. 50, 571. Sol's chariot was traditionally used in the iconography of apotheosis, so this passage cannot be taken to indicate anything about Constantius' religious beliefs (compare Berrens 2004, 148). Commentary: MacCormack 1981, 107–21.

309 Compare coins showing Sol in his chariot: Gnecchi 1912, II, 16–17 no. 67 and pl. 50.6 (Antoninus Pius); 52 nos. 3–4 and pl. 78.3–4 (Commodus); or the bearded Septimius Severus as Sol: *RIC* IV.1, Septimius Severus 102 with pl. VI.2. See also Kötzsche-Breitenbruch 1982, 217–18.

310 Gnecchi 1912, I, pl. 12; *RIC* VII, Constantinople no. 42, dated to 333 by Toynbee 1944, 198; Bastien 1992–1994, II, 681 with pl. 191.2. Interpretation: Fears 1977, 309. Further illustrations: Leeb 1992, fig. 41; Donati and Gentili 2005, 224 no. 34; Walter 2006, 29, figs. 31, 201; Engemann 2007, 207 fig. 17.

311 Grabar 1969, 40 (with figs. 99, 100) and 26 (with fig. 53), claims that the hand shown on these coins derived directly from Jewish art, citing the frescoes in the synagogue at Dura. More ancient precedents include the hands at the ends of the rays of the sun disc of Aton in the Amarna art of Egypt. For comparanda, see Kötzsche 1986. MacCormack 1981, 123–24, discusses the adoption of the motif in Christian art. Compare the general comments of Bruun 1954, 28–29; Straub 1967, 44–46; Kötzsche-Breitenbruch 1982, 219–20; Leeb 1992, 121–22.

312 *Pan. Lat.* VI.7.3, ed. and trans. pp. 227, 575. Commentary: MacCormack 1981, 107–21.

313 Dragendorff and Krüger 1924; Perler 1953, 41–43 with pls. 8–11; MacCormack 1981, 123; Kleiner 1992, 345–49; Cameron 2011, 726 with fig. 10.

314 Wallraff 2001b, 267.

315 Dagron 2003, 137, comments on the imagery: "One senses that Christianisation, making the notion of immortality respectable again, allowed the classical image of the imperial *consecratio*, although it had been

abandoned for some eighty years, to be re-employed with a different meaning."

316 Bruun 1954, 30: "They could be accepted by everybody regardless of faith." Price 1987, 101.

317 Gradel 2002, 54–57.

318 Gradel 2002, 63–68.

319 Gradel 2002, 343–47, 355–56.

320 Gradel 2002, 356–63 (quote from p. 362).

321 Gradel 2002, 364–65. On the other hand, Arce 2000, 124, deduces from the term *divus* that "the Senate had declared Constantine to be just that," i.e., a god. This statement, it may be noted, assumes the continuing role of the Senate in acts of consecration. We may reject the suggestion (Alföldi 1948, 117; Koep 1958, 96) that the abbreviation of the word DIVVS to the letters DV or DIV may have been used to obscure an apotheosis that was incompatible with Constantine's Christian faith, not least because the unabbreviated title DIVO or DIVVS occurs on some gold examples.

322 *Chronicon Paschale*, A.D. 356, ed. Dindorf 1832, I, 542, trans. Whitby and Whitby 1989, 33.

323 For the sources, see Burgess 2003, 5 n. 2.

324 Procopius, *Buildings* 1.4.9–24, ed. Dewing and Downey 1954, 48–55.

325 Burgess 2003, 32–34.

326 Socrates, *Church History* 2.38.33–43, ed. Hansen 1995, 167–68, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 67; Sozomen, *Church History* 4.21.3–6, ed. Bidez and Hansen 1995, 171–72, trans. Zenos and Hartranft 1891, 316; Theodore Anagnostes, *Church History*, ed. Hansen 1971, 47; Theophanes, *Chronicle*, ed. de Boor 1883–1885, 46. Discussion: Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 56–58, 104–107.

327 Ammianus Marcellinus 21.16.20, ed. and trans. Rolfe 1940, 184–85; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orations* 5.16–17 (esp. 17.25–29), ed. and trans. Bernardi 1983, 322–29; Philostorgius, *Church History* 6.6, ed. Bidez and Winkelmann 1981, 74, trans. Walford 1855, 474, trans. Amidon 2007, 83–84; Procopius, *Buildings* 1.4.19, ed. and trans. Dewing and Downey 1954, 52–53.

328 Downey 1951, 73, connects the arrival of the relics with the beginning of construction.

329 Speck 2000, claimed that Constantine's body was originally placed in the centre of the church, but was relocated in the church's east arm after its return from St. Acacius' church. His argument that the eastern arm of the cruciform church served as the mausoleum is untenable, however.

330 Jerome, *Chronicle*, ed. Helm 1984, 245, trans. Donalson 1996, 53; *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, ed. Burgess 1993, 240; *Chronicon Paschale* A.D. 370 (9 April), ed. Dindorf 1832, 559, trans. Whitby and Whitby 1989, 48.

331 Holloway 2004, 86–93.

332 Holloway 2004, 93–104.

333 Mango 1990, 59, sees the addition of the church to Constantine's mausoleum as a response to what he calls "Constantine's megolomaniac wishes" (p. 61). Speck 2000, 156, imagines that Constantine's sarcophagus was shifted from the crossing of the cruciform church to the eastern arm of that church, so that the emperor "wurde zu einem normalen christlichen Kaiser herabgestuft."

334 Compare Krautheimer 1971 (first published 1964), 30–31, who imagines that Macedonius aimed "to end a situation that had been an irritant for so long: the celebration of Mass at the sarcophagus of Constantine and his identification with the Apostles," but writes, "The reasons for the opposition, specifically by the Orthodox, to the move and the support for it by the Arians, are not entirely clear." Effenberger 2000, 74, quotes him approvingly. Dvornik 1966, 751 (who believes the emperors' association with the Apostles was only established under Constantius, Constantine having originally been buried in St. Acacius' church), similarly sees Macedonius' actions as "a protest against any association of emperors with the apostles." On the contrary, Mango 1990, 60, sees no sinister motive behind Macedonius' action.

335 Frede 1999, 59; Gregg and Groh 1981, 59–70.

336 Procopius, *Buildings* 1.4.19, ed. and trans. Dewing and Downey 1954, 52–53. By contrast, on the basis of this testimony Johnson 2008, 258–59, tries to attribute to Constantine the intention to create a hereditary tomb.

337 See also Dvornik 1966, 760–62.

338 John Chrysostom, *Adversus Judaeos et Gentiles Demonstratio* 9, ed. Migne 1862b, 825.

339 Weinstock 1957, 235 n. 143, considers that Demades wanted to make Alexander an invincible god, not the thirteenth god.

340 John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 2 Corinthians* 26, *PG* 61, 580–82, trans. Chambers 1889, 402–403.

341 Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2006, 63–65, 110, Table I.

342 Krautheimer 1971, 32; Dagron 1984b, 408; 2003, 142–43.

343 Athanasius, *Against the Pagans* 43, ed. and trans. Thomson 1971, 118–21, and, opposing posthumous deification, 9.34–66, ed. and trans. Thomson 1971, 24–27; Dvornik 1966, 731–33. In *Discourses Against the Arians* 3.5, ed. Metzler and Savvidis 2000, 310–11, trans. Robertson 1891, 395–96, Athanasius attempted to explain the unity of the Son and the Father by describing their relationship to each other as being similar to the relationship between an imperial image and the emperor himself. For this and several similar passages in other Christian texts, see Setton 1941, 198–202; Kolb 2001, 46–47.

344 Although Theodosius I was also buried in the rotunda, later emperors were buried in the church or in one of two "stoas" adjacent to it: Julian and Jovian in the north stoa; Valentinian I presumably in the main body of the church; Arcadius and Theodosius II in the south stoa. It may be that the decision to bury the Apostolic relics rather than house them in caskets meant that the emperors, even if they chose to be buried in the church, could no longer be accused of claiming superiority to them. Ironically, John Chrysostom was himself laid to rest in the church, together with Gratian's wife, Constantia, Maurice's father, and the patriarch Flavian.

345 Van Dam 2007, 317–53, discusses the rejection of the equation of Constantine (and other emperors) with Christ by theologians such as Athanasius, Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen, and John Chrysostom. On Constantine's sainthood, see Dagron 2003, 143–48; Wortley 2006, 355–61. On the chapel of St. Constantine erected at the porphyry column in the ninth century, see Mango 1981, 107; Mango 1993, art. III, 2. DePalma Digeser 2000, 74.

EPILOGUE

I would like to close this book with a review of some of the more significant observations that have been made about the faith and the propaganda of the first Christian emperor. We may begin by looking back to the year 310, when a panegyrist asserted that Constantine was protected by a solar deity ("your Apollo") who had granted him military success and a long rule. The orator also avowed that Constantine, when he gazed upon his solar god, had recognized himself. The claim reflects the impact of a new youthful, beardless, and handsome image of Constantine that had by now become firmly established on the emperor's coinage. The new portrait style not only indicated the emperor's rejection of the Tetrarchic system but also suggested his affinity with Apollo and with conquerors of the past such as Alexander, Augustus, and Trajan.

Following the precedent of third-century rulers, Constantine bolstered his legitimacy by choosing a divine protector and by claiming to have been granted victory and worldwide rule by that divinity. The emperor's choice of a solar deity as his protector suggests the importance of the precedent set by Aurelian, who had claimed that Sol had granted him rule over the entire globe. Although it is conceivable that Constantine's father, Constantius, had also been an adherent of the sun-god, and that this may have influenced Constantine's choice of deity, Constantius' allegiance cannot be demonstrated convincingly.

From 310, the god Sol Invictus began to appear on Constantinian coins, described as the emperor's *comes* (protective companion). At the same time, Constantine began to be shown on coins sporting a radiate crown with vertical rays, and from 316 he was depicted receiving a laurel crown or globe from Sol. Although the radiate crown had become a standard accessory of Roman emperors, it had an added force in Constantine's case, since he had adopted a solar god as his protector. Whether the crown was derived from that of the Hellenistic kings or from the Actian wreath, it suggested that Constantine reflected the light of the solar god on earth and that by doing so he inaugurated a new Golden Age of peace and prosperity. A story emerged (probably from the imperial court) that the sun-god had sent the emperor a vision or dream of a powerful symbol – a symbol that conferred heavenly support, victory, and long life; a symbol that was incorporated into a standard and carried as a talisman into battle. The tale illustrates well Constantine's debt to ancient theories about a king's intimate connection with the sun, for similar stories had been connected with Seleucus and Augustus.

The close association between an emperor and his chosen god conferred a degree of reflected divinity upon the ruler. In Constantine's case, this manifested itself visually in monuments such as the immense, seated, half-naked statue of the emperor in the Basilica of Maxentius in Rome, which recalled Pheidias' statue of Zeus at Olympia.

When Constantine came to power in 306 and brought an end to persecution in Britain, Gaul, and Spain, he clearly recognized the political wisdom of

accommodating rather than suppressing the Christians, although there is no reason to believe he considered himself a Christian. Constantine's aim was to secure the prosperity of the empire through respect for the Supreme Divinity. At first (as reflected in the policy agreed in Milan in 313), this meant ensuring that all citizens, pagan or Christian, were free to worship as they wished to guarantee that as much divine benevolence as possible would be conferred upon the state. The Lateran basilica in Rome may have been built soon after Constantine's victory of 312 to demonstrate to the Christians the sincerity of his belief that they, like the pagans, contributed to the safety of the Roman state through the worship of their God. In the same spirit, Constantine may have begun to undertake bloodless sacrifice as early as 315, although perhaps without completely shunning traditional sacrifice. It is perhaps a reflection of the emperor's desire to reconcile traditional religion with worship of the supreme solar Deity that the scenes of pagan sacrifice on the Arch of Constantine are accompanied by other sculptures that indicate the importance of Sol.

As early as 314, during the Donatist controversy, Constantine expressed his goal that all mankind should be unified in the worship of the Supreme God. The emperor may well have considered the acceptance of a single Supreme Deity sufficient to qualify as a Christian, and his personal belief may not have been very much more sophisticated. Even within the Church, where faith was a matter of more profound debate, there was no agreement as to what constituted orthodoxy. This was a matter that demanded Constantine's immediate attention, since disputes among the Christian community might arouse divine wrath and thereby endanger the emperor's position and the security of the empire. However, such ecclesiastical problems were not easily resolved and would continue to bother Constantine throughout his reign. The Arian controversy would prove particularly troubling, since Arians had been accused of ditheism, whereas Constantine's earthly monarchy sought legitimacy on the ground that it followed a heavenly monarchical prototype.

Although Constantine claimed to be a follower of Christ from 314, the image of Sol Invictus, which had been used on coins since 310 to represent Constantine's Supreme Deity, continued to appear until late 324 or early 325. Had an adherence to the sun-god paved the way for Constantine's conversion to Christianity? Did Constantine naïvely imagine that the ancient Sol Invictus might be accepted by all Christians as being one and the same as the Christian God? Whatever the truth, the solar attributes of the Father and the Son familiar from the scriptures were clearly thought sufficient to justify Constantine's continued use of the long-standing iconography of Sol. It is possible that, by exploiting familiar, traditional imagery, Constantine hoped to lead others from paganism to Christianity.

Sol disappeared from Constantinian coins, having made a final appearance immediately after the victory over Licinius. Constantine apparently realized that the imagery of Sol Invictus would never be recognized by the more observant Christians, who firmly associated the god with polytheism. Whether Constantine had retained Sol for so long out of a mistaken belief that the image of the god might become acceptable to Christians, or because the presence of the image was useful for keeping pagans on his side, or because worship of the god might potentially provide a route to Christianity (or a combination of these possibilities) is uncertain.

About the time of Sol's disappearance, coins ceased to show Constantine wearing the radiate crown. Instead, the youthful imperial portraits acquired a heavenward gaze and the emperor began to be shown wearing the diadem. Now that Constantine had disposed of his last rival and had secured sole rule over the empire, the adoption of the diadem emphasized the newly established monarchy, and the heavenward gaze indicated that Constantine modelled his earthly rule on the government above. In the context of the foundation of Constantinople, the oriental associations of the diadem may also have been attractive.

The diadem associated Constantine, now unrivalled ruler over the Roman world, with the great conqueror Alexander, with the kings who succeeded him, and with their extensive empire. The heavenward gaze, which was also an attribute of the Hellenistic kings, indicated Constantine's relationship with an unidentified but inspirational higher power: it intimated that he modelled himself on his heavenly protector, that he ruled on earth with the divine Law (Nomos) or Reason (Logos) as his guide, and that he possessed a divine mind (*divina mens*).

Solar imagery was not completely abandoned, however. In 330, Constantine's bronze statue sporting a radiate crown, presumably with angled rays, was set on top of a porphyry column in the forum at Constantinople, implying that the emperor radiated the light of the Supreme Deity on his people. The Deity, although clearly radiant, was unspecified, and the statue was therefore usefully open to both pagan and Christian interpretations. By radiating the light of the Supreme God on his citizens, Constantine guaranteed their salvation. The emperor's salvific role was also suggested by a ceremony instituted in the same year in which his statue was wheeled around Constantinople's hippodrome, expressing his royal status and his role in maintaining the stability of the cosmos. On the central barrier of the circus, the emperor had erected two monuments to his solar god – a masonry obelisk sheathed in plates of polished bronze and a column of intertwined serpents from Apollo's sanctuary in Delphi.

Once Constantine's corpus of propaganda imagery had been purged of representations of Sol, it could no longer offend those Christians who saw in Sol only a pagan deity or who considered it unacceptable to depict the Deity. On the other hand, Constantinian propaganda still made no overt reference to the emperor's personal association with the Christian God. Nevertheless, the victory of 324 meant that the emperor was in a unique position to show increased generosity towards the Christian community, and he now went beyond rectifying the wrongs that had been done to it, openly expressing his contempt for paganism. Despite his overt rejection of polytheism, however, Constantine, perhaps under the influence of the teachings of Lactantius, urged tolerance on the part of Christians, and stopped short of banning the customs of the temples.

To adorn his new capital, Constantine stripped the metal from the doors, roofs, and cult statues of pagan shrines in the eastern empire, but he was careful not to go too far. He perhaps concentrated his destructive attentions on the many shrines that had already fallen into disrepair, and we know that the few that he destroyed outright were singled out either because they obscured sites sacred to others or because they were centres of immoral activity. The place of Christ's resurrection was of particular significance to the Christians, and Constantine ensured that it was purified of pagan structures and duly adorned with a basilica so magnificent that it might be construed – by Eusebius, if not also by the emperor himself – as the New Jerusalem of Biblical prophecy. In Constantinople, a cathedral dedicated to Holy Peace was built close to the heart of the city (although it was not, as tradition might have dictated, in the emperor's new forum).

Despite the depredation of certain pagan sanctuaries and the construction of new churches, in Constantinople the old temples were allowed to remain and pagan statuary was used to decorate the city – striking confirmation of Constantine's need to refer constantly to tradition whilst working for innovation.

By portraying himself as the earthly representative of the Supreme Deity, whose light he reflected on his people, Constantine was exploiting elements of an ancient tradition of kingship philosophy. According to such theories of monarchy, the more he allowed himself to be guided by the Logos or Nomos, the more closely he would imitate the heavenly government of the Supreme Deity, and the better his rule would become. He served as the shepherd of his people or as the helmsman or charioteer of the state, and the people looked to him as an example of godly virtue so that they might be led to salvation. These theoretical ideas are also found in Eusebius' explanation of the nature of Constantine's rule in his oration *In Praise of Constantine*: the Logos-Nomos from whom Constantine took his guidance was Christ, although Constantine and Christ shared a similar status in relation to God.

According to the kingship orations of Dio Chrysostom, Hercules served as the Logos-Nomos of the supreme god Zeus, and if Trajan were to imitate Hercules, then he would be victorious and become his people's saviour. Dio even suggested that Trajan could become divine like Hercules by imitating Hercules' heroic deeds. Similarly, Hermetists and Neoplatonists held that with proper training enlightened people could recognize the Logos within themselves and achieve union with the One. Therefore, according to the logic of kingship philosophy, not only

was it possible for Constantine to grow closer to his God by following in the footsteps of Christ the Logos, but it was also theoretically possible for him to become, or recognize within himself the Animate Logos, Christ, and thereby achieve union with God.

Eusebius hinted at an identification between Christ and Constantine when he suggested that the emperor's church of the Holy Sepulchre, founded to mark the victory of 324 and the apparent success at Nicaea, was the New Temple due to descend from heaven when Christ returned in the eschatological era. Furthermore, he went so far as to claim that the emperor had been resurrected after death to continue ruling over the empire. Although these assertions might on their own be interpreted as rhetorical, the facts that Constantine chose to be depicted above the gates of the imperial palace slaying a serpent (an act analogous to that of Christ at the Second Coming), and that he chose to be buried surrounded by the coffins of the Apostles, suggest that it was not only Eusebius who was prepared to imply a parallel between Constantine and Christ. Constantine may well have expected to be worshipped after death, as his imperial predecessors had been. Indeed, Eusebius suggests that he hoped to benefit from worship given to the Apostles in the place of his burial, and religious activities at the porphyry column suggest that some Christians may have recognized Constantine as Christ at the Second Coming. The analogies that began to be drawn between Constantine and Christ may help to explain a change that began to take place in Christian art in this period: Christ the philosopher and wonder-worker (an image that had been attacked by pagan critics of Christianity) was largely superseded by Christ the divine king.

Constantine arranged for his body to be laid to rest amidst twelve sarcophagi destined to receive relics of the Apostles, and by doing so equated himself with Christ. However, this architectural scheme was quickly altered, probably by Constantius, with the intention of downgrading his father (and all later rulers, including himself) to a status equal to that of the Apostles. In this way, Constantius attempted to dissociate the problematical issue of emperor worship from the equally tricky theological question of the relationship of the Son (or Logos) to the Father. But some Christian interpreters of the altered architectural scheme, such as John Chrysostom, preferred to understand that Constantine and the later emperors had been reduced even further in status: they were not equals of the Apostles but merely the Apostles' "doorkeepers." Clearly, Constantine was no longer an equal of Christ, but the way had been paved for him to be venerated as a saint.

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