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THE CONSTANTINIAN PORTRAIT

EVELYN B. HARRISON
EXCEPT for some of the observations on the colossal Constantine in the Conservatori in Rome that were made after the original paper was given, the text of this article is substantially that which was delivered during the 1966 Dumbarton Oaks Symposium on The Age of Constantine: Tradition and Innovation. The original idea of the paper was to investigate the coin portraits of the Age of Constantine and the period of the tetrarchy which went immediately before it together with the sculptured portraits that have been assigned to these periods, and to see what might result from such a confrontation both for the development of style in these portraits and for the question of what the portraits officially tried to represent. The coins used for illustration were taken almost entirely from the Dumbarton Oaks Collection. Coming to the subject as a student of sculpture rather than of coins, I prefer simply to take the word of the numismatists for the dating and place of issue of each coin, and the recent publication of the Dumbarton Oaks coins offers the needed information in reliable and convenient form.\(^1\)

The truth seems to be that for the art of the portrait the time of Constantine is still a time of transition. It is only in the second half of the fourth century, in works like the head of Arcadius in Istanbul\(^2\) or the statue from Aphrodisias tentatively identified as Valentinian II,\(^3\) that we feel really at ease before it. Esthetically at ease, that is to say, for the element of personal individuality is so firmly repressed in these elegant heads that if we have not epigraphical evidence for their identity, it is not always easy to say who they are. In the Constantinian portrait, even when the size or medium influences the forms as strongly as it does in the provincial bronze portrait of Constantine from Nish in Belgrade (figs. 1, 2)\(^4\) or the colossal marble head from the Basilica of Constantine in Rome, now in the Conservatori (figs. 3, 4),\(^5\) we still sense something of the man himself; we can still talk about things like the shape of the mouth or the set of the jaw, just as we can talk about these things in the portraits of Augustus. In this sense the Constantinian portrait is still a Roman portrait.

But at the same time the late antique ideals are making themselves felt in various ways and to various extents. The scene that we have to survey is a restless one. The coins show clearly that violent differences of style can occur almost simultaneously in different parts of the Empire and we shall have to

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\(^1\) "Late Roman Gold and Silver Coins at Dumbarton Oaks: Diocletian to Eugenius," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 18 (1964), pp. 161–236, edited by A. R. Bellinger; coins from Diocletian to Galeria (Nos. 1–55) by C. H. V. Sutherland; coins of Licinius and Constantine (Nos. 36–71) by Patrick Bruun. I owe the idea for the present paper to Professor Bellinger.


ask whether similar discrepancies are to be found in other kinds of portraits and if so how they can be related to what we see in the coins.\textsuperscript{8}

The discrepancy appears most strikingly when we compare a coin of Constantine minted in Serdica in 313 (fig. 5)\textsuperscript{7} with one struck at Trier between 309 and 313 (fig. 6).\textsuperscript{8} Were it not for the identity of the coiffure and headdress, we should be tempted to ask whether the two heads can really represent the same person. In both the hair on top of the head appears short, and it is cut off short on the nape of the neck, but over the forehead it is long enough to form an oval (rather than rectangular) framing for the face, and the strands group themselves into separate locks that are represented very schematically in the coin from Serdica, more naturalistically in that from Trier, but are approximately similar in number and relative size. Each head wears a laurel wreath. This is composed of two very regular rows of small, stiff leaves; almost like strings of beads, in the Serdica portrait, of larger, more leaflike forms in the coin from Trier. The former wears a short stubble beard like that of Licinius, while the latter is clean-shaven, as we expect Constantine to be. The heads from the medallions of the Arch of Constantine show us this difference, Licinius bearded (fig. 7)\textsuperscript{9} and Constantine smooth-shaven (figs. 8–9).\textsuperscript{10} The arch should be contemporary with the Serdica coin, approximately contemporary with that from Trier. Note that the hair of Licinius is cut so short that it forms angles over the temples, whereas that of Constantine is longer, with separate locks forming an oval frame for the face.

It appears, then, that the artist of the Serdica mint, which Patrick Bruun suggests was opened up briefly by Licinius in 313 to produce these coins for Constantine, did not know much about Constantine's appearance beyond the fact that the hair should frame his face in a certain way. This feature, we must conclude, retained the same overriding iconographic importance that it had had in the days of Augustus. For the rest of the head, the die cutter was used to making portraits of the eastern tetrarchs and he made Constantine's accordingly. Figure 10 shows a coin of Licinius struck at Antioch in 313 after he had taken over the mint on the death of Maximinus Daza.\textsuperscript{11} The style is the same as that of the Constantine from Serdica (fig. 5), the small, stiff leaves of the wreath, the stubble beard, the round, staring eye, and the tremendously simplified planes of the heavy face and neck. Compared with the Trier Constantine (fig. 6), which also appears to represent a fairly corpulent person, or at any rate one with a quite thick neck, the Serdica and Antioch coins seem to embody an entirely different theory of how one goes about representing a human face. The Western portrait is, in spite of the schematic hatching of the

\textsuperscript{8} H. P. L'Orange in his 	extit{Studien zur Geschichte des spästantiken Porträts} (Oslo, 1933), pp. 15–46, has discussed the question with very full documentation on the side of the sculptured portraits. His conclusions need to be moderated rather than extended.

\textsuperscript{7} DOP, 18, No. 46, gold.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., No. 39, gold.

\textsuperscript{10} H. P. L'Orange and A. Von Gerkan, 	extit{Der spästantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens} (Berlin, 1939), pl. 45; L'Orange, 	extit{Studien}, figs. 129–132.

\textsuperscript{11} L'Orange and Von Gerkan, 	extit{ibid.}, pls. 43, 44; L'Orange, 	extit{Studien}, figs. 120–128.
hair on the crown of the head and the unnatural position of the ear, an organically pictured head in which flesh and bone preserve their different natures and act together to give relief to the lateral view of the face. The eye sits in its socket; the cheek-bone projects; the nose is hard and the flesh around the mouth is soft. The double nature of the double chin, part jutting bone, part sagging flesh, is clearly kept in mind.

In contrast to this the Eastern coins simplify the plastic forms and heighten the expressive features in a way that seems deliberately to negate all Greco-Roman facility in representing the surface appearance of the individual living man. Whether one calls this provincial (the least complimentary term), orientalizing (good or bad according to one’s point of view), or a forerunner of the Late Antique (the most ennobling designation), it seems to be a genuine characteristic of the coin style of the Eastern mints at the beginning of the Constantinian Age.\(^\text{12}\)

If we go back to the time of the earlier tetrarchy, we see that the difference between East and West is already there, though the Eastern style seems less a caricature of itself than does the Constantine from Serdica. Figures 11 and 12 show two coins of Diocletian, the former minted in Rome in 293,\(^\text{13}\) the latter in Antioch, 290–292.\(^\text{14}\) The somewhat earlier date of this Eastern coin compared with those that we have been looking at, appears in the larger, more natural leaves of the wreath and the almost human look of the ear; but eye, eyebrow, and cheek are already geometricized to an astonishing degree. The progression of this style within the Eastern area can be seen when we compare a coin of Galerius (fig. 13), minted in Antioch between 299 and 302,\(^\text{15}\) with one of Maximinus Daza (fig. 14) struck in Nicomedia in 306–307.\(^\text{16}\) The latter shows smaller leaves, a bigger eye, and more schematic lines in the forehead.

That there was some kind of parallel development in Rome appears when we compare a coin of Maximianus (fig. 15), Rome 293,\(^\text{17}\) with the silver coin of Maxentius (fig. 16) struck in Rome between 308 and 312.\(^\text{18}\) Small, stiff leaves; big expressive eye, big awkwardly shaped ear, and a general increase of linear emphasis as against plastic modelling all show that the Western like the Eastern engraver is making a steady progress toward what we think of as Late Antique style. But no one could confuse the Maxentius with the Maximinus Daza (fig. 17) from Antioch struck about 310 to 313.\(^\text{19}\) Many of the same features are there, but the Maxentius has kept the modelling of the face, albeit in linearized form, while the Maximinus Daza is even more simplified than its predecessors.

It is not enough to say “awkward provincial” for the Eastern portrait and

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\(^{13}\) DOP, 18, No. 4, gold.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., No. 7, gold.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., No. 27, gold.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., No. 28, gold.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., No. 16, gold.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., No. 34, silver.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., No. 30, gold.
“stadtrömisch” for the Western. If we compare a type in which both styles were, so to speak, at a disadvantage—the absolute full front view which was only exceptionally attempted—we see that the Eastern solution is actually more successful than the Western. The full-face Maxentius (fig. 18), minted in Ostia in 311, looks like two profiles glued together and spread out flat. One would never associate this moon-shaped object with the square-built face on the silver coin. On the other hand, the Licinius (fig. 19) struck in Nicomedia in 321–322, seems not incompatible with the profile face of Licinius on the Antioch coin of 313 (fig. 10). The simplification of all the planes and the domination of the big, round eyes as well as the stronger plastic projection of both profile and front face aid this impression of unity.

A very similar impression is given by the porphyry bust in Cairo that has accordingly been identified as a portrait either of Licinius or of Maximinus Daza. On the basis of this resemblance L’Orange concluded that the famous porphyry groups of tetrarchs in Venice (figs. 20–21) and in the Vatican (figs. 22–23) were made in the East and that their striking style was part of a general Eastern style that had no one particular center. He noted the fact that all the Eastern mints showed the same style, and concluded that it was common to coins and sculpture. Its main features were unorganic, geometrical form (both in the simple solids that form the heads and in the linear patterns of the features inscribed upon them), decorative symmetry, and an intensification of the expression to a stiff, icon-like stare. All these terms certainly apply to the porphyry figures as well as to the coins, but if we look at the heads of the Vatican group, the linear patterns of their faces remind us more of the Maxentius profile (fig. 16) than of anything else that we have seen, east or west, and the extraordinarily dumpy figures with their big heads and long arms are better paralleled in the friezes of the Arch of Constantine than in the more Eastern and earlier Arch of Galerius. It is hard to say whether the small, stiff leaves are significant or not, but they too remind us of coins of the time after 305. Delbrück has suggested a date around 304 for the Vatican group because of the advanced age of Diocletian, and this seems justified by the style. The group is said to have been found in Rome and there is no real evidence of where it was made. In any case, it appears that the Vatican group has less in common with the style of the Eastern coins than has the Venice group. Tradition had it that this group was brought from Akkon in Palestine in the thirteenth century, but a joining fragment has recently been excavated in Constantinople.

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20 P. R. Franke and M. Hirmer, Römische Kaiserporträts im Münzbild (Munich, 1961), fig. 46.
21 DOP, 18, No. 36, gold.
24 Porphyrywerke, p. 95.
25 Ibid., p. 92.
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It is the portrait of Diocletian (fig. 24) found in Nicomedia\textsuperscript{27} after the publication of L'Orange's basic study that does most to shatter any notion of a general Eastern style in sculpture corresponding to the general Eastern style of the coins. Figure 25 shows an Athenian portrait of Hadrian which also wears the oak wreath, the Civic Crown.\textsuperscript{28} This confrontation may help to prevent Diocletian's wreath from distracting our attention from the basic forms of the portrait. It should also help to dispel any doubts one might have that this is really a late third-century work. The heavy, square form of the head is like what we have seen on all the tetrarchic coins. The lines of the forehead are harshly engraved into the flesh, and the expression of the deeply carved eyes is heightened by reduplicated folds in the flesh beneath them. Though the drill is used in stationary fashion to perforate the wreath, there is no drilling in the hair. The ears are bigger than Hadrian's and more directed toward the front view, implying a lack of interest in the side view of the head.

At the same time the stereometric crystallization of forms that is supposed to be characteristic of the Eastern tetrarchic style has not taken place. There is more modelling and mobility in the flesh, more asymmetry in the patterns of the face, more plastic realism in hair and beard, than in any of the Roman works assigned by L'Orange to this period, not to speak of the Eastern portraits. Here is real evidence of a vital marble-working tradition that vigorously resists the suppression of all those surface subtleties which marble is so well adapted to display.

It should not really surprise us that Asia Minor is the center for such a survival. The head of Valentinian II from Aphrodisias is eloquent testimony to the Asia Minor sculptor's love for modulated surfaces as well as to his skill in producing them at a time when they had largely disappeared from the rest of the sculptural world. Asia Minor, then, cannot form part of L'Orange's eastern \textit{koine}, if indeed such a thing exists. Elisabeth Rosenbaum has made this abundantly clear in her recent catalogue of Roman and early Byzantine portraits from Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{29} But in some cases she may have gone too far in the other direction. \textit{Survival} of organic plastic form in this region is a fact we must all accept, but can we also assume a \textit{revival} of earlier ways of working and observing so far-reaching that a marble portrait which appears, to the innocent eye, to belong to the early Antonine period can be recognized, by the connoisseur, as really Constantinian? If such a thing were true, it would be very important, and we could not claim to understand the meaning and uses of the Constantinian portrait without asking where and why such revivals occurred. For a development of this kind must be the result of a deliberate intention on the part of the patrons who commissioned the work, and if it happened, as has been claimed, in more than one place in the Empire,


\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Op. cit.}, \textit{supra}, note 27, \textit{passim}. 
it would seem that the moving spirit must have been the arch-patron, the Emperor himself. Involving, as it does, the expenditure of more time on the part of the artist and the expenditure of more money on the part of the patron, such a technical revival is most unlikely to grow up from below as the result of any sort of spontaneous, grass-roots movement. We cannot, on the other hand, say *a priori* that such revivals involving technique as well as form do not occur. The Hadrianic architecture of Athens not only imitated the shapes of fifth-century buildings and their orders, but even resorted to such expensive and unshowy archaisms as the use of double-T clamps.

A fine portrait of a priest wearing a double rolled fillet (fig. 26), found at Aphrodisias by the New York University Expedition, has been dated by Rosenbaum to the time of Constantine. 30 She points to, among other things, the use of the drill to separate the locks of hair over the forehead as typical of Aphrodisian work in this period. But when we look at the modelling of the face and neck, we see that it would be an extraordinary renaissance indeed that would produce such modelling in the time of Constantine. It is not just that the surface of the flesh rises and sinks, as it does after a fashion in the Diocletian from Nicomedia. The ridges of flesh round firmly and smoothly into the sharply defined folds of neck and forehead. This particular kind of strong modelling first appears in the late Flavian age and is most characteristic of the time of Trajan. 31 It may have lasted through the Hadrianic period into the early Antonine in places like Aphrodisias, but even there it must have disappeared long before the end of the second century. For the origin of the drill-channels dividing the locks of hair on the forehead we may look to works like the posthumous Trajan in Ostia (fig. 27). The drill work on the Aphrodisian head is coarser, but its function is the same.

The carved eyes of the priest show that his date cannot be earlier than the time of Hadrian, and an early Antonine date is perhaps most likely. The delicate modelling of the lower lids would suggest this. The little herm portrait of Moiragenes from the Athenian Agora (fig. 28) is a much inferior work which also combines the engraved eyes with the remnants of Trajanic facial modelling. 32 Its inscription proves a date in the second century, though it cannot be closely pinned down. It may be that if we wait long enough Professor Erim will find an inscription to date the Aphrodisias priest, for he has already been able to add the draped torso of the figure. If we look for comparable drapery on the Arch of Constantine, we can find it, but it is in the Hadrianic medallions and the Antonine panels, not in the Constantinian reliefs.

Athens is another center for which an astonishing revival or survival of plastic competence and organic form has been claimed. 33 L’Orange set it between his Eastern and Western styles, seeing the influence of both in various examples. 34 But there is no doubt that following the invasion of the Heruli in

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30 Ibid., p. 177, no. 239.
32 Ibid., no. 25, pp. 35–37.
34 Studien, pp. 37–46.
267 Athenian marble sculpture fell upon very hard times.\textsuperscript{35} The manufacture of Attic sarcophagi, hitherto a thriving export business, ceased altogether, and sculptured gravestones for the Athenians themselves were no longer made. Such portraits as can be dated on the basis of clear resemblances to works from other parts of the Empire to the last quarter of the century show a coarseness of execution that bespeaks a general falling-off of marble-working technique.\textsuperscript{36} The Agora Excavations have yielded two heads which may belong to the time of the Second Tetrarchy. Neither of them, to be sure, can have been originally set up in the Agora in this period, for it lay in ruins outside the fortification wall that had been erected about 280 to defend the shrinking city against another incursion like that of the Herulians.\textsuperscript{37} They were probably brought here in the later fourth or fifth century to form part of a group of statues that decorated the gymnasium on the site of the old Odeion of Agrippa. The head of a man (fig. 29) may look rather feeble in comparison with the fine colossal head in Dresden that corresponds to the coin portraits of Maxentius,\textsuperscript{38} but the Athenian head has the hair and beard style of Maxentius and should belong to his time. This head is more narrowly built than the heads of any of the Tetrarchs, and the meditative expression suggests that the man is a philosopher rather than a ruler. The modelling of the eyelids is fairly conservative; in this one respect we might say that there is a survival of earlier forms, but in general the head is as simple in its planes and as shallow in its carving as works of this period in any part of the Empire. It is only fair to say that the hair and beard may be unfinished, but since the drilling of the eyes would normally come last, we must assume that the artist and patron decided it was all right to leave it this way.\textsuperscript{39}

The second Athenian head (fig. 30) is that of a young boy, or rather he appears to be a young boy except that he has a stubble beard.\textsuperscript{40} In the hard geometry of forehead and eyebrows this head comes closer to L’Orange’s “eastern style” than anything else from the Agora. The hair is cut straight across the forehead instead of dissolving into a fringe like that of the Dresden Maxentius, but it corresponds quite closely to the portrait of the young Romulus, the son of Maxentius, on a medallion minted in 311–312.\textsuperscript{41} Whether or not it could actually be a portrait of Romulus is a question I am not prepared to answer, but at any rate it is an Athenian portrait produced around that time.

All this being so, it was a considerable shock to see the charming head of a young girl in the Art Institute of Chicago (fig. 31) labelled as a portrait of Constantia, the sister of Constantine and wife of Licinius, perhaps made in Athens when she visited there in 313 or 314. This identification was proposed

\textsuperscript{36} L’Orange, \textit{Studien}, figs. 98, 99, 102–105; E. B. Harrison, \textit{Agora}, I, no. 50.
\textsuperscript{37} Thompson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 63, 64.
\textsuperscript{38} L’Orange, \textit{Studien}, figs. 139, 140, cat. no. 71.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Agora}, I, no. 52.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.}, no. 51.
\textsuperscript{41} J. M. C. Toynbee, \textit{Roman Medallions}, Numismatic Studies, No. 5 (New York, 1944), pls. 4, 11.
by Cornelius Vermeule, who compared the coiffure with that shown on the coin of Constantia. He explained that in the Age of Constantine the ladies of the court imitated the hair styles of the Antonine period and that sculptors even went so far as to carve the pupils of the eyes in an Antonine manner.

Hanfmann includes the appealing head in his picture-book on Roman art and accepts the identification as Constantia, though he boggles a bit at the suggestion that it could have been made in Athens. His appreciation of the ethos of the head is sensitive and well expressed: "The moving solemnity of an adolescent girl who is aware of her high station," but he is not being accurate when he says, "Certainly the artful wreath of tresses is a Constantinian fashion." The braid that is wound around the heads of fourth-century ladies, including that of Constantia in the coin to which Vermeule refers, is a single big twist of hair. The crown of braids of the Chicago girl consists of a number of small braids springing from a sort of melon-coiffure at the back of the head. It finds its best parallel among imperial ladies in the early coiffures of Sabina, the wife of Hadrian, when she has eliminated the Trajanic frontlet of curls but has not yet abandoned braids for softly twisted strands. Our head also shares with early Hadrianic portraits the firm faceted treatment of the eyebrow, a Trajanic inheritance that dies out in the Antonine period. Once again, as with the priest from Aphrodisias, the carving of eyes and eyelids suggests the possibility of an early Antonine date, but all the roots of the type are Hadrianic. Perhaps the girl also comes from Asia Minor, and it may well be that she is a priestess. Charming portraits of such young priestesses, albeit in a more provincial style, have been found recently in Corinth and Argos.

The urge on the part of kindly scholars to share the second-century wealth of portraits with the indigent Constantinian period reached its climax a few years ago when Sandro Stucchi proposed that the portrait of Polydeukion, the boy favorite of Herodes Atticus, be rechristened Constantine II.

There is one third-century portrait from Athens that has helped to foster the myth of a technical revival in the time of Constantine. The results of the Agora Excavations have proven that it cannot be later than the third quarter of the third century, but since there seems to be some reluctance to accept this result, the argument is worth repeating. The head of a young boy (fig. 32) was found together with the herm portraits of the Kosmetai, the annual superintendents of the ephoric training, built into the Late Roman Fortifi-

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43 The Art Institute of Chicago Quarterly, 54 (1960), no. 4, pp. 9, 10.
45 Delbrück, Kaiserporträts, pl. 11.
46 Wegner, Hadrian, pls. 42, 43.
47 A head of a girl from Aphrodisias, Art Treasures of Turkey, no. 151, which is dated in this catalogue to the fourth century but again seems to me to be Antonine, has a rolled fillet.
48 For the heads from Corinth, from the sanctuary of Demeter on Acrocorinth, see R. Stroud, Hesperia, 34 (1965), p. 21, pl. 10, b-c. The portrait from Argos is published by J. Marçal, BCH, 81 (1957), pp. 429-432, figs. 15-16, and pl. 7, with the tentative suggestion that it may be a copy of the portrait of Corinna, but the resemblance to the Corinth portraits suggests that she is another young priestess.
ocation Wall of Athens.\(^\text{49}\) This group of sculpture and inscriptions came to light just over a hundred years ago, but it was only with the excavations in the Agora that firm evidence was found to date the wall around 280. Before that, Graindor, in his publication of the portraits of the Kosmetai, had assumed that the part of the wall containing the portraits was a late repair.\(^\text{50}\) The symmetry of this boy’s head and the oval arch formed over the forehead by the uniformly forward-swept hair induced Graindor to place the head in the time of Constantine, and L’Orange followed his example.\(^\text{51}\) Now that we are thoroughly aware not only of the date of the wall but of its original manner of construction, it is clear that the Kosmetai were built into the original structure of the wall and that none of the portraits can be later than 280. The brief report of the excavations in the \textit{Praktika} of 1861 tells us that the herm shafts were used for the facing of the wall and the heads thrown into the mass between.\(^\text{52}\) Since no Athenian inscriptions referring to the ephabetic training can be dated later than the Herulian invasion of 267, it appears that this was another Athenian institution that did not survive that blow. That would place this ephēbe’s head in the time of Gallienus at the latest.\(^\text{53}\) So far as his hair is concerned, we now have to admit, in the sixties of our own century, that the hair styles of the young sometimes change faster than those of adults. In this portrait, as in that of the girl in Chicago, the simple solid form of the head is partly explained by the youth of the subject. We find such simple head shapes for portraits of young people in many different periods.

The picture that we have, then, for sculpture in the round in the different parts of the Empire hardly upholds the notion of two great stylistic provinces, one in the East and one in the West. The style varies strongly from place to place according to the local economic and workshop conditions.

What then are we to say about the coin style of the Eastern mints? I am not ready to explain all its features, but I do feel that it is a numismatic style and that its origins must be sought along mainly numismatic lines. One feature may be worth mentioning as a possible clue. The Eastern style is distinguished not only by its simplified forms and heightened expression but by an unusually strong plastic projection. The same qualities distinguish the contemporary Sassanian coins from the Parthian coins that precede them. A coin with busts of Bahram II (276–293) and his son (fig. 33) may serve for illustration. Compare figures 5, 10, 12–14, 17. This “modelled style” as the Orientalists call it, begins earlier, in the time of Shapur I, 241–272, but it becomes most emphatic in the time of Bahram II.\(^\text{54}\) Since the narrow heads of the Sassanians are shaped so differently from the square heads of the tetrarchs, the similarity


\(^{51}\) \textit{Studien}, p. 58.

\(^{52}\) \textit{Praktika} (1861), p. 18f. See also \textit{Agora}, I, p. 91.

\(^{53}\) In \textit{Agora}, I, p. 91, I accepted the date of ca. 275 for the latest known ephabetic inscription, but J. Oliver, who had proposed this date, now admits the possibility of a date between 260 and 267 (Thompson, \textit{JRS}, 49 [1959], p. 66, note 28).

may not be immediately evident from the photographs, but when one sees the Sassanian coins in the actual metal there is a striking resemblance in the broad rounding of the heavy necks. The Sassanian eyes also become large and staring at about this time. Roman coins are thought to have been the inspiration for the groups of busts on the Sassanian ones.\textsuperscript{55} Is it possible that there was some exchange of die cutters between the Sassanian and the East Roman mints? Just enough job mobility from one to the other to spark the exchange of ideas? In any case, the smoothly rounded, strongly plastic style runs through the Sassanian monumental sculpture as it does not through the Roman, and in the Sassanian rock-reliefs it seems to have a genuinely intended purpose. One cannot see their smoothly rounded forms without being reminded of Achaemenian sculpture.\textsuperscript{56} This reversion, which we are inclined thoughtlessly to call archaism, since it corresponds in formal terms to archaic Greek sculpture, is the Persian classicism. The fact that the porphyry works correspond so much better to the Eastern coins than sculpture in the round in other materials may be partly due to the fact that this tremendously hard stone always demanded an essentially archaic manner of working. Egypt, the home of hard-stone sculpture, preserved the taste for continuous surfaces and simplified form. The rather appalling red-granite Caracalla in the University Museum in Philadelphia\textsuperscript{57} has more in common with the porphyry Diocletian of the Vatican group than any two marble portraits of these emperors have with each other.

Almost as striking as the Eastern coin style itself was its disappearance in the later Constantinian coins. A gold medallion (fig. 35) minted in Nicomedia in 325\textsuperscript{58} easily bears comparison with the Ticinum coin (fig. 34) struck in 315.\textsuperscript{59} The eye is larger, to be sure, but this joins with other features that seem to belong to a consistent progression of Constantinian style rather than to any local peculiarities. There is real modelling in the cheeks, and the features seem related to an understood bony structure of the head. Whether or not one agrees with Maria Alföldi’s attribution of the renaissance to one master engraver who moved gradually eastward as the course of Empire took that way, it seems clear that the coin style has been reunified and that the dominating style comes from the West.\textsuperscript{60}

We can notice here some valuable indications for the development of the portrait type of Constantine. The Nicomedia coin still retains the laurel wreath instead of the diadem that was generally adopted at this time, but otherwise a new type is already present. Compared with the profile on the 315 coin we have a head that seems higher and less deep. The features are more strongly marked, especially the aquiline nose and the jutting chin. The hair is beginning to grow long on the back of the neck, and, most significant, the


\textsuperscript{56} E.g., Porada, \textit{op. cit.}, pls. 54–55.

\textsuperscript{57} Graindor, \textit{Bustes et statues-portraits d’Égypte romaine} (Cairo, n.d.), p. 145, no. 80, pl. 71.

\textsuperscript{58} Dumbarton Oaks Acc. 47-23.

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{DOP}, 18, No. 41, gold.

\textsuperscript{60} M. Alföldi, \textit{Die Constantinische Goldprägung} (Mainz, 1963), pp. 12ff.
top hair is no longer engraved with little separate strokes to suggest short locks, but forms long continuous wavy strands. This is clearly a new official type that makes its first appearance in the gold and works its way down to the bronze.

The next stage in the coin portrait of Constantine continues the development already initiated. In a coin (fig. 36) struck in Thessalonica in 332–333 the hair is still longer, the nose and chin more prominent, and the head still high and narrow in spite of the fact that the heavy jowls clearly indicate that Constantine is older and fatter than he used to be.

Finally, on the coins issued in celebration of the tricennalia we have the diademmed ruler gazing heavenward in a pose that first appeared in Nicomedia in 325. The 335 coin of Nicomedia (fig. 37) clearly continues the development we have been watching. The head is still narrower, the features sharper, and the hair on the neck more long and waving. A beautiful medallion from Siscia (fig. 38) and others like it have the same sort of profile but with the earlier broader head shape and shorter hair on the nape of the neck. Maria Alföldi dates this to 324–326. In all these later coins linear elements prevail everywhere except in the modelling of the actual flesh. The firm and decorative use of line is especially evident in the long strands of the hair. The eyes continue to be emphasized and the dramatic pose of the head in the heavenward-gazing portraits lends a new intensity to their expression.

When we look at the sculptured portraits of Constantine, there seems to be a parallel development. The earliest and most securely dated portraits are the heads recut on the Hadrianic medallions and the Trajanic frieze of the arch. Kähler has warned that we must allow for the influence of the heads from which they were recut. This might be invoked to explain the wavy locks on the back of the neck (fig. 8) that do not appear until so very much later on the coins. Otherwise the head corresponds to what we have seen. The face is broad in front view (fig. 39) and, a feature that is not so easily understood from the coins, widens toward the top. The treatment of the eyes is clearly inherited from the tetrarchic style. The locks of hair on top of the head are short enough to show their ends, and the carving of the strands is impressionistically irregular.

The head of the Lateran statue (fig. 40) corresponds even better with the early coins, for there the hair above the wreath is merely hatched with little strokes and that on the nape of the neck is very short. The face is smoother than that of the heads from the arch and the broadening toward the top even more noticeable. Essentially the same scheme of face is used for the cuirass statue on the Capitoline, though both face and figure are heavier there than in the Lateran statue. Since the Capitoline Constantine seems to have been

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61 DOP, 18, No. 48, gold.
62 Ibid., Nos. 54–55.
63 Ibid., No. 59, gold.
65 Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, 67 (1952), pp. 15–18.
66 Delbrück, Kaiserporträts, pls. 30–32; L’Orange, Studien, fig. 155; Alföldi, Goldprägung, pl. 31.
made together with a similar statue of his son, it should not be dated before 317 when Constantine the Younger became Caesar. Maria Alföldi suggests dating the Lateran statue between 312 and 315.67 Whether one can actually be so precise with marble works is questionable, but in any case these Roman cuirass statues should all correspond to the coin styles between 321 and 325, which they do quite satisfactorily.

The bronze head in Belgrade (figs. 1, 2) wears the diadem and so must come later than 324.68 This causes no particular trouble. It corresponds quite well with the earlier diademmed coin portraits.69 When compared with the Thessalonica coin of 332–333 (fig. 36) it looks similar but rather earlier: more youthful jaw, shorter hair on the back of the neck, more height of forehead above the aquiline nose, which therefore dominates the profile less completely. We cannot go so far as to affirm that the bronze head was made between 324 and 332, but we can say that other things being equal it would fit nicely there.

The front view of this head shows that, though the proportions are definitely higher and narrower than in the Roman heads which we have assigned to an earlier date, the face still has that widening toward the top that always reminds us of Julio-Claudian portraits. So far as proportions and structure of the face are concerned, the head in Belgrade and the big marble head in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (figs. 46–47) are close enough together to suggest for the Metropolitan head a date early in the sole reign of Constantine. The decorative feeling and linear continuity that appear in the coins around 325 are to be felt here too in the symmetrically ranged and strongly patterned locks of the forehead, a feature which the Belgrade head also shows.

It is when we look for the sculptural parallel to the head of the latest coins, high and narrow of structure, with the weight of the face sinking toward the jowline, with jutting nose and pointed chin dominating the profile, big expressive eyes intensifying the whole, that we run into trouble. But the trouble is not that we don’t have a sculptured portrait that embodies all these features. The trouble is that we do. It is the colossal head in the Conservatori (figs. 3, 4), which, together with other fragments belonging to a gigantic seated statue, was found in the apse of the Basilica of Constantine. Kähler, in an article entitled bluntly “Konstantin 313,” argues that since the apse was designed to hold the colossal statue, the head that we have must have been made to be erected in 313.70 Two numismatists, Konrad Kraft71 and Maria Alföldi72 have embraced the idea without worry, though Delbrück had concluded, as we have, that the head corresponds to the style of the later coins. Delbrück was

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68 Ibid., p. 93.
69 Ibid., pl. 11.
70 Jahrbr. d. Inst., 67 (1952), pp. 1–30. The fact that the fragments were found in the apse seems to have been placed beyond all doubt in a more recent article by T. Buddensieg, “Die Konstantinsbasilika in einer Zeichnung Francesco di Giorgio und der Marmorkloster Konstantins des Grossen,” Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst, 13 (1962), pp. 37–48. I owe this reference to Richard Krautheimer.
72 Goldprägung, p. 63.
not faced with our dilemma, however, for at the time he wrote it was mistakenly thought that the fragments had been found outside the Basilica and need not necessarily have belonged to the statue in the apse.\textsuperscript{73}

A closer look at the actual fragments is needed before we take the desperate step of scrapping our whole stylistic picture in the face of an archaeological difficulty. Such a look reveals that the head and hand are of a different marble and have a quite different finish, one can even say style, from the other fragments. The authors of the British School catalogue had distinguished four kinds of marble in the eight fragments, labelling them as follows: head, Pentelic; right hand, Luna; right arm, Luna; right leg, grechetto(?); right knee, grechetto; calf of left leg (?), Pentelic; right foot, Pentelic; left foot, Parian.\textsuperscript{74} Delbrück doubted that these distinctions could be made, and while expressing distrust of his own knowledge of marbles, stated that he would be inclined to call them all grechetto.\textsuperscript{75} Neither speaks of the differences in style and workmanship, but these seem clearly to separate the fragments into the same two groups as does the difference of grain-size in the marble. Like Delbrück, I do not feel able to identify the marbles positively, but I do feel certain that none of the fragments is of Pentelic. That of which the feet, legs, and arm are made has a grain-size and structure like those of Greek island marble or the Asia Minor marbles that most resemble it. It could be Parian except for the unlikelihood that the finer-grained Parian would be available in such big pieces in Roman times. The grains of the marble are large enough to be visible in the photograph of the right foot (fig. 43). The toes of both feet are remarkable for their smoothly rounded forms and exquisite finish. There are no raw drill-channels, no stiffly straight lines, no flat or wobbly surfaces, no chisel-marks not smoothed away nor marble left adhering in the interstices between sculptured forms. The hand (fig. 41) is quite different. The marble is fine-grained like Pentelic or Carrara and lacks the marked foliation, mica, and large calcite crystals that often distinguish Pentelic. The finish is very much less careful than that of the feet. Note also the different treatment of the cuticle on the toe-nails and finger-nails.

In the tenon of the neck (fig. 42) and in the cuttings for piecing on the left side of the head (fig. 4) the strokes appear hasty and uneven, comparable in quality to the unfinished parts of the hand. The joints on the arm, legs, and feet are carefully picked to plane or smoothly rounded surfaces. Finally, the loving care with which the patterns of the veins are rendered in arms and feet (figs. 45 and 44) shows an interest in organic form that would be altogether remarkable in the fourth century after Christ. I have not yet had time to make a comparative study of colossal hands and feet of the Roman period, but the kind of surface and plastic form we have in these larger-grained marble fragments strikes me as most reminiscent of the time of Trajan or Hadrian.


\textsuperscript{74} Stuart Jones, \textit{op. cit.}, supra, note 5, pp. 5, 11–13, nos. 2, 13–15, 17–19.

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Kaiserporträts}, p. 121, "Ich würde nach meiner, allerdings unzureichenden Kenntnis alles für grechetto halten."
Now, if we think of the problem which Constantine and his sculptors were facing in 313 and how they solved it in the case of the arch, the outline of a solution suggests itself. The best of the sculptors employed on the arch were those who recut the heads of the borrowed reliefs into portraits of Constantine and Licinius. The sculptors of the friezes and figures made new in the time of Constantine were technically far less accomplished. It seems clear that there was an acute shortage in Rome at that time of sculptors experienced in monumental work, and Constantine made a virtue of necessity by reusing in the arch reliefs from monuments of emperors with whose image he wished to be associated, Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius. Maria Alfoldi has gone so far as to see a conscious emulation of Trajan's coiffure in the hair style of Constantine in this period. In any case the forehead hair is close enough to a Trajanic pattern to make it relatively easy to recut a head of Trajan into one of Constantine. Ought we not to imagine that this is just what was done? For the colossal statue set up in the apse in 313 Constantine may simply have appropriated a colossal seated Trajan from one of the nearby buildings, whether from the Forum of Trajan or from Hadrian's Temple of Venus and Rome. Later, when the official portrait of the Emperor had developed to the stage we find on the later coins and when good sculptors were no longer so hard for the Emperor to find, it was decided to give the statue a new head and a sceptre-holding hand. Even then there would have been no reason to replace the iconographically insignificant limbs and feet, which were technically better than any contemporary sculptor would have made.

If we needed more evidence that the high, narrow head, sharp features, and big eyes of the Conservatori portrait are genuine stylistic elements of the last years of Constantine's reign, we might look at the portrait of Dogmatius in the Lateran which is epigraphically dated to the years from 327 to 337. If we compare it with the heads of Licinius from the medallions of the Arch of Constantine, we see that the hair and beard style has not changed and yet the sculptural style is completely different.

This reminds us that the hair style of Constantine is something very much his own and something that must have had a definite meaning in his image of himself as a ruler. On what was this image based, or, as scholars have tended to put the question, whom was he imitating? Who did Constantine think he was? Many have said, especially of the early portraits, that he thought he was Augustus. The approximate length of the hair in the earlier portraits and the use of flame-shaped locks as well as the breadth of the skull create a real resemblance. But, as we have mentioned, Maria Alfoldi has argued, with almost equally good reason, that he thought he was Trajan. He never at-

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76 Kähler, *op. cit.*, *supra*, note 70, p. 15.
79 Maria Alfoldi, *Goldprägung*, p. 60, mentions the idea that Augustus was Constantine's model as the "comensis opinio der Forschung auch heute." L'Orange, *Studien*, pp. 56-57, speaks of an Augustan classicism in Constantinian portraiture.
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tempts the characteristic division of the locks over the forehead into recognizable shapes that is the hallmark of Augustus’ portraits. The undivided arc over the brow is indeed more like Trajan’s coiffure. On the other hand, if we look at the complex of reliefs on the Arch we have to say that he thought he was Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius all three.

For the portrait type itself we have to judge in simpler terms. Only two features really stand out, the longer hair and the fact that the subject wears no beard. It is a crude oversimplification, but useful for our present purpose, to say that all portraits of Roman emperors are based on one of three main types: young ruler, soldier emperor, or philosopher king. There are various contaminations, but the type of Constantine is fairly clear. He is a young ruler, as was also Augustus. But Augustus was not the prototype of young ruler. He merely used the type, as did Constantine. The originator of the type was of course Alexander the Great. The young ruler is shown as young not only because he may actually have been young when he came to power and idealization will not let him grow old, but because he is a son. He holds power by virtue of his royal or divine father. In the old pre-Hellenistic Greek style of state-religious thinking on which all this iconography is ultimately based, that does not make him a god; it makes him a hero, and the representational types of the Roman emperors conform to the old scheme, which also suits the ideas of the Romans. The apotheosis of the emperor, like the apotheosis of Herakles, occurs at his death. Commodus’ exception to this rule was profoundly shocking to the Romans,\(^{81}\) and no one afterwards imitated him. As we see from Professor J. A. Straub’s paper, the apotheosis of Constantine took place at the proper time.\(^ {82}\)

It has therefore rather confused the terminology for L’Orange to have discussed under the rubric “apotheosis” the kind of inspired portrait that Eusebius interpreted as Constantine praying to his heavenly father.\(^ {83}\) What is it, actually? The numismatists are on perfectly solid ground when they say that the type of these coins is Diadochic.\(^ {84}\) We may compare a coin (fig. 49) with a portrait of Antiochos I.\(^ {85}\) But even that is too specific a derivation. We have to ask what type Antiochos and the rest are using, and if we go back to the fourth-century coins we find it. It is the type of Apollo as the inspired musician. This occurs on the coins of the Chalcidian League, which were imitated by the Macedonian coins,\(^ {86}\) and it is also used on Phocian coins of the fourth century B.C.\(^ {87}\) In each case a lyre, on the reverse on the Chalcidian coins, beside the head on the Phocian coins, makes the reference to music clear.

There are many indications in both Greek and Roman art that the portrait of a man in the type of a god does not constitute apotheosis, but the fact is

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\(^{82}\) In this volume of the *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, p. 44 ff.

\(^{83}\) *Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture*, pp. 90–94.

\(^{84}\) Alföldi, *Goldprägung*, pp. 128–129, note 5.


\(^{86}\) H. Gaebler, *Die antiken Münzen Nordgriechenlands*, 3^\text{1}, pl. 17.

\(^{87}\) *British Museum Catalogue, Central Greece*, p. 21, nos. 78–87.
most clearly apparent in the case of portrait herms. Let me descend to a very low literary level and quote an epigram from the herm portrait of an Athenian Kosmetes of the time of Trajan:

\[ \Sigmaχίμα τόθ Ἱερείας και ἐκλόγας Ἱλιοδότου
Κεστροφόροι δύνατον τόθ' ἀνέθετο τύπῳ,
τού μὲν ἐπεὶ Θεὸς ἔστι καὶ εὐσεβὲς παισὶν ἐφήβοις,
τοῦ δ' ὅτι κοσμητῶν ἐξόχου εἶλε κλέος. \]  

The Kosmetes is in the type of Hermes because both of them have been good to the ephebes. That is all.

The other type which is common on the Macedonian coins and taken over by the Diadochs is of course Herakles. The coin of Antiochos I (fig. 48) has Herakles on the reverse⁸⁸ as that of figure 49 has Apollo. There is no lion skin to mark the portrait type as Herakles, but the short locks of hair on top of the head show that the head is at least assimilated to his type.

In broad terms these two types stand for two approaches to life. Herakles stands for human arete and the immortality achieved by a man's own work and virtue; Apollo stands for reliance on prophecy and divine inspiration.⁹⁰ It is interesting to note that, while Alexander the Great achieved a fairly good synthesis of the two types, the Roman emperors tended to choose one or the other. Caracalla, for example, is a Herakles and Gallienus is an Apollo. The portraits of the tetrarchy represent the last flowering of the Herakles ideal in Roman portraiture. Figure 15, Maximianus as Herakles, is a good example. The broad head shape that had characterized the strong man hero since the archaic period in Greek art is common to all the tetrarchs, in whatever guise they are represented.

Christianity has little or no use for a Herakles type. The Apollo type is the one that is serviceable both for Christ as the son of God and for the emperor as the ruler who ascertains and performs the will of God. Thus, the emergence of this type in the portraits of Constantine must be a deliberate choice. But the assimilation to the type is gradual, and its effect on the portrait which began with conservative modifications of the tetrarchic form appears only, as we have seen, step by step until it reaches its most dramatic phase. In the terms of the title of this symposium we have to say that the Constantinian portrait is a very traditional kind of innovation.


⁹⁰ Silver tetradrachm, mint of Magnesia on the Sipylus (?), Comstock and Vermeule, *op. cit.*, no. 264.

⁹⁰ Cf. Plutarch, *Life of Sulla*, VI (454), in which the contrast between the two ways of life is expressed by Sulla himself, who chooses to rely on the divine.
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3.
Rome, Museo dei Conservatori. Colossal Marble Portrait of Constantine
5. Gold Coin of Constantine struck at Serdica, 313
6. Gold Coin of Constantine struck at Trier, 309–313
Dumbarton Oaks Collection

7. Rome, Arch of Constantine. Portrait of Licinius

10. Gold Coin of Licinius struck at Antioch, 313
11. Gold Coin of Diocletian struck at Rome, 293
Dumbarton Oaks Collection

8.
9.
Rome, Arch of Constantine. Portrait of Constantine

13. Gold Coin of Galerius struck at Antioch, ca. 299–302

15. Gold Coin of Maximianus struck at Rome, 293

Dumbarton Oaks Collection


16. Silver Coin of Maxentius struck at Rome, ca. 308–312

Dumbarton Oaks Collection

17. Gold Coin of Maximinus Daza struck at Antioch, ca. 310–313

18. E. S. R. Collection. Coin of Maxentius struck at Ostia, 311

19. Gold Coin of Licinius struck at Nicomedia, 321–322


22. 23. Vatican Library.

Porphyry Groups, Tetrarchs


26. Aphrodisias. Portrait of a Priest

27. Ostia. Trajan
34. Gold Coin of Constantine struck at Ticinum, 315

35. Gold Medallion of Constantine struck at Nicomedia, 325

36. Gold Coin of Constantine struck at Thessalonica, 332–333

38. Dumbarton Oaks Collection. Gold Medallion of Constantine from Siscia


40. Rome, Lateran Museum. Portrait of Constantine
41. Right Hand, detail

42. Neck and Tenon

43. Right Foot, detail

44. Left Foot

Rome, Museo dei Conservatori. Fragments of Colossal Statue of Constantine
46. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Colossal Marble Portrait of Constantine

48. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. Antiochus I, Herakles Type

49. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. Antiochus I, Apollo Type