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CONSTANTINUS ORIENS IMPERATOR: PROPAGANDA AND PANEGYRIC. ON READING PANEGYRIC 7 (307)

In a recent monograph T. Grünewald has contended that Constantine, as a usurper who went on to eliminate his rivals in a series of civil wars, who had members of his own family killed, and who set aside the traditional state religion and gave his own public support to a religious sect long persecuted as hostile to the state, had a need, both acute and sustained, to justify his actions and policies.[1] He needed, in fact, a strongly co-ordinated, thematically conceived and widely disseminated program of propaganda to consolidate his support, win over opposition and control public opinion. Grünewald attempts to reconstruct this program by studying the 'media' influenced by Constantine, viz. inscriptions, coins and the five (*sic*) 'Constantinian' panegyrics in the Gallic corpus of late Latin panegyric.[2] What emerges – rightly, I think – is a Constantine who is a rather more complex and ambiguous figure than the committed Christian of some recent scholarship,[3] and one who would be more easily recognisable to Jacob Burckhardt.

But while I believe that Grünewald on the whole, 'gets Constantine right', I think he seriously exaggerates the degree of central control exercised by Constantine and the *kaiserliche Kanzlei* (his term, 11) over the media he studies, and as a corollary of this, the harmony among these three classes of evidence. In particular I think he is wrong to see the panegyrics as documents of Constantinian propaganda (11), 'authorised versions' of events 'used' by Constantine (and on occasions, a colleague) to release 'situation-reports' (26). Although he initially concedes some qualified freedom of action to the speakers,[4] and sporadically pays

1 *Constantinus Maximus Augustus: Herrschaftspropaganda in der zeitgenössischen Überlieferung, Historia Einzelschriften* Heft 64 (Stuttgart, 1990) 9, reviewed by the present writer, *JRS* 82 (1992). I would like to thank Roger Tomlin and Brian Warmington for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

2 By cataloguing and ordering Constantine's Latin inscriptions (including dedications to him), over five hundred in all, Grünewald has made a valuable contribution to Constantinian research, and this should not be overlooked in what follows. The panegyrics have been edited by R.A.B. *Mynors, XII Panegyrici Latini* (Oxford, 1964; reprint, 1973), whose numbering I follow.

3 For example, T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981); cf. the review article of A. Cameron, 'Constantinus Christianus', *JRS* 73 (1983) 184-90; T.G. Elliott, 'Constantine's Conversion: do we really need it?', *Phoenix* 41 (1987) 420-38.

4 '... wo dem Redner persönlicher Freiraum bei der thematischen, rhetorischen und literarischen Gestaltung blieb, galt dies selbstverständlich nur unter dem Vorbehalt der kaiserlichen Anschauungen, denen nicht widersprochen werden durfte' (11).

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lip-service to this concession elsewhere,[5] Grünewald's habitual treatment of the panegyrics, which he rightly supposes to be 'connected with actual political events in each case', is in keeping with his bald assumption that 'their function was to supply an official interpretation (or explanation) of these events, to give currency to new political catchwords, or to extol military exploits of the emperor'.[6] While this is by no means an uncommon approach to the genre, I believe it to be a serious misconception of the relationship between the panegyrist and the emperor and court, and one that in its lack of subtlety does far less than justice to the speakers.[7] I certainly do not wish to deny that on occasion the latter might seek and be given advice or instructions from officials at court as to what might or should be said, but I believe that in general they enjoyed considerably more freedom than Grünewald supposes. Indeed, I assume that an important part of the rhetors' art was in reading the political situation for themselves, and devising appropriate means for celebrating the occasions at which they orated.

There is direct evidence of this freedom from the Greek half of the empire, and indirect evidence (I shall maintain) for our speakers. For instance the surviving handbooks attributed to Menander Rhetor,[8] which give advice on the composition of epideictic speeches for both royal (imperial) and other occasions, assume that the speakers will be independent, and that they will take the initiative; e.g.

> 'Επιβατήριον ὁ βουλόμενος λέγειν δῆλός ἐστι βουλόμενος προσφωνῆσαι ἢ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ πατρίδα ἐξ ἀποδημίας ἥκων, ἢ πόλιν ἑτέραν, εἰς ἣν ἂν ἀφίκηται, ἢ καὶ ἄρχοντα ἐπιστάντα τῇ πόλει (II 3; §378) [cf. 4; §388, περὶ λαλιᾶς· καὶ γὰρ ἄρχοντα ἐὰν ἐγκωμιάσαι βουλώμεθα ...].

The βασιλικὸς λόγος is actually envisaged as part of an ἀγών (§368). Admittedly such manuals do not reflect the political situation in Gaul exactly, in that emperor and court were more remote. Nevertheless it can be demonstrated that the Gallic speakers followed, in varying measure, the precepts to be found in the βασιλικὸς λόγος of Menander or similar guides.[9] It is not unreasonable to

5 For example, 29: '... zumindest nach der Vorstellung des Festredners ...'.

6 'Die uns überlieferten Panegyrici aus Constantins Anfängen standen jeweils mit aktuellen politischen Vorgängen in Zusammenhang. Ihre Funktion war es, eine offizielle Deutung dieser Geschehnisse zu vermitteln, neue politische Parolen auszugeben oder militärische Großtaten des Herrschers zu preisen' (156; cf. 173).

7 Cf. C.E.V. Nixon, 'Latin Panegyric in the Tetrarchic and Constantinian Period', in *History and Historians in Late Antiquity*, edd. B. Croke and A.M. Emmett (Sydney, 1983) 88-99; G. Sabbah, 'De la rhétorique à la communication politique. Les Panégyriques latins', *Bull. Assoc. G. Budé* (1984) 371-2.

8 Edited and translated by D.R. Russell and N.G. Wilson (Oxford, 1981).

9 J. Mesk, 'Zur Technik der lateinischen Panegyriker', *RhM* 67 (1912) 569-90; E. Galletier, *Panégyriques latins* (Paris 1949) I xxxi-iii. Most probably they made use of similar Latin manuals, now lost; cf. E. Vereecke, 'Le corpus des Panégyriques latins de l'époque tardive: problèmes d'imitation', *AC* 44 (1975) 141-157.

suppose, then, that they were operating in a similar fashion to their Greek counterparts.

It would be instructive if we could establish how our speakers came to participate in imperial ceremonies in the first place. Unfortunately external evidence for the process of selection of speakers, and their briefing (if any) is lacking, but we can make some inferences from information contained in the speeches themselves. It is a striking fact, for example, that with the probable exception of the elder Mamertinus, and then only in the case of his second speech (*Pan.* 11), none of the speakers of the Tetrarchic and Constantinian period was a member of court at the time of the delivery of his speech; that is, the speakers were not formally members of the imperial administration.[10] Some of them, such as the panegyrist of Constantius (*Pan.* 8; AD 297), had been, but he had come out of retirement to deliver the oration which is extant (1.1-5). Another panegyrist, whose speech contains what appears to be a 'hot' official item, a new genealogy for the emperor no less, had considerable experience at court, but was currently engaged by *privatorum studiorum ignobiles curae* (*Pan.* 6, 23.1-3; AD 310). Other speakers appear to have had no prior connection with the court (cf. *Pan.* 5; Nazarius, *Pan.* 4; perhaps *Pan.* 12 – cf. 1.1). If their task was to transmit an 'official version of events' as part of a centrally co-ordinated program of propaganda, this is a curiously roundabout and decentralised method for the government to have employed.

Despite the previous court connections of some of the panegyrists, it is an open question whether as a rule the speakers were selected by court, or offered their speeches spontaneously in competition for glory – and placement. In either case they would still have to be 'put on the program' by the emperor or one of his officials (cf. *Pan.* 11, 1.1-3; AD 291; *Pan.* 6, 1.1; AD 310). Certainly the practice of cities sending representatives to court to deliver addresses on important occasions is well attested for a variety of periods and places.[11] There are examples in our corpus. The panegyrist of AD 311 had passed up an opportunity to give an address of thanks to the emperor in the vestibule of the palace at Autun on the grounds that the audience was inappropriately small (*Pan.* 5, 1.3-5). His surviving speech, a *gratiarum actio* to Constantine for tax relief for Autun, was delivered at Trier on the occasion of the emperor's Quinquennalia: a leading senator, (1.3; 9.4) he was obviously commissioned by his city to speak on its behalf. On this important occasion there was a large crowd present, not only the whole *comitatus* and palatine bureaucracy, but a flood of visitors from almost every city in Gaul, either men sent officially or private petitioners.[12] It would be reasonable to

10 See Nixon in *History and Historians* (*op. cit.* n. 7), 91-2 for details; also, the introduction to individual speeches in Galletier (*op.cit.* n. 9).

11 F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (London, 1977) ch.VII.

12 *Totus tibi amicorum tuorum comitatus et omnis imperii apparatus ... omnes homines omnium fere civitatum aut publice missi aut pro se tibi supplices* (*Pan.* 5.2.1).

conclude that on occasions such as these, imperial anniversaries, city's birthdays and the like, there would be no lack of initiative from the emperor's subjects.

In these circumstances one might expect, at the most, merely a process of selection, with some 'inspiration' perhaps from court circles from time to time,[13] and some 'vetting' of the offerings chosen. But there is no explicit testimony to this: we must make a judgment on the basis of a close analysis of the speeches themselves (*v. infra*). That an exact program was worked out well in advance seems unlikely. The panegyrist of 310, whose speech is sometimes singled out as one likely to have had imperial input (*v. supra*),[14] did not know until the last minute exactly when he was to perform (*Pan.* 6, 1.1). He had prepared his speech carefully beforehand,[15] presumably before his arrival at Trier (he was from Autun: 22.4-7). As he explains, had he wished to make some play out of the special day which was allotted to him, the anniversary of the foundation of Trier, as many were urging him to do, he would have had to extemporise. This was inappropriate, obviously not because the material was unauthorised, but because he might not satisfy the highest rhetorical standards. On the surface, the rules of the game would seem to be as much the rhetor's as the emperor's. The experienced speaker uses his judgment. Before venturing on delicate subjects, such as Maximian's betrayal of Constantine and sudden death, he seeks the imperial nod (14.1). Compare the panegyrist of 307, who warns his audience that when he comes to the subject of Maximian's abdication he may seem to some too bold (*Pan.* 7, 7.7). Are these elaborate charades to avoid the appearance of an oppressive imperial direction, or affectations of candour where there is no genuine fear of imperial offence? Opinions will differ, and it may be that the answer will not be the same in any two cases. But in the light of the above I maintain that the onus of proof rests with those who argue that the speeches are official documents, the authorised version of events. We must remember, too, that of those delivered only a fraction of speeches survives;[16] cf. *Pan.* 12.1.1 (AD 313): *Unde mihi tantum confidentiae,*

13 This is not to say that in other circumstances panegyrists may not have had much more intimate involvement with the emperor and court. For example Symmachus, as a member of an embassy from the Roman Senate, evidently accompanied Valentinian I on an expedition along the Rhine in 369 (perhaps rather a guided tour; J.F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court 364-425*, Oxford, 1975, 32-3). As a result he was able to give quite detailed descriptions of military architecture (*Orat.* 2.18-20). But there is little of this sort in the Gallic corpus, although the panegyrist of 297/8 comes close to it (*Pan.* 8).

14 It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that he was bold enough to saddle his ruler with a new genealogy and a personal vision of Apollo, but this is unlikely; see the next note.

15 Cf. his dictum that it was neither proper to extemporize, *neque ad aures tanti numinis quicquam nisi diu scriptum et saepe tractatum adferri oportere* (*Pan.* 6.1.1).

16 Cf. B.H. Warmington 'Aspects of Constantinian Propaganda in the Panegyrici Latini', *TAPhA* 104 (1974) 371-384, emphasizing well the ephemeral nature of the speeches and their local interest (372-3). The reasons for their preservation were literary and not historical. Clearly they have suffered from no subsequent political tampering; contrast the *Tendenz* of *Pan.* 6 and

sacratissime imperator, ut post tot homines disertissimos, quos et in urbe sacra et hic rursus audisti, dicere auderem nisi nefas esse for one accustomed *res a numine tuo gestas praedicare*, to let the latest exploits of the emperor pass in silence. The bulk of this speech is about the victory over Maxentius, and there is only a brief coda (21.5-23) about Constantine's defeat and punishment of the Franks. The campaign against Maxentius was by now thoroughly familiar even to audiences at Trier (*et hic*). It is inconceivable that this panegyric was *commissioned* by Constantine or his officials, and it is not easy to see why it would even be vetted. Certainly in its enthusiastic praise of the emperor's deeds it may be termed propagandistic, if one wishes, but it can scarcely be held, any more than *Panegyric* 5 (the *gratiarum actio* mentioned above), to be part of a centrally conceived and co-ordinated program of propaganda. At the most it is, like others, an indirect reflection of some elements of Constantinian publicity; more likely it is what loyal (pragmatic?) subjects correctly termed to be pleasing to emperor and government. If this is all that Grünewald *et al.* really mean, let them say so, instead of labelling these panegyrics 'official'.

But because of the lack of direct evidence, and the inevitable subjectivity of one's assumptions, the argument for authorial independence made above may be held to fall short of conviction. A test case is desirable. Now the most original and challenging contribution Grünewald makes to the study of panegyric is to be found in his treatment of *Panegyric* 7 (AD 307), where he attributes much more of a shaping hand to Constantine than I would. But scholarly opinion is sharply divided, and a close analysis of the speech is all the more desirable for this reason.[17]

Before discussing the broad features of Grünewald's interpretation of the panegyric and offering an alternative, it will be helpful to give its political context

7, for example. This demonstrates that the extant panegyrics were not thought to be politically momentous. Dearth of other evidence makes them seem so to us. Many of them will have been perfectly routine. The words of *Pan.* 11.1.1-3 (AD 291) are cautionary. For some reason (the absence of the emperor?) the speaker has been unable to deliver a speech intended for Maximian's *Quinquennalia*. But it will not be wasted. He can use it for the *Decennalia*, *quoniam quidem lustris omnibus praedicandis communis oratio est* (1.3).

17 Contrast with Grünewald, Warmington, *op.cit.* n. 16, especially 373-4: 'Constantine had to acquiesce in this public portrayal of his inferiority' (374); Galletier, *op.cit.* n. 9 II 4-9, Sutherland, *RIC* 6, 29; Nixon, 'Maximian's Visits to Rome', *Phoenix* 35 (1981) 70-76. Close to Grünewald's position is R. Pichon, *Les derniers écrivains profanes* (Paris, 1906) 89-90, who concludes that if one considers, as well as the hereditary theme of the panegyric, the prominence of Constantius in it, 'on verra avec quelle clarté ce Panégyrique exprime l'ambition de Constantin' (90); cf. S. MacCormack, 'Latin Prose Panegyrics', in *Empire and Aftermath*, ed. T.A. Dorey (London, 1975) 143-205, at 164-65: 'the themes which emerge in the panegyric of 307 are the dynastic aims of Constantine and the collapse of the Tetrarchic religious programme' (164); '... the panegyric of 307 was only an introduction to the changes in the empire which were made by Constantine' (165).

and a summary of it. The occasion is the celebration of Constantine's marriage to Maximian's daughter Fausta, and his promotion to Augustus. This took place some time after Maxentius' revolt at Rome, 28 Oct. 306. In the face of an invasion of Italy from the East, Maxentius issued an invitation to his father to come out of retirement and resume the purple, which he did. Severus duly invaded Italy, but was abandoned by his troops, fled and was captured; subsequently he was put to death.[18] Maximian, fearing that Galerius would seek to avenge Severus, 'set out for Gaul in order to bring Constantine over to his side by marrying his younger daughter to him. Meanwhile (Galerius) Maximian collected an army and invaded Italy'.[19]

The panegyrist first sets out the occasion of the speech, emphasising at some length the marriage (rather than the promotion), and the stability that will ensue for the empire through the succession of imperial stock from the one (Herculian) family (1-2). Despite Maximian's seniority (3.2) the orator decides to praise Constantine first. His virtues, in which he resembles his father, are then extolled under the rubrics of the four cardinal virtues: temperance (especially sexual chastity) bravery, justice and wisdom (4-5). In his bravery Constantine follows his father's example, but as yet there is not much to report: *interim deest materia vincendi* (4.4). Constantine's early campaigns (in the east) *sentias necesse est tantae auspicia fortunae, imperator adulescens* (5.3). Although he was left *imperium* as an inheritance by his father, Constantine preferred to earn it *a summo imperatore (ibid.)*. A picture at the Palace in Aquileia[20] shows that Maximian was long since erecting for Constantine 'that sacred pinnacle of divine power' (6.1); the picture represents Fausta as a child bestowing upon the youthful Constantine a betrothal gift of a helmet. Yet whatever Maximian bestows, he still possesses – most relevantly, *imperium* (7.5-6).

The next section of the speech is dedicated to Maximian, who gave Constantine his name from Hercules, whose prowess he (Maximian) matches (8.2). His unique martial exploits and immense popularity at Rome are extolled (8.3-9). But his abdication, in which he loyally followed the lead of his life-long partner Diocletian, despite his vigour being unimpaired (9), proved disastrous for Rome

18 Lactantius, *Mort.* 26; Zosimus 2.10; T.D. Barnes, *New Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982) 12-13, 38-39, 65; *id.*, *Constantine and Eusebius* (*op.cit.* n. 3) 29-30.

19 Lactantius, *Mort.* 27-1-2. The chronology is disputed. I shall argue elsewhere that marriage and promotion indeed took place c. September 307, as Barnes, *CE* (*cit.* n. 18) 28ff. affirms, not 31 March (W. Seston, 'Recherches sur la chronologie du règne de Constantin le Grand', *REA* 39 [1937] 197-218 at 200; cf. Galletier [*op.cit.* n. 9] II, 3-4) nor 25 December (J. Lafaurie, 'Remarques sur les dates de quelques inscriptions du début du IVe siècle', *CRAI* [1965] 200-10; *id.* 'Dies imperii Constantini Augusti: 25 décembre 307', *Mélanges Piganiol* 2 [Paris, 1966] 795-806; A. Chastagnol, 'A propos des Quinquennalia de Constantin', *RN* 6, 22 (1980) 106-119; Grünewald [*op.cit.* n. 1] 26, 163, et *passim*).

20 'Placed in full view of the dinner guests', so not necessarily an item depending on 'official information'.

and Italy – in contrast to Gaul (10.2-4); but upon this the orator will not linger (10.4). Rome, however, appealed to Maximian to take the rudder once more (11). So he did, and saved the empire as it tottered (12).

Having spoken about the qualities of each ruler separately, the panegyrist, appropriately for a wedding celebration, now deals with them together (13). The empire can look forward to a harmonious partnership between father and son, strengthened by the marriage tie (13.2ff.). The peroration sketches the nature of the relationship (14.1):

> 'It becomes you, father, to survey from your pinnacle of command the world you share, and with celestial nod decide the fate of human affairs, to announce the auspices for wars which have to be waged, and to impose the terms when peace is to be concluded. You, young man, it behooves to traverse the frontiers tirelessly where the Roman Empire presses upon barbarian peoples, to send frequent laurels of victory to your father-in-law, to seek instructions, and to report what you have accomplished'.

Lucky, indeed, is the deified Constantius to see the same man, as father, father-in-law and emperor, usher into the empire his son. And his immortality lies in seeing his son, similar in appearance and character, now equal in power (14.4-5). Thus may Maximian always be enriched by descendants from Constantius' stock (14.7).

Grünewald's initial assumption, which is in keeping with his approach to the genre in general, is that in this panegyric we have 'an authorised version of the new alliance' between Constantine and Maximian (26). But who authorised it? The speech is explicitly addressed to two emperors, Maximian, newly emerged from retirement after his abdication in 305, and Constantine, recently proclaimed *imperator* (Augustus) by the army in Britain after the death of his father Constantius, but accorded only the rank of Caesar by Galerius.[21] Grünewald's answer is both: 'Constantine and Maximian used the speech equally to have a report released (which was) appropriate to their current situation'.[22] He goes on to observe that it will be of interest to see 'how the Panegyrist represents the relationship between the two emperors, and whether Maximian was successful in winning significant (*nennenswerten*) political influence with Constantine' (*ibid.*). This last statement, with its implication that Constantine enjoyed a position of political superiority, rather undercuts the doctrine of equality just enunciated, but as we shall see below, this is how, in the main, Grünewald thinks. It is a notion that needs to be tested against both the historical background of the speech and the speech itself.

21 Lactantius, *Mort.* 25.5.

22 'Constantin und Maximian nutzten die Rede gleichermaßen, einen ihrer jeweiligen Situation entsprechenden Lagebericht ausgeben zu lassen' (26).

As Grünewald believes that both emperors contributed to this 'authorised version of the new alliance', so on his interpretation different sections of the speech will reflect the wishes and needs of one or the other. The first section (1-7) is Constantine's. For him, the justification (or legitimation) of his rule (*Herrschaftsberechtigung*) was in the forefront (p.27). It rested on a two-fold foundation: Maximian was his new *auctor imperii*, and drew his authority from the fact that he had already been the *auctor imperii* of Constantine's father.[23] The speaker took pains lest the long-publicised descent of Constantine from Constantius be diminished in the light of the new dynastic connection. Hence the emphasis on Constantine's inheritance of his father's virtues.

Grünewald maintains that although much of the language of the panegyric in treating the marriage alliance stems from tetrarchic ideology, where such alliances reinforced the hierarchical Augustus-Caesar relationship, there is this crucial difference, that Constantine is not inferior to his father-in-law in rank. This, he claims, puts the last 'chapter' of the speech (14), which taken in isolation might suggest that Constantine was subordinate to Maximian, in another light (pp.28-9). Furthermore, while 'at least according to the presentation of the speaker' the rule of Maximian and Constantine was subject to the guardian deity of Maximian, namely Hercules, and 'Constantine here for the first time was officially brought into connection with the Herculian dynasty', Constantine himself set little store by this, either before or later. 'Strictly viewed' (*genau gesehen*), the *Panegyric* of 307 formulates no clear acknowledgement by Constantine of Hercules as his newly discovered guardian deity. Of the three places in which the god is mentioned by name, none refers to Constantine alone, only one to Constantine and Maximian together (2.5), and the two remaining (8.2 and 11.3) exclusively to Maximian'. Hercules is mentioned, in fact, only because he was inseparable from Maximian. 'Constantine, on the other hand, wanted to free his own dynastic ideology from the theological superstructure of the Tetrarchy' (29).

'The second section of the speech is devoted to Maximian' (29). But Constantine, too, is well served by it: 'If Maximian now commissioned the Gallic rhetor to justify as legitimate his resumption of power, this was in Constantine's special interests as well, for the incorporation of Maximian in his (*sic*) propaganda only remained credible if his new *auctor imperii* was also accepted as legitimate' (*ibid.*).

As for the third and concluding section (13-14), Grünewald concedes that the speaker presents Maximian as dominant in chapter 14 (31-32). If this corresponded to reality, Grünewald remarks, Constantine would have bought his post as Augustus dearly in terms of loss of power (32). But contrary to what is implied by the speaker, Maximian had no means of exerting power over Constantine. His momentary influence with Constantine rested on his *auctoritas*,

23 Grünewald quotes 2.5, in part and misleadingly: *gemina (...) imperatoria stirpe rem publicam propagastis*; see below.

the product of his famous past, and this he over-estimated. How, then, can this passage be explained? 'Probably Constantine did not wish to take away from Maximian in the festive moment of the ceremony the illusion of regaining his old lustre' (32).

But in any case, Grünewald stresses, the second and longer section of the concluding chapter is devoted to Constantius. And there 'the speaker sums up once again the most important aspect of the imperial alliance from the celestial perspective of the deified Constantius: in his son Constantius has found a living image of himself ...' (32-3).

Grünewald attributes some other features of the speech largely, if not wholly, to Constantine. There are three figures about whom the orator is silent, who 'find no place in the joint propaganda of Constantine and Maximian', *viz.* Galerius, Maximinus and Maxentius. In the case of the eastern emperors, Grünewald observes, this comes as no surprise. Constantine has renounced his legal position, cannot expect Galerius to accept his latest move, and therefore makes no attempt to win him over. On the other hand he refrains from negative utterances so as not to close the door to some accommodation. But the speaker's failure to mention Maxentius is significant. 'In view of the apparently dominant position of Maximian, in comparison with Constantine, which one detects in many passages of the speech, one might have expected that respect would also be paid to his son Maxentius', especially as Maximian was in Gaul to win Constantine over to their common cause. Yet the only reference to him 'makes him appear an incompetent dilettante'. This allusion is undisguised, and its harshness shows that Constantine was not so much reserved about Maxentius as downright censorious of him (33).

On Grünewald's view, the panegyrist indeed deserves our sympathy. He had to serve two masters, who, although they were now allies, had interests and ambitions that were not always compatible. Not only that, evidently he had to recognise that there was a gap between appearance and reality, and that 'some emperors were more equal than others'. Perhaps it is no coincidence that MacCormack, who is also inclined to see the interests of Constantine strongly reflected in this speech, finds that in comparison with earlier panegyrics it 'gives an impression of slight unease and uncertainty which is expressed in the indistinct divisions of the speech and its lack of unity and coherence'.[24] Others would demur. Galletier, for instance, praises its literary qualities warmly and quotes the judgment of editors of an earlier epoch, Patarol and Arntzen, who put it second only to Pliny in the corpus.[25] I shall suggest that there are other ways of viewing this aspect of the structure of the speech.

What if one were to view the panegyric as the product of a speaker independent of court and emperor? Immediately we can explain, perfectly

24 *Ibid.* 166; cf. n.17 above.
25 [*Op.cit.* n. 9], II 9-13.

naturally, what Grünewald has to explain away in a most unconvincing manner, *viz*. Maximian's undoubted position of superiority in the speech. We can account for the somewhat surprising prominence of Constantius. Finally, by abandoning both the distorting prism of Grünewald's Constantinian lens, and the equally distorting perspective gained by hindsight, we can see the representation of Constantine in this speech for what it really is. Maximian, and even Constantius, overshadow Constantine in the panegyric; indeed it is debatable whether the speaker has done as much for Constantine as he might have. Nor should this surprise. To a Gallic rhetor in 307 – not an official spokesman of the Court, but perhaps a professor from the Schools (he is extremely self-effacing) – Maximian may well have appeared the more impressive figure; more substantial in fact than he was to prove to be. Retired only two years, he had been ruler of the west for twenty. His re-emergence had led almost immediately to the desertion of Severus' army and the latter's elimination from the public scene. He was now back in Gaul, as senior emperor,[26] and the young[27] Constantine, virtually unknown in the West, and as yet all but untried, was now accepting promotion and a marriage alliance from him.[28] It is certainly worthwhile to note that Maximian was in Gaul as a suppliant, and that Constantine had an army which had been commanded by his father and had proclaimed him emperor. But from the panegyrist's point of view it may have looked as if Maximian was in a fair way to re-establish himself as the senior and dominant emperor in the west. Constantine's later importance could scarcely be predicted. Let us review exactly what the orator says.

From the very exordium Maximian is portrayed as the senior figure: *velis nolis semper Augusti(us)*, he is told; Constantine is an emerging ruler (*oriens imperator*). The speech, as does the festival itself, celebrates Constantine's marriage and promotion, but as we shall see, it also celebrates Maximian's resumption of power. There is rhetorical balance, but despite their new equality of rank, the two emperors are far from equal. *Tibi Caesari additum nomen imperii* is no less than the truth, but its phraseology is not such as to aggrandise Constantine: it rather reminds the audience of his recent subordination. This is soon reinforced: *quid enim aut tu carius dare aut tu carius accipere potuisti* ... (2.1); Maximian gives, and Constantine receives. Again the orator is careful to find a balanced phrase: *per generum* Maximian's youth is renewed, *per socerum* Constantine's position is enhanced. But Maximian offers *nomen imperatoris*: all Constantine has to offer is his youth (*ibid.*). The latter becomes a Leitmotiv.

26 The speaker describes him thus not fewer than three times (3.2; 13.3; 13.5).

27 For his age, see below.

28 What did a Gaul in 307 know of an Eastern officer proclaimed by the army in Britain scarcely a year before? Certainly he was the son of a popular ruler (Eutrop. 10, 1.2-3), but he had served his apprenticeship at the other end of the Roman world, cf. T.D. Barnes, *The New Empire* (*op. cit.* n. 18) 41-42. It is fatally easy to see Constantine from a much longer perspective and to lose sight of the panegyric as a contemporary document.

It is instructive to observe how the speaker treats Constantine. It is arguable that despite Maximian's seniority he chose to praise Constantine first in order not to risk an anti-climax (3.1-2). He deals with the 'junior emperor' in unimaginative text-book fashion, in terms of the four cardinal virtues.[29] His procedure is very revealing. Constantine is treated, not on his own terms, but as the son of the deified Constantius (3.3).[30] Not only has he inherited 'the first blush of his father's youth', but also his virtues (3.4), and in his military dealings, he has begun to follow his father's example (4.2). Viewed dispassionately, the comparison is hardly flattering to Constantine. Whereas Constantius has slaughtered, captured or deported thousands of Franks, Constantine has but made a beginning with their kings, though punishing them and cowing their followers (4.2). The speaker is vague. Others were to give their names and spell out their savage punishment (*Pan.* 6.10.2-7; 11.5; AD 310; Nazarius, *Pan.* 4.16.5-6; AD 321). Did the speaker not know more? If not, what of Grünewald's thesis of authorization? If he did, why not expatiate? I think the passage revealing of his state of mind: we shall find him exerting himself more on Maximian's behalf.

The comparison continues: Constantius liberated Britain; Constantine ennobled it by emerging from there (4.3)! The father by his victories tamed numerous barbarian nations, but as for the son, since Rome's foes are terrified, *interim deest materia vincendi* (4.4)! Thus the comparison, never entirely a happy one, ends in a memorable anti-climax. It is hard to believe that this is what Constantine himself or his 'publicity bureau' had in mind.

Chapter 5 is similar. Constantine is a true son of his father – but he seems merely to be paying his father's legacies: *quasi legata patris videaris exsolvere* (5.1). As for Constantine's wisdom, the panegyrist is obliged to speculate on the future (5.2). We have a very youthful ruler here, one who in the speaker's mind is a much lesser figure as yet than his father and Maximian. He surpassed Scipio Africanus and Pompey in attaining *imperium* so early, but as yet *tantarum rerum sustines molem incipiente virtute* (5.2)! 'While in your first *stipendia* in those *maximi tribunatus* you accomplished much bravely, much wisely, you must perceive these as (only) the portents of great good fortune, *imperator adulescens* (5.3). The speaker goes on to question why he is focussing on Constantine's age, and not his *gravitas*, and praises him for his *maturitas* in being content with the rank of Caesar until he had earned promotion to Augustus (5.3). This picture of a youthful ruler can only be reinforced by the vignette which follows – a description of the *imago* in the palace of Aquileia of Constantine as a *puer* and the child Fausta (6).

29 Cf. Menander Rhetor II, βασιλικὸς λόγος, §373 (ed. Russell and Wilson p.84). See now P. Schmidt in *Restauration und Erneuerung: Die Lateinische Literatur von 284 bis 374 n.chr.*, ed. R. Herzog (Munich, 1989) 168.

30 The point is well made by B.S. Rodgers, 'The Metamorphosis of Constantine', *CQ* 39 (1989) 236.

The whole passage would be simply inept if Constantine *were* in his maturity. Certainly there may be some exaggeration of Constantine's youthfulness to assist the panegyrist in his praise of an 'unknown' ruler, but if the latter were in his mid-thirties at the time of his accession, as some influential voices insist,[31] the speaker is inviting ridicule, and that is surely highly unlikely. In comparing Constantine with Scipio Africanus and Pompey our orator makes him younger than his mid-twenties.[32] More probably he was in his mid- to late twenties, with a birth-date of c.280. This would give him time enough for *maximi tribunatus* and promotion to *tribunus ordinis primi* by 305.[33] But if he were older than this the treatment accorded him here would be all the more patronising and demeaning, and would strengthen the case that he was not responsible for the portrayal.

As Barnes has demonstrated (n.31 above), there was indeed some scope for an orator in Constantine's early career and *maximi tribunatus*. Again we must ask, was our own panegyrist in the dark, or not concerned to build them up? In either case, we have less than we might have expected if this were really an authorized version informed by Constantine and his publicists. With the close of this section of the speech we are left with the picture of the child Constantine singled out by Maximian for future honours 'when his age allowed it' (7.1). The subordination of Constantine to Maximian is as complete as his overshadowing by his father.

The transition to Maximian is presumably one of the passages which prompted MacCormack's comment about 'the impression of slight unease and uncertainty which is expressed in the indistinct divisions of the speech'. Perhaps. But may there not be art in this 'indistinctness'? Chapter 7 is designed to emphasise the appropriateness of Maximian handing over *summi pignus imperii* 'to the son of

31 *PLRE* 1 233; Barnes, *New Empire* (*op. cit.* n. 18) 42; A. Chastagnol, *L'évolution politique, sociale et économique du monde romain de Dioclétien à Julien* (Paris, 1982) 109.

32 Scipio exercised consular imperium at the age of twenty-six; Pompey triumphed at the same age (Broughton, *MRR* I 280; II 84-5). Eutropius (3.15; 5.9) says that both were twenty-four, and this may be the tradition which reached the panegyrist.

33 For his early career cf. *Pan.* 6.3.3; Anon. Val. 2.2-3; Lactantius, *Mort.* 18.10; Eusebius, *VC* 1.19; *Orat. ad coet. sanct.* 16; Barnes, 'Sossianus Hierocles and the Antecedents of the "Great Persecution"', *HSCP* 80 (1976) 240-252, at 250; *id.*, *New Empire* (*op. cit.* n. 18) 39ff. Barnes boldly sets aside the contemporary evidence of Lactantius and the panegyrics in favour of later sources – admittedly large in number. But many of these probably depend on Eusebius' comparison of the life-spans and reigns of Constantine and Alexander the Great; cf. *VC* 1.5-9; 4.53, which is both tendentious and approximate; S. Calderone, 'Eusebio di Cesarea e il Computo dell' età di Constantino', *Quaderni Catanesi* 9 (1983) 51-2; N. Baglivi, 'Paneg. VII (6), 3, 3, e l'età di Costantino', *Orpheus* n.s. 6 (1985) 437-441. The Eusebian birth-date is c.273-4; Calderone suggests '282-3 at the earliest' (12), Baglivi 'perhaps 280/5'. If Constantine really saw service in the Persian Wars, c.297-8 (Anon. Val.: 'in Asia'; cf. Barnes, *supra*), c.280 is the latest one can safely put it. A credible chronology is governed by the fact that Crispus' first child was born in 322 (*PLRE* 1.233). A date of c.300 (or a little before) for Constantine's first marriage and a birth-date of c.302 for Crispus would not seem unreasonable.

the man whom you had long since joined to you by ties of marriage and associated with yourself in imperial majesty' (7.2). The speaker knows exactly where he is going. Constantine's position owed something to his birth, but that is not paramount here; rather, it is the identity of the bestower of *imperium*. The figure of Maximian has been inserted into 'Constantine's section' of the speech (Chapter 7, which precedes the formal division at 8.1). In effect the introduction of Maximian has robbed Constantine of his climax! Or, put less rhetorically, it has removed the necessity to provide one. We shall see a second such evasion later on. It is a most skilful exercise. Maximian is said to have given Constantine 'the pledge of supreme power' (7.2), a unique largess (7.3-4). But has he, indeed (7.5-6)? *Tu potes imperium, Maximiane, donare, non potes non habere* (7.6). The panegyrist is already looking ahead. With Maximian he is on more familiar ground. But not only does he have more material, he has a worthier challenge. Rather than building up one who was (to him) a nobody, a task he was evidently not particularly interested in performing, he now has to justify the unjustifiable – the resumption of power by the retired Augustus by an act of usurpation. He advertises what is at stake at the outset: 'On this subject, when I reach the point, I shall speak in such fashion that I may seem too bold to some, but that the reality of my devotion to you may be apparent' (7.7).

He then embarks with relish on a sketch of Maximian's career – Maximian, 'who gave you, Constantine Augustus, the name received from the god who was the founder of his family, ... has proved himself to be the scion of Hercules, not through the fables of flatterers, but by matching his prowess' (8.2). He recovered Gaul, tamed Germany and overwhelmed Mauretania (8.3-5). The speaker lays it on thick: Maximian it was who first bore Roman standards across the Rhine, an achievement falsely attributed to generals of old (8.4)! Next the panegyrist discourses on his immense popularity in Rome (8.7ff.). Upon his recent departure (in 304), the people tried to detain him, having a presentiment of the abdication to come. Artfully, the speaker sets the stage for an elaborate justification of Maximian's re-emergence.[34] The abdication was prompted by a sense of loyalty to a life-long partner (9.2), but it was catastrophic for Rome and Italy (10). An impassioned Rome appeals to him to rule again (11.1-4). He responds patriotically (11.5ff.), by wielding the power which had never ceased to be his (12.4-6; cf. 7.6), and restores the state to equilibrium. If any distant shadow casts a pall, it is Maximian who will dispel it (12.8).

Here, in contrast to his rather perfunctory and mechanical treatment of Constantine's career, under the conventional rubrics of the cardinal virtues and in the form of an extended comparison with the young emperor's father, the orator is

34 On this, see C.E.V. Nixon, 'The Panegyric of 307 and Maximian's Visits to Rome', *Phoenix* 35 (1981) 70-76.

pulling out the stops. He has had to tackle a problem, if not unique perhaps, at least very much more unusual than that of boosting a callow ruler. He obviously gave considerable thought to the matter, and his solution is original and ingenious. The only passage to compare with it in the earlier part of the speech is his description of the wall-painting in Aquileia.

The peroration, appropriately to the occasion, unites the two emperors (13.1ff.). The emphasis is on the benefits of harmony and co-operation, all the more effective for the combination of age and youth, experience and energy. Maximian is to be the policy-maker, Constantine is to carry such policies out (14). But a third figure emerges, Divus Constantius, and the speech ends with a comment on the impact upon him of the union and his son's promotion. For the second time, Constantine is rather up-staged.

Where in all this does Grünewald detect the mark of Constantine's propaganda? First, in the treatment of Constantine's dynastic connection with Maximian, with the emphasis on Constantius and the supposed distancing of Constantine from the Herculian line. This is surely untenable. The very occasion forbids what Grünewald's conclusion demands. While in theory it would be perfectly possible, as *Panegyric* 6 (AD 310) demonstrates, to make much of Constantine's hereditary claims, this simply cannot be done here, nor is it done. Certainly the validity of a hereditary claim is acknowledged (5.3), but it is explicitly subordinated to the tetrarchic principle of appointment by *summus imperator* in reward for *virtutes*. And the point is reiterated in the peroration. Constantius takes pleasure in seeing Maximian usher Constantine into power (14.4). His role is that of a father, but not an emperor-maker. Nor is this surprising, as I have remarked, given the occasion.

In his focus on Constantine, Grünewald has distorted the panegyric. He concedes that much of the language of the panegyric stems from tetrarchic ideology, and that Maximian seems to be given a position of superiority in chapter 14, as if Tetrarchic Augustus to Constantine's Caesar (28-9). But he maintains that there is a critical difference, viz. Constantine is now equal in rank; furthermore he paid little attention to the Herculian connection on his coins and inscriptions. The latter may be true, but it should not pre-determine a reading of the panegyric. To save his theory of the official nature of the panegyric, which according to Grünewald reflects Constantine's actual political superiority, it would seem that the media must be made to harmonise. Hence his desire to belittle the Herculian connection in the panegyric by reducing it to 'three places in which the god is mentioned by name, none (of which) refers to Constantine alone ...' (pp. 28-29).

This is a very mechanical and insensitive way to treat a panegyric. Let us look at the three passages in question. The first (2.5) is the culmination of the whole first section of the speech, in which the consequences of the marriage for the Roman Empire are spelled out. What event could be more conducive to glory, more certain to provide security (1.4)? Racked by vicissitudes, the Roman state will at last be made strong 'through the everlasting roots of your house' *(perpetuis domus vestrae radicibus*; 2.2). Which house? 'You are propagating the state not

with plebeian offshoots but with imperial stock,[35] so that that thing which we were congratulating you on finally coming to pass in the thousandth year after the foundation of the city, that is, that the reins of our common safety not be handed down, subject to change, through new families, may last through all the ages, Herculian emperors forever' (2.5)! The phrase *imperatores semper Herculii*, perhaps the most memorable in the whole speech, forms the climax of the opening section of the panegyric. It weds Constantine indissolubly to one of the central themes of the whole speech, one taken up again in the peroration (see below). Whatever Constantine himself made of it at the time, the notion of Hercules as tutelary deity is at the heart of the speaker's conception of the proper scheme of things.

This is demonstrated by the second of the three passages (8.2), where the panegyrist turns to Maximian: 'Now it follows that since I have praised your virtues, Constantine Augustus, to your father-in-law, you too should hear ... how an alliance with such a great leader *(princeps)* honours you. He is the one who gave you the name received from the god who was the founder of his family, who has proved himself to be the scion of Hercules, not through the fables of flatterers, but by matching his prowess' (8.1-2). Far from the reference being exclusively to Maximian (!) it shows how intimately associated Constantine was with Hercules, as one expected to prove himself in his turn a true *progenies Herculis*.

The third passage (11.3) is part of Rome's appeal to Maximian: 'Was it for this that Hercules, whose countless altars, temples and names I revere, gave you to me, that, yielding to idleness on your suburban estate, you should abandon the practice of valour consecrated to me'? Certainly this has immediate application to Maximian alone, but it serves as a reminder of the identity of the tutelary deity of the dynasty.

But there is a fourth passage, which Grünewald glosses over, in which Hercules is recalled, if not mentioned by name. No-one hearing 14.1 could have failed to think of Jupiter and Hercules. Only the awkward fact that Galerius, that residual shadow over a distant land (12.8), was *Iovius* and Maximian *Herculius* prevents the introduction of the names. In shaping his peroration in this way the panegyrist reveals that he was still operating within a Tetrarchic ideology, a Tetrarchic 'mind-set'. This may have something to do with the ambiguity of the political situation – it is safest to operate in terms of the orthodoxy of the

35 Grünewald (27) quotes in part and misleadingly: *gemina imperatoria stirpe rem publicam propagastis*. Mynors print Livineius' correction, surely on the right lines – *qui non plebeio germine sed imperatoria stirpe rem publicam propagastis* – of the MSS *plebeia gemina* (M) or *germina* (X^2). The balanced contrast of *plebeio germine* with *imperatoria stirpe* is obviously much more satisfactory than the clumsy chain of adjectives *non-plebeia, gemina, imperatoria*. Grünewald's selective quotation has the panegyrist emphasising a duality of imperial stock and reinforcing Constantine's claims through that duality, whereas I believe he is insisting on the superiority of imperial stock and its unity and purity in the Herculian line.

immediate past – but it should also remind us that the speaker is a man of letters, and not simply a political spokesman, if at all. The inspiration for his depiction of the relationship between Maximian and Constantine is a literary one. It is drawn from the 'classical' picture in *Panegyric* 10 (AD 289) of the relationship of Diocletianus Iovius and Maximianus Herculius (3.3; 4.2; 11.6).[36] Only the future, with Galerius' failure in Italy and the further breakdown of the Tetrarchy after Carnuntum, Maximian's death and Constantine's success, would reveal how inappropriate our panegyrist's representation was to be. But if Grünewald is right to detect in it an inappropriateness even to the political realities of 307, this only serves to demonstrate once more how far it is from reflecting Constantine's propaganda. Certainly the panegyrist 'formulates no clear acknowledgement by Constantine of Hercules as his newly discovered guardian deity'.[37] Nor does his speech embody Constantine's political concession to the aged and deluded Maximian on a festal occasion. It is his own composition, informed in important respects by the past he knew, in celebration of a new alliance contracted under the shadow of invasion.

Grünewald makes much of the fact that the last part of the peroration is seen from the viewpoint of Divus Constantius (32-3). In a speech celebrating the alliance of Maximian and Constantine this may seem an oddity. But it reflects, not Constantine's manipulation of the orator, but the latter's consciousness that there ought to be a better balance between the two parties, and his inability to provide one by praise of Constantine alone. Again, this would suggest lack of briefing rather than the reverse.

No matter how *pius* Constantine was, no matter that this epithet found a place in his inscriptional titulature,[38] the mature Constantine of Grünewald's creation cannot have wished to have appeared quite the nonentity with a famous father that the panegyrist contrives.

The silence of the orator about Galerius is not surprising. Whether that silence reflects Constantine's propaganda is another matter. Grünewald suggests (33) that Constantine did not want to close the door to negotiation by negative statements. This would seem to exaggerate the immediate impact and dissemination of the speech. Eastern emperors are seldom mentioned in our corpus, with the obvious exception of Diocletian in the panegyrics of 289 and 291, when the Dyarchy was a new and, to the Gauls recently racked by civil wars, hopeful experiment. These emperors were remote figures to the Gauls, and, one suspects, vice versa. The decision to omit mention of them is much more likely to have been the

36 See A. Klotz, 'Studien zu den Panegyrici Latini', *RhM* 66 (1911) 550-2 for our rhetor's use of *Panegyrics* 10 (289) 11 (291) and 9 (297/8).

37 Grünewald 29.

38 But not on his coins, as Grünewald is obliged to confess (21-22). PRINCIPI IUVENTUTIS and DIVO CONSTANTIO PIO (see, *e.g.*, *RIC* 6.131f.) do not fit the bill.

speaker's.[39] All the same the omission without a *pro forma* apology[40] does hint at the political crisis. Note his obscure reference to the residual dark shadow or dashing of waves (12.8). And what is to be done about this? It is surely significant that he looks to Maximian to manage matters: *necesse est tamen ad tuos nutus dilucescat et sileat*. In keeping with the peroration (14.1) it is Maximian who is to make the decisions. Here his assistant, if assistant there must be, goes completely unnoticed, and Constantine's problems with Galerius not acknowledging his promotion seem of no concern to the speaker.

In the case of Maxentius, at first glance Grünewald might seem to have a stronger point. Should he not have been accorded respect as Maximian's son and ally, and not branded as an incompetent dilettante? Does this not betray Constantine's hand? The context of the harsh reference is Maximian's resuscitation of the state after his emergence from retirement (12.1ff.): 'They say that only that god, by whose gifts we live and see, was capable of taking up the reins which had been unwisely entrusted and steering the chariot again when it had been thrown off course by its errant driver. You, emperor, accomplished a similar feat and even did it with ease' (12.3). The previous description of the plight of Rome and Italy (10.2-3) might seem to make this tale of filial inadequacy particularly pointed. This need not be. Once again, by putting Constantine so firmly centre-stage Grünewald obscures the panegyrist's aims. This whole section of his speech is devoted to Maximian, justifying his return to power in terms of his earlier and current service to Rome. That it was Maximian's son, Maxentius, who proved such an ineffectual ruler, was incidental to the speaker's purpose. His reference may seem gratuitous, but he needs to establish that Maximian was indispensable to Rome, and it was in Rome itself that the senior emperor resumed the power that had (the speaker asserts) always been his (12.4-6). In any case, if not impenetrable, the reference is at least decently oblique. And the speaker could afford to regard Maxentius, who had been ruling a matter of months, and who had summoned his father at the first sign of trouble, as a cipher. After all, Maximian had done so, through twenty years of rule. Our orator might well infer that even if Maximian took in the reference, he would not care.

Grünewald, I submit, is mistaken to see panegyric as a direct medium of propaganda which functions in the same fashion as he regards coins and inscriptions as doing. Furthermore his focus on Constantine, the natural consequence of his topic of research, has led him to distort the substance of this particular speech and to exaggerate both his subject's importance in the eyes of the speaker, and his influence on the speech. 'Strictly viewed', in this speech both Maximian and Constantius loom much larger than the youthful Constantine. If our speaker misconstrues the political situation he can perhaps be forgiven for so

39 Cf. Rodgers (*op.cit.* n. 30) 237.
40 For such, see *Pan.* 6.1.4-5 (AD 310).

doing. In 307, Constantine's spectacular exploits lay in the future. And our panegyrist is curiously wedded to the past. Or not so curiously. For him the present political situation is uncertain. He interprets it using the tools of the Tetrarchic past, which was familiar to him. He manages some things better than others. Optimistic sentiments about the future were plain sailing, as were the past achievements of Maximian and Constantius. He gets Maximian back at the helm with great panache, and he contrives an excellent vignette of the child Constantine with the toddling Fausta. The exploits of Constantine, but newly arrived in the West, and an even more recent resident of Gaul, were not so simple. For the speaker, and his compatriots, Maximian and Constantius were towering figures; Constantine a virtually untried youth, with but the portents of good fortune that could be forecast by reference to his father's legacy. He was *iunior imperator*. *Oriens* to be sure, but not yet the stuff of panegyric.

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