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ASPECTS OF CONSTANTINIAN PROPAGANDA IN THE PANEGYRICI LATINI

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The Panegyrici Latini numbered VI to XI in Galletier's edition in the Budé series,[1] especially numbers VI, VII, and IX are important sources for the period of Constantine's rise to power. Naturally their limitations as evidence, given the nature of the panegyrical form and the refinements which generations of practitioners had made in the inherited stock of commonplaces, are well known to Constantinian specialists. This has not prevented some important conclusions from being drawn from them which would be important for our estimate of his aims and methods in the early part of his career if they could be substantiated. The object of this paper[2] is to stress the misleading impression which can be obtained from a concentration on certain isolated themes such as a claim to rule by hereditary right rather than the Tetrarchic system, and to point out substantial differences of emphasis which exist between the messages of the panegyrists and those of the coinage, another significant medium of propaganda.

One reason for extreme caution in handling the panegyrics is a negative one—we have no comparable material about Constantine's rivals. If Constantine appears to make substantial propaganda claims through his panegyrists, he was certainly not the only contender to do so. For example, Maxentius unquestionably made use very explicitly in his coinage, with substantial emissions bearing the slogan CONSERVATORI URBIS SUAE,[3] of his position as ruler of Rome—what

[1] Paris, 1949–1952. These panegyrics constitute vol. II of the edition. Galletier's numbering is followed throughout.

[2] A preliminary version was read at the Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association at St. Louis on December 30, 1973. I owe much to discussion with Professor Alan Booth of Brock University.

[3] *RIC* VI, 293 (Ticinum), 324 (Aquileia), 371 (Roma).

Groag called his "Nationalrömische Politik"[4]—and it is easy to imagine how his panegyrists could have handled the theme with suggestions implying his superiority to his rivals as holder of the imperial city. Again, as will be seen,[5] he made clear references on his coinage in 310 to his own hereditary claims, the same year that Constantine's panegyrist made the claim for his emperor. There is an assumption generally made that it was always Constantine who was particularly assertive in his claims in this period, but this need not be so. Similarly, the coinage of Licinius from 311 has been said to "witness his assumption of the sanctions no less than the territories previously claimed by Galerius," that is to say, the senior Augustus.[6]

It is easily forgotten that the panegyrics are not proclamations for empire-wide distribution but ephemeral formalities, occasions for which would arise several times every year. Our collection contains only a few out of many; its core of five speeches seems to have been assembled at Augustodunum in 312, partly to celebrate the efforts of Constantius and Constantine to restore the city to its former glory, partly to preserve examples of the talents of the speakers, four of whom appear to have been teachers of rhetoric there.[7] These speeches, with those added later, were preserved because they provided models for students (or practitioners) of rhetoric in the schools of Late Roman Gaul, not because they were historically significant documents. Only one of the panegyrics on Constantine was delivered at what was a relatively important political event—VI, on the marriage of Constantine to Fausta in 307. Nazarius' panegyric (XI) given before the senate in 321 had perhaps the widest audience, but it may be significant that it has less specific to say of Constantine's actions than any of the others. These were all given before audiences in Gaul, probably at Treveri; only VIII, strictly not a panegyric but a speech of thanks to Constantine for his visit to Augustodunum[8] and the benefits which he had conferred on it, indicates the audience: the emperor in person, his councillors

[4] *RE* XIV (2), 2457 ff.

[5] See note 23.

[6] *RIC* VI, 507.

[7] See the demonstration in Galletier's introduction to vol. I, XI–XIV. Panegyric V by Eumenius is precisely a speech of thanks to Constantius for restoring the schools of Augustodunum.

[8] But delivered at Treveri; Galletier 77.

(*amicorum comitatus*) and high officials (*imperii apparatus*) together with public delegations and private petitioners come to court from most of the cities of Gaul. There can be little doubt that the audiences of the rest of the panegyrics delivered in Gaul were similar. Thus the occasions and the audiences were intimately connected with the Gallic provinces in which Constantine passed the first six years of his reign. The naïve Gallic, or rather Gallo-Roman patriotism of the panegyrists is one of their best known features, and in their essentially local interest those on Constantine differ little from those on his father, or for that matter from those on Maximian, also delivered at Treveri, and added to the initial collection later.[9]

The first panegyric to be considered (VI) was delivered in 307, probably at Treveri at Constantine's marriage to Fausta and apparently after his acceptance of the rank of Augustus from Maximian, recently emerged from retirement. The point to be observed about this panegyric is that Maximian's position appears not just equal but superior to that of Constantine. It was natural in the circumstances of the marriage to Fausta that the idea of future succession in the Herculian line should arise, but the hereditary theme is muted. As far as Constantine himself is concerned, the panegyrist briefly refers to his father as the source of Constantine's power (*cum tibi pater imperium reliquisset*) but insists that he had refrained from using the title of Augustus till it had been bestowed on him by Maximian: *ipsum imperium hoc fore pulchrius iudicabas si id non hereditarium ex successione crevisses, sed virtutibus tuis debitum a summo imperatore meruisses.*[10] As for Maximian the orator found his abdication almost inexplicable—and indeed the uniqueness of the event must have cast him on his own resources, for he would have found no precedents in his models; it was due, he thought, primarily to his unquestioned loyalty[11] to Diocletian, but in fact the only justification for Diocletian's retirement would have been the succession of Maximian to sole power.[12] Strictly speaking,

[9] IV and V on Constantius, II and III on Maximian. See below notes 58 and 59 for the constant theme of the defence of the Rhine frontier which runs through the collection.

[10] VI.5.3.

[11] *pietas fraterna*, VI.9.2. On the concept of brotherly harmony between Diocletian and Maximian, see II.13 and III.6.

[12] VI.9.6.

perhaps, Maximian's retirement was a fiction; *non enim a te recessit imperium; et privatus licet dici velles, inhaesit tibi ingenita maiestas.*[13] The picture of the future roles of the two emperors given in the peroration is of Maximian giving orders and making laws while Constantine engages in untiring defence of the frontier sending back reports of his victories to his "father." This relationship corresponds to the relationship of an Augustus to a Caesar as envisaged by Diocletian—but Constantine was now an Augustus.

Constantine had to acquiesce in this public portrayal of his inferiority but he did nothing to help its realization.[14] In his coinage we see no more than due honor paid to Maximian on his emergence from retirement—and his second retirement after Carnuntum is quickly reflected. Further, the marriage was marked by only one very rare silver issue at Treveri.[15] The panegyrist was speaking in the presence of the two emperors and the court where the higher status of the senior Augustus compared with the young Constantine, still (it seems) in his early twenties, could not be denied; but for all Maximian's energy shown in this affair, it was Constantine who was in control of the mints and who was able to play down his relationship to Maximian with the prudence he had already shown when he had contented himself with the title of Caesar reluctantly agreed to by Galerius.

The speaker of Panegyric VII, given at Treveri some time in 310, had a more difficult task after the disgrace and death of Maximian. Attention has concentrated[16] on two of his themes—hereditary succession and a vision Constantine is said to have had in which he was promised thirty years' rule by Apollo. As regards the former theme, the panegyrist unveils the story that Constantine was descended from Claudius Gothicus and was thus the third emperor of his line. What distinguished him from his imperial colleagues, he argues, was that he was born *imperator* and his actual promotion to the rank added nothing to his standing; in fact, *imperium nascendo meruisti.*[17] But this

[13] VI.12.4.

[14] For the last years of Maximian, E. A. Sydenham, "The vicissitudes of Maximian after his abdication," *Num. Chron.*, 1934, 141 ff.

[15] *RIC* VI, 216.

[16] E.g., J. Vogt, *Constantin der Grosse und sein Jahrhundert* (Munich 1960²) 149 ff.; A. H. M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (London 1948) 65 f.; Galletier, vol. II, 41 ff.

[17] VII.2.2–3.1.

does not mean that Constantine is claiming sole rule by hereditary right, and the orator in fact has it both ways; in spite of the claim that Constantine's elevation added nothing to his standing, and the obligatory reference to his choice by Divus Constantius and the approval of the other gods,[18] he devotes a substantial passage to the role of the army in 306, even bringing in the notorious commonplace of reluctance to take up the burden of empire.[19] He accepts the idea of a college of rulers (*concors et socia maiestas*)[20] and envisages Diocletian (described as *divinum illum virum*) as being sustained in retirement by the new imperial college *quos scit ex sua stirpe crevisse*, that is, theoretical as opposed to natural descent.[21] It was of course inevitable that after the death of Maximian, Constantine should seek to dissociate himself from him as far as he could, though it was not a constitutional necessity.[22] But the hereditary theme was double edged; Maxentius could do as well and his coinage in precisely this year honors DIVO MAXIMIANO PATRI, DIVO CONSTANTIO COGNATO, and DIVO MAXIMIANO SOCERO (i.e., Galerius).[23] In 311 even Maximinus Daia proclaimed himself the son of Divus Maximianus (Galerius).[24] All this testifies to the acceptability of the idea of (natural) hereditary succession, but not that it was special to Constantine. Indeed it is not even certain that he was the first to emphasize it; the coinage of Maxentius just referred to is dated by Sutherland to 310, and it could as easily have been before as after the panegyrist's claim.

Furthermore, the Claudius Gothicus motif does not appear on coinage till 317.[25] How can this be explained if the hereditary claim was so important, and if, as has been argued, the panegyrist's other story about the vision is reflected in the coinage with an increased emphasis on SOL INVICTUS?[26] Surely because the claim when made in Gaul was of so limited an appeal: the significance of Claudius there some forty years after his death must have been negligible except

[18] VII.7.4 and 5, *sententia patris . . . omnium deorum sententia.*

[19] VII.8.2–5.

[20] VII.1.4.

[21] VII.15.4 and 5.

[22] So J. Straub, *Vom Herrscherideal in der Spätantike* (Leipzig 1939) 95. Cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford 1964) 326.

[23] *RIC* VI, 346, 381 ff.; C. E. King, "The Maxentian Mints," *Num. Chron.*, 1959, 74.

[24] *RIC* VI, 682.

[25] *RIC* VII, 180, 252, 310, 394, 429, 502.

[26] See below, note 37.

precisely at Augustodunum, the city which bulks so large in the world of the Gallic panegyrists. Yet even there, Claudius was associated with failure, not success; the author of Panegyric VIII, given in 312, tells of the revolt of Augustodunum against the usurper Victorinus and its appeal to Claudius *ad recuperandas Gallias*. But he never came, and the city was sacked after a seven months' siege.[27] Hardly therefore an emperor of general appeal in Gaul. Indeed, his appearance on the coinage in 317, and in imperial titulature in the following decades,[28] must have been prompted by Constantine's acquisition in 316/7[29] of Illyricum where, if anywhere, Claudius might be remembered. The fact is that in 310 Constantine was in an embarrassing position not so much in his relations with the other rulers as in the eyes of general opinion in his own area. The execution (for this was presumably the truth about the end of Maximian) of a Senior Augustus, under whatever provocation, who had been for some twenty years the successful colleague of the prestigious Diocletian, with his own share of military success in Gaul, must have come as a profound shock. It is well known that the orator only tells the story of his plot after Constantine had indicated his personal approval,[30] and mentions his death in the obliquest possible manner.[31] Indeed, in discussing the affair, the orator contrasts Diocletian's honored retirement with Maximian's restless discontent, and is not surprised that the man who had sworn an oath to Diocletian should also break faith with Constantine.[32] For these reasons it was impossible to treat Maximian with the virulence shown by the orator of 313 (and by all other sources) towards Maxentius—and this worked to Constantine's benefit later, again in 317. He was able to "rehabilitate" Maximian and the same series of coins which first honoured Divus Claudius also honoured Divus Maximianus, and henceforth he

[27] VIII.2.5 and 4.2–3; *RE* VIII A2, 2074 ff.

[28] E.g., *ILS* 723, 725, 730, 732.

[29] The new date of the *bellum Cibalense*, 316, proposed by P. Bruun, *The Constantinian Coinage of Arelate* (Helsinki 1953), now *Studies in Constantinian Chronology* (New York 1961), is generally accepted; cf. *RIC* VII, 65 ff.

[30] VII.14.1, *quemadmodum dicam adhuc ferme dubito et de nutu numinis tui exspecto consilium.*

[31] Ingeniously put at VII.20.3–4 . . . *etiam non merentibus pepercisti. sed ignosce dicto, non omnia potes; di te vindicant et invitum*, with the comments of Galletier, 40 and 71.

[32] VII.15.6.

appears sporadically in the titulature of Constantine's sons.[33] The message of the panegyrist of 310 is therefore one of reassurance in a difficult moment rather than the proclamation of an extensive new claim.

The vision of Constantine in a temple of Apollo[34] has been the subject of the most widely differing interpretations, ranging from that of Piganiol[35] who argued that it was the only "real" vision of Constantine to that of Bidez, followed by Alföldi,[36] that the whole story is just a panegyrical invention—it occurs in the peroration where the story would form a fitting climax. In general it has been held to have had political overtones, as Constantine was now obliged, after the disgrace and death of Maximian, to seek some other divine support, preferably of wider appeal than that which the Jovian-Herculian system is supposed to have had, and has been associated with the greater prominence given to SOL INVICTUS on Constantine's coinage from this date. Vogt,[37] for example, put it that Constantine "aus seinem Verhältnis zu Apollo Sol sich eine nach Raum und Zeit unbegrenzte Universalherrschaft zuschreiben liess." But it is as well to realize that we have little to go on. Among other things we could be cautious about an easy identification of the relatively new and Oriental Sol Invictus with Apollo, in Gaul above all a god of healing and patron of sacred springs[38] —our panegyrist himself providing us with one of the many references.[39] The panegyrist makes only a literary or pseudo-philosophical reference (it appears) to the Apollo-Helios-Sol identification: *Vidisti*

[33] *RIC* VII, 180, 252, 310, 395, 429, 502; *ILS* 723, 725, 730, 732. The issues are all *aes* and rare but come from all Constantine's mints. Note that II and III, both on Maximian and delivered at Treveri in 289 and 291, survived his disgrace and were added to the basic Constantian and Constantinian collection; Galletier vol. I, XIV, dates the addition "peu de temps sans doute après la naissance du *corpus* d'Autun." Perhaps therefore *c.* 317—which was also the date at which Crispus took up residence in Gaul.

[34] VII.21.3–6. The temple visited by Constantine (presumably a fact) has been identified with that of Apollo Grannus at Grand (Vosges), C. Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule* VII, 107, Galletier, vol. II, 43, 44, and *REA* 52 (1950) 288–99.

[35] *L'empereur Constantin* (Paris 1932) 50.

[36] *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome* (Oxford 1948) 18.

[37] Vogt (above, note 16) 151.

[38] See J. Toutain, *Les cultes paiens dans l'empire romain* III (Paris 1917) 201–04, with references (not complete) to the cult of Apollo and his Gallic equivalents; 412 and 428 f. for their distribution.

[39] VII.21.7 and 22.1–3 (not in Toutain).

(sc. Constantine), *teque in illius specie recognovisti, cui totius mundi regna deberi vatum carmina divina cecinerunt.* (Taken by itself this sentence would presumably be taken as referring to Jupiter; such are the pitfalls of the religious language of the panegyrists.) For the rest, the vision obviously shows Apollo in prophetic guise, and, still more, the panegyrist proceeded to a long passage inviting the emperor to visit another temple of Apollo, this one at Augustodunum where precisely the centre of the cult was a warm spring.[40] Assuming that there was some change in Constantine's religious attitude, it is certain that the panegyrist does not tell us anything solid about what it was or on what level it was effective in Constantine's thinking, since he has presented his Apollo primarily in the form in which he was familiar to his Gallic audience.

His expression of the political consequences (if indeed it is one) is extremely brief, confined to the one sentence quoted above, where Constantine is said to have recognized himself in the features of the supreme deity. Surely this is very little. Vogt, who accepted the idea of a change in the emperor's religious outlook, was cautious about the immediate political consequences, and rightly so.[41] The significance of the increased emphasis on SOL INVICTUS on Constantine's coins from 310 must be debatable since it is a question of degree. There are still plenty of issues with the previously popular Mars motif. Again, SOL INVICTUS is popular in the mints of both Galerius and Maximinus Daia. It is only from 313 that the new motif becomes overwhelming (for a time) in Constantine's coinage. This leads to the conclusion that in 310 at least the religious motif had little significance as a support for political claims, nor can we assume that contemporaries in Gaul so viewed it. Indeed, if we were to look for a really dominant religious theme on coinage before 313, it is to be found in Licinius' mints at Thessalonica and Heraclea, said by Sutherland to show "unvaried Jupiter symbolism" and hence to witness Licinius' "assumption of the sanctions no less than the territories claimed by Galerius."[42]

[40] *Loc. cit.*

[41] Vogt (above, note 16) 151.

[42] Above, note 6. A. D. Nock, "The Emperor's Divine *Comes*," *JRS* 37 (1947) 102–117, concludes that Licinius' IOVI CONSERVATORI and Constantine's SOLI INVICTO COMITI express an almost identical relationship between the emperor and the god.

Panegyric IX, delivered in 313 at Treveri, is largely devoted to Constantine's victory over Maxentius, and is a classic exposition of the theme of the triumph of a virtuous and legitimate ruler over a tyrannical usurper. It includes almost every known political commonplace in its vilification of Maxentius and in praise of Constantine for liberating Rome from oppression. Naturally there was nothing new in this sort of presentation, but its handling in other sources is of some interest. The theme of Constantine as the restorer of liberty is solidly represented in epigraphy in both Italy and Africa, and the inscriptions seem to be in a number sufficient to justify belief in a deliberate campaign; that on Constantine's arch in Rome is only the best known of many, the earliest of which is dated to 313.[43] The theme is also represented on Constantine's coinage from his original mints in Gaul and from Rome, but all the issues are rare, in contrast to the massive Maxentian issues CONSERVATORI URBIS SUAE. To this slogan, Constantine's RESTITUTORI or LIBERATORI URBIS SUAE was the obvious if banal counterpart.[44] Whatever the real nature of Maxentius' reign, he had made much of his possession of the imperial capital and it was necessary for Constantine to make some sort of reply. It is well known that the panegyrist's view that Constantine attacked first was not the view of later Constantinian propaganda; Lactantius said that Maxentius was to blame, ostensibly to avenge his father, Nazarius that Constantine was driven to war by the provocations of Maxentius.[45] Actually, given the propagandist nature of the theme of "liberation from a tyrant," the panegyrist of 313 is not necessarily the more truthful, though his version seems the more probable.

The somewhat restrained note in the coinage may be due to Constantine's unwillingness at this point to alienate his new brother-in-law Licinius by emphasizing in such a public manner as a large emission his acquisition of territory originally destined for Licinius. It should be recalled that no source tells us under what circumstances Licinius agreed (if he did agree) that Constantine, not himself, should remove Maxentius in accordance with the plan of Carnuntum. It seems that the cautious

[43] *ILS* 692 (Rome, dated 313), 694 (Rome), 687 (Ostia), 688–91 (African locations).

[44] *RIC* VI, 293 ff., 324, 371, 400 (Maxentius); 387 (Constantine) and variants from the Gallic mints, 235, 237, 165–66, 363 ff.

[45] Lactantius, *De mort.* 43.4; *Pan. Lat.* X.9–13, and cf. Zosimus II.14. A. H. M. Jones (above, note 16) 74 believed that Maxentius struck the first blow.

and defensive spirit which he always displayed had prevented him from attacking in the period 309–311, and the panegyrist's briefest of references, in connexion with Constantine's attack *quiescentibus cunctantibusque tunc imperii tui sociis* perhaps makes a fair point.[46] It is however well known from the evidence of the panegyrists themselves that Maxentius had the bulk of his forces facing Licinius;[47] he could have been unaware of an agreement, but it remains a possibility that Constantine attacked without Licinius' knowledge while the latter was consolidating his hold on the Balkans after the events of 311, and left him with no choice but to accept a *fait accompli*.[48]

The defeat of Maxentius had further ramifications in the historiography of Constantine. It was notoriously of vital significance to the Christian view of the victory and conversion of Constantine found in Lactantius and Eusebius; in the brief accounts which survive from pagan sources of the later fourth and fifth centuries, Maxentius is also handled with uniform hostility, and in general Constantine's victory over him is viewed as a crucial point in his advance to sole rule.[49] In fact, of course, it was another twelve years before Constantine achieved sole power. Constantine had acquired Italy and the African provinces, but he had broken out of a confined area rather than broken through to supremacy. The very next year, Licinius received a much more substantial increase in strength when he defeated an attack by Maximinus and thus added the whole of the East to his already substantial Pannonian and Balkan territories. This, together with their new relationship, was perhaps the reason why neither IX nor X makes reference to the Senate's designation of Constantine as *maximus*, thus designating him as the senior of the two Augusti; nor does the title appear on coinage till 315/6.[50] The explanation for the position of the Maxentian episode in pagan as well as Christian writers seems to lie in Constantine's subsequent success in dominating the historiography

[46] IX.2.3.

[47] IX.8–13, X.25–27; the geography of the campaign has not been subject to panegyrical distortion. Cf. Anon. Val. 4.2.

[48] Vogt (above, note 16) 111 and Andreotti, "Licinius," in Ruggiero, *Dizionario Epigrafico di Antichità Romane* IV, 993, assume Licinius' agreement.

[49] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40; *Epit.* 40, 41; Eutrop. X.3–6; Zos. II.14 ff. Anon. Val. 4 and 5 is more balanced.

[50] Lactantius *De mort.* 44.11, *Senatus Constantino virtutis gratia primi nominis titulum decrevit quem sibi Maximinus vindicabat.* *RIC* VII, 28.

of his own lifetime, and in constructing a picture which laid emphasis on the end of Maxentius. This ruler could easily be portrayed as a tyrannical usurper, and concentration on this theme would go some way to disguise the fact that Constantine had remained the colleague for some twelve years of a legitimate ruler of respectable qualities who could not be handled in history the same way as Maxentius. The middle decade of Constantine's reign is little known and to some extent this is because he successfully imposed the picture of his advance to sole rule as divinely inspired, effortless and swift.

It is in this respect that Panegyric X, delivered by Nazarius of Burdigala in the senate in 321, is a disappointment, perhaps significantly so. The occasion was the *quinquennalia* of the young Crispus and still younger Constantine II; the emperor himself was absent, and indeed had not been in Rome since the victory over Maxentius except for a brief stay in 315. The orator naturally has nothing but empty phrases to say on the actions of the two young Caesars and concentrates on Constantine. But he has little to add to what is in the other panegyrics —the campaigns in Gaul of 306–10 and 313, and—his main theme—the campaign against Maxentius. Since the rules of panegyric required that all attention be centred on the emperor to which it was addressed[51] it is not surprising that there is no mention of Licinius, or for that matter the younger Licinius whose *quinquennalia* fell on the same date as that of the sons of Constantine. It may be the case that it was in precisely this year[52] that relations between the two rulers which had been at any rate formally correct since the settlement of 317 began to deteriorate, but we cannot deduce anything from this panegyric. On the other hand it is notable that we hear nothing of Constantine's activities since 313 except a brief reference of a commonplace character[53] to *novae leges*. It may be supposed that in the absence of the court the orator had no indicated line to follow and felt on safe ground in doing no more than rework the themes of the defence of the Rhine frontier and the defeat of Maxentius. One feature of his treatment of the latter has been found significant, namely its religiosity and

[51] II and III, the panegyrics on Maximian, are exceptions, as they have much to say on Diocletian, but this is presumably because of the novelty of the situation.

[52] E. Kornemann, *Doppelprinzipat und Reichsteilung im Imperium Romanum* (Leipzig 1930) 127–28.

[53] X.38.4.

especially its several references to the *caelestis exercitus*[54] fighting on Constantine's side. This has been seen[55] as the culmination of Constantine's religious propaganda, which had begun with the vision in Apollo's temple, continued with the divine inspiration of his strategy against Maxentius and now reached a climax with the actual participation of a "heavenly host" in the fighting, led by no less a person than his father Constantius.[56] Galletier's proposition is attractive (especially if the vision of 310 is regarded as mere panegyrical material, not representing any specific change in Constantine's religion), but on the whole the three aspects look more like variations on the commonplace of divine support. In Nazarius, the locale of the speech is perhaps important because he draws a deliberate comparison between the *caelestis exercitus* supporting Constantine and the appearance of the Dioscuri at Lake Regillus, one of the most cherished of Roman myths.[57] Concentration on the defeat of Maxentius would also no doubt have been at least as acceptable to the senatorial audience as anything else done by Constantine.

Finally, when all is said on these debatable points, it remains a fact that the chief theme of the *Panegyrici* is not any of those mentioned, but Constantine's defence of the Rhine frontier and his victories over the Germans. The defence of the Rhine had indeed been of vital concern to the panegyrists of Maximian and Constantius as well.[58] In the case of Constantine they are mentioned in VI, when they had hardly begun, and are treated at some length in panegyrics VII, IX, and X.[59] The most sensational single event, the capture and death in the amphitheatre of the two kings Ascaric and Merogaisus is mentioned by three panegyrists;[60] it appears to have already occurred by

[54] X.14 and 15; 19.2; 29.1.

[55] Galletier vol. II, 155.

[56] VII.21 (temple of Apollo); IX.2.4 ff. (divine inspiration); X.14.6 (Constantius as leader of the heavenly army).

[57] X.15.2–7. This article has not attempted to deal with the problems, perhaps insoluble, of the religious vocabulary of IX and X—i.e., in what degrees it is literary, pseudo-philosophical or plain evasive in the post-312 situation. In these and other passages Nazarius seems to reach new heights, or depths, of ambiguity.

[58] II.5–8.10; IV.8 and 9; 18; 20.

[59] VI.4; VII.10 ff. and 31; IX.21–24; X.16–18. The exploits of Constantius are recalled in VII.4 ff. and IX.24.

[60] VI.4.2 (unnamed); VII.10.2 and 11.5; X.16.5.

early 307, but campaigns certainly continued for several more years. So important was the defence of the frontier in the eyes of the panegyrists that the speaker of IX in 313 claims that the withdrawal of troops from the frontier did not endanger it, though in fact he himself reveals that this was not true and that Constantine had to return to the Rhine in a hurry after his meeting with Licinius at Milan early in 313.[61] The successful outcome of the series of campaigns from 306 to 309 or 310 are celebrated on coinage of 310 with the legends FRANCIA and ALEMANNIA.[62] It may be that the campaigns were not so extensive as the panegyrists try to make us believe; the repetition of the death of the two kings, which had occurred at the start of the campaigns, and the lack of much other concrete information look suspicious. But there is no reason to doubt that Constantine successfully maintained the relative improvement in stability along the Rhine and in this was succeeding to his father's role, and the role expected of him by the panegyrists. It is well known that they combine in a somewhat naïve way a "Roman" with a "Gallic" patriotism,[63] and appear to have viewed Constantine, as they did Constantius, as "their" emperor. As for Constantine's coinage, this is not substantially Gallic in tone, but according to Sutherland,[64] commenting on the issues from Treveri (the most productive mint) from 306 to 312, "Coinage in all metals, taken as a whole, gives overwhelmingly strong emphasis to Constantine himself: the issues for his colleagues are little more than bare courtesy coinage." If true—and the whole matter is rather subjective, requiring comparison with the volume of analogous coins from the mints of Constantine's colleagues, and their attitudes to each other—we may see the importance attached by Constantine to securing loyalty to his own person, if not to the intensely self-centred, self-admiring side of his personality. It must also not be forgotten that in spite of his recognition by Galerius, his position vis-à-vis Maxentius can hardly have seemed overwhelming at any stage, given the collapse of the attempts by both Severus and Galerius to remove him.

It would seem therefore that neither the panegyrics nor the coinage

[61] IX. 2.6–3.3 (Rhine defence maintained); IX.21.5 (rapid return to Rhine).
[62] *RIC* VI, 160.
[63] The whole group bears witness to this. Cf. especially VIII.2–7 and (inevitably) IX.
[64] *RIC* VI, 159.

of Constantine in the early part of his career give much support for the idea of a young man gripped from the start by a driving ambition for sole rule.[65] We may of course believe that he was, in which case the message of the contemporary sources for the years 306–13 shows an underestimated aspect of Constantine—his prudence and circumspection. Perhaps he was consciously building up during these years an army of a new type,[66] the basis of the future *comitatenses*, ready to strike swiftly when ready; but then, his victory over Maxentius was followed by another decade of shared rule with Licinius, including the indecisive war of 317. Constantine, in short, may be compared in several respects not so much with Caesar[67] as with Augustus; not only in his youth when launched into power, but also in his diplomatic adroitness, his cautious assessment of political and military realities, and his largely successful manipulation of his own image.

[65] Best formulated by A. H. M. Jones (above, note 22) 78. Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40.2 is the most explicit source: *iam tum a puero ingens potensque animus ardore imperitandi agitabatur.*

[66] So D. van Berchem, *L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme constantinienne* (Paris 1952) 108.

[67] Vogt (above, note 16) 141.