

# **DYNASTY AND COLLEGIALITY**

## **Representations of Imperial Legitimacy, AD 284-337**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates representations of dynastic legitimacy and imperial power in the later Roman Empire (AD 284-337). It explores the continuity and change in expressions of dynastic legitimacy by, for and about the emperors of this period, which were presented in coinage, panegyrics, and other literary and material evidence. I argue that familial relationships were used throughout this period to make legitimation claims or to counter claims made by rivals, rejecting the notion of clear breaks between the third century, the Tetrarchy and the reign of Constantine. The Tetrarchy's creation of familial links through adoption and marriage led to a web of inter-familial relationships that they and later emperors used in promoting their own claims to imperial legitimacy. At the same time, the presentation of these imperial colleges as harmonious co-rulership relied heavily on the adaptation of pre-existing strategies, which in turn would be adapted by the emperors of the early fourth century.

This thesis proceeds roughly chronologically, focusing on the regimes of individual emperors and their collaborators when possible. Chapter 1 examines the creation of the Tetrarchy as an extended 'family' and the adaptation of ideologies of third-century co-rulership. Chapter 2 explores the changes in the Second Tetrarchy, with an especial focus on the 'Iovian' family of Galerius and Maximinus Daza. Chapter 3 looks at Maxentius' claims to both 'retrospective' and 'prospective' dynastic legitimacy. Chapter 4 examines Licinius' legitimacy both as a co-ruler and brother-in-law of Constantine, and as the beginning of a new 'Iovian' dynasty. Chapter 5 delves deeper into the different claims to dynastic legitimacy made by Constantine over the course of his thirty-year reign.

Taken together, these chapters offer a new approach by arguing against the dichotomy between 'dynasty' and 'collegiality' that tends to dominate scholarship of this period. Instead they focus on the similarities and continuities between the representations of imperial families and imperial colleges in order to understand how perceptions of dynastic legitimacy evolved in the third and fourth centuries.



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Appendix: Stemma. Designed by author.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*Commonly used or non-standard abbreviations. Other abbreviations within will follow the standards of the Oxford Classical Dictionary.*

AE	L'Année Épigraphique.
Aur. Vict.	Aurelius Victor, <i>De Caesaribus</i> .
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> .
<i>Chron. Pasch.</i>	<i>Chronicon Paschale</i> .
Euseb. <i>Hist. Eccl.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> .
Euseb. <i>Vita Const.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Vita Constantini</i> .
Eutrop.	Eutropius, <i>Breviarium</i> .
Herod.	Herodian, <i>Historia de imperio post Marcum</i> .
<i>Hist. Aug.</i>	<i>Historia Augusta</i> ; individual lives also abbreviated.
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> .
Jer. <i>Chron.</i>	Jerome ('Hieronymus'), <i>Chronicon</i> .
Jer. <i>Vir. Ill.</i>	Jerome, <i>De Viris Illustribus</i> .
Lact. <i>Mort. Pers.</i>	Lactantius, <i>De Mortibus Persecutorum</i> .
<i>Origo</i>	<i>Origo Constantini Imperatoris</i> , ('Anonymus Valesianus, pars prior').
Orosius	.Orosius, <i>Historiarum Adversum Paganos</i> .
Opt. Porf., <i>Carm.</i>	Optatianus Porfyrius, <i>Carmina</i> .
<i>Pan. Lat.</i>	<i>Panegyrici Latini</i> .
Petr. Patr.	Petrus Patricius ('Peter the Patrician'), <i>Historia</i> .
PLRE	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , Jones et. al. (1971).
Ps.-Vict.	'Pseudo-Aurelius Victor', <i>Epitome de Caesaribus</i> .
RIC	Roman Imperial Coinage, various volumes.
Zonar.	Zonaras, <i>Epitome Historiarum</i> .
Zos.	Zosimus, <i>Nova Historia</i> .





## INTRODUCTION

### Dynasty and Collegiality, AD 284-337

#### 1. OUTLINE

This thesis will examine how representations of imperial legitimacy in late antiquity relied upon, employed, and developed dynastic connections: how emperors sought to represent their legitimacy both in terms of individual familial relationships and within the larger framework of dynasties, and in turn how these representations were perceived and used by others outside the imperial circle. In doing so, I will explore the change and continuity in expressions of dynastic legitimacy from AD 284-337, the accession of Diocletian to the death of Constantine, a period which encompassed periods both of relative stability and of civil war. It was also an era marked by the development of multiple distinct and yet interrelated dynasties, which roughly—but not perfectly—correspond to different imperial colleges, i.e. groups of co-emperors.<sup>1</sup>

My starting point is Diocletian's proclamation as emperor by the army in AD 284, although the real beginning comes a year later, with Maximian's appointment as co-emperor. This marks the first of Diocletian's imperial colleges, which would evolve in 293 into the 'First Tetrarchy'. It is the initial example of a series of collegial governments that would last arguably until 337, when Constantine's death ends the last college helmed by a 'Tetrarchic' emperor. However, in order to properly examine continuity and change in concepts of dynasty and collegiality through the evolution of these imperial colleges from AD 285-337, this thesis will make reference to earlier imperial colleges, especially those of the mid-third century. This will be especially evident in **Chapter 1**, which will compare Diocletian's imperial colleges to those of Philip I (AD 244-249); Valerian and Gallienus (AD 253-268); Carus, Carinus, and Numerian (AD 282-285); and others. However, in choosing a distinct time period in this way, beginning in 284 and ending in 337, there is some danger of 'periodization', and thus of viewing Diocletian's rule as instantly and radically different from what came before. Alaric Watson argues against viewing the events of the third century as a "catastrophic break" between the second century and the fourth, instead treating them as a period of development and change.<sup>2</sup> I follow this view and intend to show that there were continuities as well as innovations between the third and the fourth centuries.

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<sup>1</sup> See **3.iv** for a discussion on this term.

<sup>2</sup> Watson (1999) 208.

The often-remarked upon difference between Diocletian's imperial colleges and those that came before was that Diocletian's college seems explicitly non-dynastic. He had no son and, as far as we can tell, no close male 'blood' relations at all, so his decision to make Maximian a co-emperor was, while not entirely novel, certainly unusual.<sup>3</sup> Constantius and Galerius also had no blood relationships to their co-emperors and senior Augusti, nor to each other. In this thesis, I wish to challenge the long-held and now often-debated premise that the imperial colleges known as the 'Tetrarchy' were inherently 'non-dynastic' or even 'anti-dynastic' and that the reign of Constantine heralded a return to dynastic principles, as Stephen Williams claimed.<sup>4</sup> What the Tetrarchs created was a network of adoptive and marital relationships that effectively bound the four emperors together into both a college and a family.<sup>5</sup> These relationships and the subsequent ones derived from them would dominate the sphere of imperial politics for, arguably, the next half-century, but especially in the period between 306 and 324, which saw both cooperation and competition between members of this extended 'Tetrarchic family'. Even after 324, when Constantine was sole Augustus (although not sole emperor), the politics of the 'Tetrarchic' family would continue to play out through Constantine's relationship with his half-siblings and their families.

Yet nor do I want to go as far as to say, as Bill Leadbetter has, that the Tetrarchy was "an essentially private dynastic arrangement."<sup>6</sup> Instead, I wish to avoid this dichotomy between dynastic and anti- or non-dynastic by looking at the similarities between imperial colleges and imperial families, viewing the Tetrarchy and the imperial colleges that followed as extensions of these twin concepts. My arguments examine both the *presentation* and the *perception* of imperial colleges of AD 284-337, that is, how expressions of dynastic legitimacy were constructed and disseminated (e.g. on coinage) and also how they were received and employed by others (e.g. in panegyric). By combining these two approaches, I will show that these colleges relied on techniques of dynastic legitimation—often simultaneously with other types of legitimation—in their ever-evolving imperial ideologies. Dynastic legitimation, therefore,

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the appointment of Clodius Albinus by Septimius Severus seems even more unusual as Severus actually had sons.

<sup>4</sup> As in Williams (1985) 198: "A far more stable imperial system was eventually achieved in the fourth century, around the twin principles of dynastic succession and collegial rule." Cf. the overwrought statement of MacMullen (1970) 21: "Dynasticism made sense; the Tetrarchy did not; and anyone with a feeling for the Roman way must have divined the history latent in the firstborn of the Caesar Constantius." MacMullen elaborates upon this idea at (1970) 217f.

<sup>5</sup> Although he goes into very little detail, Grant (1993) 18 acknowledges both perspectives in his characterization of the Tetrarchy as "a sort of mixture between elective and hereditary rulership."

<sup>6</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 6: "Were they [Diocletian's choices of colleague] dictated by principle or did they make a virtue of necessity? It is this question that employment of the term "tetrarchy" can obfuscate, implying that an essentially private dynastic arrangement was a constitutional form."

was one way—but a vital way—of understanding the evolution of imperial power in late antiquity.<sup>7</sup>

In the modern world, the concept of dynastic succession seems both inherently familiar and charmingly old-fashioned. It was not a constitutional element of the Roman Empire, though most emperors tried to pass imperial power on to their successors anyway.<sup>8</sup> Certainly attempts were made, from the Julio-Claudians onwards, to establish imperial dynasties. By the fourth century, dynastic succession was a vital part of the functioning of imperial power.<sup>9</sup> Dynastic legitimation looks both forwards to future successors and back at imperial ancestors to establish the emperor's right to rule—or in some cases, to be the best choice out of several to rule. Most importantly, dynastic legitimation was a claim, rather than a right. There was no guarantee that being a relation of a previous emperor ensured the continuation of rule—the numerous failed dynasties of the third century show this, and yet emperors did not stop trying to set their sons up as successors.<sup>10</sup>

Additionally, the emperor had to appear worthy on multiple levels, not only through his blood.<sup>11</sup> The apparent preference of soldiers for dynastic succession is also important, and should be understood as a melding of different types of legitimacy, including acclamation and consensus, and the support of the military.<sup>12</sup> From the perspective of the present, after two millennia of dynastic succession as an accepted pattern of rule and after the rise and fall of countless dynasties across the world, it seems that dynastic succession should be inevitable. Perhaps it was, but that does not mean that the attempts to set up dynasties are not important in understanding the way that Roman imperial power both functioned and evolved.

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<sup>7</sup> For instance, as McEvoy (2013) has shown, dynastic claims to legitimacy were of vital importance to the evolution of imperial power and the position of emperor in the fourth century.

<sup>8</sup> Hekster (2015) 1-38, especially 2: “Roman imperial succession was a dynastic matter. From the reign of Augustus onwards, imperial power was transferred to members of the family if these were at hand.” Cf. Flaig (1997).

<sup>9</sup> Van Dam (2007) 105-106: “During the fourth century blood relationships repeatedly trumped seniority, experience, and ideology, and emperors almost always decided that sons, brothers, or cousins would be the best colleagues or successors. As a result, whenever the cooperation between emperors collapsed and they became rivals, they had to think about eliminating not only each other, but also their opponent's sons (and other relatives).”

<sup>10</sup> Hekster (2008) 4ff.

<sup>11</sup> As Gesche (1978) 379 says: “Überspitzt formuliert: Es galt plausibel zu machen, daß der vorn Vorgänger für die Herrschaftsnachfolge designierte, leibliche bzw. adoptierte Sohn grundsätzlich auch der geeignetste und fähigste Princeps sei.”

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Börm (2015) 242; Williams (1985) 209; Lendon (1997) 254: “Soldiers also felt a strong dynastic loyalty, which might be appealed to in time of crisis.”

## 2. KEY THEMES, TERMS, AND DEBATES

Constantinian studies cannot be said to be a neglected topic, but studies in Late Antiquity more broadly have gained popularity in the last few decades. This popularity is precisely because there is a wealth of underexplored material and topics that fall under the heading of ‘late antique’. Questions on dynastic legitimacy and collegiality crop up in wider discussions—the former especially where Constantine is concerned. Some of the broader examinations touch upon questions of legitimacy, but there has been no comprehensive study of the techniques of the presentation of dynastic legitimacy throughout this period, nor of how dynastic legitimacy was perceived and employed by others in historiographical narrative or to form rhetorical constructions of praise or blame.<sup>13</sup>

### i. Theories of Imperial Power and Legitimacy

In order to examine imperial legitimacy, it is also important to consider different theories on the nature of imperial power. Although it has a limited discussion of the specifics of the late antique world, J. E. Lendon’s *Empire of Honour* claims that the Roman Empire was built upon systems of honour, patronage, and prestige.<sup>14</sup> The emperor’s power, in the end, comes from him being able to regulate these systems. This system of honour underlying the nature of imperial power is further supported by later case studies into the nature of prestige and ranking, such as that by John Dillon, who examines the power relationship between the emperor and his officials in the former’s granting titles of honour and prestige.<sup>15</sup> A system that is different, but not necessarily contradictory, is found in Clifford Ando’s *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty*. Ando includes a broad chronological range of literary evidence that is quite impressive and largely convincing, although at times perhaps overly theoretical.<sup>16</sup> He argues that imperial power and legitimacy are based upon the idea of *consensus*, a constant negotiation of power between the ruler and the ruled.<sup>17</sup> The preference for dynastic legitimacy

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<sup>13</sup> In the period under discussion, this sort of rhetoric was often made by Christian authors like Lactantius against the members of the Tetrarchy, whom they decried as persecutors. Such rhetoric was expanded in the period after Constantine’s death to include those who supported the ‘wrong’ kind of Christianity, as Constantius II was blamed for. Cf. Humphries (1997); Flower (2013).

<sup>14</sup> Lendon (1997) 23: “The marked perception, therefore, is not of subjects, officials, and emperor dealing with each other in terms of obedience. Rather, the subject paid ‘honour’ to his rulers as individuals deserving of it in themselves, and, in turn, the rulers are seen to relate to their subjects by ‘honouring’ them.”

<sup>15</sup> Dillon (2015); see also Kelly (2006) 130ff.

<sup>16</sup> While Barnes (2001) 884 comments that “this is a book less to be read and believed than one to be skimmed in search of interesting observations and provocative ideas on specific topics”, this is certainly an overly harsh assessment.

<sup>17</sup> See also e.g. Millar (1977) 368-375 on the popularity and visibility of the emperor.

is a “fiction”, based on the desire of the populace for stability and continuity,<sup>18</sup> when in fact it is the personal ‘charisma’ of the emperors—which becomes embodied in the position of the emperor—that represents the continuity of imperial power.<sup>19</sup> This is represented through constant communication between the ruler and the ruled, as has been argued by Sabine McCormack in her influential *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*.<sup>20</sup> Such communication, McCormack and Ando argue, was performed in rituals like the *adventus*.<sup>21</sup>

Lendon essentially argues a perhaps more familiar view of imperial power which starts at the top and filters down, whereas Ando claims that the basis of imperial power rests firmly upon the ruled and how they are influenced by (and can choose to follow) the perceived charisma of the imperial position, which in turn is transmitted from emperor to emperor. Within these structures of power are different ideas on how emperors express their own imperial legitimacy. At the same time, these systems, structures—as well as the audiences of such honour and charisma—change over time; the world of the third and fourth century was different than that of the first and second centuries. If combined—examining both constructions of imperial power from the ‘centre’ or the ‘top’ (as in Lendon) and the received perceptions of this power (as in Ando)—these concepts of power may illuminate both the creation and the reception of constructions of dynastic legitimacy.<sup>22</sup>

Of course, dynastic legitimacy was not the only way of constructing legitimization claims; it was only one out of many. Rufus J. Fears discusses imperial legitimization strategies through divine election, although he shows how divine election can be combined with or replaced by other strategies.<sup>23</sup> Fears’ conclusions seem to indicate that representations of divine election are actually not particularly common, but that instead emperors return to legitimacy through dynastic succession whenever possible. Divine election “was not viewed as the foundation of cosmic order but rather as only one element in the vast repertoire of imperial propaganda, one which could be invoked when the situation required.”<sup>24</sup> The same, however, can also be said for dynastic legitimacy. Additionally, such legitimization strategies were not mutually exclusive; they were easily combined. For example, Clare Rowan has shown how

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<sup>18</sup> Ando (2000) 24.

<sup>19</sup> Ando (2000) 34ff. Ando bases his arguments on the theories of ‘charisma’ formulated initially by Max Weber; Weber (1968), (1978). Cf. Ando (2000) xii, 19-29.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, McCormack (1981) 9. Cf. Kelly (2006).

<sup>21</sup> McCormack (1981) 17-62; Ando (2000) 250-252.

<sup>22</sup> As Hekster (2015) 319 suggests.

<sup>23</sup> Fears (1977). Fears is quite conservative in his assessment; he does not feel the need to claim hundreds of potentially problematic instances of the use of divine election in order to prove his theory, but is satisfied with fewer but clearer cases.

<sup>24</sup> Fears (1977) 322.

dynastic connections and divine election could be combined in imperial ideology under the Severans.<sup>25</sup> Ultimately, legitimacy was not a one-or-the-other affair. It was entirely possible to meld different types of legitimizing constructions, and this is in fact what emperors usually did.

Both Lendon and Ando's theories of imperial power can be used to examine these constructions of legitimacy. For example, the dissemination of gold coinage, which constitutes a large portion of the material I examine throughout this thesis, often worked as gifts for high-ranking officials and military officers, spreading the presentation of dynastic relationships via the imperially-controlled mints. Equally, the use of these relationships in the rhetoric of praise and blame found, for example, in the panegyrics, shows what was perceived as important as well as the 'negotiation' between the ruler and the ruled. Overall, the active construction and dissemination of imperial legitimacy shows that it is an important part of the imperial image. There was increased activity, some of it innovative, in times of unrest, and the era of the Tetrarchy and Constantine offers periods of both relative peace and civil conflict. Emperors drew from a variety of (often familiar) methods of claiming legitimacy, depending on what was applicable to the situation, but these were not necessarily constant, even to a single ruler, over time. Emperors also had to establish their legitimacy in relation to those who had ruled before them: by inclusion or exclusion, by reuse or innovation.

## ii. Dynastic legitimacy and approaches to kinship

Dynastic legitimacy is at its core the idea that an emperor was a legitimate ruler because his father (or another family member) ruled before him and had passed down *imperium* to the son, or that the son had a right to claim that *imperium*. The closest that scholarship has come to a broad study of dynastic legitimacy for the period of 284-337 is Olivier Hekster's *Emperors and Ancestors*, which examines constructions of kinship on coinage, epigraphy, and in some literature from Augustus to the end of the Tetrarchy, with brief mentions of Constantine and his sons as endpoints of Tetrarchic ideology.<sup>26</sup> Hekster looks at how imperial ancestry was presented at different periods in the Roman Empire.<sup>27</sup> He argues that, even though the Roman Empire was not set up to follow dynastic succession, nevertheless "Roman emperorship was a

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<sup>25</sup> Rowan (2012).

<sup>26</sup> Especially Hekster (2015) 277-314. Studies of dynastic expressions under Constantine and his sons are easier to come by; see for example the study of the dynastic murders of 337 by Burgess (2008); Cameron (2006) on the propaganda of Constantine's relationship with Constantius;

<sup>27</sup> On the commemoration of family members, see e.g. Hekster (2009), McIntyre (2013).

dynastic system of rule, in a society that paid particular attention to kinship.”<sup>28</sup> Hekster imbues his examination with an anthropological approach to kinship, for example, the differences between ‘constructed’, ‘fictive’ or actual relationships, the first two in terms of adoption or invented ancestry.<sup>29</sup> I will use these terms with caution; they may clarify the nature of the relationships, but they may also misconstrue the relationships as they would have been seen in the ancient world. Related to this, Mireille Corbier and Hugh Lindsay both discuss the historical context of kinship; their work, though it focuses mostly on elites in the late Republic and the early Empire rather than imperial families, reveals how ‘constructed’ kinship was actually a very normal strategy for dealing with problems of succession and inheritance.<sup>30</sup>

In approaching the material, Hekster differentiates between ‘central’ and ‘peripheral’ evidence, especially regarding coinage, which for most of the period under discussion could be distinguished because of the organization of the mints into imperially-controlled and provincial ones. Hekster ends his study with a chapter on the Tetrarchy, in which he argues for the exclusion of dynastic elements in expressions of Tetrarchic ideology. This can be convincing at times, e.g. his discussion of the absence of women honoured under the Tetrarchy, although he does not fully acknowledge the continuation of third-century dynastic numismatic traditions (see **Chapter 1**).<sup>31</sup> This thesis will therefore build on Hekster’s scholarship by pointing out some of the nuances between family and collegiality and by exploring Tetrarchic representations in continuity with evidence from the third century.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, in looking at dynastic legitimacy I intend to examine not only the use of ancestors to provide legitimacy, but also the creation of a ‘forward-looking’ dynasty, i.e. efforts made to set up dynastic successors. These attempts to establish a dynasty provided a different type of dynastic legitimacy than ancestral forebears, one that promised stability through the continuation of the ruling dynasty.

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<sup>28</sup> Hekster (2015) 25.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. for example, Hekster (2015) 23ff. he acknowledges some of the problems with this approach as well; e.g. Hekster (2015) 25, 206.

<sup>30</sup> Corbier (1991a); Lindsay (2009). On examinations of Roman families more generally, see Martin (1996); Giardina (2001).

<sup>31</sup> Hekster (2015) 282ff. On the importance of women in earlier imperial Rome, see McIntyre (2010).

<sup>32</sup> On aspects of dynasty and imperial power in the third century, see e.g. Drinkwater (2005); Hekster (2008) 3-5; Horster (2007).

### iii. 'Political' and 'hereditary' legitimacy

It is difficult to pinpoint the qualifications that could be said to make an emperor 'legitimate'. Alan Wardman argues that theories of legitimacy in the ancient world were "on the whole weak or absent."<sup>33</sup> Jill Harries begins her account of this period with the warning that the criteria for legitimacy in the third century were unstable and did not include local perspectives.<sup>34</sup> Mats Cullhed suggests that "Legitimacy is seen as a relationship between the governing and the governed. It postulates the *mutual* recognition of ruler and ruled of certain criteria that give the *right* to exercise power."<sup>35</sup> These approaches are not necessarily contradictory, and they show that legitimacy was a complex idea. Legitimacy could be construed in different ways by different groups and audiences; there was no single solution that constituted what made an emperor 'legitimate'.

Discussions of dynastic legitimacy are present in many of the books which provide an overview of the period around AD 284-337. The most well-known of these is likely the work of Timothy D. Barnes, particularly *Constantine and Eusebius* and *Constantine: Dynasty, Religion, and Power*. Barnes is most concerned with 'proving' Constantine's status as a legitimate emperor, in both political and hereditary terms—see, for example, his attempts to prove that Helena was a legal spouse of Constantius (see **V.1**).<sup>36</sup> Bill Leadbetter challenges this focus on Constantine's 'hereditary' legitimacy, and argues that although Helena was likely not a legitimate wife of Constantius, Constantine's descent from an extra-legal union is only important because it mattered to Constantine, in that later efforts were made to present Helena as an imperial mother.<sup>37</sup>

Likewise, Constantine's status as a 'legitimate' emperor in a political sense has also been challenged. For example, Noel Lenski's narration of Constantine's rise asserts that, in the context of the Tetrarchic college, Constantine was indeed a 'usurper.'<sup>38</sup> Raymond Van Dam,

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<sup>33</sup> Wardman (1984) 225.

<sup>34</sup> Harries (2012) xi.

<sup>35</sup> Cullhed (1994) 13 (emphasis his own). Cullhed's definition is based on his interest in establishing Maxentius as a 'legitimate' ruler, but acceptance, or *consensus*—from varying sources—seems to be an underlying factor in defining 'legitimacy'. Cf. MacCormack (1981). Also note that Barnes (1996) 535f critiques this, saying that Cullhed's statement is "irrelevant", adding "even if Maxentius had been as successful and popular in Rome as Cullhed believes...he was never a legitimate emperor by the criteria applicable in the early 4th c." Barnes' model for legitimacy is based upon the ancient context; he argues against Maxentius' status as 'legitimate' because he was not accepted as such by (most of) his contemporary emperors, i.e. Galerius' imperial college.

<sup>36</sup> Barnes (2011) 27-45.

<sup>37</sup> Leadbetter (1998a) 74-85, 81.

<sup>38</sup> Lenski (2005) 62: "It had been standard practice through much of Roman history for the imperial army to elect a successor on the death of the emperor, and it was only natural for them to favor the emperor's son, himself a tested commander. But this was by no means the manner in which the Tetrarchy was meant to function. From the perspective of the other Tetrarchs, and indeed of many contemporaries, Constantine was a usurper."



throughout his book *The Roman Revolution of Constantine*, argues for Constantine's political illegitimacy as stemming from the acclamation by the troops in Britain.<sup>39</sup> Mark Humphries' article "From Usurper to Emperor: The Politics of Legitimation in the Age of Constantine" also argues that Constantine did in fact begin as a 'usurper', but more fully explores Constantine's situation by fleshing out his regime's attempts to create legitimacy and to combat perceptions of illegitimacy.<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, Humphries argues, while Constantine "certainly seized the throne and thus, in modern parlance, can justifiably be termed a usurper" what was more important was that "Constantine succeeded in having his claims to legitimacy accepted."<sup>41</sup> Mirroring Leadbetter on hereditary legitimacy, Henning Börm, in his contribution to the collected volume *Contested Monarchy*, suggests that whether Constantine should be labelled a 'usurper' or not does not really matter—the point is that he felt the need to assert his (political) legitimacy.<sup>42</sup> I agree with this last approach; for this project, 'legitimacy' is more important in how it is expressed than in whether it was accepted, by Constantine's contemporaries or modern scholars.

In discussions of legitimacy, however, it is important to question modern preconceptions of this concept. What then defines a 'legitimate' emperor versus a 'usurper'? Wardman defines a 'legitimate ruler' in terms of their accession: whether they can trace their descent from an imperial ancestor, their acclamation by the army, or dynastic marriage.<sup>43</sup> In contrast, he delineates a usurper as "one who seeks to set himself up as an emperor when there is a ruler already established."<sup>44</sup> A different approach is that of Humphries, who defines usurpers as "emperors who had been defeated in civil war and whose regimes were retrospectively condemned as illegal."<sup>45</sup> Put even more succinctly, "a *tyrannus* was a failed Augustus."<sup>46</sup> These two definitions from Humphries will provide a starting point for many of the discussions of legitimacy, usurpation, and *tyranni* throughout this thesis.

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<sup>39</sup> Van Dam (2007) 126: "Starting out as a usurper seems to have heightened Constantine's awareness of the need for legitimacy for himself and his descendants, and his political needs repeatedly took priority over any religious preferences." Van Dam has repeated references to Constantine's usurpation: Van Dam (2007) 36, 83, 134, 138, 254; and Van Dam (2011) 3, where Constantine's 'usurpation' is compared to Maxentius'.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Humphries (2008) 85: "He [Constantine] will emerge as an emperor who experimented imaginatively with the construction of his own legitimacy, a process that often required, as will be seen, the deliberate deconstruction of the legitimacy of his rivals."

<sup>41</sup> Humphries (2008) 100.

<sup>42</sup> Börm (2015) 239.

<sup>43</sup> Wardman (1984) 225.

<sup>44</sup> Wardman (1984) 226.

<sup>45</sup> Humphries (2008) 85.

<sup>46</sup> Humphries (2008) 86-7.

Although the focus of Wardman's article is to remove some of the blame surrounding the idea of 'usurpers' as responsible for the decline of the Roman Empire, he does not sufficiently define the problems with the term 'usurper' or its relationship to ancient terms like *tyrannus* and *latro*.<sup>47</sup> 'Usurper' is a modern label with polemical connotations, and *tyrannus* and *latro* are words used to retrospectively define dead emperors whose regimes others feel the need to condemn by removing any sense of their right to rule—though the same can happen with living emperors.<sup>48</sup> In contrast to the definition of a *tyrannus* as a "failed Augustus", a legitimate emperor is one who survives, or who at least is not condemned after death. Meaghan McEvoy argues that "legitimacy was a *post factum* phenomenon: an aspect of a regime which would be measured when it was over, by its successes and failures overall, and particularly by its conclusion."<sup>49</sup> Although this approach cannot necessarily be applied to all emperors under consideration, it is certainly relevant for some, e.g. in examining the methods taken to posthumously undermine a rival's claims. In establishing a dynasty, an emperor such as Constantine could effectively change his status from 'usurper' to 'legitimate': one 'proof' of his legitimacy is the succession of his sons, the opposite of a "failed Augustus". In response to this problem, my project seeks not to prove emperors' 'true' legitimacy—for that is a subjective construct that cannot be truly proven—as Barnes tries to do for Constantine,<sup>50</sup> but rather to examine how the legitimacy of each emperor is constructed and represented.

#### iv. Imperial Colleges and the Tetrarchy

One of the most detailed examinations of the potential for dynastic legitimacy as a strategy under the Tetrarchy is Bill Leadbetter's *Galerius and the Will of Diocletian*, which provides a fascinating examination not only of an oft-overlooked emperor, but also of Galerius' place within and influence over the political events of the Tetrarchic period. Many of these discussions expand upon Leadbetter's conclusions in his article on Constantine's legitimacy, which had focused on the existing links between the members of the Tetrarchy before 293.<sup>51</sup> In the book, Leadbetter presents the Tetrarchy as two competing families, the *Iovii* and the

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<sup>47</sup> Wardman (1984) 220-5.

<sup>48</sup> See, e.g. Flower (2013).

<sup>49</sup> McEvoy (2013) 36.

<sup>50</sup> E.g. Barnes (2011) 63ff.

<sup>51</sup> Leadbetter (1998a) 82: "the network of power relations which the tetrarchy established was already in place before 293, and that the nomination of the Caesars in March of that year reflected the end, rather than the beginning, of a political process."

*Herculii*, and the elevations of Maximinus Daza<sup>52</sup> and Severus as Caesars—which is generally considered ‘non-dynastic’ if not ‘anti-dynastic’—as the result of a “political victory” of Galerius over the western *Herculii*, Maximian and Constantius.<sup>53</sup> Much of Leadbetter’s exploration of the links between these two ‘dynasties’ is compelling, and I have also used the terms ‘Iovii’ and ‘Herculii’, which derive from the ancient literature (e.g. Lactantius and the panegyrics), in the context of Tetrarchic dynastic legitimation.

Leadbetter also begins his book by pointing out problems with the term “Tetrarchy”, which has been used since the 1930s to describe the period of collegial rule under Diocletian and his co-emperors and successors.<sup>54</sup> The term is misleading, Leadbetter says, because of its connotations of Hellenistic history, and moreover because the term ‘Tetrarch’ was never used in antiquity to describe Diocletian and his colleagues.<sup>55</sup> I have chosen to use the terms ‘Tetrarchy’, ‘Tetrarchic’, etc. throughout this thesis, although acknowledging the problems inherent in them, because they are the standard terms used in scholarship on this period. Some scholars have used the adjective ‘Tetrarchic’ explicitly in opposition to ‘dynastic’, and I also wish to show how this usage is based upon misleading assumptions.<sup>56</sup>

The structure of the Tetrarchy at first seems novel—two Augusti, two Caesars, paired by location, divine affiliation, and familial relationships—what has been termed the Tetrarchic ‘system’.<sup>57</sup> The precise ranks are well-attested from coinage, epigraphy, and literature. Some authors, however, use the less precise *imperator* in their narratives, normally alongside the precise ranks.<sup>58</sup> Sometimes the use of *imperator* instead of ranks seems to indicate the possibility of some confusion on the part of the author as to which rank the emperor assumed.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Hereafter often merely ‘Daza’ for simplicity (and to more easily distinguish him from the numerous others whose names begin with ‘Max’). I have chosen to use ‘Daza’ over the commonly found form ‘Daia’, following Mackay (1999) 207-209.

<sup>53</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 142: “The identity of the new Caesars, then, does not reflect a political victory of Galerius over Diocletian, but of Galerius over Constantius.” Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 178.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Mattingly (1993) 328.

<sup>55</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 3ff.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. Ando (2000) 248 on the adoption of Claudius Gothicus as a divine ancestor: “Constantine again bypassed the strictures of Tetrarchic ideology and claimed legitimacy by birth, independent of any sanction from Diocletian or his successors.” Hekster (2015) 288-289 suggests that Constantine and Maxentius, by at first omitting kinship references on coins, adhered “to the tetrarchic system of representation.”

<sup>57</sup> E.g. Cameron (1993) 31; Ando (2000) 246.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Lewis & Short, s.v. *imperator* II.B.3.

<sup>59</sup> For example, Aurelius Victor calls Maximian *imperator* upon his being made Diocletian’s co-emperor (39.17) and Maxentius upon his elevation by the soldiers (40.5). Cf. also Ps.-Vict. 40.2 and Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 26.1 for the same usage of *imperator* at Maxentius’ elevation. Eutropius calls Constantine *imperator* after Constantius’ death (10.2). Sometimes, however, the term is used when there is no confusion about what rank the emperor was made, e.g. Diocletian’s and Licinius’ elevations (Eutrop. 9.19 and 10.4 respectively). It also features routinely in these narratives as we would use the term ‘emperor’.

On other occasions, it seems to be used as a synonym for Augustus, as an individual with imperatorial powers.<sup>60</sup>

A similar caveat needs to be employed for the use of the modern term ‘college’ or ‘collegial’ in reference to the grouping of co-emperors. Eutropius and Ammianus called Maximian the *collega* (‘colleague’) of Diocletian,<sup>61</sup> but the Tetrarchy is nowhere called a *collegium* by the ancient sources. Like ‘Tetrarchy’, the phrase ‘imperial college’ is both ubiquitous in modern scholarship (for the period in question as well as before and afterwards) and used without questioning its origins. Nor is there another word used by the ancient authors to describe the idea expressed in our interpretation of ‘imperial college’. The lack of an ancient term to describe this ‘system’ of government should raise questions about whether this collaboration of emperors was perceived to be fundamentally different than previous groupings of emperors. ‘Imperial college’ is, however, a useful phrase to describe the specific phenomenon of grouping of emperors (Augusti and Caesars) into a system of co-rulership, and one which I employ often. In using ‘college’ to describe both ‘dynastic’ co-rule and the co-rule of the Tetrarchy, I will further show the similarities between these two ‘systems’ of rule.

Although the Tetrarchic system of ranks seems clear-cut at first glance, some have warned against viewing the Tetrarchy as overly systematic or as a planned structure from the beginning, with scholarly views ranging from cautioning against assumptions that this was a ‘system’ that was established early in Diocletian’s reign to questioning whether the ‘non-hereditary’ co-rulership was a system at all.<sup>62</sup> Although I have found the phrase ‘Tetrarchic system’ useful at times, I use it with the caveat that we cannot know Diocletian’s intended policies. Additionally, I tend to view the Tetrarchic ‘system’ as one that formed out of responses to particular political situations rather than a planned ‘system’ of adoption and abdication that was intended to continue indefinitely. As I shall argue throughout, what was true for the situation in 293 was not necessarily so in 305, and vice versa. This can be extended to all stages of collegial rule throughout the period of AD 284-337.

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<sup>60</sup> E.g. Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 25.5, regarding Constantine’s elevation and subsequent ‘demotion’ by Galerius to the rank of Caesar: *Sed illud excogitavit, ut Severum, qui erat aetate maturior, Augustum nuncuparet, Constantinum vero non imperatorem, sicut erat factus, sed Caesarem cum Maximino appellari iuberet, ut eum de secundo loco reiceret in quartum.*

<sup>61</sup> Eutrop. 9.27; Amm. Marc. 14.11.10.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. Leadbetter (2009) 6; Williams (1985) 197; Rees (2002) 98: “Yet that there came into being in 293 a hierarchical college of four emperors interlocked by ranks, marriages, and *signa* does not force the conclusion that at that early date there was any preconceived Tetrarchic ‘system’ of abdication, promotion, and non-dynastic succession.” Yet the term ‘system’ for the Tetrarchy is still used without caution by many, e.g. Odahl (2004), Stephenson (2009).

### v. Common Issues in Scholarship (and Some Solutions)

As has been mentioned previously, periodization is a potential problem with studying a discrete time period.<sup>63</sup> Often in discussions of Diocletian's or Constantine's reigns, this problem is countered by starting accounts before their accessions in order to properly contextualize these emperors. In *Imperial Rome, AD 284-363*, Jill Harries emphasizes that the beginning of Diocletian's reign would have been seen by contemporaries as no different, no more stable, and with no less a need for legitimizing rhetoric, than any from the fifty years preceding it.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, David Potter's *Constantine the Emperor* provides a better framework than many Constantinian studies for viewing the period of Constantine's life.<sup>65</sup> By beginning with Valerian and Gallienus instead of Constantine, Potter is able to bring up themes that would be important later (e.g. the reign and figure of Claudius Gothicus, the importance of Sol to Aurelian), and thus provides a better sense of continuity for Constantine's reign.

A topic that comes up often with studies of the Tetrarchy and Constantine is Christianity, particularly the debate over the extent to which Constantine was a 'Christian emperor'.<sup>66</sup> Often overly dominating discussions of Constantine's political contributions, this question has been the main focus of several examinations of Constantine and his reign, such as Barnes' *Constantine and Eusebius* and *Constantine: Dynasty, Religion, and Power*, Odahl's *Constantine and the Christian Empire*, and Stephenson's *Constantine: Unconquered Emperor, Christian Victor*. Odahl exemplifies some of the problems with such a one-sided approach: in his treatment of the primary sources, he offers little to no critical analysis, even of the more fantastical stories.<sup>67</sup> Odahl's other main shortcoming is that he is overly focused on a dramatic narrative rather than an appropriate scholarly appraisal of the evidence. This issue also impacts Stephenson's interpretation of Constantine. Although his premise that Constantine incorporated Christianity into the theology of victory is intriguing, overall his narrative is limited, from a scholarly perspective, by a lack of direct reference to his evidence, providing instead 'bibliographic essays' for each chapter in the back of the book which do not substantiate

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<sup>63</sup> A similar caution, but one with less relevance for this study, is the suggestion by Humphries (2017) that we should look at other cultures parallel to the Roman Empire to view 'late antiquity' from a broader perspective.

<sup>64</sup> Harries (2012) 8-9.

<sup>65</sup> Potter (2013); cf. also the larger overview of the third and fourth centuries in Potter (2014).

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Flower (2012) 289: "the issue of Constantine's 'sincerity' is not a major concern for any of these five recent studies; yet the nature of his commitment to Christianity remains a subject of intense speculation." The recent studies in question include Van Dam (2011), Barnes (2011), Harries (2012).

<sup>67</sup> In fact, the one source he does actively criticize is, unsurprisingly, Zosimus, whose critical portrayal of Constantine does not fit with Odahl's nobler characterization; Odahl (2004) 208.

many of the claims he advances.<sup>68</sup> David Potter's *Constantine the Emperor*, while offering a good overview of the period and some interesting discussion, also suffers from the desire to paint Constantine as a sympathetic, divinely instituted ruler. A lack of direct reference to evidence also plagues some of Potter's finer points.<sup>69</sup>

That is not to say that Christianity is completely divorced from questions of dynastic legitimacy.<sup>70</sup> For example, Christianity—or the 'wrong sort' of Christianity—could be used as a matter of legitimacy, as when orthodox bishops attack Constantius II for his Arian leanings. As Richard Flower points out, Constantius could be linked both ideologically and dynastically to the persecutors, like his grandfather Maximian, to paint Constantius as "an illegitimate Christian emperor with an irreligious genealogy."<sup>71</sup> Christianity became a tool of legitimacy (or illegitimacy) that could be used either in conjunction with dynastic relationships or on its own. Although in this thesis, a wide variety of evidence will be used, including Christian authors like Lactantius and Eusebius, questions about the extent of Constantine's Christianity do not often coincide with dynastic legitimacy. I will therefore largely avoid this debate.

Also problematic in some books that focus on Constantine is their tendency to view the events through the lens of hindsight, with the knowledge that Constantine will be the ultimate victor, and that his reign could be considered a 'turning point', thus attributing him undue importance in the period. Through examining the relationships of individuals to each other rather than focusing on the policies and self-representation of one individual, I hope to mitigate some of these problems. Constantine will still be an important figure because in many ways, the techniques of dynastic legitimation during his reign serve as a culmination of the familial links explored throughout this thesis; Constantine's network of dynastic relationships was expansive, but should be examined in the context of his fellow emperors.

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<sup>68</sup> Stephenson (2009) 215, for example, gives the baffling claim that Constantine "also adopted a new name, a mark of victory akin to Augustus' first use of the *praenomen imperatoris*. Constantine took as his first name, his Christian name, Victor."

<sup>69</sup> The best example of this is Potter's chapter on Minervina, where he makes several sweeping statements but provides no evidence to support them, e.g. Potter states Constantine chose to assert Crispus' legitimacy at the time of Constantine's marriage to Fausta, but he suggests no evidence, literary or material, that might possibly support this idea. Potter (2013) 96-9.

<sup>70</sup> For example, Alan Dearn has explored the possibility of the use of the Chi-Rho as a dynastic symbol, signalling 'Constantinian' as much as 'Christian'; Dearn (2003) 187.

<sup>71</sup> Flower (2013) 93. See also Humphries (1997).

### 3. METHODOLOGIES AND SOURCES

As I have stated above, I will not only examine how expressions of dynastic legitimacy were constructed as part of an imperial ideology by emperors' regimes and courts, but also how these were received and modified by others. The former can be determined through an examination of the rhetoric of the emperor and his regime, most importantly as it has survived in the coinage of the era. A study of coinage can reveal both the creation of the imperial image and its dissemination, while literature in turn engages with this image and the varying perceptions of imperial relationships. Epigraphy also plays a role in the perception and presentation of these relationships, and depending on the dedicator may even be understood as part of the 'central' creation of imperial ideology. The range of sources represents the wider importance of family connections and imperial representations of legitimacy, and how these in turn were modified or employed by the writers and artists of the time to praise or blame, whether according to their own agendas or in response to wider expectations and generalizations on legitimacy, succession, and imperial power.

#### i. Literature

This thesis will employ a variety of authors and works, especially panegyrics and historiography, in order to examine the use of dynastic constructions in different material and for different purposes. I will argue throughout that literary texts reflect either the authors' perceptions of the imperial ideology around dynastic relationships, or the authors' rhetorical employment of these relationships to suit their own purposes. As Lendon argues, one should "treat all the evidence as a kind of fiction, but as fiction that gives the historian legitimate insights into norms and broader realities."<sup>72</sup> It is often difficult to analyse the facts presented by ancient historians, but we can at least take their statements as evidence for contemporary concerns.

For example, dynastic references may be made merely to illuminate and explain the historical narrative—an example of this is Maxentius, whose elevation to Augustus in Rome is almost always linked with his father Maximian (see **Chapter 3**). Likewise, Constantine's elevation is normally attributed to his position as his father Constantius' eldest son (see **Chapter 5**). Yet the presence or omission of these and other familial relationships is also telling for a particular narrative or rhetoric, as with Maximinus Daza's relationship to Galerius (see

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<sup>72</sup> Lendon (1997) 28.

**Chapter 2).** Other authors use concepts related to familial relationships, such as *pietas*, for characterizations of praise or blame. This concept of *pietas*, and its counterpart *impietas*, as a rhetorical tool will be a theme throughout this thesis, used to great effect in both the *Panegyrici Latini* and Lactantius' *De Mortibus Persecutorum*.

As with every historical period, the sources that have survived are limited. Yet the period of Constantine and the Tetrarchy is better represented than some. There survive a few historical epitomes, most notably Eutropius' *Breviarium* (dedicated to the emperor Valens)<sup>73</sup> and the *Epitome De Caesaribus* of so-called 'Pseudo Aurelius Victor'.<sup>74</sup> The latter derives partly from the *De Caesaribus* of Aurelius Victor, a longer work than the later *Epitome*, with notable differences in places, and oftentimes with a different perspective, one that frequently employs a moralizing tone.<sup>75</sup> Victor is the closest example we have to 'classical' historiography; the relevant books of Ammianus Marcellinus have unfortunately been lost. The postulated *Kaisergeschichte*, likely an epitome of imperial biographies, must be mentioned here as a potential source for all these Latin authors, as well as for the anonymous *Origo Constantini Imperatoris*, Ammianus Marcellinus, and the *Chronicon* of Jerome.<sup>76</sup> A later perspective, the sixth-century *Nova Historia* of Zosimus, follows a different, Greek tradition, preserving much of the earlier Eunapius, including its anti-Constantinian flavour and a specifically non-Christian perspective.<sup>77</sup>

A counterpoint to this anti-Constantinian tradition is provided by Eusebius of Caesarea' *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the first ecclesiastical history, which ends with Constantine's triumph over Licinius, as well as the bishop's later 'biography' of Constantine, the *Vita Constantini*.<sup>78</sup> Eusebius has a tendency to dominate modern scholarship on Constantine and his co-

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<sup>73</sup> Rohrbacher (2002) 231 has suggested that Eutropius represents the "the official voice of the imperial government."

<sup>74</sup> The information and perspective of the *Epitome De Caesaribus* is often different than Aurelius Victor's *De Caesaribus*, but I shall refer to the author of the former as Pseudo-Victor throughout.

<sup>75</sup> Rohrbacher (2002) 45, 163-164, 181-182.

<sup>76</sup> Burgess (1993) 491 argues that the above sources contain a "common selection of facts and errors, and common wording and phrasing in their narratives", indicating a shared source. The "KG" was first postulated by Alexander Enmann (1883) 335-501; Burgess (1995b) 325ff makes a forceful argument for its existence after a surge of scepticism in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Recently, most work on the KG has been by Burgess (1993), (1995a), (1995b). Cf. Bird (1973) 376; Barnes (1970). These authors argue about dating the hypothesized text, but Burgess (1995a) and Bird (1973) argue for 357; Burgess (2005) 190 later re-dates to late 358-early 359, with three different recensions. Burgess (1993) 498f, (1995a) 128 has hypothesized that the author of the KG may have been a certain Eusebius Nanneticus. In terms of survival, Burgess (1993) 498 says that Eutropius is "generally agreed to mirror the KG most closely." Cf. Burgess (1995a) 112, (1995b) 350. See also Burgess (2002) on reading and using Jerome's *Chronicon*.

<sup>77</sup> Rohrbacher (2002) 66; Blockley (1981) 2f, 26. Eunapius has also been characterized as a "moralizing" historian, cf. Blockley (1981) 9.

<sup>78</sup> The later ecclesiastical historians (e.g. Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret), who largely begin their accounts where Eusebius leaves off, do not offer much of note for the present topic.



emperors—exemplified by Barnes’ *Constantine and Eusebius*—but in this thesis, which explicitly seeks to avoid a Constantine-dominated narrative, Eusebius will often take a back seat. He offers little important information on dynastic legitimacy besides brief mentions regarding Constantine and his sons. Likewise, exploring Eusebius’ *Vita Constantini* for questions of familial relationships is made more difficult by Eusebius’ aversion to naming any of the previous emperors who had been Constantine’s rivals or Christian persecutors.<sup>79</sup> Eusebius does celebrate Constantine’s relationship to Constantius, as well as his relationship with Helena, who was seen more often as a black mark on Constantine’s claims to legitimacy (see **Chapter 5**). As a source more broadly, Eusebius is often difficult. There were multiple versions or ‘editions’ of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* as Eusebius modified and edited his work, which can reflect changing perspectives during Constantine’s long reign.<sup>80</sup> The *Vita Constantini* was published soon after Constantine’s death and also glosses over most of the unsavoury aspects of Constantine’s reign: it has been defined as “an uneasy mixture of panegyric and narrative history” rather than a biography.<sup>81</sup>

One of the most important sources for this study is the rhetorician Lactantius’ remarkable *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, which sets out to provide an account of how emperors who persecuted the Christians were punished by God, but incidentally offers one of the most detailed and fascinating surviving accounts of the period between 305 and 313.<sup>82</sup> Scholars have debated his reliability as a source, some going so far as to accuse him of being a propagandist, and others have vigorously defended him.<sup>83</sup> To his defenders, Lactantius’ personal convictions have been identified as the source of his hyperbolic rhetoric: “He was not consciously writing propaganda; he was writing an historiographical essay with a thesis, a method and a sophisticated cultural vocabulary.”<sup>84</sup> Certainly Lactantius is favourable to Constantine, but also to Licinius. He may have had some standing at Constantine’s court, for Jerome tells us that he

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<sup>79</sup> On reading the *Vita Constantini*, see the edition by Cameron & Hall (1994) 1-53. The text’s authenticity and authorship have previously been attacked, but now is accepted: cf. Cameron & Hall (1994) 4-9.

<sup>80</sup> Barnes (1980) 201f postulates four editions: c. 295, c. 313/314, c. 315, 325. Burgess (1997) 482ff, 494 questions the existence of any edition prior to 313 and offers an additional revision (in the Syriac) in 326 to remove Crispus.

<sup>81</sup> Cameron & Hall (1994) 1.

<sup>82</sup> Christensen (1980); cf. Digeser (2000) on Lactantius and Constantine.

<sup>83</sup> Barnes (1973) has defended Lactantius against his detractors, as has Van Dam (2007) 110f, who is fairly praiseworthy about Lactantius’ narrative, claiming he used official documents, sources, and possible eyewitnesses. Mackay (1999) 207 argues for Lactantius’ inherent unreliability: “Indeed, it should be a general principle that all information deriving solely from Lactantius, and even more so that in which he contradicts other sources, should be prima facie suspect. This principle arises directly from the nature of his work.”

<sup>84</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 12; Cullhed (1994) 22; Christensen (1980) 81. Cf. Van Dam (2011) 114: “Lactantius’ narrative reflected the concerns of his own preoccupations, not Constantine’s later agenda.”

was Crispus' tutor in Gaul,<sup>85</sup> though he probably wrote under Licinius' regime.<sup>86</sup> Lactantius' ubiquity in this thesis is not due to any claims of remarkable accuracy or bipartisanship—often quite the contrary—but because the text provides a wealth of material for discussions of imperial legitimacy and dynastic connections. This debate on his 'reliability' does not, therefore, directly impact this thesis. Instead, Lactantius reveals how imperial power and legitimacy were perceived and presented, either for praise or, as is more typical of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, for invective.<sup>87</sup> It is his rhetoric as much as his historical narrative that makes him a vital source for my purposes.

Likewise, the anonymous author of the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* (sometimes called the 'Anonymus Valesianus') was also concerned to a greater degree with the political situation of Constantine's rise to power and the early years of his reign. It offers a fairly clear narrative up until after the wars with Licinius, as well as some details not found in other sources, such as the figure of Bassianus (see **Chapter 4**).<sup>88</sup> The last chapters of the narrative, after the wars with Licinius, are more scattered and abbreviated—for instance, the author completely omits mention of the deaths of Crispus and Fausta—and relies heavily on later interpolations from Jerome and Orosius.<sup>89</sup> It has been suggested that the text as it survives is an epitome of a biography of Constantine, and that the work was edited by a Christian redactor later (which explains the interpolations).<sup>90</sup> The text has been dated by König to the late fourth century, under Theodosius, but general scholarly consensus places it at the end of Constantine's reign, with Aussenac proposing a date within twenty years of Constantine's death.<sup>91</sup>

Lastly, a vital literary corpus for this thesis is the *Panegyrici Latini*, a collection of panegyrics from the west, specifically Gaul, the bulk of which date to the Tetrarchic and Constantinian periods.<sup>92</sup> The ways in which the panegyrics choose to praise the emperors in

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<sup>85</sup> Jer. *Vir. Ill.* 80. Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 7f on the dating of Lactantius' career. Digeser (2000) argues for Lactantius joining Constantine's court in 310, and argues for Lactantius' influence over Constantine more generally.

<sup>86</sup> Barnes (1981) 14.

<sup>87</sup> Opelt (1973) discusses the nature and specifics of Lactantius' invective and polemic; at pp. 98, 104-105 she notes that these have no particularly Christian nature, comparing them to Cicero's rhetoric. See e.g. Leadbetter (2009) 7ff; Mackay (1999) on Lactantius' distortion of history.

<sup>88</sup> Barnes (1989) and Odahl (2004) 7 have argued for the accuracy of the *Origo*.

<sup>89</sup> Stevenson (2014) 5, 11-12, 110ff; Aussenac (2001).

<sup>90</sup> Stevenson (2014) 4-6, and especially 25: "I am convinced, as Burgess was, that what we have with the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* is an *epitome* of a much larger *vita*, and that this *vita* was crudely trimmed down by a later Christian redactor, who also added quotes from the *Chronicon* of Jerome and *Historia Adversus Paganos* of Orosius." Cf. Burgess 1995b.

<sup>91</sup> Aussenac (2001) 675-676; Stevenson (2014) 2; Barnes (1989) 158-161; Lieu & Montserrat (1996) 39-42; cf. König (1987) 20 gives a date between 337 and 414.

<sup>92</sup> The important panegyrics in question are (with chronological order given in parenthesis as is customary for the corpus, though the chronological number will not be included in references throughout): 10(2) of 289, 11(3) of 291, 8(4) of c. 297, 9(5) of c. 298, 7(6) of 307, 6(7) of 310, 5(8) of 311, 12(9) of 313, and 4(10) of 321. For comments on the dating, see Nixon & Rodgers (1994); Barnes (1996) 539-542. For further studies on the

question—and to denigrate rival or fallen emperors—is important for understanding imperial ideology, and one type of rhetorical strategy the usually-anonymous panegyrists used centred around dynastic and familial relationships.<sup>93</sup> The largest debate concerning the panegyrics is whether the material in them, and the ways in which the panegyrists praise the emperor, was commissioned or sanctioned by the imperial court. Sabine MacCormack argued for panegyrics as a medium of propaganda, especially by men connected with the imperial court,<sup>94</sup> but this viewpoint is no longer held as the scholarly consensus. General interpretation of panegyrics now is more nuanced, arguing not for crude ‘propaganda’ but suggesting that “they usually reflected imperial wishes in a more subtle way.”<sup>95</sup> MacCormack also argued that the praise in panegyrics served as a form of *consensus* and thus as a legitimizing factor.<sup>96</sup> It is also important to remember that the panegyrics do not constitute a single, unified corpus, but that the contemporary situation and the panegyrist’s personal preferences highly influenced each one.<sup>97</sup> Fears has called panegyrics “declamations of the moment” rather than “far-ranging propaganda”.<sup>98</sup> Ultimately, panegyrics were expressions that must be contextualized in the political circumstances of the time, and the ‘messages’ expressed in these speeches must also be understood as reflections and perceptions of imperial ideology, examples of the author’s understanding of how to best praise an emperor.<sup>99</sup>

These varied sources often offer different approaches from ‘traditional’ classical historiography, for example, omitting the usual rhetorical speeches, or incorporating letters and

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panegyrics, see e.g. Leadbetter (2004); Rees (2002); MacCormack (1975); Rodgers (1986); Rodgers (1989); Warmington (1974); Nixon (1980); Nixon (1983); Nixon (1993); Buckland (2003); Brosch (2006); Elliott (1990); Seager (1983); Ware (2014); Brosch (2006).

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Warmington (1974) 371: “The object of this paper 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...”

<sup>94</sup> MacCormack (1975) 154, especially 166: “The panegyrists who used the medium of praise most successfully for propaganda and the announcement of imperial programmes in clear imaginative language, were men who had some close connection with the emperor or the court.”

<sup>95</sup> Nixon (1983) 95. Cf. Rees (2002) 24: “Panegyric’s potential for fluidity in communication belies the assumption that because orators broadcast very flattering views of their subjects, they were therefore slavishly duplicating centrally generated propaganda.”

<sup>96</sup> MacCormack (1981) 9. Cf. Ando (2000) 7 (not explicitly about panegyrics): “Rome’s desire for *consensus* thus opened a conceptual and discursive space for provincials and Romans alike to negotiate the veracity of Roman propaganda and the rationality of Roman administration.”

<sup>97</sup> As Rodgers (1986) 99 points out in her study of divine insinuation: “There was no system and there never was. There is circumstance, preference, and ambiguity.” Cf. also Nixon (1983) 90-91: “Without denying the immediacy of the political message of some of our panegyrics, I should like to emphasize that they have a public and political life which transcends this, that they are not merely occasional, nor merely ephemeral pieces of propaganda (when, indeed, they are that at all).”

<sup>98</sup> Fears (1977) 184.

<sup>99</sup> McEvoy (2013) 25: “Moreover, the messages presented through imperial panegyrics would also frequently be echoed in other forms of imperial propaganda and government activity which would reach a far wider audience—such as in legislation and coin mottoes.”

documents, as the ecclesiastical historians tend to do.<sup>100</sup> Some chronicles are also of use, such as the *Chronicon* of Jerome, but they generally offer little more than references to events, rather than the rhetorical approaches which are more useful to this study. An exception is the narrative of the *Chronicon Paschale*, from the early seventh century,<sup>101</sup> which is somewhat more detailed and offers some points for discussion. On occasion, some later authors (e.g. Petrus Patricius and the twelfth-century Zonaras) preserve material or traditions that also offer potential contributions to the later reception of literary traditions on imperial dynastic legitimacy and collegiality. Overall, I have tried to compare differing accounts and representations when possible. It is, however, the manipulation of the historical narrative and the creation of specific representations that is of most interest to this thesis.

## ii. Numismatics

The use of coins as evidence has been widely debated for at least half a century, but in the last few decades they have become an important recognized source for late antiquity.<sup>102</sup> There are some difficulties in using the numismatic corpus as evidence. Accurate dating is one of these. Although at times the nuances of the mints can provide information on the political situation, it is also true that the coins are partly dated depending on numismatists' understanding of the historical narrative. Specific dating of coins, then, cannot always be made, and often dating the higher-denomination output is more difficult than the lower-denominations because of the smaller corpus. Numismatists also rely largely on the technicalities, the progression of mint-marks and die-linking, in order to determine the 'order' or relative dating of coinage: so if a coin has the same mint mark as another coin that can be dated relatively securely, the first may thus be dated to around the same point.<sup>103</sup> Throughout, I shall largely follow the dating and identification of the *Roman Imperial Coinage*, especially Volumes VI and VII, but with the understanding that these dates are not immutable.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Rohrbacher (2002) 161.

<sup>101</sup> Whitby & Whitby (1989) ix.

<sup>102</sup> Barnes (2011) 17: "Coins are an extremely important source of information about the reign of Constantine, since they provide a firm chronological framework for political, dynastic and military events, often add significant details missing from our literary sources, and disclose much about Constantinian propaganda."

<sup>103</sup> For particulars about the minting process, Carson (1990) 221-227 and Howgego (1995) 24-38 provide brief overviews. On coinage in the period under consideration in this thesis, see also Carson (1990) 237-240. For some broad perspectives on Roman coins as a historical source, see e.g. Metcalf (1999) on the limitations and contributions of coins as primary evidence; Bruun (1999) on coins and the Roman government.

<sup>104</sup> Sutherland (1967) and Bruun (1966) respectively. If I am referring to any of the introductory or explanatory material, I shall use these references; if referring to the actual catalogue, I shall refer to them as RIC VI or VII.

Some numismatists emphasize the importance of examining the entire body of numismatic evidence, instead of individual coins, from a particular emperor or period. For example, Claire Rowan argues for the significance of the numismatic corpus in determining shifts in imperial ideology, in giving a broader understanding of the period, and in seeing differences or similarities between emperors. In her work on the Severans, Rowan focuses on a quantitative approach, assessing the body of evidence as a whole rather than picking out individual coins to “illustrate” history and also to situate numismatic evidence within the wider historical context.<sup>105</sup> This approach is also preferred by scholars such as Carlos Noreña, who recommends “equipping descriptive statements about the imperial coinage with numerical documentation.”<sup>106</sup> This methodology can be successfully applied to the Tetrarchy, especially after the increasingly centralized control of mints following the coinage reform of c. 294, which roughly standardized the numismatic output, especially in lower denominations, and also ensured that all mints were under imperial control.<sup>107</sup> Because of this, clear patterns can often be determined across all mints and variations (e.g. regional) are more easily detected. Likewise, the geographical and (to some extent) chronological extents of the different regimes after c. 306 can be determined based on the output of the mints, as the various imperial ideologies can be seen fairly clearly in the numismatic record.

My research will be dependent to a large degree on the wider numismatic corpus of the *Roman Imperial Coinage*, and I have endeavoured to include other sources (e.g. Vincent Drost’s work on Maxentius’ coinage)<sup>108</sup> when possible, but the nature of the material necessitates a focus on the higher-denomination coinage.<sup>109</sup> Constructions of dynastic legitimacy overwhelmingly appear on rarer, gold coins and medallions, thus obstructing a wholly quantitative approach.<sup>110</sup> I have, however, endeavoured to give the appropriate background for the coins that are used, offering comparisons with other emperors or the numismatic output from different mints or in different denominations, in order to avoid

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<sup>105</sup> Rowan (2012) 4.

<sup>106</sup> Noreña (2001) 147. Cf. Hekster (2015) 31, who notes that in statistics a problem is differentiating between common and scarcer coin types.

<sup>107</sup> Although the reform has been dated to 294-296, Sutherland (1967) 1-2 argues for 294 as the starting point. Cf. Sutherland (1967) 88-93, 109; Sutherland (1955) 116-118; Burnett (1987) 126-131; Weiser (2006) 206-209. Weiser (2006) 211 is, in my opinion, overly negative about the standardization of coin types after the reform, seeing it as limiting the wide variety of types that had previously been available.

<sup>108</sup> Drost (2013).

<sup>109</sup> The OCRE (<http://numismatics.org/ocre>) database has also proven invaluable to my research, though most of my collating of resources has been directly from the RIC catalogues. Also, it has been at times necessary to consult the older catalogue compiled by Cohen, the second edition of which (1892) is available at <http://virtualcohen.com>.

<sup>110</sup> See e.g. Banaji (2015) for the use of gold coinage in late antiquity and some of the problems in determining the size of the output of such coinage, in the context of late antique monetary expansion.

divorcing the evidence from the proper contextualization. The usage of the higher-denomination coinage, I argue throughout the thesis, has to do with both function (for example, larger surface areas are needed to display multiple rulers) but also with audience and purpose. High-denomination coinage was certainly intended for different audiences than the bronze and were sometimes donatives.<sup>111</sup> Bardill has argued that high-denomination coinage which had a limited audience should not be considered ‘widespread propaganda’ (see below);<sup>112</sup> instead one should conclude that the messages disseminated with these issues were simply intended for a different, specific audience.

Perhaps the most important question in numismatic methodology is that of coins’ place in imperial ideology, and whether coins could be said to come from an emperor or his regime. Rowan argues that coins are representative of imperial intentionality and ideology, even if the emperor himself was not involved in the minutiae of coin creation: “whether the emperor was responsible for the images on his coinage or not...coin types nonetheless reflect the ideology of rule in a particular period.”<sup>113</sup> The emperor did not have to be intimately involved in the process for there to be the dissemination of imperial ideology, but ancient authors seemed to be aware of the emperor’s involvement at some point in the process.<sup>114</sup>

Whether coins can or should be understood as a means of ‘propaganda’ has been mentioned already, and the question becomes more pressing with the decision to view coinage as coming from the imperial centre. Barbara Levick argued against the use of ‘propaganda’ because of its modern, anachronistic connotations, but she also saw coins as a way of honouring the emperor outside of an imperially-promoted programme.<sup>115</sup> However, the views espoused by Levick have found relatively little support in the last few decades, where the idea of coins as messages of imperial ideology seems to be more widely accepted (as with Rowan and Hekster). Noreña argues that, “The narrow question of who actually chose the types and determined mint output...is not critically important for our interpretation of the emperor’s public image.”<sup>116</sup> The coins are still “official documents” and thus can be used as representative

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<sup>111</sup> On the audiences of coins, see Manders (2012) 33ff; Rowan (2012) 4ff; Hekster (2003); Kemmers (2009). On gold coinage and medallions as gifts, see e.g. Corbier (2005) 352; Reece (2006) 125.

<sup>112</sup> Bardill (2012) 8: “...they may have been commemorative issues intended for circulation to a restricted circle of senior army officers, and if so, any message they contained could not be considered widespread propaganda.”

<sup>113</sup> Rowan (2012) 2.

<sup>114</sup> Ando (2000) 216ff; Cheung (1998); Sutherland (1959).

<sup>115</sup> Levick (1982) and Levick (1999); Sutherland (1986) engages with her arguments. But cf. Baharal (1996) vii: “Although the modern term *propaganda* derives from the Latin verb *propagare*, meaning “to spread”, it does not appear in classical Roman literature in the sense in which it is used today. [Nevertheless], even if the concept *propaganda* in today’s meaning of the word did not exist then, it does not mean that the phenomenon itself did not exist.”

<sup>116</sup> Noreña (2001) 160.

of imperial ideology or even perhaps ‘propaganda’, or at least a purposeful imperial message to disseminate particular representations.<sup>117</sup> Olivier Hekster’s solution is that one should put a “black-box in the centre from which the coins emanated” (that is, to ignore the question of precise authorship), but that in doing so, the ideological messages on coins are not obscured, especially when put into the context of their intended audiences, which can often be determined from the denomination or the reverse type.<sup>118</sup> While Hekster’s suggestion that the question of ‘authorship’ should be omitted is not entirely helpful—it is still an important question, even if we cannot determine the answer for certain—his argument does help to show that the ideologies expressed on coins are not necessarily dependent on how directly involved the emperor was in the minting process.

I therefore fully ascribe to the view that coinage can be interpreted as coming from imperial regimes. Especially after c. 294, when all the mints were placed under imperial control, distinct imperial ‘programmes’ can be distinguished across all mints. This is not to ignore the fact that different mints had different ways of doing things, or that they might have made mistakes—Carthage’s celebration of Maxentius as a Caesar is an excellent example of this (see **Chapter 3**). The period c. 312-313 is an excellent example of how the programmes of the mints can provide information about imperial politics;<sup>119</sup> the basic output of different mints changes drastically depending on who is in control. Yet in using coinage as evidence for imperial ideology, there is certainly a danger in going too far in trying to interpret individual coin types as evidence for the emperor’s personal beliefs or feelings.<sup>120</sup> Instead, it is important to remember that the coinage presents an image constructed in order to represent the emperor in a particular light.<sup>121</sup> Focus should remain on how this image was disseminated, received, and modified.

### iii. Other material

In terms of other material evidence, inscriptions can provide examples of both centralized imperial ideology and the reception of those ideologies, depending on whether the

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<sup>117</sup> Though the point can be made too bluntly, as in Odahl (2004) 13: “Through the regulated minting process of late antiquity, the emperors were easily able to use the imperial coinage as a medium of propaganda.”

<sup>118</sup> Hekster (2003) 15.

<sup>119</sup> Though it is worth considering the caution from MacCormack (1981) 11 that coins “do not ‘make’ propaganda in their own right, nor can they be treated as evidence to ‘reveal’ politics.”

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Barnes (2011) 17: “I regard the inferences often made from coin-legends, and from inscriptions whose wording was not dictated by Constantine, to the mind and beliefs of the emperors as extremely insecure...”

<sup>121</sup> King (1999) 127.

name of the dedicator survives. Inscriptions include kinship terms more frequently than coinage, and can more easily honour imperial groupings, either co-emperors or members of the wider imperial family, and also commemorate divine ancestors.<sup>122</sup> For finding different inscriptions, I have used databases (such as the most recently compiled one for the *Last Statues of Antiquity* project), which allow searches for combinations of different words together.<sup>123</sup> This has enabled me to search for kinship terms alongside different emperors to see when particular terms are used.

The usual problems with epigraphy apply: sometimes an inscription has been damaged or erased, with words or phrases suggested to complete it. These erased names are often important; many of them are the defeated rivals of Constantine—Maximian, Maxentius, Licinius—whose attempts at legitimation were therefore obscured. Charles W. Hedrick Jr. argues that rather than trying to completely purge memory, “the *damnatio memoriae* did not negate historical traces, but created gestures that served to dishonor the record of the person and so, in an oblique way, to confirm memory.”<sup>124</sup> This gap between remembrance and obliteration is the reason why Harriet Flower uses the term ‘memory sanctions’ instead of *damnatio memoriae*.<sup>125</sup> Since we can often reconstruct what names have been erased, this process of so-called *damnatio memoriae* serves as a reminder of failure—which is particularly interesting when considered alongside Humphries’ definition of a *tyrannus* as a “failed Augustus”.<sup>126</sup>

Various artworks (statuary, frescos, cameos, etc.) are used sparingly in this thesis, despite the fact that they were important means of disseminating the emperor’s image.<sup>127</sup> The reason for this is due to the difficulties in attributing pieces of art to individual figures, and sometimes even distinct periods. Some discussions of art can be illuminating. For example, R. R. Smith explores the visual creation of dynasty through a case study of the portraiture of Licinius and his son, using sculpture as evidence of the central creation of imperial ideology,<sup>128</sup> although many of his examples are only debatably Licinian (see **Chapter 4**). Jonathan Bardill’s

<sup>122</sup> Though Hekster (2015) 97 notes that kinship terms began to recede from inscriptions in the later third century, and that such references were more commonly found on unofficial inscriptions.

<sup>123</sup> Last Statues of Antiquity: <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/>. I have also extensively used the Epigraphic Database Heidelberg, [www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de](http://www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/); and the Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss-Slaby, <http://manfredclaus.de/>.

<sup>124</sup> Hedrick (2000) 93. On the *damnatio* of statues, see Varner (2004) 1-12 (on *damnatio* in general), (2004) 214-224 (on the early fourth century); cf. Stewart (1999).

<sup>125</sup> Flower (2006) 2: “Memory sanctions are deliberately designed strategies that aim to change the picture of the past, whether through erasure or redefinition, or by means of both.”

<sup>126</sup> On the *tyrannus* topos, see Hekster (1999); Dunkle (1971); Drijvers (2007); Leppin (2015).

<sup>127</sup> Elsner (1998) 58-62.

<sup>128</sup> Smith (1997) 183.



research on dynastic elements of portraiture of Constantine is impressively detailed and covers a wide range of visual material.<sup>129</sup> However, some of the questions Bardill asks, mostly to do with Constantine's intent, are largely unanswerable. Where relevant, certain pieces like the possibly-Constantinian *Ada Kameo* will be discussed briefly as interesting possibilities, but I am reluctant to rest arguments securely on the shoulders of such evidence.<sup>130</sup>

Additionally, some discussion of more archaeological evidence (including buildings and monuments) is also used, though again sparingly, when they can be linked to the promotion of dynasty (see **Chapter 3** on Maxentius' building projects). Such evidence will generally be given to provide context and potential further examples to my arguments, rather than to spark new discussions or infer new conclusions.<sup>131</sup>

#### 4. OVERVIEW OF THE ARGUMENT

Although aspects of dynastic relationships in the Tetrarchic and Constantinian eras have been looked at before, notably by Barnes, Leadbetter and Hekster, these approaches do not provide comprehensive discussions of the continuity and change over the course of this period. Nor do they compare and contrast the differing legitimization strategies employed by the various emperors of this time in sufficient detail. One of the aims of this thesis is to fill this gap in the current scholarship. In doing so, I hope to avoid the dichotomy of 'imperial college' vs. 'family', and instead to show how the two concepts could be combined. Similarly, dynastic relationships were only one of several ways to express concepts of imperial legitimacy. It was not 'one or the other'; in fact, they were employed together. Through this examination of the changes and continuities in expressions of dynastic legitimacy, especially as one type of legitimacy amongst several, I will contribute to our understanding of late antique imperial legitimacy as a whole.

The changes and continuity of dynastic legitimacy and its cousin, imperial collegiality, will be examined in a roughly diachronic approach. Colleges will be discussed together, as will individual emperors whenever possible. **Chapter 1** will focus on the 'First Tetrarchy', including the 'Dyarchy' (AD 284-305), and will contextualize Diocletian's imperial colleges as falling within a series of imperial ('familial') colleges that were set up throughout the third

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<sup>129</sup> Bardill (2012). See also Abdy (2012) on dynastic elements in Constantinian numismatic portraiture.

<sup>130</sup> Other examinations of art during this period include Rees (1993); Hannestad (1988) 301-318 (Tetrarchy), 318-332 (Constantine); Henig (2006).

<sup>131</sup> The Arch of Constantine is an important monument which, though it features at points in this thesis, has not received an extended discussion. For more on the Arch, see for example Peirce (1989); Elsner (2000); Marlowe (2010); Bardill (2012) 94ff.

century. **Chapter 2** will look at the ‘Second Tetrarchy’ and Galerius’ imperial colleges as well as the reign of Maximinus Daza (AD 305-313), which was a period of increased political tension, imperial competition, and civil war. **Chapter 3** examines the reign of Maxentius (AD 306-312) and **Chapter 4** that of Licinius (AD 308-324), with the latter especially exploring the period of co-rule between Licinius and Constantine. **Chapter 5** will look at the different stages of Constantine’s strategies of dynastic legitimation and the various colleges he belonged to, culminating in his death and the accession of his sons (AD 306-337). There is some overlap between these chapters, especially for the period 305-313, which is covered to some extent in every chapter after the first. The emperor Maximian, for example, although he does not have a chapter devoted to him, is an important figure in **Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 5**. There will therefore be call-backs throughout this thesis to previous discussions, or directions to sections of chapters yet to come, and there may be some repetition of important points when necessary in order to support the argument and the narrative.<sup>132</sup>

The reason for this focus on the individual rather than merely the diachronic is an attempt to avoid the somewhat natural domination that Constantine has within studies of this period. Although some books have looked more closely at individual emperors (e.g. Mats Cullhed’s examination of Maxentius’ policies and propaganda and Bill Leadbetter’s ‘biography’ of Galerius),<sup>133</sup> other figures like Maximinus Daza and Licinius have received less scholarly attention, especially regarding their legitimation strategies. In focusing entirely on individuals, however, some of the continuity of the period is lost. Additionally, there is a danger of attributing too much importance to the individual in question. This thesis is, therefore, an attempt to rectify the tendency towards Constantino-centric narratives by exploring the ideologies and legitimation of his rivals.

In examining emperors individually when possible, or else as a collegial unit with a cohesive ideology (as with Diocletian’s Tetrarchy), but also in comparison with others, I intend to more clearly show the links and distinctions in the different imperial ideologies of dynastic legitimation in this period. By better understanding the techniques used by Constantine’s contemporaries, this will in turn contribute to studies of Constantine, providing a more accurate picture of the extent to which his own strategies were novel or traditional. Overall, by

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<sup>132</sup> These intra-thesis references will be bolded and will take the following form of Chapter Number (capital Roman numerals), Section Number (Arabic numbers), Subsection Number (lowercase Roman numerals), and (infrequently when necessary) a further subsection or ‘point’ (lowercase letter); e.g. **I.2.iii.d** would refer to ‘Chapter 1, Section 2, Subsection 3, Point d’. When intra-thesis references are made for sections within the current chapter, the ‘Chapter Number’ (e.g. III) will normally be omitted; e.g. **2.iv** refers to the section in this introduction titled ‘Imperial Colleges and the Tetrarchy’.

<sup>133</sup> Cullhed (1994); Leadbetter (2009).

examining expressions of dynastic legitimacy and showing how 'familial' and 'collegial' relationships often coincided, this thesis will contribute to our understanding of late antique imperial ideologies, especially those of legitimacy and power.

## CHAPTER ONE

## The First Tetrarchy and the Third Century

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Both of you are now most bountiful, both most brave, and because of this very similarity in your characters the harmony between you is ever increasing, and you are brothers in virtue, which is a surer tie than any tie of blood.

*Ambo nunc estis largissimi, ambo fortissimi atque hac ipsa vestri similitudine magis magisque concordēs et, quod omni consanguinitate certius est, virtutibus fratres.*

Panegyric of 289, 10.9.3.<sup>1</sup>

In 289, an orator chose these words to praise the imperial relationship between Maximian (the recipient of the panegyric) and his co-emperor Diocletian. There is an emphasis on their harmonious relationship (*concordēs*) and that the two co-emperors are like brothers (*fratres*). These concepts—the harmony and brotherhood of their co-rule—crop up repeatedly in the panegyrics and in other media during the late third and early fourth century, especially in the period 285-305, when Diocletian (who became emperor in 284) chose other emperors to rule the empire alongside him. Yet the ‘brotherhood’ between the emperors is a ‘fictive’ relationship: Diocletian and Maximian were not brothers in terms of their parentage, nor did they have any other familial relationships to each other as far as the evidence suggests. That this lack of ‘actual’ brotherhood caused some consternation for the panegyrist of 289 is clear; he emphasizes that the harmonious relationship between Diocletian and Maximian as “brothers in virtue” (*virtutibus fratres*) was in fact superior to kinship (*consanguinitate*).

This phrase—*virtutibus fratres*—has also caused contention amongst scholars regarding the question of dynasty within the structure of the imperial college or colleges established by Diocletian, that is, the so-called ‘Dyarchy’ (a college of two emperors, Diocletian and Maximian, from 285-293) and the ‘Tetrarchy’ (a college of four emperors, established in 293). The two sides of the scholarly debate have been summed up already in the introduction to this thesis,<sup>2</sup> but they are of vital importance here—partly because, on this

<sup>1</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.9.3. This and all other translations of the *Panegyrici Latini* are from Nixon & Rodgers (1994).

<sup>2</sup> See **Intro.1.**

passage, their viewpoints coincide. Olivier Hekster, who typically argues that the rejection of *consanguinitas* for *virtutibus fratres* supports a broader argument that Diocletian employed only non-dynastic, alternative claims to legitimacy, holds that “the speeches of 289 and 291 cohere in their emphasis on non-consanguineous brotherhood.”<sup>3</sup> Bill Leadbetter generally argues that Diocletian had purposefully crafted a dynasty through ties of adoption and intermarriage. On the phrase *virtutibus fratres*, he agrees that it represents a “fictive fraternal adoption”, adding that “brotherhood is conveyed by mutuality, rather than consanguinity.”<sup>4</sup> Other scholars tend to agree. Roger Rees offers the view that, like adoption, “fraternity did not have to be natural to be considered legitimate...The emperors are not brothers through *consanguinitas* (‘blood kinship’) but through an associative fraternity.”<sup>5</sup> Harries suggests that familial terms were used to describe the relationships between Diocletian and his co-emperors “precisely because they were not related”<sup>6</sup> but that by emphasizing them as *virtutibus fratres* and “in seeking to compensate for the lack of family ties between the four, the panegyrists protest too much.”<sup>7</sup> That Diocletian and Maximian were not blood brothers is clear, but the intense interest in this phrase, *virtutibus fratres*, in scholarship on the Tetrarchy serves to create a false dichotomy between ‘dynasty’ and ‘collegiality’. I propose instead to look at the intersection between these terms.

It is important to note here that it is difficult (and potentially problematic) to determine Diocletian’s ‘intentions’ towards or against dynasty from this passage or other sources. It is better to examine the representation of dynastic elements that survive in different types of media. The orator who gave the panegyric had other concerns—some of them familial, which shall be discussed later, but most of them military and political. The orator likely was not (or no longer) a member of the imperial court,<sup>8</sup> and was someone who, rather than parroting an imperial ideology, was representing something unusual in a familiar way: Diocletian and Maximian are perceived and represented as brothers, even if there are no ties of blood (or adoption). Thus, the phrase ‘brothers in virtue’ was not only a way of emphasising imperial *concordia*, but also of making sense of a political arrangement of co-emperors which, until now, had been almost entirely based on dynastic principles.<sup>9</sup> The people of the late third century would likely have expected to see family members in Diocletian’s imperial college. Whether

<sup>3</sup> Hekster (2015) 305. Cf. Brosch (2006) 89-90.

<sup>4</sup> Leadbetter (2004) 261.

<sup>5</sup> Rees (2002) 53.

<sup>6</sup> Harries (2012) 32.

<sup>7</sup> Harries (2013) 32.

<sup>8</sup> Nixon (1983).

<sup>9</sup> As will be discussed in 2.i.

Diocletian intended to build an imperial ‘family’ with his co-rulers is debatable: what is certain is that the orator of the Panegyric of 289 chooses to represent Diocletian and Maximian as ‘brothers’, with caveats but also with the implicit connotations that went along with that term. Additionally, it is important to remember in this context that the presentation of ‘dynastic’ imperial relationships in 285 may not have been the same in 293 or 305; what may have been true for the relationship of Diocletian and Maximian is not necessarily applicable to any later forms of the imperial college.<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, these presentations are easier to analyse, as we can never truly determine what Diocletian’s actual stance might have been. Imperial messages of legitimacy were fluid and were easily adapted according to the situation.

It is unlikely that the Tetrarchy was part of some grand system planned from the beginning. Instead, it was likely a reaction to the needs of the empire.<sup>11</sup> The expansion of the imperial college provided increased imperial presence and attention across the empire, better defensive strategies from able commanders who were less likely to rebel, and the promise—through the creation of a family and even a dynasty—of further stability in the future. The rest of this chapter will explore the extent to which it can be said that the Tetrarchy was a ‘dynastic’ structure. Hekster has argued that the Tetrarchy was “explicitly not organized by bloodline,” while Leadbetter terms it “an essentially private dynastic arrangement” rather than a “constitutional form.”<sup>12</sup> The truth lies somewhere outside of this dichotomy: the Tetrarchy was simultaneously an imperial college and, by the same relationships, a family. The creation of a family proved useful to secure a political arrangement, as familial links so often did; but just as Tetrarchic succession was not straightforward, neither was the Roman family.

Therefore, this chapter will examine the extent to which dynastic elements were put forward in the imperial ideology of the Dyarchy and the Tetrarchy (c. 285-305), as presented on coins and official inscriptions. In doing so, it will explore the intersections between ideas of ‘family’ and ‘collegiality, using the traditions of the third century as a lens to see the continuity and change in representations of dynastic legitimacy. Although we cannot determine Diocletian’s intentions towards creating a dynasty, we can at least identify several legitimizing strategies which employ some form of familial links or structure. It is important to view these ‘dynastic’ expressions of Tetrarchic relationships as both disseminated and perceived; for the

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<sup>10</sup> For instance, although both Harries and Nixon note Maxentius’ exclusion from the dynastic arrangement in 293, Nixon also correctly points out that “it does not prove that at this stage Diocletian was thinking along these lines.” Harries (2012) 32; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 67.

<sup>11</sup> Williams (1985) 63-65, 197 and Leadbetter (2009) 6 offer cautions on thinking of the Tetrarchy as a “system” too rigidly.

<sup>12</sup> Hekster (2015) 277, Leadbetter (2009) 6.

former we can examine coinage, for the latter we can use panegyrics and other literature. For example, contemporary authors such as Lactantius and the orators of the *Panegyrici Latini* are useful for determining the perception of familial elements in Tetrarchic ideology, whether they were manipulated for praise or invective. I seek to examine these dynastic elements and the use of familial language outside of the aforementioned dichotomy that is so often seen in Tetrarchic scholarship, where there is the idea that the Tetrarchy must be either non-dynastic or a careful construction of relationships via adoption.

In order to provide the proper context to the Tetrarchy, **Section 2** will first discuss dynastic legitimacy in the context of previous third-century imperial colleges. The change and continuity between these colleges and Diocletian's will be discussed in two discrete stages. **Section 3** will explore Diocletian's *fraternitas* with Maximian in the 'Dyarchy'. **Section 4** will look at the establishment of the Tetrarchy and the use of what could be termed 'dynastic' techniques to present these four emperors as a unit, especially in terms of imperial *concordia*. By providing the third century context for the Tetrarchy, it becomes possible to view it in many ways a continuation of the third century, rather than a new beginning and a novel imperial structure.

## 2. DYNASTIC IMPERIAL COLLEGES OF THE THIRD CENTURY

To better understand elements of dynasticism and familial connections within Diocletian's imperial college, it is vital to first examine the traditions behind dynasty, collegiality, and imperial succession in the tumultuous third century leading up to Diocletian's accession. These traditions were bound up in ways of presenting and representing emperors and imperial colleges. This background is necessary for understanding the nature of the so-called 'First Tetrarchy' as traditional or innovative, within the context of co-emperorship that had come before.

### i. Historical Overview: Collegiality and Dynasty

While the Roman Empire was not a hereditary monarchy,<sup>13</sup> it is clear from the time of Augustus that emperors made efforts to ensure that their son (or adopted son) would become

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<sup>13</sup> Jones (1964) 41f offers a succinct example of the misconceptions regarding succession via "the hereditary principle" versus adoption. Cf. Flaig (1997); but contrast with Baharal (1996) 18: "From the time of Augustus and his Julio-Claudian successors, the dynastic principle of the imperial role was one of the most prominent factors

the next emperor.<sup>14</sup> Although the third century was littered with failed dynasties, strategies of legitimation that employed dynastic succession were common nevertheless. These sons often ruled together alongside their fathers, usually in the junior position of Caesar. This structure of co-rulership that made up the various imperial ‘colleges’ (i.e. groups of co-rulers) sometimes included the recognition of an *Augusta* or ‘empress’ as wife and mother in imperial presentation (though not necessarily in the ‘college’). Not all partnerships or colleges were dynastic, though they were almost overwhelmingly so—a rare example of apparent non-dynastic collegiality can be found in the partnership of the senatorially-elected Pupienus and Balbinus in 238. Nor did all collegial relationships end well; for instance, Clodius Albinus, the short-lived partner of Septimius Severus, was quickly removed to make way for Severus’ two sons.

The imperial colleges in the third century thus usually consisted of a ruling emperor (or emperors in special cases) and his nominated son or sons who ruled with him as Caesar. The establishment of sons and heirs as Caesars was common throughout the third century, and this was displayed and propagated on the coinage of various emperors. This was a tradition that stemmed even from Tiberius’ adoption. As Baharal notes on the continuation of the title, “It was taken for granted that a princeps who bestowed the name Caesar on someone and adopted him as his own son had indicated his choice of designated successor.”<sup>15</sup> These dynasties could not rely on descent from previous emperors, though some tried to make those claims; for example, through the popularity of the name Antoninus—seen in the titulature of Caracalla and Diadumenian—and Trebonianus Gallus’ use of adoption and marriage to link his family to the Decii.<sup>16</sup>

Instead, they were ‘forward-looking’ dynasties, seeking to establish stability and (hopefully) longevity through the promotion of future generations. Although many of these dynasties ultimately failed, this has more to do with the uncertain atmosphere of the third century than it does with the stability or instability of dynastic succession. The numismatic evidence is vital here, as family members featured regularly on imperial central coinage and mints regularly featured sons as Caesars and Augusti and wives as *Augustae*.<sup>17</sup> Though these

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in the legitimacy of the emperor’s status.” Also Leadbetter (2009) 28: “From time to time, the principate could function dynastically and was at its most stable when it did so; but therein also lay the seed of instability.”

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. Gesche (1978) 377f.

<sup>15</sup> Baharal (1996) 10.

<sup>16</sup> The *Life of Diademenus* (sic) in the *Historia Augusta* focuses mostly on the boy’s presentation as an Antoninus by his father in order to appeal to the troops.

<sup>17</sup> Hekster (2015) 6.



familial colleges did not last beyond the overthrowing of each Augustus, dynastic succession was still promoted, as a brief overview of co-rule in the third century shows.<sup>18</sup>

The Severans are the best example of a ‘dynasty’ in the third century; they ruled longer than many other emperors and the dynasty itself was constituted of several emperors who were able to claim familial links to each other. Septimius Severus (r. 193-211) made his son Caracalla Caesar in 195 and Augustus 198-211; his younger son Geta was made Caesar in 196 and Augustus upon Severus’ death in 211 but was killed by Caracalla shortly thereafter. It is worth noting that Septimius Severus had a previous heir and Caesar (and, Potter assumes, an adopted son, though it is not stated so explicitly in Herodian) in Clodius Albinus, one of his rivals.<sup>19</sup> Albinus is the sole example of a non-dynastic Caesar before the Tetrarchy (though not the only potentially adopted one).<sup>20</sup> Albinus’ coins, however, do feature the name ‘Septimius’ as part of his title,<sup>21</sup> possibly due to adoption, indicating that the situation was complex. Otherwise, Severus seems to have given permission to the mints to mint for Albinus,<sup>22</sup> a deliberate strategy on Severus’ part (though Albinus was swiftly put aside for Caracalla).<sup>23</sup>

Later, Elagabalus (r. 218-222), who could himself claim dynastic links as a Severan, adopted his cousin Alexander Severus in 221 and made him Caesar.<sup>24</sup> The importance of the Severan women in this arrangement and in Alexander’s subsequent reign following his cousin/adopted father’s death is interesting: they were also given prominence on coinage, and may have contributed to the picture of dynastic succession for the two young emperors, but more importantly the claims to dynastic legitimation of both Elagabalus and Alexander came from the assertion that both were bastard sons of Caracalla by the daughters of Julia Maesa, Caracalla’s aunt and the matriarch of the Elagabalus-Alexander branch of the family.<sup>25</sup> Coins survive for many of the female members of the Severan dynasty, whether wives or mothers.

Another intriguing example of a ‘dynasty’, and the second most long-lived example of familial and collegial rule in the third century, is that of Valerian (r. 253-260) and his son Gallienus (r. 253-268). They were co-Augusti, with Gallienus apparently not having even held

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<sup>18</sup> Dates are usually from Peachin (1990).

<sup>19</sup> Potter (2014): 102; Herod. 2.15.3-5; Cass. Dio 76.4; Hekster (2015) 209-10 rejects the idea of a formal adoption.

<sup>20</sup> Arguably, the same could be said for Gordian III, Caesar of Pupienus and Balbinus, but Gordian’s selection as Caesar was no doubt due to the apparent popularity of the failed bid for imperial power made by his grandfather and father, Gordian I and II.

<sup>21</sup> Baharal (1996) 21.

<sup>22</sup> Rowan (2012) 37, citing Herod. 2.15.5.

<sup>23</sup> Potter (2014) 109, 118-20, 134-6; Southern (2001) 35, 38, 43, 48, 50-51. Herod. 3.5, 3.10, 3.14.9, 3.15, 4.3-4; Cass. Dio 76.4, 78.2.

<sup>24</sup> Potter (2014) 157; Southern (2001) 59; Herod. 5.7.4; Cass. Dio 80.17.2-3. For Elagabalus’ Severan claims, see Baharal (1996) 52-4; for Alexander Severus as Caesar and member of the dynasty see Baharal (1996) 54-5.

<sup>25</sup> Hekster (2015) 153-7; Herod. 5.3.10.

the position of Caesar.<sup>26</sup> Instead, two of Gallienus' sons were made Caesars: Valerian II from 256-258, until he was killed in battle; and Saloninus Caesar after his brother's death, from 258-260.<sup>27</sup> Saloninus was made Augustus in 260 in a hasty attempt to contest Postumus' elevation, but was killed shortly afterwards in Postumus' attempts to solidify control in the breakaway 'Gallic empire'. There may also have been two other members of the dynasty who were not made Caesars: Gallienus' younger half-brother, Valerian Minor, and Gallienus' youngest son, Marinianus. The college of Valerian and Gallienus is intriguing for its relative longevity, but also because of the different combinations of emperors. Gallienus' wife, Salonina, was also prevalent on coinage alongside her husband and especially those that featured the imperial family—often with four heads on one coin (see **2.ii**).

There are a number of short-lived examples of colleges which constituted a father as Augustus and a son as Caesar or as a co-Augustus (often after a period as Caesar). Many of these emperors also celebrated their wives on coins as *Augustae*. Macrinus (r. 217-218) made his son Diadumenian Caesar for the duration of Macrinus' rule.<sup>28</sup> Maximinus Thrax (r. 235-238) made his son Maximus Caesar from 236-238, and raised him to co-Augustus shortly before their deaths in 238.<sup>29</sup> Philip 'the Arab' (r. 244-249) elevated his son Philip II, first to Caesar (244-247) and then to Augustus (247-249).<sup>30</sup> The Gallic emperor Tetricus (r. 270-274) made his son Tetricus II a Caesar in 273 and a co-Augustus in 274.<sup>31</sup>

Emperors who made multiple sons co-rulers included Decius (r. 249-251) and Trebonianus Gallus (r. 251-253), who shared a Caesar. Decius (r. 249-251) had two sons, the first of whom, Herennius Etruscus, was his Caesar in 250 and Augustus in 251.<sup>32</sup> His second son, Hostilian, was Decius' Caesar from 250 before he was made co-Augustus with Trebonianus Gallus, who took over after Decius' death in 251. Gallus adopted Hostilian (or at least made him co-Augustus) until his death later that year.<sup>33</sup> He also made his own son

<sup>26</sup> Some ancient sources mention it: Aur. Vict. 32.3; Eutrop. 9.7, but it seems to be disregarded by most modern scholars—see for example, Peachin (1988). Perhaps its appearance in the sources reveals a misunderstanding born from expectation that the role of Caesar, however briefly held, precedes that of Augustus? This has important parallels to the discussion of Maximian as Caesar and will be discussed in more detail in **3.iii**.

<sup>27</sup> Potter (2014) 248, 253; Southern (2001) 78-9, 98; De Blois (1976) 24. Ps.-Vict. 32.2, 33.1; Aur. Vict. 33; *Hist. Aug., Valer. Duo* 8.1-2 (confusing Gallienus' half-brother with his son?), *Gall. Duo* 14.9-11; 19.1-2; *Tyr. Trig.* 3.1-3.

<sup>28</sup> Potter (2014) 151; Southern (2001) 56, 58; Herod. 5.4.12; Cass. Dio 79.19; c.f. also Cass. Dio 79.34, 37-8; Eutrop. 8.21; Ps.-Vict. 22.1; Aur. Vict. 22; *Hist. Aug., Diadum.* 1.1, *Macrin.* 5.1, 10.4-6. It is possible that Diadumenian was also raised to Augustus towards the end; c.f. Southern (2001) 58.

<sup>29</sup> Potter (2014) 169; Southern (2001) 64; Herod. 8.4.9; Eutrop. 9.1; Aur. Vict. 25; *Hist. Aug., Max. Duo* 8.1, c.f. 22.6.

<sup>30</sup> Potter (2014) 232, 237; Southern (2001) 71, 74; Eutrop. 9.3; Ps.-Vict. 29.1-3; Aur. Vict. 28.

<sup>31</sup> Aur. Vict. 34; *Hist. Aug., Tyr. Trig.* 24.1, 25.1-2.

<sup>32</sup> Potter (2014) 242; Southern (2001) 75; Eutrop. 9.4; Ps.-Vict. 29.1-3; Aur. Vict. 29.

<sup>33</sup> Potter (2014) 242-3; Southern (2001) 76; Eutrop. 9.5; Aur. Vict. 30.

Volusianus Caesar in 251, and then Augustus (after Hostilian's death) until 253.<sup>34</sup> It is worth noting that Volusianus is said to have married Hostilian's sister, Decius' daughter; clearly Gallus was making efforts to connect himself to the previous dynasty.<sup>35</sup> During the reign of Valerian and Gallienus, the usurper Macrianus rebelled in 260 after Valerian's capture in the East. Macrianus raised his two sons, Macrianus II and Quietus, immediately to the positions of Augusti.<sup>36</sup> Both Macrianus the father and Macrianus the elder son were killed in battle; Quietus was disposed of by Odenathus of Palmyra.

An interesting and unusual situation of collegiality and dynasty is that found in AD 238. Gordian I and II were father and son and co-Augusti, and their descendant (grandson of the elder Gordian), Gordian III, was possibly adopted by Pupienus and Balbinus when they made him their Caesar (however reluctantly) in an apparent attempt to pacify the crowds at Rome.<sup>37</sup> Gordian III was Caesar in 238 and then sole Augustus after the deaths of Balbinus and Pupienus until 244.

Most relevant to the Tetrarchy is the college of Carus and his sons Carinus and Numerian, directly preceding Diocletian's elevation. Carus (r. 282-283) made both his sons Caesars. Carinus was Caesar from 282-283, raised by his father to Augustus shortly before Carus' death in 283, and then survived until 285, after Diocletian's elevation by the eastern troops in 284.<sup>38</sup> Numerian, the younger brother, was Caesar for a slightly longer time, and was made Augustus briefly after his father's death, probably elevated by his father's troops.<sup>39</sup> Carus took care in creating a dynasty—setting his sons up as first Caesars and then Augusti, as had become routine through the third century, and also ensuring to bolster his status with marriage alliances to powerful men like Aper, his praetorian prefect, whose daughter married Numerian.

It was in this context, a long line of failed attempts by emperors to establish power and to promise longevity and stability through the promotion of their sons as junior and potentially future emperors, that Diocletian became emperor. Diocletian had no established imperial ancestors upon which to draw, like so many other third century emperors, and like them he too

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<sup>34</sup> Potter (2014) 243; Southern (2001) 76; Eutrop. 9.5; Ps.-Vict. 30.1; Aur. Vict. 30.

<sup>35</sup> Potter (2014) 243 argues for Hostilian being Caesar rather than co-Augustus; but Peachin (1990) 34 suggests he may have been made emperor by his father before Decius' death. Southern (2001) 76 suggests a sort of hierarchy for the sons, with Hostilian raised to Augustus to indicate seniority over Volusianus.

<sup>36</sup> Southern (2001) 79, 100-101. The literary evidence for Macrianus and sons is scarce and problematic: *Hist. Aug., Gall.* 1.2-3.5, *Tyr. trig.* 12-14. 18; Zonar. 12.24.

<sup>37</sup> Southern (2001) 67; Herod. 7.10.7-9; *Hist. Aug., Tr. Gord.* 22.1-3. It is worth noting here an intaglio of apparently Balbinus, Pupienus, and Gordian III in the same presentation as intaglios of imperial families: Marsden (1999) 92, cf. Pl. 10.

<sup>38</sup> Potter (2014) 275; Southern (2001) 132-3; Eutrop. 9.18-19; Ps.-Vict. 38.1-2; Aur. Vict. 38.

<sup>39</sup> Peachin (1990) 49.

was a soldier who became emperor as the result of a military coup. Several authors tell the story, with Aurelius Victor providing the most detail.<sup>40</sup> While the army of the young Numerian, son of the recently-deceased emperor Carus, was returning from an ill-fated Persian campaign, he died. Diocletian, then called ‘Diocles’ according to the *Epitome de Caesaribus*,<sup>41</sup> was chosen to be emperor by a military council because of his ‘good sense’.<sup>42</sup> Numerian’s father-in-law, the praetorian prefect Aper, was blamed for the young emperor’s death, and in retribution Diocletian slew Aper in front of the military—purportedly to prove his own innocence in the plot.<sup>43</sup> Carinus, the elder son of Carus, declared war on Diocletian, both militarily and ideologically. He minted coins to the deified Carus and Numerian from multiple mints, all with the typical reverse legend CONSECRATIO.<sup>44</sup> Carinus and Diocletian met in battle near the Margus, where Victor reports that Carinus was slain by his own men,<sup>45</sup> leaving Diocletian with no immediate imperial opponents.<sup>46</sup>

Diocletian had succeeded in eliminating Carus’ short-lived dynasty, but most attention is paid to Diocletian’s next move, which at first glance seems completely at odds with the careful dynasty-planning of the third century. He raised to imperial power his comrade Maximian, a fellow soldier from Diocletian’s own home of Illyricum and a man with apparently no familial connection to Diocletian. The only time there had previously been two co-emperors with no attempts to reconstruct familial relationships was the aforementioned college of Pupienus and Balbinus and their Caesar Gordian III in 238. There is some debate about whether Maximian held the position of ‘Caesar’ before he was made Augustus. There is no numismatic evidence surviving to support the lower position, but Eutropius reports that he was sent to fight in the west as a Caesar.<sup>47</sup> Whether Maximian had been a Caesar, it seems that he was certainly an Augustus in 286, possibly due to the threat of insurrection and usurpation in the west when Carausius, one of Maximian’s naval commanders, was declared emperor in

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<sup>40</sup> Aur. Vict. 38.1-39.1, 39.13-14; Eutropius 9.18.

<sup>41</sup> Ps.-Vict. 39.1.

<sup>42</sup> Aur. Vict. 38.1.

<sup>43</sup> Eutrop. 9.20. However, as Bird points out in his commentary on Aurelius Victor, it is more likely that Diocletian was involved in the plot than Aper, who as Numerian’s father-in-law thus gained more political prestige by keeping the young man alive. C.f. Bird (1995) 160.

<sup>44</sup> RIC V.2: Divus Carus: 135 no. 4, 138 no. 28-30, 140 no. 47-50, 147-8 no. 108-113, 150 no. 126-7. Divus Numerian: 196 no. 424-6.

<sup>45</sup> Aur. Vict. 39.11-12.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Bird (1976) on the accession of Diocletian.

<sup>47</sup> Eutrop. 9.20. For lack of numismatic evidence, see Webb (1929) 191 and (1933) 204. Maximian’s rank will be discussed in **3.iii**.

Britain and Northern Gaul in 286-7.<sup>48</sup> At the end of the third century, in 293, Diocletian again expanded the imperial college, this time to include two new Caesars, Constantius and Galerius. Like the appointment of Maximian, this expansion has been taken as surprising, or at least not in keeping with the traditions of the third century.

The historical narrative of the third century before Diocletian's ascension tells us conclusively that emperors consistently promoted their sons as Caesars. Others who did not do so may have had sons they deliberately did not appoint (whose names and very existence are now lost to us), or had no sons at all, or just did not live long enough to do so. The most notable example of this is Aurelian, a relatively longer-lived emperor who did not name a son as Caesar—whether this is due to imperial policy or merely the lack of a son, is impossible to say. The latter is more likely, since Aurelian did mint coins that feature his wife, Ulpia Severina, either by herself, in the *capita opposita* style, or as part of the reverse picture, often holding hands with Aurelian, showing some interest in promoting his familial connections, even if he did not have a son to proclaim as his co-ruler.<sup>49</sup>

## ii. 'Caesar' as a dynastic title and the presentation of imperial families

The title 'Caesar' seems to have been given in most cases only to sons or boys adopted as sons.<sup>50</sup> The history of the Caesar role can be traced back as far back as Augustus' attempts to create a stable dynasty through the promotion of his grandsons, Gaius and Lucius, as his heirs, although certainly the title of Caesar was not used in the same way at that point.<sup>51</sup> As seen above, there are fewer examples of sons raised immediately to co-Augustus without first having been Caesar, though many were elevated after a short time in the junior role.<sup>52</sup> The position of Caesar, then, seems to have been a stop-gap that could fulfil multiple purposes. A

<sup>48</sup> Aur. Vict. 39.20-1; Eutrop. 9.21. Casey (1994) 39-43 discusses the evidence for a more precise dating, concluding that the numismatic evidence points towards 286. The chronology of events in the sources is more confused due to the tendency, especially in ancient authors, to condense and simplify evidence.

<sup>49</sup> RIC V.1: alone, 315-18 no. 3, 16-7, 19; double-obverse, 313 no. 1-4; CONCORDIA AVGG, see for example 315 no. 3 (from Rome). Both the holding hands image and the *Concordia* reverse type will feature in later discussions.

<sup>50</sup> As says Kolb (1987) 44: "Ein Caesar war stets entweder leiblicher oder adoptierter Sohn eines Kaisers gewesen."

<sup>51</sup> Horster (2011), Baharal (1996) 9-18; Carson (1990) 279: "On the coinage of the emperor's heir, whether natural or adopted, his title is that of Caesar, no longer used as a family name as in the coinage of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, but as the distinguishing title of the heir apparent. It is so used in the coinage of the Flavian Caesars, Titus and Domitian, and regularly thereafter. From the late third century onwards it is very often qualified by the epithet *Nobilissimus*..."

<sup>52</sup> On the growing prevalence of imperial children as Caesars and co-Augusti in the third century, see Wiedemann (1988) 126f.

son could have been made Caesar for any or all of the following reasons: to designate the son as an heir; to showcase the potential for future dynastic stability; to establish hierarchy, either to undermine the son's authority or to show clearly who the senior partner was; or to indicate the son's preparation or training for the role of Augustus. While many sons were elevated quite soon before their fathers were overthrown—possibly indicating political desperation on the part of the father-Augustus—some actually ruled alongside their fathers for a few years, their short reigns in truth not much shorter than their father's.<sup>53</sup>

Yet for all the prevalence of dynastic succession in the third century and the clear importance of the Caesar role in promoting imperial heirs and the potential for imperial stability, it is unclear how neatly this picture of succession fits in with imperial ideology in the third century. Imperial sons were routinely included in inscriptions alongside their fathers; e.g. inscriptions tended to include the imperial college (or the imperial family). Some coins fulfil similar functions; a widespread example is the common plurality of the abbreviation AVGG to indicate two emperors.<sup>54</sup> There are, however, not many coins which at first glance could be said to be explicitly 'dynastic'—that is, there is no explicit familial language on these coins. Although a second-century Caesar, Commodus, had a coin minted to him as *COMMODO CAES AVG FIL GERM SARM*,<sup>55</sup> such practice (of explicitly naming boys as the son of the Augustus) is not seen on any of the third century Caesars' coins. Even in the case of adopted sons like Gordian III and Hostilian, there is no such language used. Instead, the dynastic relationship of Augustus-father and Caesar-son is presented in different ways, especially on the third-century coinage.

Instead of using familial language like *pater* and *filius*, coins instead display visual representations of these relationships alongside the titles of Augustus and Caesar. Mints employed a few different techniques to do this.<sup>56</sup> The first is the presentation of multiple busts on the obverse of coins, either 'confronted' (facing) or 'jugate' (side-by-side). Another is a method of featuring busts on both sides of the coin, which is called *capita opposita* (double obverse).<sup>57</sup> Jugate busts were sometimes used to portray non-dynastic 'relationships',

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<sup>53</sup> The shortest-ruling sons-as-Augusti appear to have been Maximus, Herennius Etruscus, Saloninus, and Tetricus II. Longer-living co-Augusti are Philip II and Volusianus (both of whom were overthrown with their fathers); and Alexander Severus and Carinus (though they actually managed to survive their predecessors' deaths). Gallienus's long reign, both with his father and after his death, is more of an exceptional case than the rule.

<sup>54</sup> Manders (2012) 41, footnote 158: "...probably, the addition of AVGG shows that all of these emperors either tried to create a dynasty or simply continued the dynastic trend set in by their family members."

<sup>55</sup> RIC III, Rome no. 620.

<sup>56</sup> Hekster (2015) 259; King (1999) 132.

<sup>57</sup> On obverses in general, including jugate busts and other obverse variations, see Carson (1990) 276-279.

particularly those of an emperor and his divine *comes*, his ‘patron god’.<sup>58</sup> More typically, however, the relationships displayed through these techniques were familial, either Augustus-Caesar (father-son), Augustus-Augusta (husband-wife), or co-Augusti (father-son or brothers). For example, Carinus and Numerian, the sons of Carus, were displayed together in jugate on an aureus from Lyons (**fig. 1.1**). Care has been taken to distinguish the two brothers visually (as with the elder Carinus’ fuller beard).



Fig. 1.1: Jugate busts of Carinus and Numerian.<sup>59</sup>

Facing busts seem to have been reserved for familial relationships.<sup>60</sup> The earliest examples from Roman imperial coinage seems to be coins of Gaius and Lucius, Augustus’ grandsons, as *Principes Iuventutis*.<sup>61</sup> A few decades later coins of Nero and Agrippina did use explicit relationship terms to demarcate the figures shown (Agrippina as *mater*).<sup>62</sup> Another example of explicit familial terms comes from the second century, where coins of Trajan were paired with a reverse featuring his father and his adoptive father (Nerva) facing, as *patres*.<sup>63</sup> There is also the aforementioned example of Commodus as Caesar and *filius*. By the third century, however, these familial terms were almost always omitted; coins relied on the visual presentation of the figures alone to represent relationships.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Postumus, the emperor of the breakaway ‘Gallic’ empire, is the best example of this, as there are numerous examples of coinage with Postumus’ bust side-by-side with that of Hercules: e.g. RIC V Postumus nos. 258, 260-263. This association with the divine was followed by other Gallic emperors like Victorinus (e.g. RIC V no. 30), though the mints of the Gallic emperor Tetricus seems to have reserved this technique for the familial relationship of Tetricus and his son (e.g. RIC V no. 208). Other emperors who used this technique were Probus and Sol or Hercules (e.g. RIC V nos. 263, 271), Carausius and Sol (e.g. RIC V nos. 233-234), and the famous example of Constantine and Sol (RIC VI, Ticinum no. 111). Manders (2014) 111 notes that the epithet of *comes* “expresses a more intimate relationship between emperor and god” than *conservator* does.

<sup>59</sup> Not in RIC: cf. Cohen (1892) 404, no. 4 var. CARINVS ET NVMERIANVS AVGG / VICTORIA AVGG. Compare to RIC V, Carinus & Numerian no. 330. Cf. [http://wildwinds.com/coins/ric/carinus/Calico\\_4405a.txt](http://wildwinds.com/coins/ric/carinus/Calico_4405a.txt).

<sup>60</sup> The sole exception to this seems to be RIC V, Carus no. 99, which has been identified as Sol and Carus facing (with the unusual reverse DEO ET DOMINO CARO AVG (or DEO ET DOMINO CARO INVIC).

<sup>61</sup> E.g. RIC I (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), Civil Wars no. 87: C L CAESARES PRINCI IVIN COS DISICNA.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. RIC I, Nero nos. 1-3, with obverse AGRIPP AVGG DIVI CL AVD NERONIS CAES MATER, representing all three members of that imperial family: Agrippina as Augusta, Claudius as a *divus*, and Nero here as Caesar.

<sup>63</sup> RIC II, Trajan nos. 726-727.

<sup>64</sup> The mints of Alexander Severus, however, seems to have employed explicit familial terms on coins of his mother Julia Mamaea, perhaps to distinguish his mother from his wife Sallustia Orbiana: e.g. RIC IV Severus

These techniques could also be expanded and combined, for example uniting the facing busts and the *capita opposita* techniques, which had been done as early as Vespasian's reign.<sup>65</sup> An important third century example of this can be seen in a silver medallion from Valerian's reign, which features the busts of Valerian I and Valerian II (the Caesar) facing on the obverse, while the busts of Gallienus and his wife Salonina are facing on the reverse (**fig. 1.2**), with legends reading *PIETAS AVGVSTORVM* and *CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM*.



**Fig. 1.2: Medallion of the imperial family of Valerian and Gallienus.**<sup>66</sup>

Another, earlier example is an aureus from the reign of Septimius Severus, which perhaps shows an earlier stage in the presentation of the imperial family; on this coin, Septimius Severus is on the obverse alone, while his sons Caracalla (laureate, as Augustus) and Geta (bare-headed) share the reverse with their mother Julia Domna squeezed between them (**fig. 1.3**). This visual presentation serves to emphasize Septimius Severus' position as senior Augustus, but it perhaps lacks the neatness of the multiplicity of relationships presented in the medallion of Valerian and Gallienus.



**Fig. 1.3: Septimius Severus with Caracalla, Julia Domna, Geta.**<sup>67</sup>

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Alexander nos. 660-667 (Alexander facing Julia Mamaea), as opposed to RIC IV Severus Alexander 318 (which features Alexander and Orbiania facing on the obverse with Julia Mamaea on the reverse.)

<sup>65</sup> E.g. RIC II (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Vespasian no. 1302, which features Vespasian on the obverse and Titus and Domitian facing on the reverse (legend: *CAESAR AVG F COS CAESAR AVG F PR*).

<sup>66</sup> RIC V.2 63 no. 1 (Rome). *PIETAS AVGVSTORVM* / *CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM*. The Caesar was formerly thought to be Saloninus, but an earlier date and earlier Caesar seems more appropriate.

<sup>67</sup> RIC IV, Septimius Severus no. 175; cf. nos. 181A-C.



Coins which employ these different techniques are not common. Usually they are minted in higher-quality material (often gold), often on larger medallions (gold, silver, or bronze/copper), which indicates their position as important to imperial ideology: they should not be classified in the same way as the smaller low-denomination coins which recycled virtues and other tropes.<sup>68</sup> Importantly, there are no examples of these coins from before Diocletian which feature relationships other than familial relationships. No facing, jugate or double-obverse coins exist which link (human) non-family members together.<sup>69</sup> Even Pupienus and Balbinus seem not to have been depicted together as facing or jugate busts, though they did have coins which featured the imperial group together on the reverse.<sup>70</sup>

Often these coins with multiple busts bear the legend *CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM*, as on the example from Valerian and Gallienus' reign (**fig. 1.2** above). *Concordia* types were not limited to depictions of the imperial familial college; often the goddess herself was depicted on coin reverses instead of the emperors themselves. The appearance of *concordia* on coin legends can be most simply explained as owing to times in which the virtue was sorely needed—such as during the usurpations and civil unrest which plagued the third century. Another way of displaying *concordia* and the unity it suggested was through a reverse of clasped hands; this reverse was common to coins of Augustus-husband and Augusta-wife, such as Gallienus and Salonina, but could be employed in different situations as well.<sup>71</sup> Decius' mints issued coins with this reverse to Decius' sons, Herennius Etruscus and Hostilian.<sup>72</sup>



Fig. 1.4: Balbinus with reverse of clasped hands.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Burnett (1987) 77-79 on personifications, though he unfairly dismisses the continuation of personification types as “banal”.

<sup>69</sup> Jugate busts pairing emperor and god, which as previously mentioned were employed during the third century, implied a special relationship between the emperor and his divine companion.

<sup>70</sup> RIC IV: Balbinus 13; Pupienus 14, 25.

<sup>71</sup> De Blois (1976) 143 suggests that *concordia* is promoted as a personal virtue by Gallienus and Salonina. Cf. CIL 14.5335 on Salonina: *Saloninae Augustae per omnia concordia et consorti Gallieni Aug...*

<sup>72</sup> See for example, RIC IV Decius, nos. 138 (Etruscus) and 174 (Hostilian).

<sup>73</sup> RIC IV, Balbinus 10. IMP CAES CAEL BALBINVS AVG/CONCORDIA AVGG.

The joint reign of Pupienus and Balbinus is an intriguing example of this traditionally familial imagery being deployed alongside the appropriate legend of *concordia* to promote imperial unity between two emperors who had no familial links to each other (**fig. 1.4**). The pluralized abbreviation AVGG is used here for Augusti, as was common.

Thus *concordia* was not exclusively familial—for example, it was often used to promote the unity and loyalty of the army as well, with the legend CONCORDIA MILITVM. But when the imperial college (or family) was depicted, connotations of *concordia* were very often included, whether through imagery—that of clasped hands or the goddess in different poses—or only with the legend. For example, there is a coin type (a medallion, but it also appears as an *as* and a *dupondius*) which features Philip II as Caesar on the obverse, and the reverse, bearing the legend CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM, shows the busts of Philip I and Otacilia Severina.<sup>74</sup> This is a presentation of the imperial family which specifically promotes the son, Philip II, as Caesar and heir. Philip II does not need to be named explicitly as *filius* on the count for the ‘message’ to count: the relationship is understood from the context and the presentation. By naming Philip II as heir and Caesar, the implication is therefore that he is Philip’s son. The plural *Augustorum* here may technically represent the Augustus and Augusta on one side, but this may also stand for the inclusion of the wider imperial family. Another similar medallion depicts the confronted busts of Philip I and II, with a reverse of Philip I clasping hands with either Concordia or Otacilia (**fig. 1.5**).



**Fig. 1.5: Confronted busts of Philip I and II.**<sup>75</sup>

Similar examples can be found from another third century imperial family, that of Trajan Decius. One coin pairs an obverse of Decius with a reverse of his wife Herennia Etruscilla, and

<sup>74</sup> RIC IV.3 96 no. 222; 102 no. 261 (Rome). For an image of the medallion, see Marsden (1999) Pl. 15. Compare this to an intaglio with the jugate busts of Philip I and Otacilia confronted with Philip II: Marsden (1999) 92-93; cf. Pl. 14.

<sup>75</sup> Not in RIC; cf. Gnecci (1903) pl. 109, 10. CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM/CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM [http://www.coinproject.com/coin\\_detail.php?coin=284613](http://www.coinproject.com/coin_detail.php?coin=284613) On the personification of *Concordia*, see e.g. Noreña (2011) 134-135.

his sons Herennius Etruscus and Hostilian. Another displays Decius and his two sons without Herennia Etruscilla.<sup>76</sup> Both examples bear the reverse legend *CONCORDIA AVGG* emblazoned above the busts of Decius' family members.

*Pietas* was another reverse type and legend that were often associated with imperial families, especially women—*Pietas* being a common reverse type for Augustae in the third century, including several variations in which the goddess is depicted with a child (or two).<sup>77</sup> The example given above from Valerian and Gallienus' college (**fig. 1.2** above) with *CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM* on one face is paired with *PIETAS AVGVSTORVM* on the other. The family of Philip I also features in several examples which depict combinations of the imperial family (Philip I, Otacilia, Philip II) with legends of *PIETAS*.<sup>78</sup> The aforementioned example of Decius with his sons with a legend of *CONCORDIA AVGG* has a similar issue with *PIETAS AVGG* instead.<sup>79</sup> Gallienus and Salonina appear on coinage together as Augustus-husband and Augusta-wife with legends of *CONCORDIA* and *PIETAS FALERI*.<sup>80</sup> This last legend is particularly intriguing, as it apparently includes an epithet of the Augustus, 'Falerius', referring to Gallienus' dynastic connections to the ancient family of his mother, the Egnatii, from Falerii.<sup>81</sup> Thus, as well as celebrating the *concordia* of the imperial family in the bond between Augustus and Augusta, it also looks back to older dynastic (though not imperial) connections as a basis for legitimacy. The Romans' preoccupation with familial *pietas* is visible in the numismatic record of imperial coinage just as much as Vergil's *Aeneid*.

Another expression of *pietas* was the veneration of dead and deified ancestors and relatives. Although much of the third-century was forced to be 'forward-thinking', looking to and promoting the stability of the future of the dynasty, one of the ways in which emperors were able to celebrate past ancestors was through the minting of commemorative coins for their dead and deified imperial forebears, with the reverse type of *consecratio*.<sup>82</sup> Decius' *consecratio* issues are probably the most well-known from the third century because he defied tradition and did not mint them to imperial ancestors, but to well-known and well-loved emperors from the previous two and a half centuries.<sup>83</sup> Most emperors or Caesars in the third century did not survive long enough past their fathers' deaths to mint commemorative coinage to them, but

<sup>76</sup> With Etruscilla: RIC IV Decius no. 31; without: Decius no. 131.

<sup>77</sup> For example, Julia Domna (RIC IV Septimius Severus no. 642), Plautilla (RIC IV Caracalla no. 367), Otacilia (RIC IV Philip I no. 134), and even Zenobia (RIC V Zenobia 1).

<sup>78</sup> RIC IV Philip I nos. 43, 212, 260,

<sup>79</sup> RIC IV Trajan Decius no. 32.

<sup>80</sup> RIC V Gallienus & Salonina nos. 1-2.

<sup>81</sup> De Blois (1976) 134, 147. See also Manders (2012) 178.

<sup>82</sup> McIntyre (2013) 224 defines *consecratio* simply as "the ritual act of making someone a god".

<sup>83</sup> Hekster (2015) 223.

Carinus' commemorative issues are a notable exception. As part of a legitimizing strategy against Diocletian in the east, Carinus minted coins to both his dead father and his dead brother as *Divus Carus* and *Divus Numerianus* respectively (**fig. 1.6**) in the time it took for Diocletian to ultimately defeat him in the summer of 285.<sup>84</sup>



Fig. 1.6: Commemorative coin for the deified Carus.<sup>85</sup>

There also survive coins from this period to a *Divus Nigrinianus*, who has been assumed to be Carinus' son—Carinus' wife, Magnia Urbica, was also promoted on coinage as an *Augusta*.<sup>86</sup> There was no need to explicitly proclaim their relationships on coinage (though Maxentius would do so almost thirty years later in his commemorative issues), as these relationships would be easy to interpret and familiar—much of Carus' numismatic output included his sons (for example, on various reverse types), and Carinus had followed suit.

These themes and examples in the numismatics reflect trends in portraying imperial families through the third century, especially in the middle third. The technique of combining multiple busts, on one side of the coin or on both, always features combinations of family members: emperor-father, empress-wife, Caesar-son(s). The larger the imperial family, the greater variety of combinations survive, including all three or four family members on one coin. It was also common to pair these dynastic coins with legends related to imperial and familial *concordia*, an important ideal in unstable political atmosphere of the third century, as well as *pietas*, another important Roman familial virtue. This visual portrayal of the imperial family does not rely on specific familial terms to identify the individual members; these relationships are to be understood entirely through titles and iconography. The members of the imperial family, and the imperial family as a whole, were therefore promoted regularly on third

<sup>84</sup> Carus, posthumous: RIC V Carus nos. 4, 28-30, 47-50, 108-113, 126-7, 129. Numerian, posthumous: RIC V Numerian nos. 424-6.

<sup>85</sup> RIC V Carus no. 4 variation. DIVO CARO PIO/CONSECRATIO.

<sup>86</sup> PLRE 1.631 s.v. Nigrianus 1. On the coinage for Carinus' supposed son, see RIC V Nigrinianus p. 202-3, nos. 471-474; cf. Webb (1933) 123. Regarding the coins of Magnia Urbica, see Hekster (2015) 283, who notes that she was both *Augusta* and visible on 10% of Carinus' centrally minted coins. Marsden (1999) 93, cf. Pl. 16 shows an intaglio of (possibly) Carinus and Magnia Urbica, confronted.

century coinage. The imperial family and the imperial college were, therefore, largely synonymous.

### iii. The title of Caesar and *Princeps Iuventutis*

The title of Caesar represented a ‘junior’ imperial position, indicating the emperor’s intent for succession, and most of the third-century imperial sons held this position during their father’s reign. The prevalence of sons as Caesars throughout the third century is also reflected beyond their place in the imperial family; their positions as the heirs-designate meant that their role as the future of the dynasty and of the empire was something to be celebrated. Reverse types of *spes* (hope), *salus* (safety), and *securitas* (security) were common throughout the third century, which may be representative of ideas of dynastic security and hope for the future.<sup>87</sup> Although these are particularly prevalent on the coinage of the Caesars, they were not exclusively tied to the position, as multiple Augusti also were paired with these reverse types. Partly the commonness of this ‘forward-looking’ approach to dynastic legitimacy, i.e. establishing the dynasty for the future and designating a clear successor, can be explained by the fact that these emperors were not usually able to claim dynastic links with the past. Their sons therefore played an important role in the promise of continuity—but few Caesars lasted beyond their father’s death to fulfil the potential of this promise.

There is one reverse type which is tied almost exclusively to the position of Caesar: that of the *princeps iuventutis*, the ‘prince of the youth’. The type has its beginnings in coins minted to Augustus’ grandsons, Gaius and Lucius (**fig. 1.7**). Horster discusses the evolution of the *princeps iuventutis* title and how it became associated with the position of Caesar by the third century, and thus with dynastic succession.<sup>88</sup> By this time, the type had been modified; this took the form of the reverse legend PRINCIPI IVVENTVTI and a type depicting the Caesar wearing military clothing, holding a spear, and bearing a standard (**fig 1.8**).<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Horster (2011) 95; Horster (2007) 298, 300-301. Horster also includes concepts of *concordia*, *felicitas*, *laetitia*, *providentia*, etc. as dynastic. Manders (2012) also suggests dynastic connotations for *felicitas* (193, 197) and *salus* (212). However, much like *spes*, *salus*, and *securitas*, these legends are also used, with increasing commonness throughout the third century, by Augusti themselves, even those who did not have a son. Some of these concepts are important, and will reoccur throughout the following chapters and are worthy of definition here. These definitions come from Noreña (2011). *Concordia* “was naturally a highly charged and topical theme with important religious, political, and social dimensions” and carried connotations of union (especially between spouses) and harmony (p. 132). *Felicitas* was “the product of good fortune” (p. 160). *Securitas* was “freedom from undesirable conditions...such as anxiety or worry, or from physical danger” (p. 130). *Salus* was “personal safety and well-being, physical health, communal security, the means of deliverance from danger” (p. 140).

<sup>88</sup> Horster (2011), especially 102-3. Cf. Wiedemann (1988) 122-127.

<sup>89</sup> According to Manders (2012) 40, there was an average presence of 35.5%, but her methodology is flawed in that she does not distinguish between the coins of Augusti and Caesars. It is difficult to determine the percentage



Fig. 1.7 (left): *Principes Iuventutis* reverse type, Gaius and Lucius.<sup>90</sup>



Fig. 1.8 (right): *Principes Iuventutis* reverse type, Maximus.<sup>91</sup>

The presentation of these Caesars as *principes iuventutis* is remarkably consistent. The portraiture may not be entirely reliable, but most look young—though the last four Caesars, from Carinus through to Galerius, are notably older; Volusian and Maximus also look older than some of their counterparts. Most are bare-headed, though the common imperial radiate or laureate crowns seem to have been acceptable alternatives, especially later in the third century. The only Caesar to lack this title on his coinage is Gordian III, for whom there are very few coin types as Caesar.<sup>92</sup> Alexander Severus only has one *principes iuventutis* type, perhaps due to the short time he was Caesar and the reported unwillingness of Elagabalus to promote him.<sup>93</sup> Most of Tetricus II's coins copy his father's varied output.<sup>94</sup> Most of the other Caesars have a number of *principes iuventutis* coins minted to them, indicating that the title was important for the promotion of Caesars. The reverse image of the 'princeps' changes only in terms of its aforementioned attributes: the figure always carries some combination of standards, spear, and—especially later in the third century—a globe, signifying imperial power. Other variations were also possible; Carinus is sometimes shown with a bound captive.<sup>95</sup> The overwhelming majority of these coins come from the mint at Rome, but that is to be expected because Rome was the main imperial mint for the majority of the third century, though the mints diversified

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of coin types from the RIC, especially as they are outdated, but the number of *Principes Iuventutis* types seem to constitute roughly between 40-70% of the Caesars' output.

<sup>90</sup> RIC I (2nd ed.), Augustus no. 206. BC 2-4.

<sup>91</sup> RIC III, Maximus no. 13. AD 236-238.

<sup>92</sup> One example does exist, RIC IV Gordian III no. 241, but the reverse type is indicated to belong to Philip II. The title given to Gordian on the obverse is Augustus, not Caesar.

<sup>93</sup> RIC IV Severus Alexander no. 386. AD 222.

<sup>94</sup> RIC V Tetricus II nos. 260, 281, compare to Tetricus I, no. 114. AD 271-274.

<sup>95</sup> RIC V Carinus nos. 181-2, 302. AD 283-284.

in the later third century.<sup>96</sup> The majority of the *princeps* coinage, however, was still issued at Rome, where the title might have held more traditional meaning.

The great majority of Caesars and heirs, therefore, were depicted with multiple versions of the *princeps iuventutis* coinage, indicating the importance of this legend, imagery, and even the title itself to the dynastic role of Caesar. A potential counter to this argument is the existence of examples of PRINCIPI IVVENTVTIS coins from adult emperors as well, including Gallienus, Florian, Trebonianus Gallus, as well as some Augusti who had previously been Caesars. The latter examples can be explained through the simple continuation of types after promotion; it may also have had the purpose of reminding the intended audiences that, despite the title of ‘Augustus’, the son was still the heir. This may have been the reason for Gallienus’ *princeps* coins as well; a reminder that although he and Valerian were co-Augusti, Gallienus was still the latter’s son.<sup>97</sup> Another explanation, which may explain its presence for Trebonianus Gallus and other imperial fathers, is that they are hybrids: an incorrect matching of an obverse and a reverse which was usually minted for another emperor or Caesar.<sup>98</sup> For Florian, the reason is uncertain. It is tempting to suggest that it implied a claim to dynastic succession, as Florian was the half-brother of the previous emperor Tacitus—although he does not seem to have been appointed his Caesar, he might have made a claim to be his dynastic heir.<sup>99</sup>

On this ‘disturbance’ to the title of *princeps iuventutis* in the third century, Horster says, “If at least some of these Augustus/*princeps iuventutis* combinations had been a deliberate choice either by the emperor or by one of the responsible mint-masters, this would indicate that the *princeps iuventutis* honour and title had become a formula representing a general code for dynasty and security.”<sup>100</sup> This is an intriguing explanation, one that would explain its appearance with Gallienus and perhaps also Florian. It could also be that the use of *princeps* coins by fathers could in fact feature their sons as the ‘princeps’—the figure on the reverse is not distinguishable by anything other than its normal attributes. This is the suggested

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<sup>96</sup> For example, Philip II and Valerian II were featured at Antioch; Valerian II and his brother Saloninus at Lyons (modern Lugunum); Carinus and Numerian at Sisak, Cyzicus, Lyons, and the ancient mint of Ticinum (near Pavia).

<sup>97</sup> Gallienus has only two *princeps* types: RIC V.1 70 no. 26 from his joint rule and RIC V.1 154 no. 265 from his sole rule; both are marked as ‘scarce’.

<sup>98</sup> This is Mattingly’s explanation in RIC IV.3 172. They are marked as ‘rare’; although the categorization is problematic, it does support the idea that they were issued erroneously.

<sup>99</sup> Intriguingly, both of Florian’s two *princeps* types are listed as ‘common’ in the RIC—perhaps this was indeed an important claim for his regime. RIC V Florian nos. 79-81.

<sup>100</sup> Horster (2007) 304-5. She also discusses the potential inappropriateness of the title for an adult Caesar, referencing Titus, in Horster (2011) 95.

explanation for the PRINCIPI IVVENT coin of the British emperor Carausius—that it in fact depicts his son, ‘Sylvius’, whose existence is not entirely certain, but is postulated from a coin which shows the emperor clasping hands with a woman and a boy between them: another striking visual representation of familial *concordia*.<sup>101</sup>

The title of *princeps iuventutis* would continue to be employed throughout the Tetrarchic and Constantinian periods to honour sons and heirs, which later sections and chapters will examine. It is important that by the mid-third century, the title and the associated numismatic type were tied to concepts of dynastic legitimacy, the role of Caesar, and the position of imperial heir. Even these ‘disturbances’ offer the suggestion that the title was sought after by sons (or even other relatives) in order to establish their legitimacy to rule as successors of the current or previous emperor.

#### **iv. Dynastic legitimacy in the third century**

The traditions of establishing dynastic legitimacy throughout the third century show a focus on succession and the existing family over recalling imperial ancestors, in part because the latter did not exist for almost all these emperors. This is not to say that traditions were forgotten, as seen in the prominent continuation of the *princeps iuventutis* legend to establish legitimacy for the Caesars as sons and heirs. In addition, dynastic legitimacy did not rely on explicit familial language but on visual and thematic representations of unity and imperial-familial *concordia*. In fact, considering the limited space available for legends and the tendency to abbreviate, it is likely that minting coins with a dynastic tradition behind them was both more efficient and in fact preferable to minting coins that specifically name heirs as *filii Augusti*. Moreover, it is an indication that there was a deeper understanding at work. As has been shown, while explicit familial terms were used to identify some relationships in the first and second centuries, or in cases where relationships needed to be identified to avoid confusion, by the third century this practice had largely fallen out of favour. Just as emperors did not need to label the other members of their imperial college, neither did they need to label Caesars as their sons. Partly this is because the terminology was expressed visually, but also because the role itself was reserved for heirs. The great majority of Caesars were sons; most of the others were adopted—or at least perceived to have been adopted, even if no legal action ever took place. By naming a Caesar, then, the emperor was also implicitly proclaiming that the recipient

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<sup>101</sup> PRINCIPI IVVENT: RIC V.2 525 no. 721; 539 no. 947-8. COM[I]ES: RIC V.2, 527 no. 753. See also Webb (1937) 525 n. 2. For more on this hypothetical family, see Williams (2004) 63-68.



of the title was not only his heir, but also his son. This was strengthened through accompanying types and legends of *concordia* and *princeps iuventutis*, the traditions of which were based on pre-existing connotations of family and dynasty.

What this exploration of dynasty and collegiality in the third century also shows is that the ideas of family and the imperial college were irrevocably linked. There did exist colleges that were not composed of family members—Clodius Albinus' addition to the Severan college, Pupienus and Balbinus' co-rulership and adoption of Gordian III—but these were short-lived. Even the apparent adoption of Gordian shows that familial links were created when they did not previously exist. What is more, they still employed some of the trappings of familial *concordia*, such as the imagery of the clasped hands and the creation of new familial links through adoption, in order to express their collegiality. It is with this in mind that I will turn to the discussion of Diocletian's imperial college: first the 'Dyarchy', his co-rule with Maximian, and then the 'Tetrarchy', established in 293.

### 3. THE FORMATION OF THE DYARCHY

The introduction to this chapter discussed the relationship between Diocletian and Maximian in light of the phrase *virtutibus fratres*, which has often skewed the discussion of dynastic elements within the Tetrarchic college into a false dichotomy between ideas of family and dynasty and those of non-dynastic collegiality. Diocletian and Maximian were not related by blood (nor, I will argue later, by adoption)<sup>102</sup> so their relationship was not explicitly 'dynastic'. But the means of presenting the relationship between the two men drew upon the traditions and ideals of imperial families that had developed through the third century.

#### i. A new brotherhood, a new college

*Fraternitas*, brotherhood, was a concept both common and important in the ancient world, stemming from Rome's mythic and historic foundations and early years from Romulus and Remus onwards, especially in a military context.<sup>103</sup> The term *comes* is important for our understanding of this sort of non-dynastic relationship in the third century: on coinage, various

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<sup>102</sup> See 3.iii.

<sup>103</sup> Armstrong (2013) discusses the importance of (actual and metaphorical) brotherhood in early Rome, especially a wartime context, including early *sodales*. As well as *fratres*, there were the related terms *sodales* (often members of a particular group or priestly college) and *comites* (comrades or companions) as well, words which could suggest *fraternitas* in a specifically non-dynastic context.

emperors proclaimed particular gods as their *comites*—possibly a precursor to the Tetrarchic *signa*, which shall be discussed later.<sup>104</sup> Brotherhood was, perhaps, not as solid a relationship as might be expected: after all, Romulus and Remus hardly set a good example for brotherly unity, something the panegyrist is careful to address.<sup>105</sup> *Fraternitas* was thus a more open concept than simply blood-brothers, and there were other words that could be used to express it.<sup>106</sup> As Rapp puts it, “Real brotherhood is not necessarily like friendship, in other words, but real friendship is like ideal brotherhood.”<sup>107</sup> But as Rees comments, “Throughout the time of the empire, brotherhood had been a fundamental family relationship used in the presentation of a united imperial college.”<sup>108</sup> The author of the Panegyric of 289 chose (*virtutibus*) *fratres*, with its multiple interpretations—dynastic and not—to describe the relationship between the two emperors, and this metaphorical relationship is vital to representations of the relationship between Diocletian and Maximian, especially in the panegyrics. Perhaps the most important idea the panegyrist might have wanted to convey to his audience through this use of fraternal language is the unity and stability of imperial co-rule in an unstable world beset by enemies from within and without. Both emperors had been successful in war and diplomacy, but stability and longevity were not ensured.

In both the extant Dyarchic panegyrics, the brotherhood between the two emperors is qualified as one of choice, rather than one born of blood connections. As the panegyrist of 291, speaking for Maximian on his birthday (or his *dies imperii*),<sup>109</sup> proclaims:

Your brotherhood is not of chance but of choice; everyone knows that unlike children are often born to the same parents, but the likeness of only the most certain brotherhood reaches all the way up to the supreme power.

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<sup>104</sup> Divine *comites* included Jupiter, Sol, and especially Hercules, the latter most notably for Commodus and Postumus. Manders (2012) 114 says that Hercules was even used for competing propaganda between Postumus and Gallienus. I do not have the space here to explore the evolution of *comes* into an imperial rank: cf. *BNP*, s.v., ‘Comes, comites’ (Gizewski and Tinnefeld).

<sup>105</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.13 compares Diocletian and Maximian’s relationship favourably against the example set by Romulus and Remus.

<sup>106</sup> As discussed by Shaw (1997) 325-355.

<sup>107</sup> As Rapp (2016) 35 puts it: “Real brotherhood is not necessarily like friendship, in other words, but real friendship is like ideal brotherhood.”

<sup>108</sup> Rees (2002) 52.

<sup>109</sup> Nixon and Rogers (1994) 76-79 discuss the question of whether this speech was intended for Maximian’s *dies imperii* or his actual birthday, settling on the latter. Cf. Nixon (1981a) 157-166, arguing against Seston (1950) 257-266.

*Non fortuita in uobis est germanitas sed electa; notum est saepe eisdem parentibus natos esse dissimiles, certissimae fraternitatis est usque ad imperium similitudo.*<sup>110</sup>

This idea of chosen brotherhood (here *germanitas*, another term for brotherhood) is expanded throughout the panegyrics: they are contrasted favourably with the ‘actual’ brotherhood of Romulus and Remus;<sup>111</sup> “equal victories” have cemented their close relationship;<sup>112</sup> they “have mingled separate blood by [their] affections.”<sup>113</sup> Equality between the two, as befits a brotherly bond, is emphasized, in what may be another reference to their improvements upon the Romulus and Remus bond: “one might justifiably call you and your brother the founders of the Roman Empire, for you are, what is almost the same thing, its restorers.”<sup>114</sup> The panegyrist thus implies that Diocletian and Maximian are superior to Romulus and Remus, as restorers, not merely the founders, just as their relationship is also superior to the mythical twins’. At one point, the emperors are raised to a quasi-divine status, when Diocletian is called Maximian’s “kindred deity” (*cognato numine*),<sup>115</sup> but it is the use of *cognatus* which is important for the orator’s rhetoric. Hekster argues that *cognatus* “emphatically describes those related by blood.”<sup>116</sup> The use of the word here is figurative—this is not an attempt to claim that Diocletian and Maximian were actually related—but like the use of *fratres* it uses the connotations of blood-relationships in order to emphasize the strength of the metaphorical one.<sup>117</sup> There are also several points in the Panegyric of 289 where Diocletian is simply referred to as *tuus frater*, Maximian’s brother, without qualifications as to the ‘actuality’ of their relationships.<sup>118</sup>

So too were Diocletian and Maximian represented as relatives on the coinage of their period of joint rule (c.285-293), using designs that portrayed the two of them together as members of the imperial college. This could be done via facing busts or the double-obverse coins. An example of the former is a medallion from Rome from the Dyarchic period, featuring

<sup>110</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 11.7.6. N.B. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 92 n. 40, who note that the text here is problematic in the manuscript tradition in that the text from ‘but of choice...brotherhood’ does not exist in the manuscript tradition, but only in an edition by Cuspinianus from 1513. Even if this phrase was not included in the original speech, the meaning behind it is still clear: Diocletian and Maximian chose their imperial relationship.

<sup>111</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.13.1-2; cf. *Pan. Lat.* 11.6.3.

<sup>112</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 11.7.4-5.

<sup>113</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 11.7.5.

<sup>114</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.1.4.

<sup>115</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.3.1. For the connotations of the divine, see especially Rodgers (1986), though some aspects of the ‘divine’ status of the emperors will be discussed in 3.ii. N.B. that ‘numen’ is regularly translated by Nixon and Rodgers as ‘deity’, though the term is more complex than that: Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 53 n. 2, 82 n. 4.

<sup>116</sup> Hekster (2015) 295: “The term *cognatus*, however, created a fiction. It might be translated as ‘kindred’, but emphatically describes those related by blood.” Hekster is here referring to the references to *Divus Constantius* as *cognatus* on Maxentius’ coins in 311, but the situation is similar.

<sup>117</sup> The Panegyric of 291 also emphasizes fraternal *pietas*: Brosch (2006) 91f.

<sup>118</sup> E.g. *Pan. Lat.* 10.1.5 (*tuumque fratrem*), 4.1 (*a fratre optimo*), 10.6 (*fratri tuo*).

the two emperors facing on the obverse (**fig. 1.9**). The reverse is of an imperial procession or *adventus*, with the emperors riding in a *quadriga*, four elephants pulling a chariot.



**Fig. 1.9:** Medallion of Diocletian and Maximian, facing, with reverse of an imperial procession.<sup>119</sup>

The coin can be dated precisely to AD 287, as it commemorates the first joint consulship of the two emperors (as indicated on the coin itself). Both are dressed in detailed consular regalia, holding eagle-tipped sceptres. The presentation of the facing busts hearkens back to the previously-discussed medallions of the third century which featured multiple emperors and members of the imperial family.

An excellent example of the double-obverse presentation is found on an aureus from Lyons c. 285 which portrays Diocletian and Maximian as co-Augusti, both with laurel crowns and Maximian with a lionskin (**fig. 1.10**).



**Fig. 1.10:** Diocletian (left) and Maximian (right), *capita opposita*.<sup>120</sup>

The best third-century parallel to this Dyarchic coin is found from the coinage of Carus and his sons, whose reigns had directly preceded the Dyarchy and whose numismatic output includes several examples of what could be classified as ‘dynastic’ coinage. For example, a coin of Carinus and his brother Numerian as jugate busts has been examined above (**fig. 1.1**), as have

<sup>119</sup> Not in RIC. IMPP DIOCLETIANO ET MAXIMIANO AVGG / I-MPP DIOCLETIANO III ET MAXIMIANO CCSS. Rome, AD 287. Medallion (x5 aurei). For an image and description, cf. <http://ikmk.smb.museum/object?lang=en&id=18200802&view=vs>

<sup>120</sup> RIC V Diocletian & Maximian no. 334. IMP C C VAL DIOCLETIANVS P F AVGG/IMP C MAXIMIANVS AVGG.

Carinus' commemorative issues to his divine relatives (**fig. 1.6**), but there are other examples of numismatic techniques that represent these three emperors as family members. One is a double-obverse (*capita opposita*) coin with Carus on one side and Carinus on the other (**fig. 1.11**) and one of the father and son as jugate busts on the obverse (**fig. 1.12**), similar to the later coin with the jugate busts of Carinus and Numerian.



**Fig. 1.11 (left): Carus and Carinus, *capita opposita*.**<sup>121</sup> **Fig. 1.12 (right): Carus and Carinus, jugate busts.**<sup>122</sup>

A similar coin to the Carus-Carinus and Carinus-Numerian jugate bust coins is a famous example from the British emperor Carausius, which shows an attempt by Carausius to be included in the imperial college alongside Diocletian.<sup>123</sup> Carausius' rule was concurrent with the Dyarchy; he was proclaimed emperor c. 286, and Britain was not brought back under Diocletian's control until the reconquest by Constantius I ten years later. His usurpation is the proverbial elephant in the room for the panegyrist of 289, and he is referred to only as *ille pirata*.<sup>124</sup> The coin features a triple-jugate arrangement of Carausius, Diocletian, and Maximian, with a reverse of PAX AVGGG—the triple G denoting three emperors (**fig. 1.13**).



**Fig. 1.13: Carausius, Diocletian, Maximian, triple-jugate.**<sup>125</sup>

<sup>121</sup> RIC V Carus & Carinus no. 136: IMP C M AVR CARVS P F AVG/IMP C M AVR CARINVS AVG (cf. similar at no. 137).

<sup>122</sup> RIC V Carus & Carinus no. 139: CARVS ET CARINVS AVGG.

<sup>123</sup> Casey (1994) 65; Harries (2012) 28-9; Lyne (2003) 162-165.

<sup>124</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.12.1. CARAVSIVS ET FRATRES SVI/PAX AVGGG. Cf. Rees (2002) 34.

<sup>125</sup> RIC V Carausius no. 1; see also Shiel (1977) 191-3. Following on from Shiel, Williams (2004) 80 views this coin as evidence for an “uneasy alliance” between Carausius and the “legitimate” emperors, following from

Most tellingly, the obverse legend of this coin is CARAVSIVS ET FRATRES SVI, one of the few examples of familial language from the coinage of the third century and the only example of *frater* being used on imperial coinage until this point.

Significantly, Carausius also perceived the relationship between Diocletian and Maximian to be fraternal. Carausius then manipulated this perception to his own advantage—as Leadbetter notes, “His [Carausius’] clear understanding was that the relationship between Diocletian and Maximian was fraternal, and fraternities are not inherently dual.”<sup>126</sup> Since it was minted by Carausius’ regime, however, this coin issue says more about Carausius’ own self-representation as an emperor equal to the Dyarchs than it does about Diocletian and Maximian’s representation of their own relationship during this period. This coin shows that depictions of definitely non-dynastic imperial collegiality could also be presented as familial, or at least metaphorically familial. Carausius takes a numismatic representation of shared imperial power, that of the jugate busts, and manipulates it to become an expression of his own imperial legitimacy by including himself as one of the *fratres*. It was an expansion of an already metaphorical relationship, one which might not have been possible if Diocletian and Maximian’s relationship were that of blood-brothers.

These coins and other (previously shown) examples from the third century show that these techniques could be used for both paternal/filial and fraternal relationships (as well as conjugal) within the imperial and familial college; the different methods of portrayal were not necessarily reserved for specific types of kinship. Diocletian and his co-emperors also used some of these techniques to proclaim not only their statuses as part of an imperial college, but also their relationships to one another. Unlike the panegyrics, the coins do not promote the (figurative) relationship of Diocletian and Maximian as *fratres*: these relationships would have been expected, and thus interpreted as such, by the recipients of their coins. An imperial college is not a ‘family’ in the strictest terms; a college does not have to be composed of family members or those brought into the family. In practice, however, it almost always was. Yet Carausius’ coin shows that the inherent dynasticism of collegial coinage, which was already being employed to promote a metaphorical relationship between Diocletian and Maximian,

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Eutrop. 9.22 and Aur. Vict. 39.39. Cf. Lyne (2003) 162-165. A similar triple-jugate coin from Carausius features the reverse legend VICTORIA AVGGG (RIC V Carausius no. 2 variation), and another has the legend COMES AVGGG (This is not collected in the RIC; for an example and additional information, cf. the British Museum: [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1672328&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1672328&partId=1)).

<sup>126</sup> Leadbetter (2004) 264.

could be expanded and manipulated further, in this case to present Carausius as belonging to an already existing imperial college/family rather than being set against it.

*Concordia* was also important for the representation of Diocletian and Maximian as co-emperors, as it was for promoting the imperial-familial colleges of the third century (and would be later for Diocletian's Tetrarchic college). The legend *CONCORDIA AVGG*, though it did not appear on the double-obverse coinage, was associated with a reverse type that portrayed Diocletian and Maximian seated side-by-side on their thrones (**fig. 1.14**). Another reverse type showed them riding side-by-side with the legend *ADVENTVS AVGG*.<sup>127</sup>



Fig. 1.14: Imperial Concordia, Diocletian and Maximian enthroned.<sup>128</sup>

Under the umbrella of *concordia*, Diocletian and Maximian are thus represented as co-Augusti, equals in imperial power with globes in their hands, and crowned by Victory. Similar representations are found in the panegyrics, where their shared rule and their equality is emphasized. The panegyrist in 289 compares the two emperors to Spartan kings in a *synkrisis*: “And so it happens that such a great empire is shared between you without any rivalry; nor do you suffer there to be any distinction between you but plainly hold an equal share in the State, like those twin Lacedaemonian kings, the Heraclidae.”<sup>129</sup> Of course, the panegyrist infers, the co-rule of Diocletian and Maximian is again better and more just because of their choice to rule together voluntarily (*sponte*) rather than being compelled by blood, and because they are made equal through “not any resemblance of features, but rather resemblance (*similitudo*) of character”.<sup>130</sup> This similarity is another equalizing and unifying term often ascribed to the relationship between the two emperors. Another coin from the Dyarchic period shows a slightly different version of events. Instead of the co-emperors enthroned together, it depicts Diocletian

<sup>127</sup> RIC V, Diocletian no. 11, Maximian no. 347 (e.g. <http://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.5.dio.347>)

<sup>128</sup> RIC V, Diocletian no. 254. *DIOCLETIANVS AVGVSTVS/CONCORDIAE AVGG NN*.

<sup>129</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.9.4. *Sic fit ut uobis tantum imperium sine ulla aemulatione commune sit neque ullum inter uos discrimen esse patiamini, sed plane ut gemini illi reges Lacedaemones Heraclidae rem publicam pari sorte teneatis.* The original Heraclidae were mythical brother-kings of Sparta whose descendants co-ruled the polis; cf. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 67-68 n. 34.

<sup>130</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.9.5. *quos in rebus aequauit non uultum similitudo sed morum.*

presenting a globe (symbolic of imperial power) to Maximian and conferring that imperial power upon him.<sup>131</sup> The panegyrics tend to gloss over the idea that Maximian's imperial legitimacy rested to some degree upon Diocletian.<sup>132</sup>

The panegyrics also make numerous references to the explicit *concordia* and harmony of this imperial rule: Maximian regards harmony as an imperial virtue;<sup>133</sup> the co-emperors display more harmony and share the Roman world more equitably “than full or twin brothers”;<sup>134</sup> they are harmonious despite not being blood relatives;<sup>135</sup> Fortune responds favourably to them because of their harmony;<sup>136</sup> their equality is evident to all who see them, as is the way they converse amicably (*concorditer*).<sup>137</sup> Their *concordia* is therefore expressed through their unity, equality, similarity, and collegiality. This trope previously associated with dynastic imperial harmony is also applicable and appropriate to non-dynastic co-rule, and by using the language previously ascribed to imperial families, the panegyrists blur the already permeable boundaries between imperial families and imperial colleges. To complicate matters, the Panegyric of 291 switches between phrases denoting close kinship (*vestri generis*, 3.2; *stirpis vestrae*, 4.1) and those which imply varying parentage (*vestri illi parentes*, 3.3; *vestrorum generum*, 19.4).<sup>138</sup> These orators proclaim loudly that Diocletian and Maximian are not brothers, but their choice of tropes and even the figurative language to honour them slyly suggests that they are, in fact, not that different than the imperial families who have come before.

<sup>131</sup> RIC V.2 250, no. 290 (Cyzicus).

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Rodgers (1986) 78; Rees (2005) 228.

<sup>133</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.11.4.

<sup>134</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 11.6.3: “Next, what is especially linked with the reverence for the immortal gods, with what piety you honor each other! For what ages ever saw such harmony in the highest power? What full or twin brothers share an undivided inheritance so fairly as you share the Roman world?” *Deinde, id quod maxime deorum immortalium cum religione coniunctum est, quantas uosmet inuicem pietate colitis! Quae enim umquam uidere saecula talem in summa potestate concordiam? Qui germani geminiue fratres indiuiso patrimonio tam aequaliter utuntur quam uos orbe Romano?*

<sup>135</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 11.7.4. “Surely all men would be struck dumb with admiration for you, even if the same father and same mother had inspired you to that harmony of yours by Nature's laws.” *Obstupescerent certe omnes homines admiratione uestri, etiam si uos idem parens eademque mater ad istam concordiam Naturae legibus imbuissent.*

<sup>136</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.11.1. “Your harmony has this result, invincible princes, that even Fortune responds to you with an equally great measure of success. For you rule the State with one mind, nor does the great distance which separates you hinder you from governing, so to speak, with right hands clasped.” *Vestra hoc concordia facit, inuictissimi principes, ut uobis tanta aequalitate successuum etiam fortuna respondeat. Rem publicam enim una mente regitis, neque uobis tanta locorum diuersitas obest quominus etiam ueluti iunctis dexteris gubernetis.*

<sup>137</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 11.11.4. “All cried out for joy...’Do you see Diocletian? Do you see Maximian? Both are here! They are together! How closely they sit! How amicably they converse!” *Clamare omnes prae gaudio... ‘Vides Diocletianum? Maximianum uides? Ambo sunt! Pariter sunt! Quam iunctim sedent! Quam concorditer conloquuntur!’*

<sup>138</sup> See Rees (2002) 74 for a closer textual reading, and also Brosch (2006) 86-93 on the diarchic panegyrics.



Familial iconography is further adapted using the imagery of clasped hands, previously so common on coinage of wives to imply conjugal unity,<sup>139</sup> though Balbinus and Pupienus had adapted the iconography before to profess specifically imperial unity (**fig. 1.4** above). Importantly, it was a gesture also linked to rituals of ‘adoptive’ brotherhood.<sup>140</sup> Although there are no coins from the Dyarchy which featured the clasped hands imagery in the familiar reverse type of two disembodied, clasped hands (literally *iunctis dexteris*), there is an example of it from the Tetrarchic period,<sup>141</sup> as well as a type featuring two Concordiae clasping hands, paired with obverses of each of the four Tetrarchs soon after the expansion of the imperial college.<sup>142</sup> The imagery, however, was popular in the Dyarchic panegyrics. Diocletian and Maximian clasping hands or joining hands is a symbol of their equality and harmony:<sup>143</sup>

Your harmony has this result, invincible princes, that also Fortune responds to you with an equally great measure of success. For you rule the State with one mind, nor does the great distance which separates you hinder you from governing, so to speak, with right hands clasped.

*Vestra hoc concordia facit, inuictissimi principes, utu obis tanta acqualitate successum etiam fortuna respondeat. Rem publicam enim una mente regitis, neque uobis tanta locorum diuersitas obest quominus etiam veluti iunctis dexteris gubernetis.*<sup>144</sup>

This *iunctis dexteris* imagery is distinctly conjugal, rather than fraternal, but it fits with the panegyrics and coins’ use of tropes from the imperial-familial colleges of the third century to describe and praise the new non-familial college.

The *fraternitas* of Diocletian and Maximian was not relegated to the Dyarchic period. It continued and evolved over the course of their reign. For example, Lactantius, writing c. 315, describes their relationship using both explicit familial language (*frater*) and the tropes of equality and *concordia* that were so common in the panegyrics.

What of his brother Maximian, who was given the name Herculus? He was not unlike Diocletian: two people could not combine in so loyal a friendship if there were not in them both a single mind, the same line of thought, an equal will, and identical opinions.

<sup>139</sup> Hekster (2015) 305; Rees (2002) 62-3; Dixon (1991) 113.

<sup>140</sup> Shaw (1997) 334: “...a wide range of sources outside the *adelphopoiesis* texts seems to indicate that the most significant bodily gestures connected with the formation of ritual brotherhoods were the handshake (or ritual embrace) and the kiss.”

<sup>141</sup> RIC VI, Antioch no. 16. The obverse is of Constantius I; the reverse legend reads only AVGG.

<sup>142</sup> RIC V Diocletian no. 17, Maximian nos. 354-355, Constantius no. 628, Galerius no. 678.

<sup>143</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.9.1; 11.12.3.

<sup>144</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.11.1. Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 10.9.1; 11.12.3. Trans. Nixon & Rodgers (1994), adapted.

*Quid frater eius Maximianus, qui est dictus Herculius? Non dissimilis ab eo: nec enim possent in amicitiam tam fidelem cohaerere, nisi esset in utroque mens una, eadem cogitatio, par voluntas, aequa sententia.*<sup>145</sup>

Taken out of context, Lactantius' description is hardly at odds with the descriptions of the two emperors in the panegyrics. *Concordia* itself is not used, but there are ideas of *similitudo* (*non dissimilis*) and equality (*aequa*). Lactantius' rhetoric turns these tropes to his own purpose of invective, as it soon becomes clear that the similarities between the men are vices rather than virtues. But in this, Maximian's introduction into the narrative, Lactantius does not qualify the relationship he ascribes to the two men as anything less than actual brothers. The inscription on the Baths of Diocletian, which purports to be from Maximian himself, also portrays him and Diocletian as brothers: "He [Maximian] consecrated them to the name of Diocletian Augustus, his brother" (*Diocletiani Aug fratris sui nomine consecravit*).<sup>146</sup> By 305-306, when this dedication was made, the emperors declared each other *fratres* as Carausius had done twenty years earlier, but here there is no hint of the relationship being a figurative *fraternitas*. The qualifications of the Dyarchic panegyrics had ceased to matter in the presentation of Diocletian and Maximian's relationship within the imperial college.

The panegyrists' insistence upon the strength of this non-familial 'brotherhood' has, as was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, been taken as a rejection of dynasticism in the Tetrarchy. Yet this should not be taken as clear-cut. As I have shown, the collegiality of Diocletian and Maximian was demonstrated in familial and familiar terms: the use of *fraternitas* to describe their relationship; the inclusion of familial imagery on coinage like the clasped right hands (*iunctis dexteris*); the promotion of *concordia* as an imperial virtue; and through the presentation of Diocletian and Maximian on multiple-bust coins in a similar way to the colleges of imperial families like those of Philip, Gallienus, and Carus. Listeners would be accustomed to the idea of brothers (or other family members) ruling together; perhaps such language was a way to assuage concern or confusion over the function of the imperial college.

The use of familial language to describe the relationship had its benefits beyond the continuation of the traditional and the familiar. For example, *fraternitas* could be exclusive as well as inclusive—when Carausius proclaimed the emperors as *sui fratres*, the continued promotion of Diocletian and Maximian as brothers in the panegyrics—especially comparison to twin (as well as divinely-descended) brothers like the Heraclidae and Romulus and Remus—

<sup>145</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 8.1. Trans. Creed (1984). All subsequent translations will be from Creed unless noted otherwise.

<sup>146</sup> CIL VI.1130 = 31242; ILS 646, trans. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 45. The dedication is now lost. See also Hekster (2015) 286-7.

served to exclude Carausius from that imperial and collegial relationship. The ideas of ‘imperial’ and ‘familial’ *concordia* worked together; they are not contradictory ideals. It bears repeating that although an imperial college was not necessarily a family, a family was often (especially in the third century) a college. While it can be argued that the Tetrarchic coins represent ‘imperial’ *concordia* rather than ‘familial’, it is impossible to ignore the dynastic connotations that would have lingered from the third century.

Lastly, the use of such language in the panegyrics was in some way a compensation for the absence of an actual familial relationship, not a rejection of it as such. The insistence upon a stronger bond, the examples used of blood-brotherhoods gone wrong—this is rhetorical, a way of overlooking the inescapable fact that Diocletian and Maximian were not actually brothers. Fraternal language, then, was not only a way of expressing imperial *concordia*: it represented the relationship in comforting terms. Perhaps in some way it was also an insinuation—perhaps even a hope—that this brotherhood would last longer than that of Caracalla and Geta or of Carinus and Numerian. As seen in the evidence from Lactantius and the Baths of Diocletian inscription, the concept of Diocletian and Maximian as brothers would prove pervasive. It was also integral to the evolving presentation of the Tetrarchic college from 293 onwards.

## **ii. Innovation: the establishment of the *signa***

One presentation of the Dyarchs that was innovative compared to the traditions of the third century was the introduction of the *signa*, which Rees defines as “an appellation which typically implied a relationship between the claimant and a second party.”<sup>147</sup> The ‘second party’ in this instance was the gods Jupiter and Hercules; Diocletian took the appellation of *Iovius*, and Maximian of *Herculius*. The dating of the establishment of the *signa* is unclear, as is much in the early years of Diocletian’s reign. Some suggest it came with the appointment of Maximian as an imperial colleague (whether to the disputed Caesar position or as Augustus). Others link it to imperial ideology countering Carausius’ usurpation.<sup>148</sup> As for the choice of the gods themselves, Jupiter and Hercules were commonly featured on coins throughout the third-century, in varying roles. As Manders comments, “The prominence of Jupiter and Hercules in

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<sup>147</sup> Rees (2004) 6. See also Rees (2005) 224, in which he points out the importance of *signa* to a patron-client relationship.

<sup>148</sup> Hekster (2015) 297. Rees (2004) 6-7 claims “about 287” without acknowledging the debate, but implying that it could be related to Carausius’ usurpation; he also suggests this in Rees (2002) 32. Harries (2012) 46 implies it is linked to Maximian’s elevation to Augustus.

Tetrarchic ideology, then, cannot be considered wholly novel.<sup>149</sup> They were important gods to Roman religion and to Roman emperors. By choosing them for their *signa*, Diocletian and Maximian were being traditional in this respect, though innovative in the form which the expression of the relationship took.

The intended use of the *signa*, and its perception in the literary sources is more complicated. They certainly stem from a tradition of claiming gods as comrades and protectors that was prominent throughout the third century. Yet Bardill suggests that the adoption of the *signa* went beyond what was traditional, and that it “represented a much closer alliance between the Augusti and their respective protective gods than usual.”<sup>150</sup> Leadbetter describes the names as “mimetic”; rather than claiming to be divine, the emperors represented the qualities of the gods.<sup>151</sup> Fears suggests that the *signa* “implied their divine election and status as the vice-regents of Jupiter and his helper Hercules.”<sup>152</sup> It is possible that the names stemmed from the common expression of close relationships with divinities like Hercules on coinage throughout the third century. For example, the Gallic emperor Postumus minted coins that featured jugate busts of the emperor and Hercules.<sup>153</sup> Diocletian and Maximian’s *signa*, however, are notably absent from coinage in the forms they are given in the panegyrics: *Iovius* and *Herculius*. As a caveat to this point, it should be noted that there was limited space for inscriptions on coins, and large percentages of the surviving coin reverse types refer to each emperor’s patron god.<sup>154</sup> To those accustomed to the language of panegyrics—we can only assume that panegyrics in the east employed the *signa* as well as the surviving ones in the west—the images would serve as well as the use of the *signa* themselves.

These are thus three different, but by no means exclusive, suggested explanations for the use of the *signa*. The first is that the *signa* represent a (close) alliance between the emperors and the gods, similar to the ‘companion’ (*comes*) term used on much later third-century coinage, but perhaps even closer than that. The second is that the emperors are in a way the earthly representatives of the gods, sharing their innate qualities. The third is that the *signa* can

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<sup>149</sup> Manders (2012) 154, who provides quantitative data on the commonness of these deities. Of Hercules, she comments that there were three representations of the god: as *victor/invictus*, as a *comes*, and combined with the *virtus* of the emperor (pp. 100-101). Rowan (2012) shows that Hercules was an important deity in Severan propaganda as well. Hekster (2015) 299 shows quantitatively that Hercules and Jupiter types comprise a large proportion of Tetrarchic coinage. Cf. Burnett (1987) 77; Carson (1990) 281.

<sup>150</sup> Bardill (2012) 64. This is supported by Hekster (2015) 297, Leadbetter (2009) 55, and Kolb (2004) 30.

<sup>151</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 55, from *Pan. Lat.* 10.10.6. Echoed by Harries (2012) 82: “Imperial actions mirrored the achievements of their gods...”

<sup>152</sup> Fears (1977) 296.

<sup>153</sup> RIC V Postumus nos. 258, 260-263. See especially Marsden (2007) on the ‘propaganda war’ between Postumus and Gallienus that included references to Hercules.

<sup>154</sup> Hekster (2015) 299.

be used as a form of legitimation through divine support, making the emperors the divinely-appointed but still human rulers of the world. Barnes summarizes the uses of the *signa* and adds another meaning: the *signa* indicate not divine status, but that the emperors were “the chosen instruments of the gods, their deputies on earth, and in some sense their sons.”<sup>155</sup>

The reason for this slight disparity in the definitions of the *signa* is not only the result of usual scholarly inquiry, but also because of the diverging uses in the literary sources. The *breviaria* authors, Eutropius and Pseudo-Victor, use them only to help in distinguishing Maximian Herculeus from Maximian Galerius. It is worth noting, however, that this demonstrates a general familiarity with the *signum*, especially when referring to Maximian. Lactantius mentions Maximian’s *signum* only twice, implying that he was often known as Herculeus (*qui est dictus Herculeus*, 8.1).<sup>156</sup> Yet Lactantius also mentions another use of the *signa*, terming them *cognomina*.<sup>157</sup> Rees points out that the *signa* were used rarely in official imperial communication: papyri, coins, and inscriptions.<sup>158</sup> This is somewhat debatable. Hekster points out several inscriptions, some of which seem to come from the Tetrarchs themselves, which do employ the *signa*,<sup>159</sup> such as one from the Tetrarchic period, from Galerius’ preferred city of Thessaloniki, that reads: *Herculi Augusto / Iovius [[et Herculeus]] Augg et / Herculeus et Iovius nobb Caess.*<sup>160</sup> The *signa* were also given to army units which were outstanding, according to Aurelius Victor,<sup>161</sup> so the soldiers would likely have been familiar with the emperors’ new names.

It is in the *Panegyrici Latini* where most references to the *signa* occur, and each panegyrist seems to have a slightly different take on them. As Rodgers explores in detail, authorial preference—or at least authorial interpretation—must be considered within any discussion of the panegyrists’ representations of imperial ideology.<sup>162</sup> The earliest mention is from the Panegyric of 289, where the orator beseeches the city of Rome not to choose between the two emperors—since she does not have to because of their unity—and to adopt the names of both emperors: here, both *Herculia* and *Iovia* rather than names derived from the emperors’

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<sup>155</sup> Barnes (1981) 11.

<sup>156</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 8.1, 27.1.

<sup>157</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 52.3. This usage of the *signa* is clearly defined more by their adoption by later generations, which will be discussed in 4.iii. Yet cf. Nicholson (1984) 133-142, who points out how Maximian’s associations with Hercules were used for purposes of invective in Lactantius’ *Divinae Institutiones*.

<sup>158</sup> Rees (2005) 225.

<sup>159</sup> Hekster (2015) 297-8, citing inscriptions: ILS, 621-3, 634, 658-9, 661, 681, 8930-1. It is also worth noting that the *signum Iovius* was used on coins by Daza in 310: Hekster (2015) 298; RIC VI 636, no. 134.

<sup>160</sup> ILS 00634 = CIL 3.12310. *Et Herculeus* seems to have been erased in a *damnatio memoriae*.

<sup>161</sup> Aur. Vict. 39.18.

<sup>162</sup> Rodgers (1986).

imperial titulature.<sup>163</sup> The rest of the references to the *signa* usually focus more on the emperors as earthly representatives of the gods (though the theology of this has been greatly debated).<sup>164</sup>

The relationship between the emperors and the gods that comes forward most strongly after the ‘earthly representatives’ connotation is a pseudo-dynastic one: the idea of the emperors as sons or descendants of their patron gods. This is most prevalent in the Panegyric of 289. Here, Hercules is not merely a *comes*, he is the “first of your [Maximian’s] family and name” (*principem illum tui generis ac nominis*, 1.3). The representation of Hercules as an actual ancestor is continued throughout the panegyric: the panegyrist mentions the “divine origin of your family” (*divinam generis tui originem*, 2.3) which manifests itself in Maximian’s ‘inherited’ name (*nominis successione*, 2.3). Maximian’s courage stems from his place amongst the “race of Hercules” (*Herculei generis*, 7.6) and can only be compared to that same race (10.2). The idea of the emperors belonging to the *gens* of the gods continues in the Panegyric of 291: “those parents of yours, who have given you both name and empire” (*vestri illi parentes, qui vobis et nomina et imperia tribuerunt*, 3.3). Although not explicitly named, reference is made to the divine parents of both emperors.<sup>165</sup> The panegyric mentions a god who is “founder or parent” of Maximian’s *gens* (*ille vestri generis conditor vel parens*, 3.2), while another god is the “ancestor of Diocletian” (*Diocletiani auctor*, 3.4).<sup>166</sup> The panegyrist would not need to be explicit in naming Jupiter because his audience would understand the implicit reference; by this time, they would no doubt be familiar with the *signa*.<sup>167</sup> The evidence for Maximian being a divine scion is evidenced in his very nature; by characterizing Hercules, the orator is characterizing the emperor.<sup>168</sup> Hekster claims, “Characterization of Maximian as being *like* Hercules is more important in the speech than his descent from the god.”<sup>169</sup> Hekster, however, does not acknowledge the extent to which the panegyrist uses family terms. Additionally, the similarities between Maximian and Hercules can also be attributed to family

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<sup>163</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.13.3.

<sup>164</sup> References: 10.2.1, 7.5, 11.6, 13.4; 11.10.5, 14.2-4, 16.2. Cf. Rodgers (1986); Rees (2005); Hekster (2015) 297ff; Leadbetter (2009) 121; Bardill (2012) 64ff; Fears (1977) 296.

<sup>165</sup> The previously mentioned comparisons of the emperors to the Heraclidae and Romulus and Remus are also notable in that the offered comparisons were sons of gods.

<sup>166</sup> Hekster (2015) 304 argues, however, that the use of *auctor* does not imply a dynastic relationship as *progenitor* would.

<sup>167</sup> Rees (2002) 39.

<sup>168</sup> Rees (2002) 42-3, 51. Rees also gives examples of the ways in which the panegyrics reflect the common reverse legends of Maximian’s Hercules coinage, which present epithets such as VICTOR, INVICTUS, PACIFER, CONSERVATOR, and VIRTUS.

<sup>169</sup> Hekster (2015) 303.

resemblances—as is evident from the explicit ways in which Constantine is compared to his (actual) father in the Panegyric of 307.<sup>170</sup>

Such connotations do not exist in such blatant forms in centralized imperial ideology. There are no coins and few inscriptions explicitly proclaiming Maximian as a descendant of Hercules or Diocletian as one of Jupiter. An inscription from Albania does refer to the Augusti as the descendants of gods, likely on a dedicatory inscription: “having been begotten by gods and brought forth gods” (*Diis genitis et / deorum creatoribus*).<sup>171</sup> This is clearly not an imperial inscription; it does however, engage with the dedicator’s observations of ‘imperial’ ideology (referring to the *signa* as divine progenitors, as in the panegyrics) in order to flatter the emperors.<sup>172</sup>

This inscription and these panegyrics present instead the *perception* of this ideology, an unofficial version of the close relationship which had already been represented on imperial coins for several years by 289 and 291, and which the *signa* could suggest rather than proclaim. That the panegyrists chose to represent Diocletian and Maximian as the descendants of the gods implies a need either to include praise of their families, as is suggested by Menander Rhetor’s handbook on panegyric,<sup>173</sup> or else to present their legitimacy as not only through divine election, but also as in some way ‘inherited’. The two concepts were not mutually exclusive: they worked in conjunction with one another to create an overall picture of legitimacy.<sup>174</sup> Hekster argues that the language in the Panegyric of 289 focuses on the characterization of Maximian as Hercules rather than his ‘descent’ from him.<sup>175</sup> While it is true

<sup>170</sup> For example, in Pan. Lat. 7.3.4: “For not only does your father’s appearance manifest itself in you, Constantine, but also his temperance, his bravery, his justice and his wisdom, in response to the prayers of nations.”

<sup>171</sup> CIL 3.710. For further discussion, see Hekster (2015) 312, whose full translation and transcription follow: “For our lords the unconquered Augusti Diocletian and Maximian, who were raised by gods and have brought forth gods.” (*Diis genitis et / deorum creatoribus / dd(omnis) nn(ostris) Diocletiano et / [Maximiano invict]is Augg(ugstis) /*). I have edited Hekster’s translation (from ‘raised’ to the old-fashioned but apt ‘begotten’) as I think he does not sufficiently acknowledge the ideas of family inherent in the participle *genitus*.

<sup>172</sup> Kolb (2004) 30.

<sup>173</sup> Menander Rhetor’s section on the *Basilikos Logos* says the following: “If it [the family of the imperial addressee] is humble or without prestige, omit it likewise, and start with the emperor himself... Alternatively, you can say something about the family on these lines: ... ‘Many seem to be of human stock, but in truth are sent down from God, and are verily an emanation of the higher power.’” (ἐὰν δὲ ἄδοξον ἢ ἡ εὐτελέες, μεθεις καὶ τοῦτο ἀπ’ αὐοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως τὴν ἀπχὴν ποιήσῃ... ἢ ἄλλως τοιαῦτα ἄττα περὶ τοῦ γένους ἐρεῖς... πολλοὶ τῶ μὲν δοκεῖν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων εἰσί, τῇ δ’ ἀληθείᾳ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ καταπέμπονται καὶ εἰσὶν ἀπόρροιαὶ ὄντως τοῦ κρείττονος, Treatise II, 370.9-23. Trans. Russell & Wilson, 1981.) McEvoy (2013) 24 notes that late antique panegyrics followed the patterns set out by Menander Rhetor, whether consciously or unconsciously; cf. Whitby (1998) 2-3; Russell (1998) 29-33.

<sup>174</sup> Fears (1977) 179 does not distinguish between the two; the concept that the empire was given to Diocletian and Maximian by their ‘divine fathers’ is used as an example of divine election. The connotations, however, are slightly more complex than that, especially when considering the importance of dynastic co-rule throughout the third century.

<sup>175</sup> Hekster (2015) 303.

that many of the panegyric's comparisons are for the sake of characterization, it is still important that the panegyrist chose to do this through the language of family. He could easily have done so through the more familiar concept of the god as a *comes*, but instead he chooses to present the god specifically as a divine ancestor.

Thus, it is clear that the *signa* provided several things: divine legitimation, the proclamation of close ties to important Roman gods, and even the suggestion that the emperors are more than merely human. There is also the hint of an underlying pseudo-dynasticism, manifested in the proclamation that Diocletian and Maximian were the sons of their patron gods. This may have only worked within the medium of the panegyrics; aside from a few inscriptions that may have picked up on this terminology, this claim is not referenced in any other way. Yet this form of primarily divine legitimation should not be taken as proof of 'anti-dynastic' sentiments on the part of the new imperial college. The panegyrics show that figurative dynastic relationships were one way to praise the emperor. What is more, legitimation strategies could and did coexist—one does not automatically prevent the other, and in the Dyarchic period, it is likely that the emperors' regimes would have employed a number of claims that could work together to bolster the perception of legitimacy. Diocletian and Maximian could not claim direct descent from previous emperors, so orators proclaimed them the descendants of gods. As will be discussed with the *signa* and the expansion of the Tetrarchy (4.i), these divine relationships could become more tangibly 'dynastic' when it was fitting to be so.

### iii. Maximian as brother or son?

The projection of the relationship between Diocletian and Maximian seems, at first glance, decidedly fraternal—at least, this is how the panegyrists chose to portray them, and ostensibly this could be reflected in the coinage as well. But what has been shown by the dynastic coinage of the third century is that presentations of fraternal and paternal-filial relationships could be expressed in the same ways. Linking Diocletian and Maximian on coinage implies that they were related, but it does not specify the relationship. This confusion is echoed in two other points: the choice of Jupiter and Hercules as the divine *comes*, and the question of Maximian's status upon elevation in 285.

The immediate connotation suggested by the pairing of Jupiter and Hercules is that of father and son; yet there is no hint of that father-son relationship in the panegyrics—the closest thing is the characterization of Maximian (through Hercules) as the more active partner to his



senior's (Diocletian or Jupiter) 'commander'.<sup>176</sup> To confuse matters further, claiming that Diocletian and Maximian were descended from Jupiter and Hercules respectively directly contradicts the claim that they were 'brothers'.<sup>177</sup> Yet that is to place too much emphasis on the metaphorical claim of *fraternitas*. The dyarchs were, so to speak, keeping it within the family—an extended, semi-divine family. There is, however, a possible function in the implied father-son relationship: that of a hierarchy even within the Dyarchy, with Diocletian as the origin of Maximian's power—perhaps similar to the way in which Hercules, previously just a hero, was promoted to god.<sup>178</sup> If their relationship was represented in this way—that is, Diocletian as the Jupiter of the relationship—the need for Maximian's actual title to be subordinate to Diocletian's is lessened, as the ideology in itself represents him as 'lower'. The inequality of the relationship is evidenced in an example from the Panopolis papyri (dated 8 February 300) in which Diocletian is called the 'senior Augustus' by Aurelius Isidorus, the procurator of the Lower Thebaid.<sup>179</sup> Diocletian was therefore a senior emperor in precedence of imperial power as well as age;<sup>180</sup> never is this challenged by the sources.

This hierarchal relationship was more difficult to represent on coinage. The jugate bust was one way of representing hierarchy even within a fraternal relationship. For example, with Carinus and Numerian, the coin (**fig. 1.1** above) clearly shows Carinus as senior. He is bearded and takes precedence on the coin in the foremost position, while Numerian is clean-shaven or at least with a less prominent beard, and is half-hidden behind his brother. This was not picked up by the Dyarchic coins, however, which do not employ the jugate bust technique. Instead, one example, which has been discussed before, shows more of an equal relationship: a double-obverse aureus from Lyons features Diocletian on one side, while the other depicts Maximian wearing a lion skin and holding a club—the traditional iconography of Hercules (**fig 1.9** above). It could be that the association of Maximian with Hercules here implies the unequal relationship, or that the slightly different reverse legends achieve the same function (IMP C C VAL DIOCLETIANVS P F AVG compared to the more concise IMP C MAXIMIANVS AVG).<sup>181</sup> There is no fraternal *similitudo* in the portraiture: one distinguishing feature of this

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<sup>176</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.4.1-3.

<sup>177</sup> Hekster (2015) 304.

<sup>178</sup> Rees (2004) 6, Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 45-6.

<sup>179</sup> Rees (2002) 33; citing *P. Beatty Panop.* i.252, ii.164; c.f. translation in Rees (2004) 155. In ii.164, Isidorus, as a member of the imperial bureaucracy, may be using an official title for Diocletian to distinguish him above his co-emperors.

<sup>180</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 11.7.6-7 implies the age difference.

<sup>181</sup> Carson (1990) pl. 36, no. 526; Rees (2002) 58-61.

is Maximian's upturned nose.<sup>182</sup> The relationship between the two is not defined here, but it is likely that this coin and the relationship it implies would have been understood when taken in conjunction with the panegyrics, which were a product of Gaul just like the coin. Similarly, the coin also reflects the association of Maximian with Hercules that also featured in the panegyrics.

The father-son relationship of Jupiter and Hercules in the panegyrics may thus have been intended to establish hierarchy, but as we have seen, the coins do not designate the relationship between Diocletian and Maximian as strictly fraternal. Still, a paternal relationship between Diocletian and Maximian can be dismissed as, at the most, short-lived, and more likely non-existent. The proponent of the argument for Maximian as adopted by Diocletian during his short tenure as Caesar is Williams, who argues from a reading of John Malalas: "Diocletian, now over 40, had no son. His solution was bold but rational, a synthesis of the conflicting traditions of imperial legitimacy. It was simply: choose your most reliable man, adopt him legally as son, heir and Caesar (as the Antonine Emperors had done) and make him effective co-ruler."<sup>183</sup> Williams' hypothesis makes sense in the context of the traditions surrounding the Caesar position, though Malalas' narrative is not known for its accuracy. There is simply not enough evidence to show that this was, indeed, the case, especially considering the interpretation of the panegyrics, which only interpret Maximian and Diocletian as brothers. Leadbetter argues strongly against Williams' interpretation of the relationship between Maximian and Diocletian.<sup>184</sup> He does, however, suggest that Maximian's subsequent assumption of Diocletian's titulature (see section 2.3) implies an informal adoption: "Adoption there was, but as brother, not son. Such an adoption was not a legal act, but a carefully contrived fiction. Such an adoption more accurately reflected the kind of role that Diocletian had in mind for Maximian."<sup>185</sup> Leadbetter is correct insofar as Diocletian and Maximian are represented as brothers in the panegyrics, and to a certain extent, on coins as well (see section 4.2). But he focuses too much on the idea of adoption, formal or informal; it is not clear how defined the line between the two would have been for the Tetrarchs. There was no precedent for an emperor 'adopting' someone as an imperial brother. (Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius were brothers

<sup>182</sup> Rees (2002) 58-9. On Maximian's nose, c.f. Smith (1997) 181; he refers to it as a defining feature of much of Maximian's numismatic portraiture.

<sup>183</sup> Williams (1985) 43; c.f. 45. William's argument stems from Malalas 12.38.1. "After three years of his reign he appointed as Caesar his son Maximian Herculianus." (μετὰ δὲ τρία ἔτη τῆς Βασιλείας αὐτοῦ ἐποίησε Καίσαρα τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ Μαξιμιανὸν τὸν καὶ Ἑρχουλλανόν. Trans. Jeffreys, 1986). Malalas seems to have confused Maximian Hercules with Maximian Galerius.

<sup>184</sup> He is not alone: see Harries (2012) 27.

<sup>185</sup> Leadbetter (2004) 259. Nixon and Rodgers (1994) 45-6 also argue against the adoption of Maximian as son, as does Hekster (2015) 277-8.

by adoption, but they did not adopt each other.) In fact, a rescript issued by Diocletian specifically forbade fraternal adoption.<sup>186</sup> Leadbetter argues for simultaneously an unequal relationship of Augustus-Caesar and a (comparatively) equal relationship of ‘brothers’ (although with one senior to the other).

This does not fit with the conception of Caesar for which I have argued previously. The father-and-son relationship could be either that of Augustus-Caesar or co-Augusti; there is no example of brothers being Augustus-Caesar (unless one was elevated at an earlier point by the father-Augustus, as Caracalla and Carinus both were). By making Maximian an Augustus, Diocletian was not necessarily making him a brother; he could easily have continued to propagate the concept of Maximian as his son and heir even after Maximian’s elevation to Augustus—after all, most third-century emperors did the same; Valerian and Gallienus were only the most long-lived pair of father and son co-Augusti. Clearly Diocletian disseminated either: a) the construction of a fraternal relationship; or b) no specific relationship, allowing the relationship to be interpreted ambiguously (leading to the relationship’s interpretation as brothers.) To be clear: either Maximian was a Caesar or he was an imperial brother. The two are not easily reconciled. As Hekster points out, the brotherhood motif makes a previous father-son relationship unlikely: “making a brother out of your son would be difficult, even in fiction.”<sup>187</sup> As we have seen, coins do not help in determining the specifics of the relationship that was put forward, but beyond the aforementioned suggestion that adopting Jupiter and Hercules implied a father-son relationship, the remaining evidence suggests a figurative fraternal relationship over a paternal-filial one.

Rather than asking what relationship Diocletian and Maximian claimed to have or were portrayed as having, the question should then be whether Maximian was ever Caesar. The evidence for Maximian’s proposed tenure Caesar is scarce. Eutropius terms him ‘Caesar’ explicitly, though Aurelius Victor merely uses *imperator* to describe his elevation to imperial power.<sup>188</sup> When Maximian is termed ‘Caesar’ in the Panegyric of 291, this is certainly an

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<sup>186</sup> *Cod. Just.* 6.24.7. Rapp (2016) 13, 236, 245; Shaw (1997) 339-340; Hekster (2015) 305; *Cod. Just.*, 6.24.7; Corcoran (2000) 77 n. 15.

<sup>187</sup> Hekster (2015) 278.

<sup>188</sup> Eutrop. 9.20; Aur. Vict. 39.17. Eutropius only uses the term Caesar (aside from the narrative of Julius Caesar) to describe the specific position of the junior emperor, starting with Commodus and ending with Julian: 8.13 (Commodus), 18 (Clodius Albinus), 23 (Alexander Severus); 9.4 (Decius’ sons), 7 (Gallienus; see discussion later), 18-19 (Carinus and Numerian), 20 (Maximian), 22-23 (Constantius and Galerius); 10.1-2 (Daza and Severus), 6 (Constantine’s sons), 9 (Dalmatius), 12-14 (Gallus and Julian). Aurelius Victor uses the specific term *Caesares* to describe Constantius and Galerius’ positions immediately afterwards. See also Kolb (1987) 24-5 on the various positions which attempt to date Maximian’s appointment to Caesar.

honorific address rather than his actual title.<sup>189</sup> The statement of Eutropius seems sufficient evidence for Barnes,<sup>190</sup> although Eutropius' text suffers from chronological problems due to the compressed nature of the genre. There is no numismatic evidence for Maximian's reign as Caesar, which is certainly curious, though it is difficult to argue *ex silentio* that the absence of coins means the absence of title.<sup>191</sup> The most compelling evidence seems to come from inscriptions, though only a single inscription is precise about the title: *Aur[eli]/o Vale[r]io Max[imiano] nobiliss[im]o Caes.*<sup>192</sup> Leadbetter's final argument for Maximian as Caesar is based on a study of dating formulae on papyri.<sup>193</sup> This argument, which dates Maximian's assumption of *tribunicia potestas* to between December 285 and August 286 (after he had had a year of rule as Caesar without *tribunicia potestas*), is thorough and acknowledges the scanty nature of the evidence while providing a neat—perhaps too neat—solution.<sup>194</sup> It is, however, as difficult to argue that Maximian was never Caesar as it is to prove that he was. If we assume that Maximian was Caesar, we can discuss what this means in terms of dynasty. The main problem occurs with matching Maximian's portrayal as brother with the dynastic tradition embodied in the role of Caesar. Since Caesars indicated successors who were almost certainly *sons*, the disparity of Maximian's apparent non-adoption becomes clear.

It is intriguing that a similar discussion can be had about Gallienus: was he ever Caesar or was he always a co-Augustus? As a son, he could easily fit into either position, in a way that Maximian (as a 'brother') could not. Some literary sources claim he was made Caesar, including Aurelius Victor and Eutropius, as well as a few inscriptions and studies of regnal years.<sup>195</sup> This is the same sort of evidence Leadbetter gives for Maximian's position as Caesar. Peachin notes that it is odd that there are a number of coins of Volusian as Caesar, although he would have been Caesar for only a short time, while, if Gallienus was Caesar for a similar length of time, there survive no imperially-minted coins to show this.<sup>196</sup> Peachin concludes "I should like to suggest (tentatively) that Gallienus was never officially Caesar, only Augustus.

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<sup>189</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.5.3; cf. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 63, n. 26, who term the use of Caesar here as "A 'nontechnical' term of address".

<sup>190</sup> Barnes (1982) 4.

<sup>191</sup> Webb (1929) 191 and Webb (1933) 204.

<sup>192</sup> CIL VIII 10285; c.f. Leadbetter (1998b) 217.

<sup>193</sup> Leadbetter (1998b) 216-221; however, see Kolb (1987) 45: "Selbst wenn es aber einen derartigen Titel für Maximian in einem ägyptischen Papyrus gäbe, so wäre dies wohl nur auf die Verwirrung eines inkompetenten Schreibers der ägyptisch-römischen Bürokratie zurückzuführen."

<sup>194</sup> Potter (2014) 283 argues for Maximian's ability to issue rescripts as Caesar; cf. Corcoran (2000) 78-79. The ability to do so as a Caesar might be considered extraordinary—if he were a Caesar at the time. The rescripts in question are *Cod. Just.* 3.29.4 and 8.53.6.

<sup>195</sup> The evidence is summarized by Peachin (1988) 219-222.

<sup>196</sup> Peachin (1988) 223.

News of the senate's initial reaction may have leaked out, thus inspiring the Numidian milestones, or the coins in Asia Minor. But those who called Gallienus Caesar probably did so erroneously."<sup>197</sup> Peachin's arguments seem to have been accepted by modern scholarship;<sup>198</sup> I would argue the same conclusion for Maximian as Caesar that Peachin did for Gallienus: that those who called Maximian 'Caesar' were probably mistaken.

Dynastic security was something that clearly mattered to the third-century emperors, but may not have been the top priority for Diocletian and Maximian. The ideology of the Dyarchy promoted unity, *fraternitas*, and equality (to an extent and when appropriate), especially in the face of political difficulties such as the breakaway British empire under Carausius and his successor Allectus. As Manders has pointed out, there is a far smaller percentage of third century coins dealing with dynastic matters than, for instance, divine legitimation or imperial virtues.<sup>199</sup> In this way, the relatively small number of coins which feature the imperial relationship between Maximian and Diocletian is in line with much of the third-century output. The presentation of the Dyarchy employed the familiar language and iconography of the imperial and familial colleges of the third century to present their rule, but they did not employ the forward-looking methods of these family-colleges, such as the promotion of Caesars, until a later stage in the evolution of Diocletian's imperial college. It may only have been after ten years in power that the dynastic *continuity* that was so important to the third century—continuity as expressed through the promotion of imperial sons and Caesars—became important to Diocletian and Maximian, leading to the creation of the Tetrarchy.

#### 4. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TETRARCHY

After eight years of co-rule, the biggest threat to the security of Diocletian and Maximian's empire was undoubtedly the continued resistance of Carausius against Maximian's efforts to subdue him. After a few failed attempts, the command was given to Maximian's praetorian prefect and son-in-law, Constantius, who won a victory in Boulogne in 293.<sup>200</sup> Carausius was soon assassinated, and his successor, Allectus, was finally defeated in 296.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Peachin (1988) 224.

<sup>198</sup> For example, Potter (2014) 248, and in a recent book on Gallienus by Geiger (2013) 82.

<sup>199</sup> Manders (2012) 49.

<sup>200</sup> The panegyric of 291 is, unsurprisingly, largely silent on Maximian's failures; c.f. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 79. Constantius' victories are commemorated in *Pan. Lat.* 8.6.1-4, 14.1-19.4.

<sup>201</sup> Casey (1994) 136-9.

Perhaps partly for his service against Carausius, Constantius was given the position of Maximian's Caesar—a junior emperor who could serve as an imperial presence primarily in Gaul and Britain. At around the same time—whether on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 293, the same date as Constantius, or a few months later on May 21<sup>st</sup>—Diocletian made Maximian Galerius his Caesar in the East.<sup>202</sup>

The imperial college now encompassed four emperors in a symmetrical structure, effectively shutting out Carausius, Allectus, and any other imperial claimants who might have wanted to share in the fraternal ideology of the Dyarchy. A college this large had some precedent. Valerian and Gallienus' imperial college had included Gallienus' sons, though not simultaneously, and Gallienus' wife Salonina had been included; likewise, both of Septimius Severus' sons had ruled with him. Yet this new structure meant that the ways of presenting Diocletian's imperial college needed to adapt as well.<sup>203</sup>

### **i. Marriage and adoption in the Tetrarchy**

The greatest difference between Diocletian's new imperial college and earlier third-century imperial colleges is that Constantius and Galerius, unlike previous Caesars, were not imperial sons. That is not, however, to say that the new 'Tetrarchy' was not dynastic. The four emperors were tied together through new links of kinship, marriage and adoption. Constantius was married to Maximian's daughter (or step-daughter) Theodora, and Galerius to Diocletian's daughter Valeria.<sup>204</sup> Subsequently, the Caesars were adopted by their respective Augusti. Such alliances were important for the stability of the empire, especially as the role of Caesar traditionally marked out imperial successors. The marriages also offered the opportunity for further dynastic stability in the next generation. Constantius already had a son, Constantine, by Helena, his previous wife (or mistress).<sup>205</sup> Maximian also had a son, Maxentius, who was at least perceived to be a potential imperial heir by the panegyrist of 289.<sup>206</sup> Constantius and Theodora would have a prolific marriage, producing six children, of whom five survived to

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<sup>202</sup> König (1974) 571-6 discusses the disparate dating and also suggests that Constantius' elevation was perhaps not planned by Diocletian, but was instead representative of Maximian's imperial ambitions. This view is not adopted by most scholars. Many accept the dating of March 1<sup>st</sup> for both Caesars: c.f. Barnes (1981) 8; Williams (1985) 64, Leadbetter (2009) 62. Harries (2012) points out that Constantius' rise might have been unwelcome to Maximian, whose son Maxentius would probably have been only a few years old at the time.

<sup>203</sup> On the presentation of the Tetrarchic structure in the panegyrics, see especially Brosch (2006).

<sup>204</sup> The timings of these weddings has been a topic of debate. Leadbetter (1998a); Barnes (2011) 38-40; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 70 n. 38; Leadbetter (2009) 61.

<sup>205</sup> Barnes (2011) 27-45 argues for Helena as a legitimate wife, in line with his argument for Constantine's legitimacy. Compare to Leadbetter (1998a). This problem will be discussed at length in **V.1**.

<sup>206</sup> Pan. Lat. 10.14.1-2.

adulthood. Galerius and Valeria had a daughter, Valeria Maximilla, who would wed Maxentius; Galerius also had a son, Candidianus, apparently by a concubine.<sup>207</sup>

Leadbetter's arguments for evidence of dynasticism within the Tetrarchy revolve around these 'constructed' (per Hekster) relationships of marriage and adoption of the First Tetrarchy.<sup>208</sup> Such constructed kinship was a longstanding tradition in the Roman world; it provided a way for Roman elite men to shape their families.<sup>209</sup> Such techniques were useful for emperors as well. Augustus and the Julio-Claudians provide a prime example of both the importance and the malleability of imperial familial relationships.<sup>210</sup> Marriage was another way of constructing useful relationships, and adoption and marriage easily went hand-in-hand.<sup>211</sup> Loyalty was not the only concern behind these new relationships. As Barnes comments about the Tetrarchic marriages, "These alliances by marriage did more than bind the four reigning emperors to one another. They advertised to the world the identity of their prospective heirs."<sup>212</sup> The position of Caesar already promoted Constantius and Galerius as heirs and implied them to be imperial sons: the marriages and adoptions simply reinforced this advertisement. In fact, these marriages could even be the reasons for Constantius and Galerius' elevations and adoptions in the first place.

Eutropius and Pseudo-Victor suggest that the marriages and adoptions happened at the same time: this may be true, as a way of doubly reinforcing bonds relating to their promotions, but it may also be symptomatic of the epitomators' tendency to condense time (as is seen in the passages which combine Maximian's elevation to Augustus with the promotion of the Caesars).<sup>213</sup> It is likely that this assumption of simultaneous marriage and elevation/adoption

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<sup>207</sup> It is also possible that Valeria Maximilla was Galerius' daughter by an earlier marriage: c.f. Barnes (1982) 38, PLRE 1.576 s.v. Valeria Maximilla 2. Candidianus: Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 20.4, 50.2.

<sup>208</sup> See especially Leadbetter (2009) 48-73; Leadbetter (1998a); Hekster (2015). Diederik Burgersdijk also included similar arguments at the beginning of a paper given in Nijmegen in September 2015, in which he argued against an adoptive-only ideology within the Tetrarchy.

<sup>209</sup> Lindsay (2009) 33; Hekster (2015) 24. Lindsay (2009): 62 defines adoption as "a method developed to regulate the entry of new members to the family." Legally, there was little difference between an adopted son and a hereditary one (Lindsay (2009) 65; Hekster (2015) 24). Gesche (1978) 377f discusses this specifically in the context of imperial adoptions and hereditary succession.

<sup>210</sup> Hekster (2015) 6-9.

<sup>211</sup> The adoptions and marriages of Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius are an excellent example of this: see the discussion in Lindsay (2009) 211-14; Hekster (2015) 78-95.

<sup>212</sup> Barnes (1981) 9.

<sup>213</sup> Eutrop. 9.22: "Diocletian promoted Maximian Herculus from the dignity of Caesar to that of emperor, and created Constantius and Maximian Galerius Caesars...That he might also unite them by affinity, Constantius married Theodora the step-daughter of Herculus...while Galerius married Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian; both being obliged to divorce the wives that they had before." (*Diocletianus Maximianum Herculum ex Caesare fecit Augustum, Constantium et Maximianum Caesares...Atque ut eos etiam adfinitate coniungeret, Constantius privignam Herculi Theodoram accepit...Galerius filiam Diocletiani Valeriam, ambo uxores, quas habuerant, repudiare compulsi.*) Ps-Aur. Vict 39.2: "He made Maximian an Augustus; Constantius and Galerius Maximianus, with the cognomen Armentarius, he created Caesars, giving to Constantius, when his prior wife was divorced,

was not true for Constantius. It is now broadly accepted that Constantius is the unnamed ‘holder of highest office’ under Maximian listed in the Panegyric of 289 (*ut etiam eos qui circa te potissimo fuguntur officio necessitudine tibi ad adfinitate deuinxeris*).<sup>214</sup> It is uncertain whether Theodora was a step-daughter or actual daughter of Maximian; the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* may provide evidence that Theodora was Maximian’s own daughter from a previous marriage.<sup>215</sup> Very probably Constantius was married to Theodora at least four years before his elevation to Caesar, making him a member of Maximian’s extended family even before his adoption.<sup>216</sup> Galerius’ marriage is less certain: Leadbetter also posits an earlier marriage for Galerius and Diocletian’s daughter Valeria, based on the assumed age of their daughter Valeria Maximilla when she was married.<sup>217</sup> There is, however, a suggestion that Valeria Maximilla might be Galerius’ daughter by an earlier marriage.<sup>218</sup> Her name seems to indicate otherwise: either she was born after Galerius’ promotion to Caesar (as it was then that he assumed the titulature ‘Valerius’) or her mother was Valeria. Evidence for Galerius’ adoption as a pre-existing son-in-law may stem from a line in Lactantius: *quem sibi generum Diocletianus asciverat*.<sup>219</sup> Creed translates this as “[Galerius], whom Diocletian had adopted as his son-in-law,” but an alternate translation could be “Diocletian adopted the man who was (already) his son in law”.<sup>220</sup>

There are, then, two ways of interpreting the Caesars’ marriages and adoptions: first is that the Augusti adopted their sons-in-law, the second is that the Caesars, upon being adopted, married the daughters of their new ‘fathers’. The former is more in keeping with Roman law, which stated that it was illegal for an adopted son to marry his sister, i.e. the daughter of his adoptive father.<sup>221</sup> This could be circumvented through the emancipation of the adopter’s daughter from her father’s *patria potestas*, common in cases of adoption of the son-in-law.<sup>222</sup> It is also possible that imperial adoptions, which were often tied to marriages, may not have been under such restrictions. Leadbetter argues, “What is clear...is that the Caesars were not

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Theodora, the stepdaughter of Herculius Maximian.” (*Is Maximianum Augustum effecit; Constantium et Galerium Maximianum, cognomento Armentarium, Caesares creavit, tradens Constantio Theodoram, Herculi Maximiani privignam, abiecta uxore priori.*)

<sup>214</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.11.4. See for example Barnes (2011) 38-40; the discussion throughout Leadbetter (1998a); the detailed analysis (with other candidates) in Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 70 n. 38; Harries (2012) 31.

<sup>215</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 60 and Barnes (1982) 33 cite *Origo* 1.2.

<sup>216</sup> Relevant here is the intriguing idea from König (1974) 571-6 that the Tetrarchy came about not because of Diocletian but because Maximian and Constantius took matters into their own hands.

<sup>217</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 61; PLRE 1.576 s.v. Valeria Maximilla 2.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. Barnes (2010) 321-322; PLRE 1.1128 s.v. Stemmata 1.

<sup>219</sup> *Lact. Mort. Pers.* 9.1.

<sup>220</sup> Thanks to Richard Flower for suggesting this translation.

<sup>221</sup> Lindsay (2009) 68; Gardner (1998) 119. Citing Gaius *Inst.* 1.104.

<sup>222</sup> See Corbier (1991a) 67, 71; Corbier (1991b) 142; Lindsay (2009) 68.



chosen to be the sons-in-law of the Augusti, but that the existing sons-in-law of the Augusti became the Caesars.<sup>223</sup> This is not necessarily correct for both Caesars: what proved true for one (Constantius) need not have been true for the other (Galerius). They need not both have been sons-in-law before their elevations. Still, this goes against Hekster's view of the Tetrarchy, that "the adoption of men from outside the extended family was almost unheard of."<sup>224</sup> Constantius, at least, *was* part of the extended family.

It is necessary to give a brief overview of the legalities of Roman adoption, to contextualize the adoptions that helped to form the Tetrarchy. Yet it is important to remember that imperial adoptions did not necessarily follow the same rules as in the late Republic and early Empire, such as the testamentary adoption that set young Octavian on his path to power. These adoptions, including the Tetrarchic ones, reflect convention and expectation, but also provide stability for the future and ensure the continuation of the imperial family.

The Roman family was complex, and Latin used different terms to denote levels of familial connections.<sup>225</sup> An *agnatus* was a relation through the male line, whereas *cognatus* indicates a relationship through the female line. Relations by marriage were called *adfines* or *affines*, and they possessed their own status within the family.<sup>226</sup> Complicating familial connections further, adoption was common amongst the elites, for whom adoption and marriage provided powerful strategies designed to influence aspects of power and succession.<sup>227</sup> The imperial family provided another layer of complexity: there was an emphasis on dynastic succession to provide stability for the future, even though the Roman principate was formally not inherited (even if it was not perceived that way).<sup>228</sup> Emperors, then, if they had no legal sons, adopted (usually within the family) to ensure that their successor carried on the family line.<sup>229</sup> a notable example is the adoptions of Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius by Antoninus Pius upon the latter's own adoption by Hadrian.<sup>230</sup> As with much of Roman life, adoption was controlled by Roman law.<sup>231</sup> There are some regulations that may

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<sup>223</sup> Leadbetter (1998a): 82.

<sup>224</sup> Hekster (2015) 312.

<sup>225</sup> A list of legal terms appears in Lindsay (2009) 221-25.

<sup>226</sup> Corbier (1991a) 70-1; Corbier (1991b) 129.

<sup>227</sup> Corbier (1991a) 48; Corbier (1991b) 128; Hekster (2015) 23.

<sup>228</sup> Hekster (2015) 2-3, 25-6. On adoption and succession or transmission of property, see: Corbier (1991a) 63; Corbier (1991b) 142. See also Lindsay (2009) 65, 103, 219.

<sup>229</sup> Hekster (2015); Lindsay (2009) 190-216. On the adoption of close relatives, see also Lindsay (2009) 103, 197, 217; Corbier (1991b) 142.

<sup>230</sup> See footnote 99.

<sup>231</sup> During the Republic, the most important factor in both adoption and marriage was the position of the father at the head of the family and his *patria potestas*, the power he held over his relations. By the third century, however, the concept of *patria potestas* seems to have been outdated, even in legal discourse. See Eyben (1991) 115: "From the days of Empire onwards the legislators adapted themselves gradually to the altered mentality and took as their

have bearing when considering the Tetrarchic adoptions. For instance, the new *pater*, the adopter, was legally required to be at least eighteen years older than the new *filius*, the adoptee, though this was clearly not a problem for some imperial adoptions.<sup>232</sup> Lastly, there seems to have been at least social disapproval, though perhaps not legal prohibition, against someone adopting if he was capable of begetting children.<sup>233</sup> This potential social indiscretion is particularly notable when considering the adoption of Constantius, even though Maximian had his own son, Maxentius.

It is important to situate imperial adoption within the wider context of the Roman imperial family. The adoption of Constantius and Galerius would have not been unusual; adoption had continued throughout the third century to reinforce dynastic legitimacy. Elagabalus had adopted his cousin Alexander Severus.<sup>234</sup> As previously mentioned, Pupienus and Balbinus had possibly adopted the boy Gordian III.<sup>235</sup> Trebonianus Gallus had adopted his predecessor Decius' young son Hostilian upon Decius' death and Gallus' ascension to imperial power.<sup>236</sup> These imperial colleges, linked by adoption to form families, mirrored other imperial family-colleges who did not have to adopt: Valerian's familial college, with his son Gallienus as co-Augustus and his grandsons Valerian II and Saloninus as Caesars (consecutively), is only the best example.<sup>237</sup>

These adoptions are reflected in the sharing of imperial titulature between the Tetrarchs. All of the Tetrarchs adopted the name 'Valerius' as part of their official titulature, which served as the *nomen gentile*, the "family name" for Diocletian.<sup>238</sup> It provided an expression of uniformity and *concordia*, uniting them not only as an imperial college, but also as a 'family'. Van Dam suggested the idea of a 'Valerian dynasty' with Diocletian as its head, in that the adoption of the name Valerius by all the Tetrarchs "indicated subordination to Diocletian, as well as membership in the Tetrarchic imperial college".<sup>239</sup> Constantius and Galerius' titulature

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rule of thumb the maxim we find in the writing of the third-century jurist Marcianus: 'paternal authority must be based on affection, not on cruelty (*patria potestas in pietate debet, non atrocitate consistere*)', citing *Dig.* 48.9.5.<sup>232</sup> Severus and Clodius Albinus were probably of a similar age (they were at least of similar careers), and Maximian and his adopted son Constantius seem to have been similar in age as well, as estimated by Barnes (1992) 32-37. This seems to have been a rule under contention anyway: Lindsay (2009) 66-7, citing *Dig.* 1.7.16, 1.7.40.1 (age requirement), *Inst.* 1.106 (contention).

<sup>233</sup> Lindsay (2009) 67, citing *Dig.* 1.7.15.2; Corbier (1991a) 66.

<sup>234</sup> Southern (2001) 59. Herod. 5.7.1, 5.7.5; Cass. Dio 80.17.2-3.

<sup>235</sup> The sources attest for his being made Caesar, but do not specifically mention adoption: Herod. 7.10.7-9; *Hist. Aug., Tre. Gord.* 22.1-3, *Max. et Balb.* 3.3-5, 8.5.

<sup>236</sup> Southern (2001) 76. This adoption is less well-attested; it exists only in *Zos.* 1.25.

<sup>237</sup> De Blois (1976) 125 n. 16 suggests that Gallienus had a third son, Mariniano, who was not made Caesar.

<sup>238</sup> Barnes (1982) 4; Van Dam (2007) 90.

<sup>239</sup> Van Dam (2007) 90; he more explicitly calls it a "Valerian dynasty of Tetrarchs" (93) and a "Valerian dynasty" (98). Cambi (2004) also suggests this, though Hekster (2012) 277 suggests that it is perhaps wise not to read too

would normally have changed anyway due to their adoptions.<sup>240</sup> Importantly, the name ‘Valerius’ was then passed on to Tetrarchic sons and daughters, most notably Galerius’ daughter Valeria Maximilla.<sup>241</sup> Even if there was no intentional Tetrarchic ideology of dynasty-building, the use of the *nomen gentile* by all the Tetrarchs and their sons was at the least a perception of dynasty. Cambi argues that the Tetrarchic titulature was “an instrument of propaganda” instead of reflecting “the juridical manner of Roman adoption.”<sup>242</sup> When combined with the adoption and intermarriage of the Caesars, and with the presentation of Constantius and Galerius as Caesars in keeping with third-century tradition, there is strong evidence for a dynastic interpretation (or even dynastic creation) of the imperial college of the Tetrarchy.

Clearly, adoption and marriage were vital techniques to fill gaps in imperial families, as with Diocletian’s lack of a son. It is, however, important to qualify the distinction made by Hekster between hereditary and ‘constructed’ relationships. The terms are useful for understanding the ‘actualities’ of the relationships, in that moves were made to create an imperial family. They should not, however, be unduly overemphasized. Adoption was second nature to elite Romans, a custom which extended to imperial families. Likewise, the use of adoption should not be seen as innovative for the Tetrarchic relationships. The status of Constantius and Galerius as ‘sons’ was no less than previous heirs just because they were adopted, which is reflected in perceptions of the Tetrarchy in literature and coinage. Additionally, the social ties of these constructions were strong, embodying societal customs like familial *pietas*—which has been seen before as a common legend on third-century dynastic coinage. *Pietas* bound together family members (especially the *pater familiae*) with various obligations of appropriate affection and dutifulness.<sup>243</sup> Constantius and Galerius were not merely bound to Diocletian and Maximian because they owed to them their imperial power. Because of the many ways of proclaiming imperial legitimacy, such a debt could be easily overcome, as will be seen later through the rise of men like Constantine, Maxentius, and Julian. The complexity of the Roman family, with the importance of social and legal constructs of

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much into the assumption of the name Valerius by all of the Tetrarchs, but this is in line with much of Hekster’s arguments against dynastic links under the Tetrarchy. It is striking that all four emperors share the name.

<sup>240</sup> Lindsay (2009) 87, 92-3; Cambi (2004) 41.

<sup>241</sup> Cullhed (1994) 50-55 also comes up with a theory of a ‘Valerian dynasty’, but one he attributes to Maxentius. The commonness of the name under the Tetrarchy undermines Cullhed’s argument of an independent Maxentius, as it would instead point to the continuing importance of the Tetrarchic name.

<sup>242</sup> Cambi (2004) 45. See also Hekster (2015) 277.

<sup>243</sup> Gardner (1998) 3, 78.

*pietas* and familial affection, bound the Caesars to their Augusti far more effectively than mere imperial *potestas*.

## ii. Dynastic representations of the Tetrarchy

There are, therefore, two ways at looking at the dynastic links of the Tetrarchy: that the Augusti adopted the Caesars and made them their sons-in-law, or that the Augusti adopted their sons-in-law and made them Caesars. It is also important that what was true for Constantius does not necessarily need to be true for Galerius. The new Caesars were therefore sons by marriage and by adoption, but also they were implied to be sons by the very act of bearing their new titles. What is more, Constantius and Galerius were promoted as sons, heirs, and Caesars in similar ways to the Caesars of the third century. Thus, when Constantius and Galerius were made Caesars—and when their new roles were proclaimed on coinage—they would have been at the very least *perceived* as the sons of the emperors, a perception which would have been reinforced by the new constructed links of kinship.

In panegyrics, on coinage, and in other media, the Tetrarchy was represented as a family and as an imperial college. One way in which this was done was through the promotion of Constantius and Galerius as Caesars. The most striking difference between the Tetrarchic Caesars and their predecessors is their age—although Carinus and Numerian, who directly preceded them, were also both older and depicted as bearded or semi-bearded as Caesars. Aside from their portraits, however, Constantius and Galerius were still represented within the pre-existing traditions around the title, for example, the *princeps iuventutis* reverse type, which has previously been shown to be directly linked with the role of Caesar and heir (figs. 1.15-16).



Fig. 1.15: *Princeps Iuventutis* coinage of Constantius.



Fig. 1.16: *Princeps Iuventutis* coinage of Galerius.<sup>244</sup>

Whether Maximian (or another Tetrarch) specifically ordered these coins minted, or whether it was done by the prerogative of the mints as appropriate for Caesars, we cannot know. The latter is more likely: after all, both Constantius and Galerius were grown men, and the title *Princeps Iuventutis* might have been deemed inappropriate for adult Caesars.<sup>245</sup> This could explain the absence of the reverse type soon after the coinage reform of 293, which standardized much of the output of the *aes* coinage to that ubiquitous reverse type of the Tetrarchy, *Genio Populi Romani*.<sup>246</sup> But that did not stop the panegyrist of 298 from proclaiming Constantius as “truly the prince of the youth” (*uere principis iuuentutis*).<sup>247</sup> Even if the more cautious explanation is the correct one, it still shows the perception of Constantius and Galerius as the newest Caesars, sons, and heirs in long-standing traditions around the promotion of imperial successors. That these coins were particularly minted at Rome also might show the importance of the legend to that mint, but during and after the Tetrarchy, the title was also used at other mints. Either way, these coins can be interpreted as in line with dynastic traditions of the third century, whether the decision was Tetrarchic design or because the *princeps* type was perceived to have been important to the traditional legitimization of new Caesars.

The importance of the *princeps iuventutis* type did not end with Constantius and Galerius; later it would constitute an important legend for Constantine’s early years, and also for his sons when they were made Caesars. According to numismatic tradition, then, to the people of Italy—at the very least, though it was probably more widespread—Constantius and Galerius would have been seen not only as the heirs of Diocletian and Maximian, but as their

<sup>244</sup> (Left) Constantius: RIC VI, Rome no. 53a; (right) Galerius: RIC V, Galerius no. 712 (Rome).

<sup>245</sup> See Horster (2011) 95 on the potential inappropriateness of the title for an adult Caesar, referencing Titus.

<sup>246</sup> Examples of Constantius and Galerius as a *Princeps Iuventutis* are featured in both RIC V.2 (pre-reform) and RIC VI (post-reform), but Sutherland dates the latter coins in the latter to the early years of the reform: RIC VI, Rome nos. 50-61a.

<sup>247</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 9.6.1-2.

sons. Constantius and Galerius signalled the beginning of an era of self-aware, self-propagandizing Caesars—of whom Constantine is the best example—but their numismatic representations are in line with the continuity of Caesar representations throughout the third century.

Coinage also featured the new Caesars as part of a wider imperial college in similar ways to the dynastic coinage of the third century, with expressions of collegiality—and implied familial unity. The best example of this is a medallion from the Arras Hoard, from the mint of Trier, which can probably be dated to the formation of the Tetrarchy c. 293-294 (**fig. 1.17**). The coin is a combination of the double-obverse (*capita opposita*) and multiple busts (here, facing) techniques. Diocletian and Galerius are depicted on one side; Maximian and Constantius on the other.<sup>248</sup>



**Fig. 1.17: Medallion of the Tetrarchy: conjoined busts, *capita opposita*.**<sup>249</sup>

This coin is also rare and unique to this mint: special-issue medallions were likely to be the only suitable coin for this type of imperial message, as it would be extremely difficult to fit multiple emperors on coins of smaller size and denomination.<sup>250</sup> The representation of the emperors on this coin is comparable to the medallion of the imperial college of Valerian and Gallienus (above, **fig. 1.2**). Both show an imperial college (here composed of two Augusti and two Caesars; there two Augusti, a Caesar, and an Augusta), and both also represent an imperial family. The family of the Tetrarchy was created through adoption and intermarriage and represents only male figures—there were no Tetrarchic *Augustae* until Galerius' wife Valeria

<sup>248</sup> See Baldwin (1926) 28-32; Weiser (2006) 216-217. Weiser dates the medallion to 294 through the wearing of consular dress by all Tetrarchs, as 294 was the year Constantius, who controlled the Trier mint, was first consul. Baldwin prefers to date the medallion to the vicennalia celebrations in 303, rather than the formation of the Tetrarchy in 293-294, as it is dated in the RIC VI, though the medallion would also fit with the earlier time as a presentation of the new familial college. The dating does not affect the interpretation of the coin, as the ideology would have been applicable throughout the period of the First Tetrarchy.

<sup>249</sup> RIC VI, Treveri no. 2. DIOCLETIANVS AVGET MAXIMIANVS C/MAXIMIANVS AVGET ET CONSTANTIVS C. AD c. 293-294. There is another example of this coin at <http://numismatics.org/collection/1967.153.38>.

<sup>250</sup> Rees (2004) 73; he also notes that Carausius' coin with the three emperors (jugate busts) was 'ambitious' for this reason.

was made one in 309. As with previous medallions, the legends do not need to use explicit language to signify the familial relationships shown, for these relationships would be understood by the visual presentation (facing busts) and the titles (here, each Augustus is paired with his Caesar-son). Thus, this medallion represents the pinnacle of Tetrarchic ideology on coinage: the presentation of a united, familial college.

This form of presentation (four emperors facing) is presented also in modified form on lead seals from the Tetrarchic era, as shown by Peter Weiss in his examination of the tradition of multi-bust lead seals and presentations of the Tetrarchy in this medium, which are developed from the earlier ‘dynastic’ examples of a facing Augustus and Caesar (much as coins were).<sup>251</sup> These seals differ from coins in that they have no inscriptions and only one ‘face’.<sup>252</sup> The presentation, however, is remarkably similar to the medallion above: two sets of emperors facing (**fig. 1.18**).<sup>253</sup> Weiss has identified the figures as the Augusti on the top and the Caesars below, based on their crowns. He has further identified them as (clockwise from top left) Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius, arguing that “es wird nicht die reale Zuordnung von Augusti und Caesares und damit auch nicht der Aspekt der *Iovii* und *Herculii* in den Vordergrund gestellt.”<sup>254</sup> Such identifications should not be pushed this far, however; it is impossible to determine which emperor is which within the pairs. Ultimately, identification is not the important message of the image. What is important is the presentation of a unified imperial college—a presentation which builds upon and innovates from preceding ‘dynastic’ portrayals of an Augustus and Caesar facing. The same can be said for the second, less-attested presentation of four emperors standing together, which mirrors coins from c. 294-301: a different style of presentation, but the same message.<sup>255</sup>

There is a dynastic series of coins from Trier, c. AD 298-299, which features different combinations of the Tetrarchs using the jugate style instead of facing busts. The reverse presents the common reverse legend of the Tetrarchic period,



**Fig. 1.17: Lead seal of the Tetrarchy (top: Augusti; below: Caesars.)**

<sup>251</sup> Weiss (2006) 239; 246: “Es wurde — sicher an zentraler Stelle — aus der Tradition der „Kaisersiegel“ entwickelt, die, wie zu beobachten war, in entsprechenden Fällen anscheinend immer dynastische Bilder, d. h. zwei und mehr Herrscherköpfe, aufwiesen, auch in der Zeit der diocletianischen „Dyarchie“. Cf. Weiser (2006) 214-215 for a brief discussion of Tetrarchic representations on lead seals from the same volume.

<sup>252</sup> Weiss (2006) 236.

<sup>253</sup> Cf. Weiss (2006) fig. 1b.

<sup>254</sup> Weiss (2006) 238.

<sup>255</sup> Weiss (2006) 244.

GENIO POPVLI ROMANI, which dominated the lower-denomination reverses. The obverses feature the imperial pairs: Diocletian and Maximian, Constantius and Galerius (**fig. 1.19**), and Diocletian and Galerius.<sup>256</sup>



**Fig. 1.19: Constantius and Galerius, jugate busts.**<sup>257</sup>

Once again, it is not important to point out the explicit familial relationships: they would have been implied by the status of the emperor in question. Diocletian and Maximian, both Augusti, are brothers, as are Constantius and Galerius as Caesars (or cousins, though the Tetrarchic familial language seems never to get that complex). The pairing of Diocletian and Galerius, meanwhile, is unequal, representing a father-son pairing. As we have seen, the choice of facing or jugate busts does not reflect particular dynastic relationships, but either technique could be used for either type of relationship; for lower-denomination coins like these, which would have been smaller, the jugate bust was an excellent choice as it utilized available space more efficiently. The coin pairing of Diocletian and Galerius shows that these coins could represent dynastic, paternal links as well as collegiate, fraternal ones; no coins exist which pair Diocletian and Constantius, or Maximian and Galerius (although the expected pairing of Maximian and Constantius is also missing).

A counterpoint to this sort of presentation on coinage can be found in the system of imperial consulships. Bagnall has noted that imperial pairs of consulships had meaning: “Emperors also regularly took consulates when their co-emperors did, whether to introduce sons or new colleagues in their first consulates, or to accompany brothers or colleagues of long standing.”<sup>258</sup> The pairs of consulships were largely ‘fraternal’: Diocletian and Maximian were consuls together in 287, 290, 293, 299, and 303, while Constantius and Galerius were paired

<sup>256</sup> All coins from RIC VI. DIOCLETIANVS ET MAXIMIANVS AVG: Trier no. 318. CONSTANTIVS ET MAXIMIANVS NB C: Trier no. 373. IMP DIOCLETIANVS AVG ET MAXIMIANVS N C: Trier no. 319. As it is listed in the RIC, no. 318 (Diocletian and Maximian) has a dual legend but are not depicted as jugate busts.

<sup>257</sup> RIC VI, Treveri no. 373. CONSTANTIVS ET MAXIMIANVS NB C/GENIO POPVLI ROMANI.

<sup>258</sup> Bagnall (1987) 23.



in 294, 300, 302, and 305.<sup>259</sup> Yet the only other Tetrarchic pairings were Diocletian and Constantius in 296 and Maximian and Galerius the following year. This does not necessarily have to be understood as ‘anti-dynastic’; a parallel to this can be seen in the ‘cross-familial’ consulships of the joint college of Constantine and Licinius (see **IV.2.ii**). Yet it is interesting that such a ‘cross-familial’ presentation in 296 and 297, which clearly came from the imperial centre, survives in the consulships but not in the coinage.

One aspect of dynasticism on coinage that does not feature in the numismatic output of the Tetrarchy is that of commemorating divine ancestors. Horster notes, “From the late first to the third century dynastic themes have been displayed on coins in two different ways: either with a reference to ancestors in commemorative issues, in the second and third century mainly by *consecratio*-types, or with a reference to living family-members.”<sup>260</sup> Not having imperial dead ancestors meant that the Tetrarchs did not employ *consecratio* types (although the Tetrarchic descendants did, as shall be discussed in later chapters), nor did they seek to create these links to past emperors like Decius’ *consecratio* coins, which commemorated a series of ‘good’ deified emperors.<sup>261</sup> Tetrarchic ideology instead focused on the present, in the establishment of the extended familial college, and the future, in the promotion of the Caesars as the future of the dynasty. This would be ensured in 305, when Diocletian and Maximian abdicated and allowed Constantius and Galerius to become Augusti with two new Caesars below them.

That the Caesars were represented and perceived as sons—and that the Tetrarchy could be perceived as an extended family—is also evident from the *Panegyrici Latini*. Familial language in the *Panegyrici Latini* was expanded with the accession of Constantius and Galerius beyond expressions of *fraternitas*. There are two panegyrics from the period of the First Tetrarchy, which are sometimes dated to 297 and 298.<sup>262</sup> Both are addressed to Constantius, although he is not present during the latter speech. The panegyrist of 297 focuses on cosmic phenomena instead of the now-familiar themes of *concordia* and *fraternitas* to emphasize the unity of the Tetrarchic rulers;<sup>263</sup> this is no doubt a personal preference rather than reflective of imperial ideology. Collegial unity, now encompassing four emperors instead of two, was more

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<sup>259</sup> Bagnall (1987) 108-145.

<sup>260</sup> Horster (2007) 297.

<sup>261</sup> Carson (1990) 86; Dmitriev (2004). While these do not draw upon actual dynastic relationships, it seems that the series is meant to portray Decius in tandem with those who have come before.

<sup>262</sup> Panegyric VIII(4) (‘297’) could also have been delivered in 298; c.f. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 105. The dating of IX(5) (‘298’) is even less certain: Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 146-8 suggest 298 as the median of the range 297-299.

<sup>263</sup> Rees (2002) 120-1.

important than ever. The Panegyric of 298 uses familial language combined with the *signa*, which had been expanded to include Constantius as a *Herculius* and Galerius as a *Iovius*. In the Panegyric of 297, however, are echoes of earlier panegyrics. Much as Diocletian is often referred to as *tuus frater* in the Panegyric of 289, similar language is used in that of 297, where Maximian and Diocletian are termed “your [Constantius’] father and your uncle” (*patris ac patru tui*, 8.1.3). The unity of the imperial college is emphasized through the presentation of the tetrarchs as a family. Additionally, Constantius is legitimized as an emperor through his dynastic heritage (the fact that it was a heritage not through blood but through constructed relationships makes no difference to the orator’s rhetoric).<sup>264</sup> The rhetoric of Maximian and Diocletian as ‘parents’ is echoed by a reported letter from Maximinus Daza, recorded by Eusebius.<sup>265</sup> Diocletian (alone) appears as a ‘father’ in Aurelius Victor: “they [the Tetrarchs] used to look up to Valerius as a father or like a mighty god” (*Denique Valerium ut parentem seu dei magni suspiciebant*, 39.29).<sup>266</sup> In framing Diocletian as a ‘father’, Victor (and the letter reportedly from Daza) may have been echoing some of the later rhetoric of the *seniores augusti* (see **II.2.iii**).<sup>267</sup>

The idea of Maximian and Diocletian as ‘parents’ could be expanded and employed in more metaphorical ways as well. At the end of the panegyric of 297, the panegyrist extends the usage of familial language: all four emperors are now the “everlasting parents and masters of the human race” (*perpetui parentes et domini generis humani*, 8.20.1).<sup>268</sup> This context—the emperors not only as a unified ‘family’ of sorts, but also somehow simultaneously the ‘parents’ of their subjects—would be used again, this time in official imperial ideology, in the prologue to the Edict of Maximal Prices.

As we looked on, we who are the parents of the human race decided that justice should intervene as arbiter, so that a solution which has for a long time been desired but humankind has been unable to provide could, by the remedy of our foresight, be brought, for the general moderation of all.

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<sup>264</sup> Rees (2002) 105-6.

<sup>265</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* 9.9.14 (9.9a.1): Διοκλητιανὸν καὶ Μαξιμιανόν, τοὺς ἡμετέρους πατέρας... On Eusebius’ use of letters in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, see DeVore (2014).

<sup>266</sup> See Harries (2012) 32.

<sup>267</sup> Such rhetoric may have also influenced Julian’s conception of the Tetrarchy as a harmonious choir with Diocletian in the centre, which included Maximian in a subordinate role rather than a relatively equal ‘fraternal’ one. *Jul. Caes.* 315B-D; see 4.v.

<sup>268</sup> See also 9.5.3, “I do not hesitate to call them our children’s parents” (*liberorum nostrorum parentes appellare non dubito*).

*Convenit prospicientibus nobis, qui parentes sumus generis humani, arbitram rebus intervenire iustitiam, ut, quod speratum diu humanitas ipsa praestare non potuit, ad commune omnium temperamentum remediis provisionis nostrae comferatur.*<sup>269</sup>

Hekster's interpretation is that this use of 'parents' is rhetorical, noting that "there is no reference to kinship between the tetrarchs but an attempt to place the emperors as a group above their subjects, as metaphorical 'parents'."<sup>270</sup> There are still connotations of familial unity, despite the fact that there could hardly be four *patres* in one family. It is a metaphor, but one that plays with ideas of dynastic and familial *concordia* (see 4.ii). As has been seen, however, the claims to be the *parentes generis humani* could coexist with kinship claims, as in the panegyric of 297; the metaphorical nature of one did not necessarily exclude the other, which was based more on actual relationships of constructed kinship.

Familial language in representations of the Tetrarchy could, therefore, still rely on metaphorical ideas, such as the emperors being the parents of the empire. But the construction of relationships between the emperors created a new family as well as a new imperial college. These new relationships were formed by marriage and by adoption, but there is no sense that these relationships were excused or explained in the same way as the *fraternitas* of the Dyarchy was. Maximian, for example, is never Constantius' *socer* (father-in-law) in the panegyrics; he is only ever his *pater*. Likewise, the coinage of the Tetrarchy does not represent the relationships between the members of the Tetrarchy any differently than the familial colleges of the third century. These new relationships would be expanded upon in later panegyrics, like the Panegyric of 307 to Constantine and Maximian, that show the different ways in which the Tetrarchic emperors could be considered relatives. But that panegyric reflects the political situation in 307; the relationships in the Panegyric of 297 and 298 are much more straightforward. Whether in official imperial ideology or in the decisions made to praise the emperor, Constantius and Galerius were the sons of their Augusti, and these relationships would be an integral part of the claims to legitimacy made after Diocletian and Maximian's abdication in 305.

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<sup>269</sup> Trans. Rees (2004) 140.

<sup>270</sup> Hekster (2015) 285.

### iii. The expansion of the *signa*

It is with the inclusion of Constantius and Galerius in the imperial college that the *signa*, the appellations of *Iovius* and *Herculius*, take on a dynastic meaning beyond the metaphorical claims of divine ancestry that were present in the Dyarchic panegyrics. Inscriptions show that the *signa* definitely included Constantius as a *Herculius* and Galerius as a *Iovius*. For example, an inscription from Numidia reads: *Sacratissimis atque invictissimis / Caess(aribus) F(lavius) V(alerius) Co/nstantius / iunior et He/rculius et Val(erius) Max[imianus] Iovi(us) / Caess(ares)*.<sup>271</sup> The terming of Constantius as *iunior* is uncommon, and may be another way of asserting his status as a junior emperor. The newly dynastic function of the *signa* is also evident in the coinage of the period after the coinage reform (c. 294-6). Before the reform, the coinage of Constantius and Galerius shows little particular preference for Hercules or Jupiter. The mint of Antioch, however, minted *antoniniani* to both Constantius and to Galerius with the same reverse: Jupiter facing Hercules, accompanied by the legend IOVI ET HERCVLI CONS CAES.<sup>272</sup> This legend is a continuation of previous coins from Antioch and Tripoli during the Dyarchy, minted to both Diocletian and Maximian.<sup>273</sup>



Fig. 1.20: Maximian with reverse of Hercules.<sup>274</sup>

After the reform, there is some increase in the number of Hercules and Jupiter reverses for Constantius and Galerius, but there are also coin types which explicitly use the *signa* to celebrate collegial unity. These are *aurei* issues from the mints at Carthage and Trier, minted between c. 296 and 305, with coins to Hercules *Comes* (fig. 1.20) and *Conservator*, and Jupiter *Conservator*.<sup>275</sup> Each coin reverse features the associated god with his normal attributes; the

<sup>271</sup> For example, AE (1909) 00225; cf. <http://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD020213>. AE (1909) 00226 is very similar.

<sup>272</sup> RIC V.2 302, nos. 673-4; 309, no. 719.

<sup>273</sup> RIC V.2 256 no. 323, 257 no. 327, 294 no. 624.

<sup>274</sup> RIC VI, Carthage no. 3. AD c. 296-305 HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAESS NN; cf. <http://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.6.carth.3>.

<sup>275</sup> These coins employ the following legends: HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAESS NN, HERCVLI CONSER(VATORI) AVGG ET CAESS NN, and IOVI CONSERVAT(ORI) AVGG ET CAESS NN.

obverses of the Hercules coins portray Maximian and Constantius (separately; there are no examples of conjoined multiple heads), and the Jupiter examples show Diocletian and Galerius.<sup>276</sup> There is a clear proclamation of the new imperial college, indicated by the AVGG (numismatic shorthand for the plural form *Augusti*) and CAESS NN (the same for *Caesares Nobilissimi*) and the use of the *signa* to do so—the Augusti and their Caesars are also explicitly linked through their gods.

It is intriguing that these full collegiate examples survive from the western mints, especially as Carthage provides examples of collegial-divine types with Mars and Sol in addition to Jupiter and Hercules.<sup>277</sup> There have been attempts to show that these two gods were linked with the Caesars, and that each emperor had a separate patron deity. But while coins were minted for both Constantius and Galerius featuring these gods (making it unlikely that the Caesars had their own individual ‘patrons’), Jupiter and Hercules types are far more common for both. The inclusion of Mars and Sol, at least on coinage, is likely to do with those gods’ popularity throughout the third century and the important connotations they conveyed; these coins continue that important tradition rather than create a relationship on the same level of the *signa*.<sup>278</sup> The family relationships of the *signa*, shown in the proliferation of Jupiter and Hercules types especially in the Tetrarchic post-reform coinage, seem more important due in part to the larger percent of these coins featuring Jupiter and Hercules over any other god.

There is also a definite evolution in how the panegyrics use the *signa*, as evidenced in the difference between the panegyrics of the ‘Dyarchy’ and the two panegyrics to Constantius (the Panegyrics of 297 and 298). The Panegyric of 297 is overwhelmingly concerned with recounting Constantius’ deeds as *Caesar invictus* and comparing him favourably with historical *exempla*;<sup>279</sup> there is less focus on dynastic language and the *signa*.<sup>280</sup> When the *signa* are

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<sup>276</sup> All coins from RIC VI. HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAESS NN (Carthage, 422 no. 3-5) is found for Maximian and Constantius; HERCVLI CONSER AVGG ET CAESS NN (Trier, 169 no. 43-5) for Maximian, Constantius, and also, intriguingly, Galerius; HERCVLI CONSERVATORI AVGG ET CAESS NN (Trier, 167 no. 28-30) seems to be primarily for Maximian. IOVI CONSERVAT AVGG ET CAESS NN (Trier, 170 no. 52-3) is found for Diocletian and Galerius, and the same for IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG ET CAESS NN (Carthage, 423, no. 6-7) More Hercules examples from the Trier mint survive than the others (The RIC VI lists two of the Hercules versions as R<sup>2</sup>, while the others are R<sup>4</sup>-R<sup>5</sup>).

<sup>277</sup> RIC VI, 423 no. 8-9: MARTI CONSERVATORI AVGG ET CAESS NN/MAXIMIANVS P F AVG; SOLI INVICT CONSERVAT AVGG ET CAESS NN/DIOCLETIANVS P F AVG.

<sup>278</sup> Potter (2014) 22; Barnes (2011) 57; Bardill (2012) 60, 73, 89, 91. Smith (2000) argues conclusively against Constantius’ special association with Sol. Hekster (2015) notes that Sol was a common third-century ‘conservator’ on coins (ex. Gallienus, Claudius, Aurelian, Florian, Probus). Note Bardill (2012) 91: “We can infer from the evidence presented previously that, although Sol was not important in the official Tetrarchic theology, there was nevertheless in Late Antiquity – as there had been under Aurelian, Augustus, and the earlier Hellenistic kings – a continuing association between the ruler, the sun, and a Golden Age of security and prosperity.”

<sup>279</sup> Discussed throughout Rees (2002) 95-129.

<sup>280</sup> Rees (2002) 121.

mentioned, the orator is explicit: *Iovio Herculioque principibus*.<sup>281</sup> To the elite likely to be in the audience, the *signa* were by this point common identifiers, made familiar through the gold coinage produced by the mint in the very city where the panegyric was given.<sup>282</sup> In contrast, Eumenius, the author of the Panegyric of 298, uses dynastic language less, but the *signa* more. However, Rodgers notes that Eumenius does not use the *signa* in the same way as the Dyarchic panegyrics: there is no equation of the emperor with the gods.<sup>283</sup> The panegyrist returns to the use of the *signum* Hercules, but links the god to education—Eumenius’ prime focus; he wanted imperial patronage to improve his school.<sup>284</sup> The *signa* are used again in 10.2, but in the plural rather than the singular form employed by the author of the Panegyric of 297. Eumenius also combines the *signa* and the language of family, echoing the language in the Panegyric of 289, when he links Constantius, Maximian, and their divine ancestor Hercules through the repetition of the *signum*: “Caesar Hercules and his grandfather Hercules and his father Hercules” (*Caesar Herculus et avi Herculis et Herculi patris*, 8.1).<sup>285</sup> Constantius is therefore placed in a successive dynasty of the *Herculii*; the familial language here is both literal and figurative—though what Rodgers calls “precise”.<sup>286</sup> While Hercules could not be literally Constantius’ grandfather (though such claims were made in antiquity), Maximian could be his father (through adoption). Constantius is called “Caesar Hercules” again in the same chapter (8.3), reinforcing the previously expressed relationship between Constantius and Hercules.

It is evident that there has been a change in the use of the *signa* over time. What may have started out c. 285 as a way of supporting Diocletian’s position as the senior emperor turned into a representation of family. By the time Lactantius wrote his *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, the *signa* could represent two distinct (but associated) families:

Where now are those surnames, recently so magnificent and famous, of the Jovii and the Herculii, which were first of all assumed with such arrogance by Diocles and Maximian, and then transferred to their successors and kept in active use by them?

*Ubi sunt modo magna illa et clara per gentes Ioviorum et Herculiorum cognomina, quae primum a Dioclete ac Maximiano*

<sup>281</sup> Rees (2002) 122 points out that the titles encompass only Diocletian and Maximian, as *Iovio* and *Herculio* are singular epithets; he explains this as part of the need to characterize Constantius individually.

<sup>282</sup> It is presumed that the panegyric was given at Trier: Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 105.

<sup>283</sup> Rodgers (1986) 80.

<sup>284</sup> Rees (2002) 147.

<sup>285</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.8.1. See also the discussion on this panegyric by Hekster (2015) 301-2.

<sup>286</sup> Rodgers (1986) 80.

*insolenter adsumpta ac postmodum ad successores eorum translata  
vigerunt?*<sup>287</sup>

The *signa*, therefore, cannot be considered as static. Their use developed over the period of twenty years and beyond to suit the needs of an equally evolving imperial ideology. They became useful to panegyrists and authors alike—and possibly to the emperors themselves—in order to propagate the concept of an imperial college unified through family. The *signa* were useful in claiming legitimation through divine election,<sup>288</sup> but the two forms of legitimacy were easily compatible, as seen through the claims for the emperors' divine ancestry. Upon the creation of a Tetrarchic family, the *signa* could be more easily manipulated in a dynastic sense which stayed more firmly in the realm of the human, using precise relationships to explain both the new imperial college and their religio-political connections to the divine. These divine and dynastic associations would be used and adapted by other emperors after the abdications of 305, and would still be important for Licinius' dynastic claims during his co-rule with Constantine more than two decades after the panegyrists of 297 and 298 proclaimed the emperors to belong to the families of the Iovii and the Herculii. The *signa* were not inherently dynastic—but they could be employed in such a manner if needed.

#### **iv. Lactantius and the polemic of familial relationships**

After the panegyrics, Lactantius is the other near-contemporary author to use clear dynastic terms when referring to the members of the Tetrarchic college. His representation of Maximian as Diocletian's brother has been discussed above: the relationship proves useful to Lactantius' invective, whereby he claims that the two were not unlike (*non dissimilis*) in order to expound upon their mutual and individual vices. His terming of the Tetrarchy as the families of the Iovii and the Herculii is useful for showing that the *signa* had an impact beyond the panegyrics. Lactantius' primary use for emphasizing familial relationships, however, is to focus on the impiety that can be discerned in how the family members of the Tetrarchy honour their relationships. He does not mention the relationships between the emperors as the authors of the *breviaria* do, to elucidate the complex political situation of the time. Instead, the moments when he uses kinship terms are when he is purposefully emphasizing the evil nature

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<sup>287</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 52.3.

<sup>288</sup> See Fears (1997) 180ff.

of the various emperors which he denigrates. I shall focus here on Lactantius' representation of the relationship between Diocletian and Galerius.<sup>289</sup>

Galerius is introduced as Diocletian's adopted son-in-law (*quem sibi generum Diocletianus asciverat*, 9.1)—which could also be understood as his son-in-law that he then adopted. Lactantius subverts this adoptive relationship later in that chapter by noting that “his father-in-law too was acutely afraid of him” (*socer quoque eum metuebat acerrime*, 9.4) because of Galerius' Persian victories. Lactantius emphasizes the relationship in order to point out the dysfunction: it is supposed to be the father who has *potestas* over his son, according to social and legal tradition in the Roman family,<sup>290</sup> but instead, Diocletian (here as *socer*) is powerless.

The implication of this fear and powerlessness is especially evident in Chapter 18 of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*. Lactantius narrates:

A few days later the Caesar arrived, not to congratulate his father, but to compel him to give up his power. [...] His first approach to Diocletian was gentle and friendly; he pointed out that he was now an old man, less strong than he had been, and no longer able to cope with the administration of the state; he ought to rest after his labours. At the same time, he cited the example of Nerva who had handed over power to Trajan. [...] If Diocletian refused to give way, he went on, he would look to his own interests. [...] On hearing this, the tired old man...replied in tears: ‘Let it be, then, if that is what you want.’”

*Nec multis post diebus Caesar advenit, non ut patri gratularetur, sed ut eum cogeret imperium cedere. [...] Aggressus est ergo Diocletianum primum molliter et amice, iam senem esse dicens, iam minus validum et administrandae rei publicae inhabilem; debere illum requiescere post labores. Simul et exemplum Nervae proferebat, qui imperium Traino tradidisset. [...] Si ipse cedere nolisset, se sibi consulturum [...] His auditis senex languidus...lacrimabundus, ‘fiat’, inquit, ‘si hoc placet.’*

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Lactantius has presented the relationship here so as to fulfil his own purpose of villainising Galerius. Firstly, he has described Diocletian not as *socer*, but as *pater* to heighten the impact

<sup>289</sup> Lactantius' representations of the other Tetrarchic relationships will be discussed elsewhere in this thesis when appropriate: see especially **II.4.iii**, for Maximinus Daza and Galerius, **III.2.i**, **III.4.i** for Maxentius and Maximian, **V.3.i-ii** for Maximian and Constantine, and **V.1**, **V.2i**, **V.4.ii** for Constantine and Constantius.

<sup>290</sup> Corbier (1991a) 128.

<sup>291</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 18.1, 2, 6, 7.



of the relationship: he is his father, not only his father-in-law. Galerius is presented here with all the invective Lactantius can muster: he is presented as gradually beating down the counter-arguments of a weak old man—an old man to whom, as the initial *pater* indicates, Galerius should be showing the utmost filial piety. The additional significance of Lactantius' use of *pater* over *socer* comes from the reference to Nerva and Trajan: another adoptive father-son pair. The comparison of Diocletian and Galerius' relationship to the now accepted and historicized relationship between Nerva and Trajan is interesting, as no one would doubt the traditionally beloved Trajan's legality or appropriateness as Nerva's successor. Lactantius implies that *pietas* towards an adopted father was still important. By highlighting the closeness of the relationship between Diocletian and Galerius, and comparing Galerius unfavourably with Trajan, Lactantius makes Galerius' *impietas* seem even more unforgiveable. If he owes his imperial power to his father, his misuse of that relationship therefore makes him unfit to rule.

Just as the panegyrics could employ dynastic language to underline the legitimacy of Constantius through his relationships to Maximian and Diocletian, so too could Lactantius manipulate the same language to highlight the inappropriateness of Galerius to rule. The coinage and the panegyrics both maintain a sense of familial and collegiate *concordia* and *fraternitas*. Lactantius tries to portray that *concordia* as a sham: the very man who was supposed to inspire loyalty instead quails before the *impietas* of his son.

#### **v. Rethinking Tetrarchic *concordia* and dynasty**

Thus far, I have argued that the representations of the Tetrarchy should be understood within the context of third-century imperial colleges, which also were inherently familial without calling attention to that fact through the use of explicit familial language. Different media used and adapted familial language and imagery in order to express collegiality in both stages of Diocletian's imperial college, but this language and imagery was used in different ways. For the Dyarchic stage there was more of a focus on a metaphorical *fraternitas* between two men who were not brothers (but were even better than natural brothers). For the Tetrarchic stage, when actual familial links were created and disseminated, imperial ideology and ways of praising the emperors evolved to represent the Tetrarchs as belonging to two distinct 'families', the *Iovii* and the *Herculii*.<sup>292</sup> Dynastic concepts, language, imagery, and ideas were

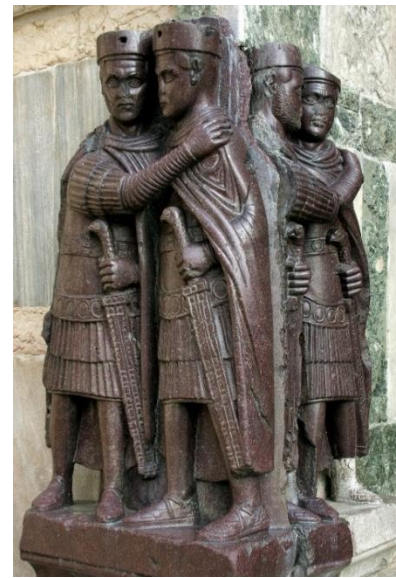
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<sup>292</sup> It is difficult to determine how much this ideology developed during the Tetrarchic period itself, at least from 293-305, as we have limited panegyrics (only to Constantius), and because many of the coins and surviving

therefore bound up in the presentation of the Tetrarchy. Briefly I wish to further discuss some of the primary arguments for the Tetrarchy as an ‘anti-dynastic’ institution.

*Concordia* has been previously discussed as an important theme and virtue for the Dyarchy; it continued under the Tetrarchy, to the point where the idea of imperial *concordia* has defined many modern approaches to the Tetrarchy. It has especially supported the argument that the Tetrarchy was explicitly non-dynastic. This approach is most commonly found in scholarship on Tetrarchic artwork, of which the most famous example is the ubiquitous porphyry sculpture from St. Mark’s Basilica, Venice (**fig. 1.21**). Scholars have described the statue group as presenting the ultimate picture of *concordia*: “With one hand they [the four Tetrarchs] grip their swords and with the other embrace each other. *Virtus* and *concordia augustorum*, the two fundamental and essential imperial virtues since Severan times, are here illustrated.”<sup>293</sup> Williams has insisted that the group displays “...a simple, strong message: the four brother generals, back to back, hands on their swords, loyally supporting one another...”<sup>294</sup> Yet Williams’ picture is fundamentally incorrect: as we have seen, imperial ideology did not present a picture of four equal emperors as brothers, but rather as a hierarchy of fathers and sons. In a familial group, however, *concordia* was still important. The *concordia* of the Tetrarchs is important to another visual presentation: the frescos of the imperial chamber in Luxor, Egypt, which unfortunately does not survive intact.<sup>295</sup>

The literary trope of the harmonious group of emperors is found not only in panegyrics but in other literature as well. In the *Caesares*, Julian describes Diocletian’s co-emperors as a choir around him, using words like ‘harmony’ (ὁμόνοια) to describe the group (and later, the discordancy which was promoted by a few members).<sup>296</sup> Likewise, Aurelius Victor



**Fig. 1.18: Porphyry statue group of Tetrarchs, St Mark's Basilica, Venice.**

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statuary is difficult to date to a specific point. The ‘Second Tetrarchy’ does show some distinct development, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>293</sup> Hannestad (1988) 305. Cf. Rees (1993) 181-199 on Tetrarchic imagery and *concordia* more broadly, including on the porphyry statue groups.

<sup>294</sup> Williams (1985) 64.

<sup>295</sup> I will not discuss the frescos in detail here, but for a description of the frescos, including images, see the very informative article by Kalavrezou-Maxeiner (1975) 244-288 especially. Some of Kalavrezou-Maxeiner’s comparisons are dated—those to the Piazza Armerina especially—but the descriptions and interpretations of the frescos themselves are interesting. The newest take on the imperial chamber at Luxor is Heidel & Johnson (2017) 39-60. Cf. Rees (1993) 183-186.

<sup>296</sup> Jul. *Caes.* 315B-D.

comments on the *concordia maxima* of the Tetrarchs,<sup>297</sup> and Orosius—who was no especial friend to the Tetrarchs—says of their reign:

There was also a condition of affairs previously unknown to mankind—the lasting association of a number of rulers at the same time, their remarkable harmony, and a joint sovereignty directed to the common good, now as never before.

*Res praeterea humano generi hucusque incognita: multorum simul regum patiens consortium et magna concordia potestasque communis, alias numquam, nunc in commune prospiciens.*<sup>298</sup>

The *concordia* expressed in these passages is certainly not explicitly dynastic in tone. No effort is made to explain the Tetrarchs' complicated relationships. But neither is it commented upon that the emperors were unrelated by birth. In the panegyrics, meanwhile, explicit professions of *concordia* were bypassed by the panegyrists of 297 and 298 in favour of a focus on the familial relationships of the emperors. *Concordia* was no doubt intended to be understood, and its use in the Dyarchic panegyrics to create a figurative *fraternitas* did not have as much relevance to an imperial college that was connected by more tangible bonds.

Other scholars focus on the idea of *similitudo* as representing imperial unity and *concordia*. Regarding the porphyry statue group, Bardill claims, “The similarity in appearance (*similitudo*) was not an attempt to suggest nonexistent hereditary dynastic links; rather it was a method of expressing visually the Tetrarchs' unity of purpose.”<sup>299</sup> Smith argues in the same way that the indistinguishability of the Tetrarchs in art indicates that the emperors forewent personal identity and dynasty in favour of a college of four, a ‘yoked team of empire’ (*multiugum imperium*), and in favour of *concordia*.<sup>300</sup> This is something that appears in scholarship regarding other types of material, including coinage. For instance, Abdy comments that Tetrarchic portraiture was “made to resemble the official image of Diocletian” but with slight variations,<sup>301</sup> but often that could be the limitations of the coin or the artist at work rather than deliberate policy. In fact, the most detailed coins show a disparity of looks; for instance, the Trier medallion of the four Tetrarchs (**fig. 1.17** above) hints at some differences in portraiture, especially Constantius' aquiline nose and Maximian's upturned one. Hekster, however, points out that usually only context enables us to identify which Tetrarch is which.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Aur. Vict. 39.28-29.

<sup>298</sup> Orosius 7.26.5-6.

<sup>299</sup> Bardill (2012) 68.

<sup>300</sup> Smith (1997) 180, 183; *Pan. Lat.* 6.15.5.

<sup>301</sup> Abdy (2006) 53.

<sup>302</sup> Hekster (2015) 281.

Additionally, the panegyrics specifically bring up *similitudo* of looks as something that Diocletian and Maximian do not have, but do not need to have: “You on the other hand rule in this fashion voluntarily, you whom not any resemblance of features, but rather resemblance of character, has made equal at the summit of affairs.”<sup>303</sup> It is instead a similarity of mind and purpose that the panegyrics propose, and which Lactantius repeats in his likening of Diocletian and Maximian’s characters. When the emperors are made to look visually similar, as on the porphyry statue group, this could be merely due to craftsmanship,<sup>304</sup> but it is also interesting that these scholars pick up on *similitudo* as proof of anti-dynastic sentiment. After all, when *similitudo* is focused on most in the panegyrics is in that of 307, when Constantine is said to have *similitudo* of both virtue and features with his father Constantius.<sup>305</sup> Visual similarity and the *concordia* that it infers, then, should not be taken as a mode of suppressing dynasticism, but perhaps could be seen as expressing it. Likewise, *concordia*—the virtue found so often on the medallions of third-century families—should not be understood as inherently anti-dynastic, but quite the opposite.

Another argument against Tetrarchic ‘dynasticism’ is that of Hekster on the absence of women in Tetrarchic ideology. He has claimed that the absence of imperial women on coinage (he terms the rulers ‘parents without wives or mothers’) is indicative of non-dynastic approaches to an imperial family.<sup>306</sup> He says that “The difference, for instance, with the immediately preceding period, in which Carinus’ wife Magnia Urbica was Augusta and visible on about 10 per cent of all central coin types, must have been noticeable.”<sup>307</sup> While Hekster argues that this must be a change “from the top”,<sup>308</sup> a simpler explanation could be that with two Caesars, the imperial college had no room to prominently celebrate a fifth member (a wife or mother), or equally that it would be impossible to celebrate all the Tetrarchic wives and mothers (Prisca, Eutropia, Valeria, and Theodora).<sup>309</sup> Additionally, women were not permitted to adopt, even as part of a couple,<sup>310</sup> although this rule perhaps did not apply to imperial wives.<sup>311</sup> There are no examples of mothers and adopted sons together on third-century

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<sup>303</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.9.6.

<sup>304</sup> As Smith (1997) 180 points out; cf. Hekster (2015) 280-281. Williams (1985) 150 notes that the trend for unifying portraiture seems to have come from Egypt.

<sup>305</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.4.3-4.

<sup>306</sup> Hekster (2015) 282-87.

<sup>307</sup> Hekster (2015) 283.

<sup>308</sup> Hekster (2015) 283.

<sup>309</sup> There are coins of Valeria and of Theodora, but these date from after 305; Valeria’s from 308 onwards and Theodora’s from much later, c. 337-338.

<sup>310</sup> Lindsay (2009) 71.

<sup>311</sup> See, for example, Lactantius’ suggestion that Galerius’ wife Valeria had adopted Galerius’ illegitimate son, Candidianus. (*Lact. Mort. Pers.* 50.2.)

coinage. This could be a possible explanation for the absence of women on imperial coinage under the Tetrarchy. Constantine's imperial college after 324 is perhaps another example of this: even after the elevation of his wife and his mother to *Augustae*, they did not appear on any of the numerous examples of dynastic multiple-bust coinage. Arguably, this presentation may be following on from Tetrarchic precedent, but it shows that women did not need to be included to convey dynasticism on coinage.

What is more intriguing is that some of the types that were associated with imperial women, such as *Pietas*, were mapped onto the emperors themselves. This can be seen through two series of aurei from Trier, which were minted for all four emperors (e.g. **fig. 1.22**).<sup>312</sup>



**Fig. 1.19: Galerius and Pietas with children.**<sup>313</sup>

The reverse type for both these legends features the personification of *Pietas* holding a child with another standing at her side. Often this and similar reverse types were minted for women, while simpler iterations of *Pietas* without the children were common on the coinage of emperors and their sons.<sup>314</sup> However, this ‘maternal’ *Pietas* was not exclusively for women. The mints of Antoninus Pius—unsurprisingly from his name—produced many examples for both the emperor and his Caesar (and adopted son) Marcus Aurelius.<sup>315</sup> The adoption of the *pietas* type by the men of the Tetrarchy at the exclusion of their wives and mothers, therefore, is not necessarily an example of the Tetrarchic exclusion of women, but the adaptation of a previous type that had evolved through the third century and still held importance. After all, as

<sup>312</sup> With legends *PIETAS AVG* and *PIETAS AVGG ET CAESS NN*.

<sup>313</sup> RIC VI, Treveri no. 74b. Reverse: *PIETAS AVGG ET CAESS NN*. Dating of this coin is uncertain; it could have been minted at any point between 294 and 305. Cf.

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1189473&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1189473&partId=1)

<sup>314</sup> E.g. Faustina the Younger, daughter of Antoninus Pius: RIC III, Antoninus Pius nos. 1369, 1379, 1302; Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus: RIC IV Septimius Severus no. 642; Plautilla, wife of Caracalla: RIC IV Caracalla nos. 367, 578, 581; and Otacilia Severa: RIC IV Philip no. 122, 133-4, 207.

<sup>315</sup> Antoninus Pius: RIC III nos. 302a-c, 313a-d, 977, 1002, 1016, 1031-2, 1035, 1045, 1048-9; Marcus Aurelius as Caesar: RIC III Antoninus Pius 449, 487a-b, 490, 1281a-b, 1293a-b, 1294, 1359, 1361a-b.

Manders points out, *pietas* was the most important virtue to communicate worthiness to rule in the third century.<sup>316</sup>

The Tetrarchy could therefore be both simultaneously a college and a family, like the other colleges of the third century and before. Concepts like *concordia* and *pietas* were bound up in the conception of the imperial college-family, whether through art or through literature, and though these virtues were sometimes employed in slightly different ways under the Tetrarchy, the overall effect does not therefore become ‘anti-dynastic.’ This chapter will not go into the question of the so-called ‘Second Tetrarchy’, the imperial college of Constantius and Galerius after the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian in 305. That abdication is the starting point for a college which should be considered separate from the First Tetrarchy, much like the Dyarchy has here been considered as separate from the Tetrarchy. This new imperial college of Constantius and especially Galerius signifies new ideologies, new loyalties, and the creation of new familial links. It has its basis in the First Tetrarchy, and the choice of successors may well have been Diocletian’s own, but it is important not to retroject the events of 305 upon the earlier colleges. The creation of the Second Tetrarchy too often overshadows discussions of the First, and in my analysis I have attempted to avoid just that.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the question of the extent to which dynasty can be considered a part of the creation of legitimation in the Tetrarchy. While it is evident from careful consideration of coinage and literature that both *constructions* and *perceptions* of dynastic legitimacies were definitely a part of Tetrarchic and post-Tetrarchic political discourse, it is also important not to overemphasize such dynastic elements. The portrayal of the Tetrarchy as a dynasty, bound together through adoption, marriage, tradition, titulature, and divine *signa* is only one element of legitimation within a large corpus of techniques that emperors were able to employ. Diocletian’s college built upon pre-existing colleges, rather than being wholly novel and innovative.

Nor is it correct to infer that dynastic legitimation was the most important technique used by the Tetrarchs. I merely argue that it was indeed present, both subtly—as the dynastic expectations embodied in the role of *Caesar*—and more overtly—as the relationships are represented in the *Panegyrici Latini*. Legitimacy through dynasty was not necessarily the most

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<sup>316</sup> Manders (2012) 178.

effective form of legitimation, but it offered the hope of stability: the comfort of continuation from past emperors as well as promises for the future. Diocletian created no fictive links to the past as Constantine later would with his claimed lineage from Claudius Gothicus, but the Tetrarchy set up the structure which would later be drawn upon by succeeding generations of emperors to proclaim their own legitimacy as sons of imperial blood. There is also an argument for varying levels of dynasticism evident over time. The pre-reform coinage continues the traditions of the third-century, while post-reform coinage uses dynasticism as it would have been understood in the *signa* to promote the relationships and *concordia* of the Tetrarchy.

The Tetrarchy was not a family in the conventional sense, but it was described in familiar, dynastic terms, and there were attempts to create a family that relied on normal methods of extending the family that were used throughout the Roman Empire. Emperors and authors alike were able to use this conception of the Tetrarchy as a college and a family to further their own ideologies and rhetorical intents. The emperors of the Tetrarchy created, disseminated, and promoted relationships that later emperors were able to use and manipulate in order to create legitimizing constructs of their own. The techniques used by later emperors like Maximinus Daza, Maxentius, Licinius, and Constantine were built upon the structure of the Tetrarchy, even when the emperors themselves might reject Tetrarchic authority. These constructions will be explored in more detail in the following chapters, focusing on the techniques used by the individual emperors of the post-Tetrarchic period. These emperors adapted these techniques, just as the different evolutions of the imperial college of Diocletian should be understood as adaptations of third-century imperial colleges and families rather than the systematic establishment of an ‘anti-dynastic’ college.





## CHAPTER TWO

### Galerius, Maximinus Daza, and the Evolution of the Tetrarchy

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The gaze of all was on Constantine, no one had any doubt; ... [Diocletian said that] he was handing over the imperial power to men who were more robust, and was appointing other Caesars in their place. There was tremendous excitement on all sides as to what he was going to tell them. Then suddenly he proclaimed Severus and Maximian as Caesars. Everyone was thunderstruck. Constantine was standing up on the platform, and people hesitated, wondering whether his name had been changed. But then in view of everybody Maximian [Galerius] stretched his hand back and drew Daza out from behind him, pushing Constantine away... Everyone wondered who he was and where he came from, but no one dared to shout out any objection amid the general consternation at this new and unexpected development.

*Constantinum omnes intuebantur; nulla erat dubitatio; ...imperium validioribus tradere, alios Caesares subrogare. Summa omnium expectatio, quid afferet. Tunc repente pronuntiat Severum et Maximinum Caesares. Obstupefiunt omnes. In tribunali Constantinus adstabat susum. Haesitare inter se num Constantino immutatum nomen esset, cum in conspectu omnium Maximianus manum retrorsus extendens protraxit a tergo Daiam Constantino repulso...Mirari omnes qui esset, unde esset. Nemo tamen reclamare ausus est cunctis insperatae novitate rei turbatis.*

Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 19.1, 3-5.<sup>1</sup>

This passage from the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, which tells of the elevation of Maximinus Daza in 305, is the most detailed surviving account of the transition from the ‘First Tetrarchy’ of Diocletian and Maximian to the ‘Second Tetrarchy’ of 305-306. In 305, Diocletian and Maximian stepped down from power, and Galerius and Constantius I, their Caesars, heirs, and adopted sons, took up the mantle of Augusti. Two new Caesars were chosen, but they were not Constantine and Maxentius, the sons of emperors. Instead—in what seems a

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<sup>1</sup> Translation adapted from Creed (1984).

clear rejection of dynastic principles—the title was given to men whom Lactantius calls a “drunken, intoxicated devotee of the dance” (*saltatorem temulentum ebriosum*) and a “half-barbarian young man” (*adulescentem quendam semibarbarum*).<sup>2</sup> These men were Severus and Maximinus Daza, the Caesars in the West and East respectively.<sup>3</sup>

Lactantius’ entire account of the elevation of the Caesars is clearly prejudiced against Daza in favour of Constantine. It is also, as Mackay has pointed out, highly rhetorical and polemical. Mackay goes so far as to say that Lactantius “completely misrepresents this situation in order to bolster the claims of his hero Constantine.”<sup>4</sup> Yet it is precisely this aspect of Lactantius’ account which is valuable; it is an exploration into the ways in which imperial legitimacy could be challenged. Within the narrative of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, Maximinus Daza is the last persecutor, the final evil to be overthrown. Lactantius does not rely merely on describing him as an evil persecutor, however; he spends time in undermining Daza’s claims to imperial legitimacy from the start. As Mackay has examined in detail, Lactantius continually subverts and dismisses the dynastic links that Daza could claim to Galerius.<sup>5</sup> This passage goes further, representing Constantine as the rightful Caesar in the East but who had been robbed of his title through Galerius’ schemes.

The soldiers fully expect Constantine to be named Caesar (*nulla erat dubitatio*); they are completely shocked (*obstupefiunt omnes*) when he is not proclaimed so; and they are so confused that they even wonder if he had changed his name. The drama is heightened still further when Galerius physically pushes Constantine away to make room for Daza. Unlike Constantine, who was known and liked by all the soldiers present, nobody even knew who Daza was (*mirari omnes qui esset, unde esset*). The whole incident is unexpected (*insperatae*). Within the narrative of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, the accession of Daza is evidence of Galerius’ coup behind the scenes, a political manoeuvring that literally pushed aside the claims of Constantine (and, to some extent, Maxentius) in favour of Galerius’ own creatures.

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<sup>2</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 18.12-13.

<sup>3</sup> I have chosen to call this emperor Maximinus Daza instead of Maximin Daia or one of the other variations on the name. Regarding this, Ps.-Vict. (40.18) comments that Daza’s name “before imperium” was Daca. Mackay (1999) 207-209 believes this to be an incorrect modern reading of Daza, the name he finds preferable to Lactantius’ Daia. I have followed Mackay, sticking with ‘Daza’.

<sup>4</sup> Mackay (1999) 207. Mackay does an excellent job of exposing Lactantius’ rhetoric as concerns Maximinus Daza, but he is, at the same time, overly polemic towards Lactantius, dismissing him entirely as a useful narrative source.

<sup>5</sup> Mackay (1999) 202-4; 206: Mackay suggests that the name ‘Maximinus’ given to Daza indicates Galerius’ “dynastic intentions”.

However, Barnes suggests that the surprise might not come from the fact that Constantine had been overlooked, but that “new dynastic arrangements had been announced to the world”.<sup>6</sup>

There is no reason to assume that this passage, or indeed any of what Lactantius suggests regarding the succession in 305, truly represents the details of what happened. Probably it is instead a dramatic reinterpretation—which of course was typical of Roman historiography.<sup>7</sup> Its value lies instead in Lactantius’ representation of the situation. Lactantius’ nameless soldiers expect Constantine to be made emperor; previously in the narrative, Lactantius has Diocletian express the same expectations.

It remained to choose Caesars by common agreement among them all.  
 ‘But what need is there of an agreement,’ Maximian [Galerius] asked,  
 ‘when the other two must accept whatever we do?’ ‘They obviously will  
 accept it,’ said Diocletian, ‘since we must plainly appoint their sons.’  
*Supererat ut communi consilio omnium Caesares legerentur. ‘Quid opus  
 est consilio, cum sit necesse illis duobus placere quicquid nos  
 fecerimus?’—‘Ita plane. Nam illorum filios nuncupari necesse est.’*<sup>8</sup>

When Galerius tells Diocletian that instead he wishes Severus and Daza to be the new Caesars, Diocletian decries them as unsuited for the office (‘*non idoneos homines mihi das, quibus tutela rei publicae committi possit*’, 18.14). Indeed, Daza’s only apparent qualification is that he is an *affinis* (or *adfinis*) of Galerius.<sup>9</sup> It is through passages like these that Lactantius represents Galerius’ imperial college as illegitimate—the Caesars were not chosen by ‘common consent’ (*communi consilio*) but through Galerius’ forcing Diocletian to acquiesce to his demands. These demands are portrayed as unnatural, going against both dynastic succession (at least of sons) and inherent suitability for the role. It is notable that it is Daza, not Severus, who supposedly took Constantine’s place as Caesar. This has led to the suggestion that Constantine was being primed to take over the eastern Caesar role despite his being the son of a western emperor, an argument which is supported by Constantine’s military service under Galerius.<sup>10</sup> In terms of the narrative of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, it is also more suitable for Lactantius’ rhetoric that from the beginning it is Daza, rather than Severus, who is ‘illegitimate’, a ‘usurper’ of Constantine’s place as eastern Caesar, and the ultimate enemy to

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<sup>6</sup> Barnes (2011) 60.

<sup>7</sup> Harries (2012) 42 says that Lactantius may have been an eyewitness to some of the events, as he was likely in the East at the time, but although he was a prominent rhetorician in Nicomedia, we should not go so far as to assume that he was present at Daza’s elevation. Certainly, he could not have been present for the ‘conversation’ between Diocletian and Galerius (which follows in the main discussion.)

<sup>8</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 18.8.

<sup>9</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 18.14.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Barnes (1981) 25, (2011) 52-54.

be defeated. That Daza also had dynastic claims was, as Lenski argues, a further slight against Constantine and Maxentius.<sup>11</sup> In Lactantius' narrative, however, the claims of an *adfinis* should not challenge the claims of a *filius*.

The *expectations* of dynastic succession, therefore, could play a vital role in the presentation of imperial legitimacy, and Lactantius uses these expectations (as well as hindsight, knowing Constantine's use of Constantius as a legitimation factor) to his full advantage to craft the rhetoric he deploys against Galerius' college and especially Maximinus Daza.<sup>12</sup> In the narrative of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, both Diocletian and the soldiers expect Constantine to be Caesar, but it is through the nefarious scheming of Galerius that he is kept from his rightful title. This narrative is easily dismissed as unsubtle, a way of Lactantius boldly manipulating the facts. Alternatively, it could be characterized as an attempt to explain something that is undoubtedly strange—the passing over of two imperial sons in favour of others.

It is this exclusion of dynastic principles that modern scholars fix upon in their explorations of the Tetrarchy, and not without reason, for at first glance it seems to define the Tetrarchic 'system' as a "meritocracy" built on explicitly anti-dynastic principles.<sup>13</sup> Scholars certainly do not all agree on how to understand the Second Tetrarchy and the events in 305 and afterwards. Bill Leadbetter sees the Second Tetrarchy as two competing dynasties, the second generations of the Iovii and the Herculii.<sup>14</sup> Olivier Hekster sees the Tetrarchic system as being replaced by a dynastic system after the ill-fated Second Tetrarchy.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, but more negatively, Stephen Williams argues that dynastic claims brought down the Tetrarchic system.<sup>16</sup> As with the First Tetrarchy, scholarship tends to represent a dichotomy between the ideas of 'family' and 'college', or between 'dynastic' and 'Tetrarchic'. As I suggested in the previous chapter, however, these concepts are not necessarily opposites. As the First Tetrarchy showed that the line between imperial families and imperial colleges was blurred, the Second

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<sup>11</sup> Lenski (2005) 61. Cf. Potter (2013) 100, who suggests that Daza and Maxentius had the best dynastic claims to the succession.

<sup>12</sup> I will use the phrase 'Galerian college' at times throughout this chapter. In truth, however, Galerius had multiple colleges, and I have tried to draw lines between the different versions of his 'tetrarchies' when possible, instead of understanding the college of 306 as the same as the one of 308, etc. For the idea of a Galerian college as an extended family (especially as deriving from a passage of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*), see **section 4**.

<sup>13</sup> The Tetrarchy has been dubbed a "meritocracy" by, e.g. Börm (2015) 245 and Stephenson (2009) 130-1, 223. Other authors who comment on the Tetrarchy as non-dynastic include: Hekster (2015) 232, 278, 288; Lenski (2005) 74; Van Dam (2007) 12, 80, 104; Potter (2014) 350; Williams (1985) 209; Rees (2002) 98; Stephenson (2009) 87-88; Bardill (2012) 68; MacMullen (1970) 20-21.

<sup>14</sup> See especially Leadbetter (2009) 156-167, 170-205.

<sup>15</sup> Hekster (2015) 288-297.

<sup>16</sup> Williams (1985) 197-98.

Tetrarchy was not wholly ‘anti-dynastic’ either. For example, Daza is dismissed by Lactantius as an *affinis/adfinis*, an imprecise term to describe familial relationships but usually indicating a relation by marriage.<sup>17</sup> Mackay, on the other hand, believes Daza to be Galerius’ nephew.<sup>18</sup> Daza’s ties to Galerius, however, are stronger than this term implies, both naturally and through constructed kinship. Instead, the Second Tetrarchy and the subsequent forms of the imperial ‘Tetrarchic’ college until Maximinus Daza’s death in 313 show the evolving delineations of what constituted a ‘college’ or a ‘family’.

The previous chapter argued for a Tetrarchy that was simultaneously a ‘college’ and a ‘family’, dynastic in its continuity with and adaptation of the traditions of the third century. Yet it is important to note that the situation in 293, when Constantius and Galerius were made Caesars, was vastly different than in 305, when Severus and Daza were. Just because there appears (at least, at first glance) to be an obvious attempt to exclude family members in 305 does not mean that the First Tetrarchy was also based upon purposefully non-dynastic principles. Equally, however, it would be unwise to assume that because dynastic expressions were used to characterize the First Tetrarchy, the same expressions were employed by and for the Second Tetrarchy.

The imperial colleges of the early fourth century, especially after the death of Constantius in 306, clearly show the attempts of Galerius to consolidate his power. Leadbetter has argued for a Second Tetrarchy heavily influenced by Galerius’ own political and dynastic wishes, or at least a scenario in which Galerius’ personal ambitions won out over Constantius.<sup>19</sup> Whether the elevation of Maximinus Daza instead of Constantine in 305 was at Galerius’ instigation, as Lactantius and Leadbetter suggest, or whether it was the result of an ‘anti-dynastic’ system set up years beforehand by Diocletian, is impossible to know for certain. What is clear is that the representations of the Tetrarchic emperors continued to change and adapt according to political pressures. There is both continuity and change in the techniques which were used to emphasize dynastic claims to legitimacy as well as ‘collegiality’, and this evolution will be explored throughout this chapter. Overall, however, the period of AD 305-313 is marked by political chaos, and this is reflected in the material. Changes in ideology help distinguish between the different colleges, even those helmed by Galerius.

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<sup>17</sup> Hekster (2015) 295.

<sup>18</sup> Mackay (1999), but Barnes (1999) offers an explanation to keep *adfinis* (though he also agrees that Daza was Galerius’ nephew). Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 141.

<sup>19</sup> See note 178; cf. Leadbetter (2009) 142: “The identity of the new Caesars, then, does not reflect a political victory of Galerius over Diocletian, but of Galerius over Constantius.”

Therefore, this chapter will attempt to examine these different colleges separately when possible, rather than viewing the ‘Second Tetrarchy’ (and the ‘Third’ and ‘Fourth’) as a single political entity with revolving members. I will look at these colleges in roughly chronological order. In **section 2**, I will examine the Second Tetrarchy as a ‘continuation’ of the First. **Section 3** will examine the slow disintegration and adaptations of the system after the death of Constantius, especially how dynastic and collegiate strategies of legitimation were employed differently in the east and the west, e.g. the ‘Iovii’ and the ‘Herculii’. **Section 4** will discuss the dynastic legitimation strategies of Galerius’ imperial ‘Iovian’ family, the last years of the reign of Maximinus Daza, culminating in the destruction of these dynastic claims.

## 2. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECOND TETRARCHY (AD 305-306)

The Second Tetrarchy looks much like the First; there are no drastic changes in its formation or presentation. The imperial college once again consisted of two Augusti and two Caesars, whose ranks were proclaimed on coinage, in inscriptions, and probably in panegyric as well.<sup>20</sup> Diocletian and Maximian continued to be honoured on inscriptions and in coins, but not as ruling emperors, holding instead the apparently ceremonial title of *Seniores Augusti*. As with the First Tetrarchy, any familial links that do exist are not blatant; coins and inscriptions do not include kinship terms to describe the relationships between emperors during this period.<sup>21</sup>

At the heart of the debate between ‘dynasty’ and ‘collegiality’ in the Tetrarchy is the question of how scholars interpret the establishment of the Second Tetrarchy in 305. It seems almost painfully clear that this imperial college avoided or disregarded dynastic principles in the succession of 305—certainly the constituent emperors of the Second Tetrarchy were not brothers or sons to each other by birth. Instead, both Severus and Maximinus Daza were military men, like Constantius and Galerius before them; Severus was apparently a high-ranking military officer (Barnes suggests even a praetorian prefect), and Daza had some military experience before his elevation.<sup>22</sup> However, the familial links crafted and employed in

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<sup>20</sup> The only panegyrics that survive from the period after 305 are to Constantine, although the Panegyric of 307 is to both Constantine and Maximian. By nature of their being addressed to western emperors, the panegyrics do not mention Daza at all; Severus is mentioned only in the context of his defeat by Maxentius (*Pan. Lat.* 12.3.4). This perhaps reveals more about the focus of panegyrics and the difficulties of addressing panegyrics to one emperor out of four than it does about a lack of imperial unity.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Hekster (2015) 278-9. The epigraphic evidence does not seem to be from a directly imperial or central source, but instead dedicated by provincial officials or found on milestones.

<sup>22</sup> Eutrop. 10.1-2; Aur. Vict. 40.1; Ps.-Vict. 40.1; *Origo* 3-4; Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 19.6. Cf. Barnes (1981) 26, (1982) 38-39 for the pre-elevation careers of Severus and Daza.

the presentation of the First Tetrarchy are also true for the Second. The adopted sons Constantius and Galerius were elevated to Augusti, and their new Caesars were also bound to the imperial college through familial relationships, both of blood (in the case of Maximinus Daza) and of ‘constructed’ relationships such as adoption.

This section will explore continuity and change in concepts of ‘dynasty’ and ‘collegiality’ for the Second Tetrarchy in light of this debate, primarily by examining the promotion of Severus and Maximinus Daza as Caesars, the presentation of the college as a whole, and the new place of the retired Augusti, Diocletian and Maximian.

### **i. Severus and Maximinus Daza as Caesars and sons**

Severus and Maximinus Daza were presented as Caesars in a variety of media, in line with the traditions of the third century. Just as Constantius and Galerius had been incorporated into the First Tetrarchy through adoption and marriage, Severus and Daza were also adopted by their respective Augusti. Yet these adoptions are not as prominently recorded as those of the First Tetrarchy. In fact, the adoption of Severus is completely invisible in the literary evidence, and does not appear to be promoted in the numismatic evidence. This can be easily explained by the success and prominence of Constantius’ own son, Constantine, who could claim both a blood-relationship with Constantius and the title of Caesar from July 306 onwards. The adoption of Daza is implied by Lactantius: “to [Daza] he had recently ordered the name ‘Maximinus’ to be given after his own name” (*quem recens iusserat Maximinum vocari de suo nomine*).<sup>23</sup> This, however, is complicated by Lactantius’ use of the vague *affinis* to describe Daza’s relationship to Galerius, as has been mentioned above.<sup>24</sup> Yet the adoptions are clearly reflected in the titulature of both men: Severus is often ‘Flavius Valerius’ on coins and invariably on inscriptions, the same as Constantius, while Daza has taken ‘Galerius Valerius’ after his uncle and adoptive father.<sup>25</sup> The similarities between Galerius and Daza in name, as well as in their literary afterlives as *tyranni*, led to some confusion even just a few centuries later: Zonaras, writing in the twelfth century, confuses the two figures, saying for example that ‘Maximinus’ chose Licinius as a co-emperor and died from an infected ulcer.<sup>26</sup> Other sources

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<sup>23</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 18.13.

<sup>24</sup> Mackay (1999).

<sup>25</sup> Van Dam (2007) 91, n. 13.

<sup>26</sup> Zonar. 12.34.1.

mention the elevation of the new Caesars but only briefly or without much comment,<sup>27</sup> or else frame it within a narrative focused on Constantine.<sup>28</sup>

Few authors mention the fact that Daza had familial links to Galerius beyond what Lactantius dismisses as those of a distant *affinis*. Pseudo-Victor and Zosimus both report a tradition stating that Daza was the son of Galerius' (unnamed and otherwise unknown) sister.<sup>29</sup> Pseudo-Victor's chronology is often confused, but this is a detail that does not survive in the other brief narratives of the reign. Either as an *affinis* or a nephew, Daza was still a relation of Galerius, who—like Diocletian—had no son of his own, so chose to adopt one. While Daza could claim a blood relationship to Galerius in addition to his adoption, however, the same cannot be said for Severus. The *Origo* disparages Severus (and indirectly Galerius) for his drinking and, more importantly, his low birth—he is called *ignobilis et moribus et natalibus*.<sup>30</sup>

Some authors did not only omit mention of Daza's adoptive or blood relationships to Galerius, but also explicitly undermine his claims to dynastic legitimation. Eutropius makes an intriguing statement about Daza's status, although it refers to the situation in 308 rather than 305. He says that after the death of Galerius, the empire was ruled by four men: Constantius and Maxentius, “sons of emperors” (*filiis Augustorum*), and Licinius and Maximinus Daza, “new-made men” (*novis hominibus*), or as a nineteenth-century translator terms it, “sons of undistinguished men.”<sup>31</sup> (Severus is long dead by this point in the narrative and thus does not feature in the comparison). Although Watson's translation is stretching the analogy too far—the context of the term *novus homo* is important in Republican Rome—it is clear that the two phrases, *filiis Augustorum* and *novis hominibus*, were meant to be taken as opposites. Daza's new status as the son of an emperor is ignored—perhaps deliberately, or perhaps Eutropius focused instead on his initial status. The *Chronicon Paschale* also reports Daza's ‘undistinguished’ background: “he wasted his great army since he was a usurper (τύραννός) of low birth (ἀγεννής).”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> E.g., Aurelius Victor 40.1 mentions the Caesars' appointments only briefly as an explanation for Constantine's plans for his own elevation.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. *Origo* 4.9: “Accordingly Galerius made Caesars of him [Severus] and Maximinus [Daza], without Constantine having knowledge of any such step.” *Hunc ergo et Maximinum Caesares Galerius fecit, Constantino nihil tale noscente*. Trans. Rolfe (1952). It is interesting that this explanation of events contradicts Lactantius' dramatic narrative of surprise, with Constantine present.

<sup>29</sup> Ps.-Vict. 40.1: *Galerii sororis filio*; Zos. 2.8.1: ἀδελφῆς ὄντα παῖδα τοῦ Γαλερίου.

<sup>30</sup> *Origo* 4.9: “Severus Caesar was ignoble both in his way of life and his birth, a drunkard, and thus a friend of Galerius.” *Severus Caesar ignobilis et moribus et natalibus, ebriosus et hoc Galerio amicus*. Trans. Stevenson (1996).

<sup>31</sup> Eutropius 10.4: *Ita res publica tum a novis quattuor imperatoribus tenebatur, Constantino et Maxentio, filiis Augustorum, Licinio et Maximino, novis hominibus*. Trans. Watson 1886. Cf. Orosius 7.28.14.

<sup>32</sup> πολὺν στρατὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἀναλώσας, οἷα τύραννός τις ὢν καὶ ἀγεννῆς (Dindorf, p. 521). Trans. Whitby & Whitby.



Although Severus and Daza were undoubtedly Caesars and likewise adopted sons, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these constructed relationships were promoted. It is also uncertain if Daza or Severus entered into ‘dynastic’ marriages like their predecessors Constantius and Galerius had. Although we know that Daza had a wife, we know nothing of her; Lactantius is uncomplimentary, but that is hardly surprising.<sup>33</sup> Potter states that Daza was married to a daughter of Galerius (another besides Valeria Maximilla), but he does not suggest any evidence for this statement.<sup>34</sup> His comment may derive from a suggestion by Barnes concerning the term *adfinis/affinis*, which often means a relation by marriage; Barnes proposes that Daza married into Galerius’ family, but does not go so far as to suggest the existence of another daughter.<sup>35</sup> Thus, based on the traditional use of the term *adfinis*, there is the possibility that the literary sources who report that Daza was a nephew of Galerius are incorrect, or are derived from a single mistaken source. One piece of evidence against the idea that Daza was married to a daughter of Galerius may be Lactantius’ story of Daza’s desire to marry Valeria (see 4.ii); if Daza were already married to a daughter of Galerius, he would hardly need to wed Valeria for further legitimation. This story, however, may be invented wholly to disparage Daza.<sup>36</sup> In the end, it is futile to attempt to determine who Daza’s wife was without further evidence. The fact that Daza was adopted by Galerius and was made his Caesar and heir supersedes all other relationships, at least in terms of Daza’s presentations of imperial legitimacy, especially later in his reign.<sup>37</sup>

As Caesars, Daza and Severus were also promoted as *principes iuventutis*, which the previous chapter has shown was a title clearly linked with both the role of Caesar and with imperial (dynastic) succession. The title for the new Caesars appears on an inscription (likely on a milestone) to the Second Tetrarchy of 305-306 naming them *Caess(aribus) princ(ipibus) iuv(entutis)*.<sup>38</sup> Another inscription puts the title first in Severus’ honorifics: *Principi iuv/entutis domino / nostro Flavi[o] / [Val]erio / Severo no/bilissimo ac / baeatissimo(!) / Caesari*.<sup>39</sup> Both Caesars also had coins with the *princeps iuventutis* reverse type minted to them in 305-306

<sup>33</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 50.6. Cf. Barnes (1981) 64.

<sup>34</sup> Potter (2013) 101.

<sup>35</sup> Barnes (2011) 58-59; cf. Barnes (1999). The fact that Valeria Maximilla was married to Maxentius and not to Galerius’ future Caesar is certainly interesting.

<sup>36</sup> See Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 39.1.

<sup>37</sup> See 3.iv and 4 for more discussion on this topic.

<sup>38</sup> AE (1984) 0449, from Sardinia. <http://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD003019>

<sup>39</sup> AE (1954) 0010b, from ancient Cilicia, modern-day Turkey. The inscription is now lost. <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/database/detail.php?record=LSA-535>

from a number of mints from Severus' base in Italy and the Balkans.<sup>40</sup> Rome had a long-standing tradition of minting *princeps iuventutis* coins;<sup>41</sup> and Sardica was close to Galerius' Danubian campaigns in this period.<sup>42</sup> The aptness of the title *princeps iuventutis* did not matter: Constantius and Galerius had shown that age was not of relevance for this expression of dynastic imperial legitimacy. What was more important was that Severus and Daza were being set up as the successors in a way that had worked for their predecessors Constantius and Galerius—the only third-century Caesars (and *principes iuventutis*) since Caracalla whose fathers' regimes had not failed before they themselves were given the chance to rule.

The new Caesars were also portrayed by other numismatic techniques used by the familial colleges of the third century, though even less prominently than with the *princeps iuventutis* title. Bronze coins from London in 305-306—possibly when Constantius was campaigning in Britain—feature the jugate busts of Severus and Daza with the obverse legend of SEVERVS ET MAXIMINVS NB C, accompanied by a standard GENIO POPVLI ROMANI reverse.<sup>43</sup> This is in line with third-century examples of jugate bust pairings from the First Tetrarchy and before, which often feature 'fraternal' representations of co-emperors in this way, such as Constantine and Galerius or Carinus and Numerian (see **I.2.ii**, **I.4.ii**). What is notable about this example is that it is the only one from the Second Tetrarchy and afterwards. Although in 305-306 the pairing of busts was still a way to present co-rule, this technique would not be employed again until the co-rule of Constantine and Licinius, more than a decade later. There is no example of the Second Tetrarchy together on one coin, as there was for the First (**fig. 1.17** above), but there seem to have been carved stone 'medallions' that represented the Second Tetrarchy (in pairs of Augustus and Caesar, as well as one of the Senior Augusti, all facing outward), at Gamzigrad.<sup>44</sup>

Another interesting example of the pairing of emperors is found on a gold coin to Constantius from Sisak with the reverse legend CONCORDIA AVGG ET CAESS, with a reverse type showing an Augustus and Caesar (somewhat distinguishable by size), togate and

<sup>40</sup> From 305-307: RIC VI Trier nos. 615, 627 (Daza, gold), Rome nos. 125, 127 (Severus, aes), Siscia no. 151 (Daza, gold), Serdica nos. 8a-9b (Daza and Severus, gold).

<sup>41</sup> Though Severus' base was in Milan, cf. Barnes (1982) 65. On Severus' mints, Sutherland (1967) 47 comments that Ticinum/Pavia and Aquileia were given more importance than Rome.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Barnes (1982) 61-64.

<sup>43</sup> RIC VI, p. 127, Londinium nos. 74-75. Sutherland gives two variations on the legend, SEVERVS ET MAXIMINVS NB C and NO C. The addendum to the LMCC suggests that the latter is a misreading of the former: [http://www.hookmoor.com/home/?page\\_id=675](http://www.hookmoor.com/home/?page_id=675)

<sup>44</sup> Srejović (1994) 144-146, cf. Figs. 1-5.

facing each other, holding a globe between them and accompanied by a wreath with XX, a votive for twenty years of rule (**fig. 2.1**).<sup>45</sup>



**Fig. 2.1:** Constantius Augustus with reverse of Augustus and Caesar (?).<sup>46</sup>

Sutherland identifies the figures as Constantius and Severus: it seems an apt description, although conceivably it could instead represent Constantius and Galerius, especially when considering the votive wreath.<sup>47</sup> If we assume Sutherland's interpretation is correct, it may be worth considering that the mint of Sisak would have been under Severus' control.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, the image, although it does not name Severus explicitly, nevertheless conveys a sense of the bestowing of power upon a Caesar, who then shares in it. The idea of this relationship of power is similar to coins from third-century joint rule, which depict two emperors doing a variety of activities (sacrificing, riding, etc.) together, or the more elaborate depictions of the two emperors seated side-by-side on a platform. There was also a medallion from Ticinum from around 294 with the same reverse legend of *concordia*: this one, minted to Maximian, showed two emperors sacrificing—it is unclear whether it depicts Diocletian and Maximian, or Maximian and Constantius, and Sutherland makes no attempt to identify them.<sup>49</sup> Such activities were related to the role of emperor rather than explicitly 'familial' portrayals, but they belong in a tradition of third-century power-sharing (*concordia*) that was inherently familial (see **I.2.ii**).

These examples of possibly 'familial' titles and presentation are not common in the epigraphic and numismatic records of the Second Tetrarchy, but they do show that the *princeps iuventutis* title was in still in use as more than a lingering vestige of the third century. The inscriptions from Sardinia and Cilicia indicate that officials on opposite sides of the empire

<sup>45</sup> RIC VI, p. 471, Siscia no. 148.

<sup>46</sup> RIC VI, Siscia no. 148. CONSTANTIVS P F AVG/CONCORDIA AVGG ET CAESS.

<sup>47</sup> Sutherland (1967) 448, the inclusion of CAESS in the legend and the disparate sizes led to Sutherland's identification.

<sup>48</sup> Sutherland (1967) 47-8, 448.

<sup>49</sup> RIC VI, Ticinum no. 1.

deemed it an acceptable title to use to honour the new Caesars. Likewise, imperial regimes and mints chose the *princeps iuventutis* title and traditionally dynastic visual presentations, both of which were steeped in third-century tradition and the implications of imperial dynastic succession, in order to bolster the new Caesars' positions as sons and heirs within the new imperial college of the Second Tetrarchy.

Overall, the coinage of the Second Tetrarchy shows an evolution in ways of presenting the imperial college—which in many ways was as much a 'familial' college as the First. Some of these techniques would fall into disuse, especially the presentation of co-rulership through the use of jugate or facing busts. This would be replaced on coinage by more inherently 'Tetrarchic' ideas, such as the continued promotion of *concordia* and an apparent emphasis on the ranks of the Tetrarchy, which will be discussed in the next section. Some techniques, however, would thrive—especially the *princeps iuventutis* title, which would be wholly embraced by the mints under Constantine's control after his accession in 306.

## ii. Formation and presentation of a new college

Upon his elevation, Constantius was apparently considered the new head of the Tetrarchy, the 'senior' Augustus in a different way than Diocletian and Maximian now were; this is reinforced by his being listed first on inscriptions, as he also was as Caesar. Possibly this was due to seniority of his age, of time as Caesar, or of position.<sup>50</sup> Leadbetter, however, argues that the outcome of the retirement was for Galerius' greater benefit;<sup>51</sup> this is certainly the impression that Lactantius gives, where the elevation of Severus and Daza seems to indicate the power of Galerius' influence on the situation.<sup>52</sup> Eutropius also attributes to Galerius the active responsibility of choosing both Caesars (*Galerius...Caesares duos creavit*) but at the same time he gives an overall positive view of the emperor, and of his co-ruling relationship with Constantius.<sup>53</sup> This explanation of events is echoed by the seventh century *Chronicon*

<sup>50</sup> The previous chapter discusses the potential for Constantius' elevation as prior to Galerius'; this is cited as a reason for Constantius' seniority. Seniority due to age, cf. Leadbetter (2009) 64.

<sup>51</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 134-146. Barnes (2011) 56-60 argues for a similar influence of Galerius over the succession, but based around a reading of the sources in which Galerius refuses to allow Constantine or Maxentius to become Caesars because of their tolerance for Christianity. Barnes' interpretation might have more grounding in the sources, but he fully buys into the stories propagated by Lactantius, Eusebius, and the panegyrics.

<sup>52</sup> Other authors suggest similar pictures of Galerius' control over the situation, e.g. Potter (2013) 110 suggests that there is evidence of Galerius issuing edicts without Constantius' approval; Williams (1986) 173.

<sup>53</sup> Eutrop. 10.2: "Galerius, a man both properly civilized and distinguished in military matters, when he saw that Italy was added to his own administration by Constantius' permission, created two Caesars, Maximinus [Daza], whom he put in charge of the east, and Severus, to whom he gave Italy." *Galerius vir et probe moratus et egregius re militari, cum Italiam quoque sinente Constantio administrationi suae accessisse sentiret, Caesares duos creavit, Maximinum, quem Orienti praefecit, et Severum, cui Italiam dedit.*

*Paschale*.<sup>54</sup> Eutropius' narrative is also interesting because he does not attribute to Diocletian a similar degree of control in the expansion of the imperial college in 293. Zosimus, however, presents a more collaborative interpretation of the Caesars' elevation, with both Constantius and Galerius appointing the new members of the imperial college.<sup>55</sup> This representation of *concordia* and cooperation between the new co-Augusti may be due to Zosimus' place in a tradition, following Eunapius, which was generally complimentary to Galerius and the Tetrarchy. It is unclear how much 'seniority' actually mattered in the new imperial college; Constantius does not seem to have lived long enough to put it to the test.<sup>56</sup>

Constantius' seniority has led to debate about the nature of the *signa*, concerning whether it was problematic if in the second generation the senior emperor was a Herculus.<sup>57</sup> Constantius' seniority is reflected in epigraphy, where he is always listed before Galerius; similarly, Severus was always listed before Maximinus Daza. This may also be due to age (Daza's youth is usually implied by authors like Lactantius); it could be for symmetry between Caesars and their respective Augusti, but this practice was not employed for the First Tetrarchy.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, as the previous chapter showed, the *signa* should not be seen as part of Tetrarchic ruling policy or a symbol of rank, but as part of a way of portraying the emperors as an extended combination of two related 'families', the *Iovii* and the *Herculii*.

This changed somewhat under the Second Tetrarchy, where the distinction between the *Herculii* and the *Iovii* is not always as pronounced, especially between 305-307. Both Constantius and Galerius, as well as the Caesars, were honoured with coins of all denominations featuring both Jupiter and Hercules. This is not to say that the attention is evenly split, however: Constantius and Severus still get comparatively more Hercules coins, while Galerius and Daza get more of Jupiter (see **3.i-iii**). Instead, pairings of the Tetrarchs seem to have been made more often according to position, not 'family'. That is, the Augusti or the

<sup>54</sup> *Chron. Pasch.*, 517 Dindorf, trans. Whitby & Whitby (1989): "Galerius Maximianus while he was emperor of Rome created two Caesars, Maximinus [Daza] in the east and in Italy Severus." Γαλέριος δὲ Μαξιμιανὸς βασιλεύων Ῥώμης δύο Καίσαρας ἐποίησεν, Μαξιμῖνον μὲν ἐν ἀνατολῇ, ἐν δὲ Ἰταλίᾳ Σεβήρον (Dindorf).

<sup>55</sup> Zos. 2.8.1: "The emperors Constantius and Maximianus Galerius appointed as Caesars Severus and Maximinus [Daza], Galerius' sister's son, and entrusted Italy to Severus and the eastern provinces to Maximinus." Κωνσταντίος καὶ Μαξιμιανὸς ὁ Γαλέριος ἀνέδειξαν Καίσαρας Σεβήρον καὶ Μαξιμῖνον, ἀδελφῆς ὄντα παῖδα τοῦ Γαλερίου. Σεβήρω μὲν τὴν Ἰταλίαν Μαξιμῖνῳ δὲ τὰ πρὸς ἀνίσχοντα ἤλιον παραδόντες. Trans. Ridley (1982). Subsequent translations will be from Ridley unless noted otherwise.

<sup>56</sup> McEvoy discusses different imperial pairings of rulers in the east and west in the fourth century, including that of first Gratian and then Valentinian II as 'senior Augusti' in the west against their older and more experienced colleagues in the east; e.g. McEvoy (2013) 48-70. It is important, however, not to retroject the events of the fourth century onto earlier imperial ideology and practice.

<sup>57</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 139-140.

<sup>58</sup> Constantius is always listed as the senior Caesar (or Augustus), and is usually accredited with being older. Barnes (1982) 35-38 suggests c. 350 for Constantius and c. 260 (conjectured) for Galerius. Leadbetter specifically gives 258 as Galerius' year of birth, based on the pattern of Carpi activity.

Caesars share coin pairings with each other more often than they do according to their territorial divisions (east and west); Constantius and Galerius received more ‘paired’ issues than Constantius and Severus did. This is a distinct change from the First Tetrarchy, which often featured pairings of an Augustus with his Caesar. There is therefore less of a sense of each Caesar ‘belonging to’ a particular Augustus. This seems to be a development that deemphasizes the ‘familial’ aspects found in presentations of the First Tetrarchy. Instead of fathers and sons, the four emperors of the Second Tetrarchy fit more into the perspective of the Tetrarchy as a college of unrelated emperors, who are marked instead by their title of Augustus or Caesar.

Related to this is the apparent division of the empire amongst the emperors. Rank does not seem to have been a factor as to which areas were controlled by a Caesar or an Augustus, since the retiring Augusti were replaced by Caesars rather than the new Augusti—Severus replaced Maximian in Italy, while Daza replaced Diocletian in the east.<sup>59</sup> Yet it seems that the division of the empire was not as clear-cut as the ancient authors make it seem. Leadbetter argues that the division was not formally created until the Second Tetrarchy, but his argument, based upon a passage of Orosius, is unconvincing in its finer points (that Orosius is reproducing a lost source).<sup>60</sup> The overall point that Leadbetter makes, however, is important: that the division of the empire essentially seems to have arisen due to conflicts between the individual empires. These divisions were not inherent to Tetrarchic rule, but they evolved over a short period of time in the early fourth century in response to increasingly hostile relations between different emperors. This argument is important when considering the numismatic evidence. At times it is easy to see which emperors controlled which mints—the numismatic output in areas controlled by Constantine and Maxentius, for example, show distinct deviations from those areas controlled by Galerius, Daza, Severus, and Licinius.<sup>61</sup> From the latter areas, however, it is more difficult to determine any individual meaning in the numismatic output.

Leadbetter gives a compelling interpretation of the Second Tetrarchy: that of a political situation in which Galerius and his ‘Iovian’ dynasty competed with a refreshingly active Constantius and his ‘Herculian’ dynasty.<sup>62</sup> Leadbetter’s theory, however, does not quite fit with the numismatic evidence, at least from 305-306, especially regarding the *signa* and the

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<sup>59</sup> *Origo* 3.5: “In the meantime, two other Caesars had been appointed, Severus and Maximinus [Daza]; to Maximinus was given the rule of the Orient... Severus received Italy and whatever Herculius had formerly governed.” *Interea Caesares duo facti, Severus et Maximinus... Maximino datum est Orientis imperium... Severus suscepit Italiam et quicquid Herculius obtinebat.* Trans. Rolfe (1952). Cf. *Aur. Vict.* 40.1.

<sup>60</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 160-161. Cf. Potter (2013) 109; Mirković (2012).

<sup>61</sup> See the excellent introduction in Sutherland (1967); cf. Leadbetter (2009) 163.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. the extended discussions in Leadbetter (2009) 156-167, 170-205, which counter the picture of an enfeebled Constantius, e.g. Barnes (1981) 26.

presentation of the imperial college. There is no real ‘Iovian’ focus in Galerius and Daza’s regions in the East during this period, nor a particularly ‘Herculian’ one in the West. Instead, the *signa* both play a vital role throughout the empire—but, as with the First Tetrarchy, the divisions between the two ‘families’ are not always clear-cut, especially in coinage.

The legends IOVI CONSERVATORI, HERCVLI COMITI and HERCVLI VICTORI continue from the First Tetrarchy, often in gold, and for different combinations of emperors—but not always for the combinations of emperors that might be expected.<sup>63</sup> The clearest example of this comes from the mint of Aquileia, in what was apparently Severus’ territory, where a series in gold was minted for the new ruling college. This clearly linked series of coins employed the *signa*, but here there is an emphasis not on the emperors’ identification with one of the patron deities, but rather on rank. Hercules and Jupiter reverses are minted for both Constantius and Galerius as Augusti, and for both Severus and Daza as Caesars.<sup>64</sup> The difference in rank is more clearly delineated than an identification with an individual god. Jupiter and Hercules are the gods of the Tetrarchy—but of the whole Tetrarchy.

It is unclear whether this focus on rank instead of pseudo-divine ‘family’ was a decision made by the mint or by Severus’ regime. Elsewhere, the picture is not as clear, although it is important to keep in mind that it is difficult to argue *ab silentio* for coinage due to the gaps in the record. Trier, for example, minted, the legends showing the whole imperial college; the Iovian version appears only for Galerius and Daza, but the Herculian version includes Daza alongside Constantius and Severus (although Daza’s coins are rarer than the other two).<sup>65</sup> Notably, types for Mars and Sol also continue in the numismatic record; as I have argued for these coins in the output of mints under the First Tetrarchy, the use of these gods should be considered as reflecting a continuation of numismatic, religious, and imperial traditions instead of personal imperial preference.<sup>66</sup>

The promotion of the imperial virtue of *concordia* also continues in the coinage of the Second Tetrarchy, through reverse legends containing the phrase ‘AVGG ET CAESS NN’ seen above to promote the college as a whole, but also through reverses which explicitly feature

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<sup>63</sup> Aquileia and Ticinum (close geographically and often similar in output) minted HERCVLI COMITI and variations, while HERCVLI VICTORI was minted at Sardica, Sisak, Alexandria, and Nicomedia. IOVI CONSERVATORI and variations have been found from Trier, Aquileia, Rome, Sisak, Sardica, Nicomedia, Antioch, and Alexandria.

<sup>64</sup> RIC VI, Aquileia nos. 46a-50b: HERCVLI COMITI AVGG NOSTR and IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG NN (Constantius and Galerius); HERCVLI COMITI CAESS NOSTR and IOVI CONSERVATORI CAESS NN (Severus and Daza).

<sup>65</sup> RIC VI, Trier nos. 620a-626b.

<sup>66</sup> E.g. Severus had MARTI PATRI and Daza SOLI INVICTO in gold (RIC VI Nicomedia nos. 34-36).

*concordia*.<sup>67</sup> For example, a series of bronzes from Alexandria for all four emperors features a reverse image of the emperor receiving a small Victory on a globe from Jupiter, such as in this example for Severus (**fig. 2.2**).



**Fig. 2.2: Severus with reverse of emperor receiving globe from Jupiter.**<sup>68</sup>

This reverse likely does not have connotations of the *signa*, but is instead a metaphor for power and divinely-bestowed legitimacy that could be used by any emperor. Jupiter, as king of the gods, was routinely associated with this idea throughout the third century and before.<sup>69</sup>

*Concordia* legends are not numerous in variety nor production, though many are in gold, an indication that the message was still an important one. This seems especially prevalent at Severus' mints.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, Severus' regime seems more concerned with presenting the *concordia* and structure of the new Tetrarchy than anywhere else in the empire, and certainly more than the East.<sup>71</sup> With the legends of *CONCORDIA AVGG NOSTR* and *CONCORDIA CAESS NOSTR*, from Aquileia and Ticinum respectively, the separation of *AVGG* and *CAESS* more fully reflects the structure of the college and emphasizes the ranking—this change is novel, and reflects an emphasis on the ranks of the Tetrarchy that is also found on other coinage of Galerius' colleges, especially in the east (see **3.iii**).<sup>72</sup> A new legend, *CONCORDIA IMPERII*, was minted in bronze for Daza and Severus, although no examples survive for the Augusti.<sup>73</sup> This might imply the continuation of the empire through the Caesars,

<sup>67</sup> E.g., *CONCORDIA AVGG ET CAESS NN* (Trier nos. 618a-619; Sisak no. 148), *CONCORDIA AVGG NOSTR* (Aquileia nos. 41a-42), *CONCORDIA CAESS NOSTR* (Ticinum nos. 49a-50), *CONCORDIA IMPERII* (Sisak nos. 172-175, bronze), *CONCORD IMPERI* (Alexandria no. 52), and the potentially misspelled *CONCORDIA AVGG ET CAES* (Alexandria no. 61).

<sup>68</sup> RIC VI, Alexandria no. 60a. *FL VAL SEVERVS NOB CAES/CONCORDIA MILITVM*.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Fears (1977) 256ff.

<sup>70</sup> Ticinum (Pavia), Aquileia, and Siscia (Sisak), at which a number of these relevant issues were minted, were under Severus' control.

<sup>71</sup> Sutherland (1967) 47 says that Aquileia, Severus' primary mint, was the driving force in the presentation of the structure of the imperial college and *concordia*.

<sup>72</sup> For examples of *CONCORDIA* legends on coinage of the First Tetrarchy, see **I.4.v**.

<sup>73</sup> RIC VI p. 475, Siscia no. 172-175. The rarity given for these coins in the RIC VI is common to rare, making it unlikely that none would have survived if they had been minted for the Augusti. Interestingly, this issue continues for Severus after his elevation to Augustus, and is also minted for Constantine as Caesar.



the heirs. It certainly is meant to emphasize a sense of continuity and unity within the new imperial college. Sutherland suggests that the issue “stressed [the Caesars’] sense of alliance within the Tetrarchy”<sup>74</sup> as well as a “smooth transition” of power.<sup>75</sup> The *concordia* coinage, though important for the First Tetrarchy as well, is notable for the extent to which it was extended and modified under the Second.<sup>76</sup>

### iii. *Seniores Augusti*

The Second Tetrarchy leaned heavily on *concordia* and collegiality and less on adapting the traditionally dynastic representations of the imperial college in the third century; they were instead building on and adapting the already-existing ‘Tetrarchic’ college. Yet the very fact that the Second Tetrarchy had come about through the abdications, rather than the deaths, of Diocletian and Maximian meant that adaptations had to be made. Diocletian and Maximian were no longer ruling emperors, but neither were they removed entirely from the imperial sphere of influence—they were too powerful for that. Instead, they were turned into a new possible source of legitimation.



Fig. 2.3: Diocletian as Senior Augustus.<sup>77</sup>

Under the new presentation of the imperial college, Diocletian and Maximian were given the official titles of *Seniores Augusti* (fig. 2.3), reflecting their former power.<sup>78</sup> A new style of presentation was designed for the coinage, where the emperors were featured as

<sup>74</sup> Sutherland (1967) 270.

<sup>75</sup> Sutherland (1967) 47. In contrast, Kos (1993) 90 suggests that several of the new legends of the Second Tetrarchy, *CONCORDIA IMPERII* amongst them, reflect “the personality of the members of the second tetrarchy and also the rivalry and tension among them.” I do not tend to agree with the idea that types of *concordia* indicate political unrest.

<sup>76</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 170 comments that Galerius ought to have been at the centre of this *concordia*, supported by Daza and Severus’ elevations.

<sup>77</sup> RIC VI Antioch no. 69, AD 305-306. D N DIOCLETIANO FELICISSIMO SEN AVG / PROVIDENTIA DEORVM QVIES AVGG.

<sup>78</sup> Van Dam (2007) 246.

*seniores* (often abbreviated to SEN or S) as part of their obverse titles, while their busts were dressed in imperial garb, usually holding a branch or a *mappa* (a symbol of consulship). The reverse type associated with them was invariably that of *Providentia* and *Quies* ('Repose').<sup>79</sup> Such coins were minted across the empire, although they were more common and long-lasting in the east, especially for Diocletian, and the title is found on inscriptions as well.<sup>80</sup>

The entire image is clearly meant to portray the establishment of the Second Tetrarchy as a peaceful event, not a hostile takeover, and to emphasize the retired emperors' *concordia* with the new regime. Diocletian holds an olive branch, a symbol of peace, and *Providentia* and *Quies* greet each other on the reverse.<sup>81</sup> The honorific *Felicissimus* was common on these issues for the Senior Augusti, as was the related *Beatissimus*; these titles also appear on epigraphy.<sup>82</sup> The obverses of these coins displayed the emperors' names in the 'inactive' dative, not the nominative as was usual.<sup>83</sup> This indicated that the current emperors were minting these coins in honour of their retired predecessors, rather than the *seniores Augusti* having the authority to mint for themselves.

It was still useful for the imperial college to fall back upon familial terms to describe this new phenomenon of the retired emperor. Diocletian and Maximian were referred to as *patres Augusti* on several inscriptions, most notably in 305-306 on the Baths of Diocletian inscription, which names Maximian as the dedicator. The inscription labels Diocletian and Maximian as *seniores Augg(usti) patres Imp(eratorum)*.<sup>84</sup> This terminology for the two retired Augusti is found on inscriptions from Italy to Syria, mostly datable to 305-306 because of the inclusion of Constantius.<sup>85</sup> This title represents a continuation of ideas found within the First Tetrarchy, as Diocletian and Maximian had previously been referred to as the fathers of

<sup>79</sup> With the reverse legend PROVIDENTIA DEORVM QVIES AVGVSTORVM or variations thereof (including merely QVIES AVGG)

<sup>80</sup> E.g. ILS 645 shows the new imperial college with Diocletian and Maximian as *seniores Augusti*. Cf. Potter (2013) 102.

<sup>81</sup> A variation on this type comes from Alexandria after the Council of Carnuntum, depicting the emperor, along with all the trappings and associations of the Senior Augustus type, but with the bust of a god upon his breastplate—likely either Jupiter or Sol. RIC VI, Alexandria nos. 125-128, 146. The exact 'god' on the breastplate is difficult to distinguish, being merely a head on the emperor's chest. For an example, see Alexandria no. 128 in the British Museum's online collection:

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?assetId=1613296123&objectId=1157780&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=1613296123&objectId=1157780&partId=1)

<sup>82</sup> Though not at the same time as the *seniores Augusti* title; e.g. AE (1916) 21 (*fortissimus*); CIL 8.4324 (*beatissimus*)

<sup>83</sup> Sutherland (1967) 39-40, 49, 526.

<sup>84</sup> CIL VI 01130. Cf. Hekster (2015) 287.

<sup>85</sup> For example: Pecë, Albania: LIA 2012 697-98, nr. 301; Jordan: AE (1996) 1621-2; Campagnatico, Italy: AE (1961) 0042, AE (1961) 0240, AE (1998) 0467; Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, Austria (Ancient Carnuntum): AE (2003) 1395; Petra: CIL III 14149,34; Between Amman, Jordan and Busra, Syria: AE (1900) 0163b; Umm al Jimal, Jordan: AE (2009) 01612; Busra, Syria: Samra (1998) 00034, 00044, 00124, 00125; Balat, Turkey: CIL III 14404.

Constantius and Galerius. As we have seen previously (see **I.4.ii**) Diocletian and Maximian were represented as parents in multiple ways: as *πατέρας* in a reported letter from Daza (recorded by Eusebius), as the collective ‘parents’ of the world, or as Aurelius Victor describes Diocletian, the ‘parent’ of the Tetrarchs.<sup>86</sup>

This emphasis on Diocletian and Maximian as imperial fathers functions in the same way as the Senior Augusti coinage, by emphasizing *concordia* and the peaceful handover of power, as well as establishing the retired emperors’ places in the new regime. The new formation of the imperial college may be not as a three-tiered family—as was seen with the college of Valerian, Gallienus, and Gallienus’ sons Valerian II and Saloninus—but as a family in which Diocletian and Maximian were the fathers and implied grandfathers. Additionally, Constantius and Galerius are not at all represented as ‘brothers’ of Severus and Daza, and the new titulature of the emperors (Severus as a Flavius, Daza as a Galerius) clearly indicates that Constantius and Galerius were the adoptive fathers of the new Caesars, not Diocletian and Maximian. Still, Diocletian’s place in the elevation of new emperors was clear: he was certainly involved in the elevation of Daza in Nicomedia in 305, and he was also the guest of honour at the Council of Carnuntum in 308, in which Licinius was chosen as a new Augustus.<sup>87</sup> Related to this return to politics, Diocletian is termed *pater* in the listing of his consulship for 308.<sup>88</sup> It is likely that this terminology is engaging with the rhetoric of Diocletian and Maximian as *patres* and *seniores Augusti*, but it is notable that he is paired with his adopted son Galerius for this consulship in which he is named thus.

The inclusion of Diocletian and Maximian, although largely honorific, was both collegial and familial. They were given official titles (*seniores Augusti*) to designate their place in the new regime, honoured alongside the current emperors on inscriptions and in coinage, and were proclaimed as *patres Augusti* within the new and extended imperial family. This ideology is one that was promoted by the whole of the Second Tetrarchy, from mints as diverse as Trier and Antioch.<sup>89</sup> It was imperial *concordia*, but a picture of harmony between the old regime and the new, rather than the emphasis on inter-collegial *concordia* that Severus’ mints promoted so heavily. This peace would not last. Maximian, unsatisfied with his merely

<sup>86</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* 9.9.14 (9.9a.1); *Pan. Lat.* 8.20.1, 9.5.3; *Aur. Vict.* 39.29.

<sup>87</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 226.

<sup>88</sup> Bagnall (1987) 151: *DD NN (Impp) Diocletianus pater Augg. X.*

<sup>89</sup> Senior Augustus coinage: London nos. 76a-77b, 81; Trier nos. 671-678, 681a-b; Lyons nos. 200a-201, Ticinum nos. 56a-57b, 61a-62b, 65a-69; Aquileia nos. 63a-64b; Rome nos. 116a-119b, 130a-131b; Carthage nos. 41a-42b; Siscia nos. 158-161; Serdica nos. 14a-15b; Heraclea 27a-29; Cyzicus nos. 22a-23b, 28a-29b, 32a-33b; Antioch nos. 69, 72a-73b, 76a-77b; Alexandria 57a-58b.

honorific place, would return to power after Constantius' death, forging new alliances opposed to Galerius' imperial college.

### 3. AFTER THE DEATH OF CONSTANTIUS (AD 306-308)

Constantius I, the ostensible head of the Second Tetrarchy, died shortly after his elevation, in July 306, at York. Although the idea that Constantius had been ill for a long time before his death comes from antiquity, where he is portrayed as a passive co-ruler with Galerius as the true head of the Second Tetrarchy,<sup>90</sup> Leadbetter points out the flaws in this narrative.<sup>91</sup> Constantius' eldest son, Constantine, famously was made emperor with the support of his father's troops in Britain, and he was formally accepted into the imperial college by Galerius at the rank of Caesar, while Severus—Constantius' Caesar and apparently adopted son—was elevated to the rank of Augustus. Constantine was therefore a member of the new imperial college—called by some the 'Third Tetrarchy', although it is at this point that labelling the different colleges as versions of the Tetrarchy becomes problematic and confusing. Several of the ancient narratives suggest that Galerius was reluctant to include Constantine in this new college, of which he was now certainly the head. Many scholars follow Lactantius, who suggests that Constantine was named an Augustus by the troops but forced to submit to the lesser position of Caesar by Galerius.<sup>92</sup>

Whether Galerius was reluctant to accept Constantine into the college or not, the new Caesar was proclaimed on coins and inscriptions across the empire. Harder to accept was the coup of Maxentius, the son of Maximian Herculius and also Galerius' own son-in-law, who in October 306 was made emperor in Rome through the support of the Praetorian Guard and some Roman officials.<sup>93</sup> It has often been argued that there was no 'room' for Maxentius in the Tetrarchic 'system';<sup>94</sup> a better explanation might be that Galerius imagined him an easier

<sup>90</sup> Most notably, Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 24; cf. Barnes (1982) 26.

<sup>91</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 157-8. Leadbetter's account of the Second Tetrarchy paints Constantius as a refreshingly active ruler rather than the nondescript persona he has in most other narratives.

<sup>92</sup> Most prominently Barnes (1981) 27-29; (2011) 63-5. Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 166. Harries (2012) 43, in contrast, offers a narrative that fits best with the surviving sources: that Constantine was proclaimed as Constantius' successor (rank unspecified). Potter (2013) 113 also seems to support Constantius' elevation as Caesar alone. Barnes (1981) 27 argues: "Both then and later Constantine asseverated most categorically that the dying Constantius had made him his heir in the fullest sense—as the ruler of Britain, Gaul, and Spain with the rank of Augustus." This can be disproved by the lack of coins proclaiming Constantine as Augustus in 306. Although Constantine's claim to be an Augustus was proclaimed in 307 without a doubt, this does not seem to be the case just after Constantius' death. The details of Constantine's elevation and his legitimization strategies will be discussed more thoroughly in V.1-2, but it is worth pointing out here that the idea of a 'system' is undermined somewhat by the elevation of Licinius straight to Augustus in 308.

<sup>93</sup> Sources on Maxentius' elevation: Eutrop. 10.1-2; Aur. Vict. 40.2-5; Ps.-Vict. 40.2; *Origo* 3.1, 3-4.

<sup>94</sup> E.g. Barnes (1981) 30; Barnes (2011) 68; Harries (2012) 43; Leadbetter (2009) 181-183.

opponent to subdue than Constantine, who unlike Maxentius had the support of a good portion of the imperial army because of Constantius' active campaigns in Gaul and Britain around the time of his death. Severus soon marshalled his troops and marched against the new (literally) Roman emperor in the spring of 307. The period is marked by increasing regionalization and decentralization of the mints, reflecting the political chaos and growing individualized presentation of the emperors during this time.<sup>95</sup>

The details of Constantine's and Maxentius' elevations, regimes, and legitimation strategies will be discussed in later chapters (Maxentius in **Chapter 3**, Constantine in **Chapter 5**). This section will first briefly examine the trends in the west of increasing individualization and the apparent promotion of dynastic claims to legitimacy, as well as the emergence of a new western 'Herculian' college in opposition to Galerius'. Severus' campaign and position as the territorially-deprived Western Augustus is also important here. The rest of the section, however, will focus on the responses of Galerius' 'eastern college' to these rival regimes, including the introduction of a new title, *Filii Augustorum*.

### **i. The Western Herculii**

The success of Constantine and Maxentius is usually interpreted as dynastic claims bringing about an end to the Tetrarchic system. As Börm claims, "Diocletian's Tetrarchy did not fail because of an arbitrary or naïve rejection of the dynastic principle but rather because Constantius Chlorus died before his son could earn regular admission to the college of emperors on the basis of his achievements."<sup>96</sup> The truth is not so simple—as shall be shown, Galerius and Daza also engaged in dynastic claims—and certainly Constantine and Maxentius were not the sole culprits: Maximian's return from abdication changed the political sphere of the west. Yet Maximian is side-lined in many of the sources, his return to power treated as more of a footnote to Maxentius' rise to power than a serious contender in his own right. The evidence behind these narratives, however, suggests that Maximian, rather than being a hanger-on to his son's power, was active in crafting alliances to solidify his own regime as a ruler once again.<sup>97</sup>

Maximian's actual position was unclear, but it is likely that his support came from an anti-Galerian or anti-Severan faction.<sup>98</sup> The mint of Lyons, which seems to have minted coins for Maximian's regime more than Constantine's or Maxentius', shows an evolution in the

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<sup>95</sup> Sutherland (1967) 93: "The disintegration of the tetrarchic system brought decentralized control of coinage..."

<sup>96</sup> Börm (2015) 246, cf. Williams (1986) 197-8.

<sup>97</sup> The support for Maximian can be seen, for example, in the coinage of Carthage: Sutherland (1967) 49.

<sup>98</sup> Potter (2013) 119.

presentation of Maximian's role. Initially he was celebrated alongside Diocletian as Senior Augustus (in the dative, with both *Baeatissimus* and *Felicissimus* included in the legend) along with the typical *Quies* reverse (see 2.iii). This shifted to D N MAXIMIANO P F S AVG within a year of Constantine's elevation, but on the normal Tetrarchic *Genio*-type coins which were still minted for all current emperors, not the *Quies* reverses—which continued unchanged for Diocletian alone. Approximately half a year after that (c. late 307), it changed again, this time to IMP C VAL MAXIMIANVS P F AVG, the usual legend from before his resignation.<sup>99</sup> The obverse legend has returned to the 'active' nominative, as opposed to the 'inactive' dative.<sup>100</sup> These coins coincide with the alliance between Maximian and Constantine; the latter emperor is also styled Augustus on coins from the same period. This alliance was marked by Constantine's marriage to Fausta, Maximian's daughter, and was celebrated in the Panegyric of 307 to both emperors.<sup>101</sup> The memory of Constantius is woven throughout the panegyric, adding imperial, divine, and dynastic authority to the new alliance as well as providing a pre-existing dynastic link between Maximian and Constantine.<sup>102</sup> Constantius was only commemorated by *divus* coinage after his death at western mints, especially Lyons, though these issues largely seem to date from the time of the alliance between Maximian and Constantine rather than immediately after Constantius' death.<sup>103</sup>

Under Constantine and Maxentius, the western mints saw enormous variations in output. Under Maxentius in particular, coin issues seemed to play a large role in establishing him as distinct from the Tetrarchic college (although not necessarily the Tetrarchic emperors): many of his coin types focus on the city of Rome and Maxentius as a primarily Roman ruler. The *Genio* types which were ubiquitous in the output of the First and Second Tetrarchy were replaced by CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE in all mints under Maxentius' control. This legend was not echoed in the mints of any other emperor at this time, nor does there seem to have been an attempt in the coinage to directly counter Maxentius' claim.

Meanwhile, in the time when Constantine held the rank of Caesar (AD 306-307 according to his own regime), the mints in Constantine's power base of Gaul and Britain

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<sup>99</sup> Dating is according to Sutherland (1967), based on his understanding of the chronology of the events after Constantius' death.

<sup>100</sup> Sutherland (1967) 39-40, 49.

<sup>101</sup> See V.3.i for an extended discussion of this panegyric.

<sup>102</sup> For some mentions of Constantius, cf. *Pan. Lat.* 7.3.3-4, 5.1, 7.2, 14.4, 14.6.

<sup>103</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 166 notes that the east did not mint at all for Divus Constantius; cf. Hekster (2015) 289-90. Western commemorative coinage until 310: CONSECRATIO: Lyons nos. 202, 251 (AD 306-308), Trier no. 809 (AD 310-313, gold). MEMORIA FELIX: London no. 110 (AD 307-310); Trier nos. 789-790 (AD 307-308); Lyons nos. 266-269, 297 (AD 307-309). MEM(ORIA) DIVI CONSTANTII: Ticinum nos. 96-97 and Aquileia no. 127 (AD 307-308, possibly minted by Maxentius); Dating is approximate.

continued the omnipresent *Genio* type and the *Quies* retirement type, but they also began to mint large numbers of coins almost solely for their new Caesar, which continued after he was proclaimed Augustus in 307. Some of these types reflect the ‘Caesar-suitable’ gods Mars and later Sol.<sup>104</sup> Hercules and Jupiter, in contrast, are relatively neglected. Constantine’s mints also minted a few Sol types to Daza as well, although much fewer in number than those of Constantine himself—Daza himself, intriguingly, would promote Sol in the later years of his reign.<sup>105</sup> After c. mid 307, Constantine’s mints stopped the *Genio* type but continued to acknowledge his eastern co-emperors (and, at times, Maxentius) without any particular attention. Nonetheless, the strength and importance of Constantine’s alliance with Maximian can be seen in the numismatic output from Londinium and Trier in 307-308.<sup>106</sup> Many of the types issued in the latter half of 307 are pairs of votive coins for Constantine and Maximian, variations of VOT/X/CAESS for Constantine and VOT/XXX/AVGG for Maximian.<sup>107</sup>

Most notable among Constantine’s new types is the revival of the *Princeps Iuventutis* type in bronze as well as gold, a type that would continue until after Constantine’s victory at Milvian Bridge.<sup>108</sup> His mints produced the legend with a variety and in a number that far surpasses any other use of the type during the Tetrarchic period—in fact, it is more similar in use to that of the young third-century Caesars than any Tetrarchic Caesar. This not only celebrated his new position as Caesar, but also served to emphasize his position as an imperial son and dynastic heir. The mints also nominally minted for Daza as *Princeps Iuventutis*, a choice which can be explained by Daza’s growing identity as Galerius’ own (adopted) son and heir, as he was promoted as *Princeps Iuventutis* in Galerius’ mints as well (see 3.iii).<sup>109</sup> At Lyons, the *princeps* type is altered slightly: Constantine and Daza both receive coins with the legend PRINCIPI IVVENT B R P NAT.<sup>110</sup> The abbreviation is explained as BONO REI

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Sutherland (1967) 40-43.

<sup>105</sup> RIC VI Lon. 121b; Trier 826 (gold), 866a. Bardill (2012) 91 comments on the continued importance of Sol in numismatics.

<sup>106</sup> Though the mintmasters at Trier seem to have misunderstood the complicated political situation by continuing to mint for Constantine as Caesar at the same time as minting for Maximian, and also by minting the plurals CAESS and AVGG. Perhaps this is an attempt to combine the new alliance with Constantine’s place in the Tetrarchy?

<sup>107</sup> They share PLVR/NATAL/FEL. RIC VI, Trier: PLVR/NATAL/FEL: nos. 745-747; MVLT/NATAL/FEL: no. 744 (Constantine); VOT/X/CAESS: no. 748; VOT/X/CAESS/NN: no. 749; VO/TIS/X: no. 750; VOT/XXX/AVGG: nos. 751-752; VOT/XXX/AVGG/NN: no. 753; VO/TIS/XXX: no. 754. All reverses feature the legend contained in a wreath, as is typical for votive coinage issues.

<sup>108</sup> Sutherland (1967) 52, 112. This type is very common from all Constantine’s mints.

<sup>109</sup> From mints under Constantine’s control: RIC VI, Trier no. 841b; Lyons nos. 271, 275; Ostia nos. 71-72 (gold). These types should not be interpreted merely as accidents, as they do not survive for other emperors. For Daza’s promotion as *Princeps Iuventutis* under Galerius: RIC VI, Serdica nos. 8b, 9b, 19, 31. The title was always more popular in the west than the east.

<sup>110</sup> Constantine: Lyons nos. 270, 298; Daza: Lyons no. 271.

PUBLICAE NATO, “the prince of the youth, born for the benefit of the state.”<sup>111</sup> This title also appeared on epigraphy.<sup>112</sup> Not only were Constantine and Daza promoted as dynastic heirs on this type, but their very births were said to be fortuitous. This forward-looking image of dynastic stability is similar to the previously-employed Caesar-types, such as *Spes* and *Securitas*, an idea which would be picked up once again by Licinius and Constantine to promote their own sons (see **IV.2.ii And V.5.i**).

Although the western mints showed an increase in types that can be understood as dynastic, they did not employ the double-obverse (*capita opposita*) or multiple busts (jugate or facing) which were found on important third-century issues. Neither did the eastern mints. Thus, the move away from these techniques during the later years of the First Tetrarchy and afterwards should be understood as an evolution in presentation, not necessarily as a move away from dynastic types under the Tetrarchy. Even though there were clear dynastic claims or alliances of co-rulership which were promoted in other ways during this period, these techniques were not resurrected until c. 317, when multiple facing bust obverses were minted to promote Constantine and Licinius’ imperial college.

The alliance between Constantine and Maximian, tentatively uniting the Herculii in the west against the Iovii in the east, can thus be understood as a re-emergence of dynastic claims to legitimacy.<sup>113</sup> It may be clearer, however, to say that the new alliance allowed for useful interpretations according to these dynastic claims. Dynastic legitimacy was not necessarily a ‘stronger’ claim, but an alternate claim that these emperors used to their advantage; this move should therefore not be understood as a somehow inevitable ‘return’ to dynastic legitimation. It was easier for the panegyrist of 307 to navigate the problematic political situation by framing the situation as a family affair rather than a complicated coup that might even be akin to usurpation (in modern terms, if not ancient).<sup>114</sup> Dynastic legitimacy is not the only rhetorical tool at play—divine legitimacy also plays a role, as has been shown, and Maximian’s return to power is phrased as answering a beleaguered Rome’s call.<sup>115</sup> Yet the promotion of *Divus Constantius* on coins and the proliferation of *princeps iuventutis* types is evidence of the strength of Constantine’s claims to dynastic legitimacy as well as a growing independence from

<sup>111</sup> Sutherland (1967) 239-240 offers an expansion of the legend.

<sup>112</sup> E.g. AE (1981) 0464, AE (1998) 0652, AE (1979) 0148, CIL 11.6635 (all Italy); CIL 17.304 = AE (1983) 0607 (Spain); AE (1985) 0658a-b (Switzerland). Some of these are combined with legends that proclaim Constantine the son of Divine Constantius. See also Maligorne (2008) for a discussion of this phrase (sans dedicatee) in epigraphy in the west.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 191; Börm (2015) 247; Cameron (1993) 49; Drake (1975) 19.

<sup>114</sup> Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 186-187.

<sup>115</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 7.10-12. Divine legitimacy: Fears (1977) 193 warns that *Conservatori* types, for example IOVI CONSERVATORI, is not the same thing as divine election.



Galerius' imperial college.<sup>116</sup> But the strength of the Herculii, united under Maximian, did not last long: within a year of Fausta and Constantine's marriage, Maximian and Maxentius fell out, and the former was cast out of Rome.<sup>117</sup> He apparently joined Constantine's court,<sup>118</sup> but Constantine's mints do not honour him at all after the Council of Carnuntum in 308, when Maximian was forced to retire once more.<sup>119</sup>

## ii. Severus: a western emperor with eastern alliances

Severus, who also could have claimed to be Herculian, had already been conveniently disposed of by the time of Maximian and Constantine's alliance. In the spring of 307, he had marched to defeat Maxentius—who after all had usurped part of Severus' territory—but the return of Maximian completely undermined his campaign. Severus' troops had been Maximian's, and it was possible that an emperor with twenty years' experience was more alluring to the army than an emperor of two years. Severus was defeated and captured at Ravenna.<sup>120</sup> Coins which were still minted to him in the east, however, as well as his titulature being listed on papyri, indicate he was not killed until later, perhaps in the autumn of 307—he was a hostage for Galerius' good behaviour.<sup>121</sup> It did not work; Galerius was determined to oust his son-in-law and the senior Augustus from their holdings in Rome, Italy, and now Africa. Severus' subsequent death may have been regrettable—there is no sense of it being so in the sources, and there are no coins minted to him as a *divus*. Perhaps he was nothing more than an embarrassment by the time he actually died. Galerius' campaign later that year against

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<sup>116</sup> Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 217: “The coinage of Constantine demonstrates a grudging recognition of Galerius' authority up until Carnuntum, and none after that.” In contrast, Hekster (2015) 289-290 suggests that the originally limited run of coins to Divus Constantius was due to Constantine “sticking to tetrarchic ‘kinshipless’ messages.” Cameron (2006) 23 says that from 306-310 Constantine “alternatively played the loyal member of the tetrarchic apparatus and the dynastic successor.” This will be discussed in more detail in **V.1-2**.

<sup>117</sup> Eutrop. 10.3; Aur. Vict. 40.8-9. Cf. Harries (2012) 43-45: “[Galerius'] loss of control of ‘his’ college was now plain to see.” (p. 43). On the wedding, see **V.3.i**.

<sup>118</sup> Potter (2013) 123-4 suggests that Maximian served in some advisory capacity.

<sup>119</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 29.

<sup>120</sup> There are three somewhat detailed versions of his death. In Lactantius' version (26.10), Severus' troops desert to their old commander Maximian and Severus, seeing that the besieged Ravenna was about to give him up, “restored the purple to the very man from whom he had received it” (i.e. Maximian) and committed suicide. In Zosimus 2.10.2, however, he is a more sympathetic figure: he is “persuaded by false oaths” by Maximian, and then ambushed by Maxentius, where he was hanged. See also Eutrop. 10.2; Aur. Vict. 40.5-7; Ps.-Vict. 40.3.

<sup>121</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 188, 193, citing the *Chronograph of 354*'s claim that Severus died on 16<sup>th</sup> of September 307 (*Chron. Min.* I, p. 148). See also the narrative of the *Origo* 4.10, which most closely seems to reflect the numismatic record, states that Maximian “deceived Severus by a false oath” and took him to Rome, where he was not ambushed, but was kept under guard as a hostage against Galerius' good behaviour and was only killed when the latter invaded Italy anyway. It must be acknowledged, however, that the disparity of timing may be due to the time it took for news of Severus' death to reach the east; cf. Hanson (1974).

Maxentius and Maximian was no more successful than Severus', and he too was forced to withdraw.

Oddly, authors such as Eusebius and Lactantius, whose characterization of Maxentius as a tyrant and persecutor is well-known and pervasive, do not make more of Severus' ill treatment and death. That Maxentius was pitted against Severus is a convenient aspect of the historical narrative: just as Lactantius depicts Daza as taking Constantine's rightful place in the Tetrarchy, Maxentius' rejection of Severus (for example, as consul in 307) might indicate a similar sense of Severus' 'usurpation' of Maxentius' 'rightful' place as Caesar of the West—though this is admittedly underdeveloped in the extant literature.<sup>122</sup> But to acknowledge such rhetoric would be to align Maxentius with Constantine in a way that many authors would have wanted to avoid.

Another explanation for the silence on Severus' role as emperor might be that to promote Severus' right to rule—even in order to counter Maxentius' claims—was to undermine Constantine's own. After all, Severus' legitimacy stemmed not only from his place in the Tetrarchy, but also from his adoption by Constantius, which is never mentioned in the literary material.<sup>123</sup> When Lactantius' Severus gives up his imperial power, it is said that he received it from Maximian, the retiring Augustus, but there is no mention of Constantius. (Compare this to the elevation of Daza at Nicomedia, where Galerius is actively involved, although it is Diocletian who ultimately bestows the purple upon the new Caesar.)<sup>124</sup> Considering this, it is surprising that Severus is not represented as an enemy to Constantine, but in the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* it is Daza, not Severus, who usurps Constantine's rightful place. Severus could also have been used as a rhetorical foil to Maxentius, similarly (or conversely) to how Daza was pitted against Constantine.<sup>125</sup>

In fact, little is said of Severus in the literary sources at all—as Barnes has said, our lack of knowledge about Severus is because Lactantius deliberately suppressed this information.<sup>126</sup> Barnes' conclusion that Severus may also have been a nephew of Galerius',

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<sup>122</sup> Cf. Barnes (1980) 30 on Maxentius' first few months as emperor and his rejection of Severus.

<sup>123</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 141 comments that, as Constantius' adopted son, Severus might be expected to protect the dynastic rights of his new 'brothers', Constantius' three young sons by Theodora. As Severus had a son of his own, this is probably a naïve perspective on Severus' new relationship with Constantius (and which is inconsistent with some of Leadbetter's later comments that Constantius would not have trusted Severus, p. 161, 165), but Leadbetter is right to point out the potential dynastic conflict between Severus and Constantine as a result of Severus' adoption.

<sup>124</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 19.4-5.

<sup>125</sup> Some modern authors, e.g. Leadbetter (2009) 182 does somewhat set Severus up as the natural counterpart of Maxentius, though this is not fully explored.

<sup>126</sup> Barnes (1999) 460.

like Daza, is overly speculative and does not seem to be supported by the little evidence that does survive. Overall, Severus made little impact on the political sphere of the early fourth century, but his legacy as an emperor was still potentially dangerous. His son Severianus was killed by Licinius several years after Severus' own death. Severianus was apparently a companion of Daza and was present at that emperor's court, showing another link between Severus and the east. Licinius' excuse for the assassination (as reported by Lactantius) was that Severianus, who seems to have been active in Daza's court, had imperial aims.<sup>127</sup> Clearly his claim, as the son of an emperor, was strong enough that Licinius felt threatened, whether Severianus actively propagated those claims or not. It may have been prudent to eliminate Severianus, since two imperial sons, Constantine and Maxentius, had effectively brought about the downfall of Galerius and Severus' imperial college.

### iii. Eastern Reactions

After Constantius' death and Severus' downfall, Galerius' imperial college controlled the east but not the west. This college temporarily consisted of himself and Daza, but Licinius was added in 308 and Constantine was included at least intermittently. In 307-308, however, several mints only honour Galerius and Daza.<sup>128</sup> Maxentius seems to have been largely ignored, especially in the east.<sup>129</sup> Perhaps Galerius and his co-emperors felt that the best way to clamp down on Maxentius' claims would be to ignore him. As all the Tetrarchs were honoured, at least nominally, in each other's mints, it may in fact have been the best way to deal with him politically. The character of the 'Tetrarchic' coinage in the east was marked by the evolution of the popular *Genio* type. Where once the reverses proclaimed GENIO POPVLI ROMANI for all emperors, this changed to a focus on the ranks of the Tetrarchy after Constantius' death, proclaiming GENIO AVGVSTI (or IMPERATORIS) for Galerius and GENIO CAESARIS for Daza—and, at some mints, for Constantine as well.<sup>130</sup> The choice of GENIO AVGVSTI versus GENIO IMPERATORIS seems to have been a choice of the mint, as they appear to be largely

<sup>127</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 50.4. cf. Leadbetter (2009) 184; PLRE 1.828 s.v. Severianus 1.

<sup>128</sup> E.g. Sardica, Cyzicus, Cf. Corcoran (2006) 239-240, Sutherland (1967) 60.

<sup>129</sup> The coin type in the east which most clearly seems to engage with Maxentius' ideology is Daza's AETERNAE MEMORIAE GALERI MAXIMIANI, using the wording of Maxentius' remarkable AETERNAE MEMORIAE series to his deified relatives.

<sup>130</sup> Odahl (2004) 89-90. Typically, GENIO AVGVSTI or GENIO IMPERATORIS was reserved for the Augusti (usually mints chose one legend or the other, though rarely they were minted simultaneously, as at Cyzicus AD 308-311).

synonymous, though the easternmost mints favoured IMPERATORIS.<sup>131</sup> For the most part, the mints of Galerius and Daza—even in the face of Maxentius and Constantine’s innovations—continued with coinage of this ‘Tetrarchic’ flavour. Constantine’s renewed numismatic focus on first Mars and then Sol from about 310 onwards may have had some influence; they may explain the promotion of Sol in the later years of Daza’s reign.<sup>132</sup>

Galerius might be accused of being an ineffectual emperor, unable to deal with the increasing individualism of Constantine and the outright rebellion of Maxentius in the west. In fact, however, the numismatic output from regions under his and Daza’s control show a careful amount of control. The change of the *Genio*-type coinage to expressions of rank was a way of countering Constantine’s claim. The eastern mints did not recognize Constantine as Augustus until 310. Instead of omitting him entirely, the choice to continue to honour him explicitly at the rank of Caesar shows an attention to countering some—but not all—of his claims. It would have been impossible, much as it is now, to see the *Genio* type without being reminded of the Tetrarchy, even in its new iterations of GENIO CAESARIS, GENIO AVGVSTI, and GENIO IMPERATORIS. The *Genio* type had been used consistently and pervasively on Tetrarchic bronze coins for fifteen years, and Galerius’ continued use of these legends is significant.

Perhaps the strongest and clearest reaction to the events in the west was the Council of Carnuntum in late 308, at which Licinius was chosen as Augustus to replace Severus, simultaneously re-establishing Daza and Constantine as Caesars.<sup>133</sup> Potter calls this “a display of dynastic reordering” and Barnes notes this as one of few instances in which a Caesar was passed over for the Augustus position in place of someone else.<sup>134</sup> Maximian was forced once more to abdicate his power, and Galerius was again given the chance for control of the whole

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<sup>131</sup> A description of the appearance of these legends in the coinage follows. Note that the splitting of the GENIO-type coinage into the GENIO AVGVSTI, GENIO IMPERATORIS, and GENIO CAESARIS only happens from Sisak eastward. Aquileia and Ostia mint GENIO AVGVSTI briefly, but only in c. 312-313; this is likely because it was one of the main types minted under Daza. Most mints begin to produce these new types after Carnuntum, but Antioch and Sardica are early. (At Sardica, they were minted simultaneously, rather than instead of, GENIO POPVLI ROMANI.)

Sisak, Serdica, and Thessaloniki prefer GENIO AVGVSTI for the Augusti; Heraclea, Nicomedia, Antioch, and Alexandria prefer GENIO IMPERATORIS (though all switch to GENIO AVGVSTI during the last few years of Daza’s reign.) At Cyzicus, the situation is slightly more complicated, as GENIO AVGVSTI and GENIO IMPERATORIS appear simultaneously and appear to be ‘synonymous’ (i.e. minted for the Augusti but including the Caesars.) Generally, the types are minted for the emperors of that rank; Daza and Constantine are included in GENIO AVGVSTI/GENIO IMPERATORIS once they are recognized as Augusti in the east. There is slight confusion evidenced at Heraclea, which included Daza as Caesar in the GENIO IMPERATORIS issues. Notably, Constantine is included at Antioch, which also mints the GENIO FIL AVGG and GENIO EXERCITVS variations.

<sup>132</sup> Sutherland (1967) 72.

<sup>133</sup> Kos (1993) 93f suggests that coins from Siscia with the legend VICTORIA AVGG ET CAESS are meant to commemorate the “diplomatic victory” at Carnuntum. I see this as an extremely far-fetched assumption.

<sup>134</sup> Potter (2013) 121; Barnes (1981) 33. Barnes (2011) 50 tries to claim that Constantine’s acclamation as Augustus after Constantius’ death is another example, but this is hardly the same.

empire.<sup>135</sup> It would not last; both Daza and Constantine proclaimed themselves Augusti by 310—perhaps even as a challenge to Licinius, who was only nominally recognized in both emperors' mints.<sup>136</sup>

Licinius' representation was nominally that of a 'Iovian', though he was not technically part of Galerius' imperial family; there is no sign that he was considered a 'Herculius.'<sup>137</sup> The symmetry had been broken: Maximian's return to imperial power and subsequent creation of a Herculan family in opposition to Galerius' Iovii had apparently problematized the use of Hercules in the east (although he is picked up again for Daza in 310-313). The *signa* no longer indicated Tetrarchic collegiate unity, but after Galerius' death, Daza and Licinius joined the western emperors in expressing divine comrades, as in the numismatic traditions of the third century, whether it was Jupiter, Mars, Sol, or indeed Hercules.<sup>138</sup> Licinius' 'Iovian' identity is important to this evolution, but shall be discussed in more detail in the context of his wider ideology and representation (IV.3).

#### **iv. *Filii Augustorum***

Another example of this control is the introduction of a new title for Daza and Constantine, that of *Filii Augustorum*, in use 308-310.<sup>139</sup> By the time of the title's introduction, Constantine had been calling himself Augustus for one or two years, and Daza had been a Caesar for three or four. In fact, the introduction of the title is often framed as an appeasement to Daza, who reportedly was frustrated that Licinius had been elevated immediately to Augustus at Carnuntum. The title appeared on the obverse of coins as FIL AVG(G) in lieu of

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<sup>135</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 202, 204-5, 226.

<sup>136</sup> Sutherland (1967) 15, 40-43, 71-72. Harries (2012) 44 comments that the two new Augusti did so because they were "freed from any consequences," perhaps inspired by the lack of effective control over Maxentius.

<sup>137</sup> Licinius, although his titulature gives no sign that he had been adopted by Galerius, also presents himself as a Iovian in contrast to Constantine. Licinius promoted Jupiter on coins to a greater degree and in higher numbers than Daza, but that does not mean that the latter would not have been seen—or that he could not be represented—as a Iovian. Licinius' own status as a 'Iovian' is more complicated.

<sup>138</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 204 suggests that the "distinction between *Iovius* and *Herculius* had become redundant." This could contribute to the explanation of why Jupiter was promoted more than Hercules.

<sup>139</sup> Stefan (2005) 181-188 has dated the title according to papyrological evidence, asserting that it was in use between December 308 and c. May 310. Previously, Sutherland (1967) 15-16, had dated the title to around the same period through the numismatic record, though this was based upon the acceptance of the dating that Daza was acclaimed as full Augustus in 310.

‘Caesar’ or ‘Augustus’ (figs. 2.4-5).<sup>140</sup> There were a few examples of the title incorporated into the reverse as well.<sup>141</sup>



Figs. 2.4 & 2.5: Obverses of Maximinus Daza (left) and Constantine (right) as Filii Augustorum.<sup>142</sup>

On epigraphy, the title appears in full, apparently as a replacement for the title of *nobilissimus Caesar* which usually followed the Caesars’ names. It has been found at various places, usually from the regions of the empire under Galerius and Daza’s control.<sup>143</sup>

This legend marks one of the few times that kinship terms were used explicitly on late antique coinage. The blatant labelling of these two younger emperors as FIL AVGG is considered to herald ‘dynastic’ interests. Hekster notes that it is “striking that kin-terms were now thought appropriate.”<sup>144</sup> It is perhaps more striking that this reverse legend is new, and that it was not used at any point during the third century—this seems at odds with the usual characterization of the Tetrarchy as being ‘anti-dynastic’ but has been explained away by the accusation that dynasty was the ‘downfall’ of the Tetrarchy.<sup>145</sup> Usually *Filii Augustorum* is considered to be a ‘stop-gap’ title somewhere between Caesar and Augustus, though Stefan has shown that the title had real political importance and implications.<sup>146</sup> Leadbetter says that the title was “intended to reassure Daza of his dynastic role”; Barnes calls the title a “compromise”; and Hekster suggests that it was a way of combating Constantine’s and Maxentius’ claims.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Constantine receives both FIL AVG and FIL AVGG, apparently according to preference from each mint, whereas Daza seems to only have FIL AVGG—it is unclear whether this is due to the record as it survives, as a choice by the mints, or if there was a deeper ideology to it.

<sup>141</sup> E.g. GENIO FIL AVG for Constantine, RIC VI Antioch nos. 105, 111.

<sup>142</sup> Both from RIC VI. Daza: Siscia no. 200a; Constantine: Nicomedia no. 56.

<sup>143</sup> E.g. AE (1979) 303 = AE (2005), 690 (Sardinia); CIL 5.8081 (Italy); AE (2004) 1641a (Egypt); AE (1929) 94 = AE (1991) 1405 (Thrace); CIL 3.6174 = ILS 683 & CIL 3.14215,2 (Moesia Inf.); AE (1986) 660 (Pontus & Bithynia); AE (1986) 656b (Cappadocia). Cf. Stefan (2004) on the epigraphic evidence. Stefan (2005) discusses these inscriptions and the title of *Filius Augusti* further, including its appearance in papyri, literature, etc.

<sup>144</sup> Hekster (2015) 294.

<sup>145</sup> E.g. Börm (2015) 245.

<sup>146</sup> Stefan (2005) 170f, 193-198; Stefan (2004) 329-349.

<sup>147</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 220; Barnes (1981) 33; Hekster (2015) 294-296. Cf. Stefan (2005) 176.

Hekster's explanation is the most convincing, but I wish to build upon this idea and to examine the purpose of the title more closely.

Before continuing, it is important to note that the title only appears in full on epigraphy as *Filii Augustorum* for Daza and Constantine together, and on coinage as the abbreviated FIL AVGG. The exact semantics of the title is unclear.<sup>148</sup> It obviously is explicit in its naming of Daza and Constantine as sons of emperors, that is, the sons of Galerius and Constantius. It may be possible, however, that the plural *Augustorum*—indicated by the AVGG on the coin legends—implies a more figurative relationship, similar to the *parentes* of the panegyrics. Going forward, I will treat this title as an expression of dynasticism indicating descent from emperors. Daza's adoptive relationship to Galerius, notably, is not treated differently from Constantine's descent from Constantius. This stands in stark contrast to Eutropius' use of the phrase *Filii Augustorum* (previously mentioned in 2.i), where Constantine and Maxentius are said to be *filii Augustorum* but Daza and Licinius are dismissed as *novi homines*.<sup>149</sup> The situation on the coinage is very different.

The *Filii Augustorum* title is one that controls the political narrative of the post-Carnuntum era by asserting that Daza and Constantine are on the same level, while acknowledging their similar imperial statuses (in Galerius' imperial college that was reinforced at Carnuntum) as well as their mutual status as sons of emperors. Licinius was never a recipient of this legend; one reason for this is merely that he had not been adopted by any emperor, another is that the *Filii Augustorum* title implied a status within the imperial college—one that was not inherently linked to dynastic claims—that did not apply to Licinius. The key to this control is in the status of this new title within Galerius' imperial college. At most mints, the *Filii Augustorum* are still presented as definitely junior to the Augusti. The reverse legend most commonly associated with the FIL AVGG obverses is GENIO CAESARIS; the *Filii Augustorum* are not allowed to share in the GENIO AVGVSTI or GENIO IMPERATORIS legends.<sup>150</sup> Thus, the title of *Filii Augustorum* is linked to the position of Caesar, albeit in a different way than the *Princeps Iuventutis* title. This makes sense if one considers the implications of the Caesar role as discussed in the previous chapter. To recap the argument: Caesars were, in the third-century, always sons or close relatives adopted as sons. This

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<sup>148</sup> Stefan (2005) 180ff interprets the singular form as *Filius Augustorum* in a 'collegiate' sense, but I remain more cautious.

<sup>149</sup> Eutropius 10.4.

<sup>150</sup> The only exceptions to this are from Sisak (nos. 200a-b for Daza and Constantine respectively), and it may be explained by the equally unsuitable reverse type of GENIO CAESARIS for Galerius and Licinius: both types were minted for both emperors. If GENIO CAESARIS for Galerius and Licinius cannot be taken as lessening their power, then neither can GENIO AVGVSTI be taken as augmenting Daza and Constantine's.

continued in the Tetrarchy, when first Constantius and Galerius and then Severus and Daza were adopted as sons by their Augusti, while Licinius, who never held the place of Caesar, was not adopted by Galerius.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, the title of Caesar was irrevocably linked with dynastic implications, even when the relationships expressed were constructed through adoption and marriage.

Calling Daza and Constantine *Filii Augustorum*, therefore, acknowledged their dynastic legitimacy claims but also established their statuses within Galerius' imperial college as *Caesars*, not as Augusti.<sup>152</sup> Galerius' regime ignored Constantine's claim to be an Augustus, elevated by Maximian's hand. But instead of ignoring him entirely and refusing to mint coins to acknowledge him at all, the propagation of this title instead emphasized Constantine's place within the college—his 'rightful' place. Maxentius—who could and did also claim to be the son of an Augustus—was ignored because Galerius could not exert the same method of control on him, an emperor who had achieved success in his own right and who had never been a member of Galerius' imperial college. Instead, Galerius exerted narrative control over the events in the west, even if he could not defeat Constantine and Maxentius in battle, reasserting the imperial status of the post-Carnuntum college.<sup>153</sup>

This new title of *Filii Augustorum* seems, however, to have been one which both Constantine and Daza were uninterested in promoting for themselves.<sup>154</sup> The title as it survives in the numismatic record seems to have been more prevalent for Constantine than Daza.<sup>155</sup> There are no examples of the title, or the related reverse legend GENIO FIL AVGG, from any western mints controlled by Constantine or Maxentius. This implies that Constantine's regime was not about to present the emperor as anything less than a full Augustus, especially when the title was merely another way of saying 'Caesar'.

The relative scarcity of the coinage for Daza as one of the *Filii Augustorum* is interesting. It could be explained merely by survival, but the issues for Daza survive only from mints in areas near to where Galerius was based: Sisak and Thessaloniki; one of the surviving inscriptions for Daza and Constantine as the *Filii Augustorum* is also from near this area.<sup>156</sup> None of the mints under Daza's control mints for him under this title—but they do for

<sup>151</sup> See IV.1 for further discussion of Licinius' non-adoption.

<sup>152</sup> Although I agree with Stefan (2005) 171-176 that Caesar and *Filii Augustorum* were two separate ranks, I still hold that the *Filii Augustorum* rank implied the position of Caesar rather than that of Augustus.

<sup>153</sup> Stefan (2005) 198-199.

<sup>154</sup> Stefan (2005) 189-193.

<sup>155</sup> E.g. CONSTANTINE: Siscia no. 203; Thessalonica nos. 32b, 39b; Nicomedia nos. 56, 61; Antioch nos. 104 and 111; Alexandria nos. 100b, 113, 117. DAZA: Siscia no. 200a; Thessalonica nos. 32a, 39a.

<sup>156</sup> AE (1929) 94 = AE (1991) 1405. <http://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD023579>



Constantine.<sup>157</sup> These trends in issuing the FIL AVGG legend make it more likely that, just as Constantine was not about to give up the title of Augustus, similarly Daza's ambitions were not to be placated by a different name for the title of Caesar. There are, however, some inscriptions from Daza's regime that do term him and Constantine *Filii Augustorum*.<sup>158</sup> We do not have the dedicators for most of these inscriptions, but we do for a Cappadocian inscription: one Flavius Severus, a *vir perfectissimus*, one of the equestrian ranks (not to be confused with the Flavius Valerius Severus of the Second Tetrarchy).<sup>159</sup> This Severus, in setting up a dedication to the imperial college, chose this title to honour both Caesars instead of the far more common *nobilissimi Caesares*. It should, therefore, not be seen as an expression of imperial policy or a contradiction of the mints, but instead a choice that reflects some of the rhetoric and language of legitimacy in the east during this period.

Thus, the introduction of the title may also have been about controlling Daza as well as Constantine, or perhaps merely offering an honorific that Daza was not willing to promote. When Galerius eventually accepted Daza's claims to the Augustus title, he accepted Constantine's as well. Although the title is seen by several modern scholars as a step towards dynastic legitimation on the part of the Tetrarchic emperors, it instead should be understood more as a reflection of the ways in which the position of Caesar was evolving under Galerius' imperial college. These coins were not particularly common, and the title was quick to disappear because it offered nothing to imperial legitimation claims that the title of Caesar did not already provide. *Filius Augusti* offered no increase in status or independence from the Augusti. Yet, as can be inferred from inscriptions, the innovation of the new title was welcomed by provincial officials and elite, who then used it to honour their Caesars.

Most importantly, the title of *Filii Augustorum* is not necessarily an indication that the Tetrarchic system was being supplanted by dynastic principles—the two could and did exist simultaneously. Instead, the title represents an effort to realign these competing dynasties within the Tetrarchic system, perhaps even a way of bringing Constantine 'back into the fold' after Carnuntum. The *Filii Augustorum* title was an experiment, probably instigated by Galerius, that was unsuccessful—but it is also a counterpoint to the idea that dynastic claims

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<sup>157</sup> E.g. RIC VI, Antioch nos. 104-5, 111; Alexandria nos. 99b, 100b, 117. Sutherland (1967) 31 says that Daza's minting of this title for Constantine served as "a derogatory mark".

<sup>158</sup> On the inscriptions, see the detailed discussions in Stefan (2004), (2005); also Grünwald (1993) 41-45.

<sup>159</sup> AE (1986) 656a (Cappadocia). This Fl. Severus is not immediately identifiable as one of the many Severuses listed in the PLRE.

destroyed the Tetrarchy.<sup>160</sup> Dynastic claims were not necessarily more successful than others, but they may have become more appealing as the Tetrarchic system began to collapse.

The introduction of this title also fits with the degree of control exerted over the Tetrarchy through the new emphasis on the ranks of the imperial college (GENIO CAESARIS, GENIO AVGVSTI, GENIO IMPERATORIS). Overall, Galerius should not be seen as an ineffectual emperor, but one who struggled valiantly to preserve order against the increasing individualization of rival emperors and ostensible allies alike. His efforts also culminated in the presentation of his eastern dynasty along with his adopted son, Daza. In opposition to the Herculii in the west, Galerius' regime would promote these emperors as the Iovii in the east.

#### 4. THE IOVII: GALERIUS AND MAXIMINUS DAZA

Galerius' dynastic policies are often overshadowed by Constantine and Maxentius' claims and propaganda during the early fourth century. Leadbetter, however, has called attention to Galerius' policies, seeing the power struggles after Constantius' death as effectively the Herculii against the Iovii.<sup>161</sup> This section will examine the extent of Galerius' dynastic interests in the period after Carnuntum, and also how Maximinus Daza continued these policies after Galerius' death beyond the continuation of the persecution of Christians.<sup>162</sup> After eighteen years of rule, Galerius died in 311, from what may have been an infected wound or some kind of cancer of the bowels or genitals.<sup>163</sup> Daza and his family were eliminated by Licinius after the latter's victory in 313, bringing an end to Galerius' imperial family and the last vestiges of his imperial college. Before his death, Galerius seems to have been with his court at Thessaloniki, where he had a palace complex and a triumphal arch, though his 'retirement' palace had been built at Gamzigrad in Serbia.<sup>164</sup> It is unclear whether these

<sup>160</sup> As expressed by Williams (1985) 197-198.

<sup>161</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 170-205; cf. Odahl (2004) 73: "The new Tetrarchy which Diocletian announced in 305 furthered the political aims of the eastern Jovians over the dynastic hopes of the western Herculians..."

<sup>162</sup> Daza seems to have continued Galerius' policies more generally. Control of territory: Barnes (1981) 39-40. The numismatic evidence from mints under Daza's control—primarily Alexandria and Antioch, and Nicomedia and Cyzicus from about 311; cf. Barnes (1981) 39-40—shows a continuation of the coinage issued while Galerius was still alive as well as some new foci—primarily coins featuring Jupiter, Sol (perhaps as a counterpoint to Constantine's 311-313 emphasis), and the *genio* types, now reduced almost entirely to the single legend GENIO AVGVSTI, which was also minted for Licinius and Constantine. There is also the addition of BONO GENIO PII IMPERATORIS at Alexandria only, also a *genio* type. E.g. Alexandria nos. 134b, 135b, 137, 144b. Cf. Sutherland (1967) 657.

<sup>163</sup> On Galerius' death: Harries (2012) 44.

<sup>164</sup> Galerius at Thessaloniki: Leadbetter (2009) 242, Sutherland (1967) 486, 505 in opposition to Barnes (1982) 64, who suggests that Galerius remained longer at Sardica. On the Arch of Galerius: Hannestad (1988) 313-318; Elsner (1998) 129-130.

building programmes carry any dynastic implications; Galerius was not buried within the complex.<sup>165</sup>

### i. Galerius and Daza as Iovii

As I have shown throughout this chapter and the previous one, Galerius should not be considered a ‘non-dynastic’ emperor. His status as a Caesar and an adopted son of Diocletian established his dynastic ‘right’ to the position of Augustus, and he promoted his nephew Daza in much the same way. Another legacy from Diocletian was the ability to claim to be ‘Iovian’. The previous chapter has shown how the *signa* were used in literature, such as the *Panegyrici Latini* and the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, as discrete ‘families’, although this was not strictly adhered to—for example, Severus does not seem to have propagated a claim to be Herculian. In fact, the use of the *signa* is difficult to interpret in the period after Constantius’ death. It is only later, after Carnuntum, that the Iovian tendencies of the eastern emperors became more pronounced, perhaps as another reaction to the ostensibly ‘Herculian’ claims of Constantine and Maxentius. However, there are no panegyrics that survive for the eastern emperors as parallels to the Gallic *Panegyrici Latini*. While the Herculian identities of Maximian and Constantine were heralded in the Panegyric of 307,<sup>166</sup> no such praises exist for Galerius or Daza. Coinage is therefore the basis for any discussion of their Iovian identities beyond a few brief mentions in the surviving sources.

The appellation of Iovius was used to describe all three members of the ‘Iovian’ family: Diocletian, Galerius, and Daza. In Aurelius Victor’s *De Caesaribus*, Diocletian is the one with the appellation Iovius, and he is called that at various points, though interchangeably with ‘Diocletianus’ and ‘Valerius’. Galerius is called “Maximian Iovius” to distinguish him from “Maximian Herculius” in the *Chronicon Paschale*. An epistle apparently transcribed by Eusebius, purportedly from Daza, gives the emperor’s salutation as “Iovius Maximinus Augustus”<sup>167</sup> but no other author seems to use the name for Daza. For Eusebius, it may have

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<sup>165</sup> Johnson (2009) 75-82 discusses the different buildings which have been identified as Galerius’ mausoleum; he settles on a building atop a ridge, outside of the palace complex at Gamzigrad (Romuliana). The name, at least, is dynastic; Romuliana was named for Galerius’ mother.

<sup>166</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 191; Rees (2002) 173.

<sup>167</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.9.14. Whether this was copying an actual epistle or Eusebius’ interpretation of one is unclear. It seems to be the only time Eusebius uses the name ‘Iovius’ in both the *Historia Ecclesiastica* and the *Vita Constantini*.

been a way of reminding his readers that Daza was of a line of Iovian persecutors; he also records that Daza built a statue to Jupiter in the midst of renewed persecution.<sup>168</sup>

Galerius' gold coinage as Augustus, especially from the Balkan and north-eastern mints under his control, shows an emphasis on Jupiter types, suggesting that he promoted the links to the 'Iovian' family and to Tetrarchic ideology.<sup>169</sup> It is Daza, however, who most promoted his Iovian lineage, especially after Galerius' death. Upon his elevation, Galerius honoured him with a IOVI CONSERVAT type to display his new rank.<sup>170</sup> Sutherland comments that it "records the formal adhesion of the new Augustus to the Jovian line."<sup>171</sup> However, the type in itself is not new or unusual, nor is the statement of Daza's Iovian allegiance. The coinage from Galerius' mints shows that regime's interest in promoting Daza as a Iovian, but this was done at his own mints as well.<sup>172</sup> For example, he was presented in the imperial toga on the reverse of a bronze type from Antioch with the reverse legend IOVIO PROPAGAT ORBIS TERRARVM—again referring to the then-Caesar's military victories.<sup>173</sup> (fig. 2.6)



Fig. 2.6: Daza as 'Iovius'.<sup>174</sup>

The issue combines military and civic presentation: the toga is combined with a Victory, and he is in full imperial outfit, with the laureate crown especially suited to Caesars, on the obverse.<sup>175</sup> Like Galerius before him, Daza was a useful commander on the eastern military

<sup>168</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.3.

<sup>169</sup> E.g. RIC VI, Serdica nos. 7a-b, 18a-b, 27-30; Nicomedia no. 31, 33, 44, 63. See also Torbatov (1996) 235-237 for the discussion of a silver medallion with reverse IOVIS CONSERVATOR AVGG.

<sup>170</sup> RIC VI, Nicomedia no. 63; Sutherland (1967) 58.

<sup>171</sup> Sutherland (1967) p. 550.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. MAXIMINVS P F AVG/IOVI CONSERVATORI (Gold, 311-313, Antioch no. 158); IMP C GAL VAL MAXIMINVS P F AVG/IOVI CONSERVATORI (Aes, 311-313, Nicomedia nos. 71b, 76, 79); GAL VAL MAXIMINVS P F AVG/IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG (Aes, 311, Cyzicus no. 79); IMP C GAL VAL MAXIMINVS P F AVG/IOVI CONSERVATORI (Aes, 311-313, Cyzicus nos. 91a, 105b, 109); IMP C GAL VAL MAXIMINVS P F AVG/IOVI CONSERVATORI (Aes, 312, Antioch no. 166b)

<sup>173</sup> RIC VI, Antioch no. 134 (obverse legend MAXIMINVS NOB CAES).

<sup>174</sup> Cf. RIC VI, Antioch no. 134 (var). MAXIMINVS NOB CAES / IOVIO PROPAGAT ORBIS TERRARVM. N.B. The picture shows an earlier version of the RIC number given, but with the same title, description, and attributes.

<sup>175</sup> On civic busts, see King (1999) 131-132.

front, which the mint of Antioch supplied. The message was that Daza, with the help of Jupiter, successfully defended the borders.

It is unclear whether the IOVIO in this legend is a corruption of IOVI or if it is indeed dedicated to Daza as *Iovius*.<sup>176</sup> The image of the emperor himself strongly suggests the latter.<sup>177</sup> Hekster agrees, translating the reverse legend as “To Iovius, extender of the whole world.”<sup>178</sup> He links this coin type to a group of coins from Antioch which also include coins for Valeria and the FIL AVGG title for Constantine, though he suggests that “the explicit use of Iovius at the time strengthens the suggestion that the *signa* were meant as an alternative to family relations.”<sup>179</sup> I see it instead as an express of familial and thus dynastic strength against the counter-claims elsewhere in the empire.

## ii. Galerius’ imperial family

Galerius’ mints show an increased focus at certain points on commemoration of his imperial family.<sup>180</sup> One of the most pronounced examples of Galerius’ increasingly dynastic policies after Constantius’ death was the elevation of his wife Valeria to Augusta. Valeria was Diocletian’s daughter, a potentially powerful link to the stability of Diocletian’s reign. It is uncertain if Valeria Maximilla, Galerius’ daughter who was married to Maxentius, was also Valeria’s child or if she were a daughter of Galerius’ by a previous marriage.<sup>181</sup> Lactantius reports that Valeria was barren, but this may be interpreted as her not having any sons.<sup>182</sup> She reportedly adopted Galerius’ illegitimate son Candidianus, who would have been in his mid-teens,<sup>183</sup> effectively legitimising him within the narrative, if not according to actual legal practice.<sup>184</sup> Valeria seems to have been raised to Augusta shortly before the council of

<sup>176</sup> Grammatical corruptions of Latin legends are fairly common in the east, e.g. SOLE for SOLI.

<sup>177</sup> The use of the dative IOVIO (compared to the usual IOVI) is potentially interesting, but it is likely merely a numismatic standard than a specific ideological choice.

<sup>178</sup> Hekster (2015) 298.

<sup>179</sup> Hekster (2015) 298.

<sup>180</sup> Sutherland (1967) 60: “As a group, these types reflect a strict narrowing of the imperial basis, east versus west, set against a minatory background.”

<sup>181</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 178.

<sup>182</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 50.2; cf. Barnes (1982) 38 regarding Lactantius’ comment on Valeria’s infertility says it “could be taken to mean that Valeria was unable to conceive any children except a single daughter.” C.f. Barnes (2010) 321.

<sup>183</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 50.2.

<sup>184</sup> See Lindsay (2009) 71 on women being unable to adopt (legally). Imperial women of the later empire may not have been bound by such rules.

Carnuntum, and coins were minted for her from Galerius and Daza's mints with the legend *VENERI VICTRICI*, celebrating Venus as a conqueror (**fig. 2.7**).<sup>185</sup>



Fig. 2.7: Valeria with reverse of Venus Victrix.<sup>186</sup>

Hekster points to the inclusion of Valeria on coins which both pre- and post-date the council of Carnuntum, which, along with the inclusion of wives (not previously promoted under the Tetrarchy), partially led to his statement that “non-dynastic emperorship had proved insufficient” in the early fourth century.<sup>187</sup> In his view, the promotion of Valeria was a step towards the promotion of dynastic claims that became more common after the Second Tetrarchy. Perhaps similarly, Leadbetter believes that the elevation of Valeria shows Galerius’ “supremacy.”<sup>188</sup> Valeria’s title was attested on inscriptions as well as coins,<sup>189</sup> and Aurelius Victor says that Galerius called a province after his wife’s name.<sup>190</sup>

Valeria was also potentially important after Galerius’ death for offering legitimacy through marriage. Lactantius claims that Daza pursued Valeria after Galerius’ death (see also **4.iii**).<sup>191</sup> Although Daza was already married, it may have been that a marriage to Valeria—though, in Lactantius’ eyes, a perversion of social norms—would have provided Daza with additional links to the legitimacy offered by associations with Galerius’ Iovian dynasty and

<sup>185</sup> Most notably in gold, as in RIC VI Siscia no. 196, Thessalonica no. 29, Nicomedia no. 47. Cf. Sutherland (1967) 59. Stefan (2005) 179 suggests that this honouring of Valeria was in response to Constantine’s minting for Fausta as *nobilissima femina*, but as the promotion of Valeria far exceeded Fausta’s, I believe the two to be largely unrelated—though both emblematic of a nominal resurgence of women in the numismatic record.

<sup>186</sup> RIC VI, Siscia no. 196.

<sup>187</sup> Hekster (2015) 295-296, also 282-283. On the lack of women in Tetrarchic portraiture and coinage, Hekster (2015) 314: “The absence of women implied a departure from the notion of a ruling family.”

<sup>188</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 205.

<sup>189</sup> Hekster (2015) 295, cf. ILS, 8932.

<sup>190</sup> Aur. Vict. 40.10: *Cuius gratia provinciam uxoris nomine Valeriam appellavit*. Cf. Zos. 2.33.2.

<sup>191</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 39.1. “Now Daia [Maximinus Daza], in gratifying his libidinous desires, made his own will the standard of right; and therefore he would not refrain from soliciting the widow of Galerius, the Empress Valeria, to whom he had lately given the appellation of mother.” *Denique cum libidinibus suis hanc legem dedisset, ut fas putaret quicquid concupisset, ne ab Augusta quidem, quam nuper appellaverat matrem, potuit temperare.*

that emperor's eighteen years of imperial power.<sup>192</sup> Valeria's power stemmed from her familial relationships, and this would be her downfall after Galerius and Daza's deaths.

Candidianus, Galerius' illegitimate son, is mentioned only in Lactantius. There is no evidence that he was groomed for imperial power; he does not feature on coins (although he almost certainly would not have appeared unless he had been made a Caesar).<sup>193</sup> Much like Maxentius before him, however, Candidianus was betrothed to the daughter of an emperor, the young daughter of Daza.<sup>194</sup> Galerius and Daza's families were thus bound together by further dynastic techniques. If the information we have about Candidianus was correct, a child by him and Daza's daughter would have been the grandson of two emperors and the great-grandson of Diocletian: a powerful claim by dynastic principles and one that Licinius would have been foolish to ignore.

Galerius' dynastic tendencies are generally surmised from a passage from Lactantius in which the author presents Galerius' 'ideal' imperial college, to be initiated after his *vicennalia*:<sup>195</sup> Licinius and Severus as Augusti, Daza and Candidianus as Caesars, and Galerius himself as a senior Augustus after twenty years in power.

...and at that stage, after replacing himself by making his own son Caesar (at present his son was only nine years old), he [Galerius] in his turn could lay down his power. Thus, with Licinius and Severus in supreme control of the empire and with Maximinus [Daza] and Candidianus in the second rank as Caesars, he would be surrounded by an impregnable wall behind which he could enjoy a carefree and calm old age.

*...ac substituto Caesare filio suo, tunc erat novennis, et ipse deponeret, ita cum imperii summam tenerent Licinius ac Severus et secundum Caesarum nomen Maximinus et Candidianus, inexpugnabili muro circumsaeptus securam et tranquillam degeret senectutem.*<sup>196</sup>

Immediately before this passage, Lactantius had introduced Licinius, saying that Galerius considered him a brother and did not want to make him Caesar—possibly Lactantius' explanation for Licinius' elevation at Carnuntum to Augustus, bypassing Caesar.<sup>197</sup> The

<sup>192</sup> Cf. Cullhed (1994) 81, who also suggests that Daza's desire for Valeria was based around dynastic principles.

<sup>193</sup> See Leadbetter (2009) 204, 241. Chastagnol (1976) 228 suggested that Candidianus was actually made a Caesar, but Barnes (1982) 38 n. 18 argues convincingly against this, as there is no evidence to support it.

<sup>194</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 50.4; Leadbetter (2009) 243.

<sup>195</sup> The timing of just when Galerius was supposed to have envisioned this is unclear and one of the many problems with Lactantius' interpretation; see below.

<sup>196</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 20.4. Trans. Creed (1984), adapted.

<sup>197</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 20.3

passage is also important because it shows Lactantius' understanding of co-Augusti as 'brothers' and Caesars as their sons.<sup>198</sup> Severus and Licinius, therefore, are here presented as Galerius' 'brothers' and Daza and Candidianus as Galerius' sons. Licinius' elevation also makes him a successor to Galerius (with Severus as Constantius' successor), but this understanding does not fit with the relationship between Galerius and Licinius that was expressed in other media—i.e. not a filial one.

This passage is interesting as an interpretation of the relationships of the imperial college, but should not be trusted. Lactantius, of course, would have had no way of knowing Galerius' plans. His retirement might be surmised by the building of his palace at Gamzigrad in Serbia as a parallel to Diocletian's retirement palace in Split.<sup>199</sup> But beyond that, Lactantius would have been in the dark, and the passage may even be an explanation for Galerius' actions, its construction dependent on hindsight.<sup>200</sup> Even the relationships expressed here are somewhat confused; it has been seen previously that the *Senior Augustus* status of the retired emperors was likened to 'fathers', *patres augustorum* (see 2.iii); Licinius and Severus, therefore, would not necessarily have been 'brothers' to a retired emperor. The classification of Daza and Candidianus as sons also does not make sense; as Galerius' sons, they would not have made sense as the Caesars of Severus and Licinius.

One might argue that this classification of relationships is too rigid; the fraternal relationships at the very least were metaphorical. But it is important to consider that the set-up here would doubtless have caused more conflict—Severus already had a son, who was likely older than Candidianus. Severus and Licinius would have had no familial bonds to tie them to their Caesars; they would have owed them no loyalty, nor would the Caesars have owed filial *pietas* to their Augusti. The imperial college was based upon a family structure because of the importance of *pietas* and *concordia* to Roman society. Emperors who were fathers and sons had societal as well as imperial expectations of loyalty placed upon them. The incorporation of

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<sup>198</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 20.3: "...he did not wish to make him Caesar so that he could avoid calling him his own son. He wanted rather to appoint him later as his fellow-Augustus and brother in place of Constantius..." (...*eum Caesarem facere noluit, ne filium nominaret, ut postea in Constantii locum noncuparet Augustum atque fratrem...*). The importance of this passage will be discussed further in IV.1.

<sup>199</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 236-241.

<sup>200</sup> As Potter (2013) 121-122 comments on the passage: "It is a story that dates itself... Like all good propaganda, some aspects of the story were grounded in observable reality: for instance, Galerius did promote Licinius to the rank of Augustus over the head of Maximinus. But one crucial feature, Galerius' hope for his son, reads too much like Constantine's own claim to the throne in 306." Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 138, 204-205; also note the flaws in Lactantius' story and his possible reliance on hindsight. Mackay (1999) 206-207 also offers similar thoughts, but he seems to misunderstand the passage—he suggests that Candidianus would replace Daza in the arrangement proposed by Lactantius, when in fact Candidianus and Daza are here presented as equals (both are sons and Caesars).



familial relationships into the Tetrarchic colleges was more than a metaphorical presentation of hierarchy; there was purpose to it. Lactantius has presented something that at first glance seems plausible, but falls apart when examined too closely. This passage primarily functions as a rhetorical device to foreshadow Galerius' posthumous dynastic failures and the elimination of his, Daza's, and Severus' families. In Lactantius' narrative, though, it is most important in the context of this thesis that the Second Tetrarchy is not presented as the triumph of anti-dynastic principles against the tradition of hereditary succession, but instead as the personal and dynastic interests of Galerius against those of the western emperors.

These dynastic interests would be eliminated after Galerius and Daza's deaths—ironically, by Licinius' hands. Licinius had no familial bonds of *pietas* to Galerius, but especially not Daza. The *De Mortibus Persecutorum* ends with this dynastic destruction, as Lactantius' purpose of the narrative was to show how the legacies of the Tetrarchs were ultimately destroyed: “Thus did God subdue all those who persecuted His name, so that neither root nor branch of them remained.”<sup>201</sup> For Licinius, the purpose was more practical: it was foolish for an emperor to permit the survival of any who might gain the sympathy of the troops or of cities, as Constantine and Maxentius did in recent memory. Thus Daza's wife and children (a young son apparently named Maximus, and an even younger daughter who had been betrothed to Candidianus), Candidianus himself, and Severus' son Severianus were all killed.<sup>202</sup> The dynastic murders ended with the death of Valeria, whom Lactantius had previously expressed sympathy for, yet here it seems a necessary end in order that the families of all the persecutors would be destroyed.<sup>203</sup> Licinius was the new eastern emperor, and to firmly plant his own dynasty, the sprouts of the previous Iovian—and eastern—dynasty must be uprooted.<sup>204</sup>

### iii. Maximinus Daza as a son of Galerius

Daza's familial relationship to and adoption by Galerius has been touched upon at several points in this chapter, as it is an important element of the dynastic nature of Galerius' eastern college. It has been seen how Daza's relationship to Galerius is either obfuscated or

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<sup>201</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 50.1. *Hoc modo deus universos persecutores nominis sui debellavit, ut eorum nec stirps nec radix ulla remaneret.*

<sup>202</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 50 records all these deaths; cf. Leadbetter (2009) 243, Harries (2012) 258; Harries (2014) 199-200.

<sup>203</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 51.

<sup>204</sup> Licinius will be explored more in **Chapter 4**.

ignored, and his adoption makes little impact in how the surviving sources—or modern scholars—treat him and his dynastic claims. As the younger member of the eastern half of the college, Daza has been accused of “chafing” under Galerius’ control, of rebelling from his place in his adoptive father’s imperial college, and of naming himself Augustus in Galerius’ face. In fact, however, Daza seems to have supported his father until the end, even after Galerius’ death; throughout his reign, Daza had been in line with Galerius’ policies and imperial image.<sup>205</sup> The one open break while Galerius was alive had been Daza’s insistence upon the title of Augustus, thereby apparently dealing the final death blow to the Tetrarchic ‘system’ of two Augusti and two Caesars. In Lactantius’ account, this was due to Daza’s jealousy at Licinius’ immediate appointment to the position of Augustus, whereupon Daza forced Galerius to elevate him to the higher rank by contriving to have his own troops acclaim him as *Augustus*.<sup>206</sup> Harries states that the fact that Galerius entrusted his family to Licinius rather than Daza shows a lack of confidence in Daza.<sup>207</sup> She bases her argument on a reading of Lactantius, but by Lactantius’ own later narrative, Candidianus at least was still at Daza’s court after that emperor’s death.<sup>208</sup> In contrast, the numismatic evidence shows continued promotion of Daza by Galerius’ regime even after the former’s elevation to Augustus.<sup>209</sup> However fraught their personal or imperial relationship, the two put up a united front against their western adversaries, solidifying power in the east and continuing to campaign on the eastern and Balkan frontiers.

Before his elevation, the mints under Daza’s control continued to present him as the Caesar and heir—particularly at Antioch, which Sutherland describes as “sensitive in reflecting the various political nuances of the time.”<sup>210</sup> Daza had been a successful commander in campaigns against the Persians, and was therefore presented in military fashion.<sup>211</sup> An example of this is in two intriguing but rather rare bronze types with the reverse legend MAXIMINVS NOBILISSMVS CAESAR, essentially duplicating the obverse legend MAXIMINVS NOB CAES with an obverse bust of Daza in an elaborate, ceremonial military dress or else holding

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<sup>205</sup> He is characterized as obedient and loyal by Leadbetter (2009) 196, 217, 219.

<sup>206</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 32.5. cf. Leadbetter (2009) 217-218. A better argument can be made for Daza’s conflict with other emperors, especially Licinius, after Carnuntum: e.g. in Zonar. 13.1.4; cf. Sutherland (1967) 62; Potter (2013) 121, 134; Barnes (1981) 33.

<sup>207</sup> Harries (2012) 107.

<sup>208</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 35.4 compared to *Mort. Pers.* 50.

<sup>209</sup> For example, in 310-311 the only gold surviving from Nicomedia, one of the mints under Galerius’ control, is for Daza as Augustus: RIC VI, Nicomedia no. 63.

<sup>210</sup> Sutherland (1967) 72.

<sup>211</sup> On Daza’s victories: Barnes (1981) 39.

a Victory on a globe.<sup>212</sup> The reverse type features Daza in military uniform (in the later issue also holding a Victory on a globe); Sutherland interprets it as a *princeps iuventutis* type.<sup>213</sup> It is unusual to find such little variation in the obverse and reverse legends; perhaps the *princeps* type, which had always enjoyed more popularity in the west, was simplified for an eastern audience. The ceremonial style is perhaps an extension of Antioch's tendency to produce coins commemorating emperors' consular appointments.<sup>214</sup>

Daza's rejection of the *Filii Augustorum* title (see **3.iv**) does not also indicate a rejection of the relationship, as is shown by Daza's commemorative coinage to Galerius. Just as Maxentius in Rome used commemorative coinage to assert his relationships with various emperors, Daza used it to explicitly proclaim himself the son of an emperor and *divus*.<sup>215</sup> At the very least, Galerius was useful to Daza after his death—much as Maxentius' dead relatives could be appropriated despite their disagreements whilst alive. Both Daza and Licinius recognized Galerius' death on coinage, although Constantine did not. Licinius' regime minted to the deified Galerius as simply DIVO MAXIMIANO AVG, with reverse legends FORTI FORTVNAE or MEM DIVI MAXIMIANI—the latter is reminiscent of some commemorative coinage to *Divus* Constantius from Ticinum and Aquileia in 307-308.<sup>216</sup>

Daza's commemorative issues go further in expressing *pietas* towards Galerius, this time explicitly connecting himself as the son of Galerius with his newly-deified father. The obverse legend of one type proclaims DIVO MAXIMIANO MAXIMINVS AVG FIL, with the reverse legend AETERNAE MEMORIAE GALERI MAXIMIANI (**fig. 2.8**).<sup>217</sup>



**Fig. 2.8: Commemorative for Galerius (reverse) with obverse of Maximinus Daza.**<sup>218</sup>

<sup>212</sup> RIC VI, Antioch no. 120, 135. Categorized as R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> by Sutherland.

<sup>213</sup> Sutherland (1967) 72.

<sup>214</sup> Sutherland (1967) 68-69, 597.

<sup>215</sup> Maxentius' coinage will be discussed further in **III.4.i**.

<sup>216</sup> E.g. MEM DIVI CONSTANTI: Aquileia no. 127, Ticinum no. 96; MEMORIA DIVI CONSTANTI, Ticinum no. 97. The mints were under control of Maximian and Maxentius at the time. Sutherland (1967) 294 n. 2 dates them to 307-308 to coincide with the alliance with Constantine.

<sup>217</sup> Cyzicus no. 75; Alexandria nos. 133, 143, 148, 151, 154, 159.

<sup>218</sup> Not in RIC, cf. Bastien (1972) Pl. VIII, no. 85.

This reverse legend was reminiscent of Maxentius' contemporary issues, which read AETERNAE MEMORIAE and incorporated multiple dead and deified imperial relatives using explicit familial language—including his father-in-law Galerius, as DIVO MAXIMIANO SOCERO MAXENTIVS AVG (III.4.i). It is difficult not to see clear parallels between the two issues. The issues from Daza's mints may engage with Maxentius' and make a greater claim. Maxentius was only Galerius' son-in-law, but Daza was his son. He fulfilled his obligations of imperial *pietas* by proclaiming his father's deification, but it was not without benefits to Daza himself, who could now claim a *divus* as a father.

Yet this representation of filial piety is not reflected in any of the literary sources; instead, Lactantius explicitly uses the obligations of filial *pietas* to undermine Daza's dynastic claims, perhaps engaging with and subverting messages similar to those found on these coins. In his narrative, when Daza insists upon his elevation to Augustus, Lactantius characterizes him as insolent, obstinate, and impious.<sup>219</sup> The latter term is especially important to Lactantius' rhetoric; *pietas* usually refers either to religious or familial obligations.<sup>220</sup> As there is no religious context here, the indication would be that the passage represents Daza's impiety towards Galerius as that of a son towards a father. The relationship is not explicitly mentioned until later in the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, when Daza furthers his impious behaviour by trying to marry Valeria, Galerius' widow (previously mentioned in section 5.i).

She gave a frank reply (she was the only person who could): firstly, she could not be concerned with marriage while she was still in mourning garb and while the ashes of her husband, his father, were still warm; secondly, he was acting shamefully in repudiating a wife who had been loyal to him...

*Si impetrasset, respondit illa libere quae sola poterat: primo non posse de nuptiis in illo ferali habitu agere tepidus adhuc cineribus mariti sui, patris eius; deinde illum impie facere, quod sibi fidam coniugem repudiet...*<sup>221</sup>

*Impietas* features here as well in a familial context, with Daza now being impious towards his faithful wife (of whom we know next to nothing) as well as his mother by adoption.<sup>222</sup> The

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<sup>219</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 20.

<sup>220</sup> Lactantius also uses the term *impius* to denigrate Maximian as a traitorous father-in-law, the only other time he uses it in a familial sense besides these two instances with Daza: Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 29.8; see a discussion of this instance in V.3.ii.

<sup>221</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 39.3-4.

<sup>222</sup> Though cf. Lindsay (2009) 71 on women being unable to adopt (legally). This may not be true in practice, at least according to claims that Valeria had indeed adopted Galerius' illegitimate son, Candidianus. (Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 50.2.)

implication is, of course, also that he is again acting impiously towards his dead father, who here for the first and only time in Lactantius' narrative is termed Daza's *pater*, to heighten this sense of impiety. While other authors prefer merely to ignore or deny Daza's claims to be the son of Galerius, Lactantius goes one step further: he ignores or belittles them only until he can masterfully subvert them.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Galerius had been an Augustus for six years, and Caesar for twelve years before that, and he had left his mark upon the empire. Daza had ruled as Caesar and Augustus for eight years in total, not an insignificant reign in light of the chaos of the previous century. Their legacies, however, are shrouded in the rhetoric of the time. Galerius is remembered in the surviving literature as a tyrant, a bully, and a persecutor. Perhaps surprisingly, the unfavourable characterizations lingered even in the non-Christian sources (for whom his status as a persecutor would not have been so overpowering.) Zosimus seems merely indifferent; Aurelius Victor is dismissive.<sup>223</sup> Only Pseudo-Victor reports a somewhat positive tradition, although admittedly this is mixed with the 'insolent' claim to a serpent-father in the style of Alexander the Great.<sup>224</sup>

Daza posthumous reception was even more negative. In some of the Christian sources, such as Eusebius, Daza was portrayed as the worst of the persecutors.<sup>225</sup> It may be because Caesarea was under Daza's control and thus had seen the effects of persecution that Eusebius was most vehemently against him.<sup>226</sup> Daza's familial relationships, however, do not feature in

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<sup>223</sup> Aur. Vict. 42.19: "This is so important that Tiberius and Galerius achieved very much that was outstanding when serving others, but under their own authority and auspices their accomplishments were by no means equal." (*quod adeo praestat, ut Tiberius Galeriusque subiecti aliis egregia pleraque, suo autem ductu atque auspicio minus paria experti sint.*) Trans. Bird (1994).

<sup>224</sup> Ps.-Vict. 40.15. "Galerius, however, (although with an uncultured and rustic sense of justice) was praiseworthy enough, handsome of body, a most excellent and a fortunate warrior, born of farming parents, a keeper of herds of cattle, from which comes his surname 'Armentarius.'" *Galerius autem fuit (licet inculta agrestique iustitia) satis laudabilis, pulcher corpore, eximius et felix bellator, ortus parentibus agrariis, pastor armentorum, unde ei cognomen Armentarius fuit.* Serpent-father claim: Ps.-Vict. 40.17.

<sup>225</sup> Trompf (1983) on Eusebius' portrayal of Daza; cf. Van Heesch (1993) on unusual civic coinages as "anti-Christian propaganda" that was initiated directly by the emperor.

<sup>226</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.1.1, Eusebius calls Daza "the tyrant of the East, a monster of impiety... who had been the bitterest enemy toward the God of the universe..." (δυσσεβέστατος εἰ καὶ τις ἄλλος, καὶ τῆς εἰς τὸν τῶν ὄλων θεῶν εὐσεβείας πολεμιώτατος γεγονώς;) and later (9.7.2) says that he possessed a "boastful, overweening arrogance." (ἄλαζόν και ὑπερήφανος ἀθάρδεια) Trans. Oulton (1932). In fact, Book 9 is largely concerned with the evil deeds of the 'tyrant', culminating in 9.10.6 with his defeat by Licinius and his death by the God's will. Cf. Van Dam (2011) 85. Eusebius also gives more detail as to Daza's final days than most other sources, although his reliability is obviously questionable. This interest is not replicated in the *Vita Constantini*. This between Eusebius' two accounts must be due to timing: one was written before and one after the civil wars of 317 and 324 between Constantine and Licinius. After, when praising Constantine in the *Vita Constantini*, it would be

Eusebius' narrative. In his account of Licinius' wars against Constantine, Eusebius briefly calls to mind the persecutions, saying "the latter [Daza] had even striven to outdo his predecessor [Galerius] in a sort of competition in evil" (ὁς δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπερβαλέσθαι τὸν πρῶτον ὡς ἐν κακῶν πεφλοτιμημένος ἀγῶνι).<sup>227</sup> By omitting any mention of a familial relationship between the two, Eusebius refused to add any sense of legitimacy to Daza's reign. Similarly, when reproducing Daza's edict to stop persecution in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, he reports the emperor's titulature as "Gaius Valerius Maximinus" rather than the correct "Galerius."<sup>228</sup> In the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, much of the account of the war between Daza and Licinius also details the character of the former. To do this, Lactantius uses many of the typical tropes of a *tyrannus*.<sup>229</sup> As Harries comments, "The conduct ascribed to Maximinus [Daza] and Maxentius contravened not only sexual but also social and legal norms. By their unlawful behaviour, they were 'proved' also to have been unlawful rulers."<sup>230</sup>

In other ancient sources, he is hardly mentioned, except for his death and defeat.<sup>231</sup> These are the side-effects of Daza being one of history's 'losers' in a literary world that would have been heavily influenced by Constantine's victorious reign.<sup>232</sup> It is this representation of a *tyrannus*, as well as a penchant for Constantine-centred narratives, which still influences

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impractical to give glory to another's victory, especially when that victor, having lost a civil war, had been deemed a *tyrannus* himself. The *Historia Ecclesiastica*, like Lactantius' *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, however, seems to have been written before the wars—at least one version of them.

<sup>227</sup> *Vit. Const.* 1.58.2.

<sup>228</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* 9.10.7.

<sup>229</sup> Harries (2012) 115-16 discusses these tropes briefly. In more depth: Daza is greedy even when his people are in famine but overly generous with his soldiers (37), and he also is gluttonous, gorging himself on food and drink (49). He is debauched towards women ("in which he transcended all former emperors"), both married women and virgins and even the wife of his adoptive father (38-39). He condemns the innocent (40). His jealousy towards Licinius is the root of this struggle, and he enters into a secret alliance with the other remaining persecutor, Maxentius (43). In war, he attempts to bribe or 'seduce' Licinius' troops (45, 47) but refuses the chance of peace when it is offered (46). At the end, he tries to commit suicide with poison but it does not work, and he suffers greatly as befits a tyrant (49).

<sup>230</sup> Harries (2012) 116.

<sup>231</sup> The *Origo* does not discuss his defeat by Licinius or the persecutions. In Aurelius Victor, he is not connected with persecutions; Victor reports only that Licinius defeated him and that he died at Tarsus (41.1). Zosimus repeats this story (2.17.3). Eutropius' version is similar to Victor and Zosimus, but Daza's death is specifically termed "accidental", an interesting version of the narrative that is not reflected in other contemporary sources (10.4). The *Chronicon Paschale* is confused: as well as saying that Licinius defeated Daza, it also reports erroneously that it was Licinius abdicated after a truce with Daza and also (separately) that Constantine campaigned against Daza (Dindorf, p. 517, 520-521). Pseudo-Victor (40.8) is perhaps the most simplistic regarding Daza's death, stating only that "Maximinus died a simple death at Tarsus."

<sup>232</sup> The one positive source regarding Daza is the *Epitome de Caesaribus*. Pseudo-Victor (40.18) calls the emperor "Galerius Maximinus", reporting his correct titulature and thus implying his closeness to Galerius Maximianus, as well as reporting the relationship between them (*sorore Armentarii progenitus*). He also offers the analysis, not found elsewhere, that Daza was a quiet man, a supporter of literary arts although also fond of wine. The author adds, however, that "his [Daza's] birth and station was a shepherd's" (*ortu quidem atque instituto pastorali*), perhaps echoing Lactantius' more pejorative statements about Daza's career (Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 19.5). Overall, it is a more nuanced characterization, giving his virtues as well as his vices.

discussions of Daza to this day. That, coupled with the *damnatio memoriae* on his name, was an effective way to counter the memory of Daza's claims to imperial legitimacy.<sup>233</sup> The most effective *damnatio*, however, was the murder of Daza's family and any other potential claimants under his protection (see 4.ii). Eusebius gleefully records that statues of Daza and his children were torn down or defaced in the wake of his defeat and death.<sup>234</sup> Galerius and Daza's dynastic lines was thus destroyed, and his reputation soon followed.

By the time of their deaths, Galerius and Daza had promoted their dynastic interests and their relationships to each other. It is clear that this relationship was established and promoted from the beginning of Daza's reign. Yet, by the time of Galerius' death, 'family' no longer equalled 'college' as it had done throughout the third century. The First Tetrarchy, as shown in the previous chapter, was able to promote familial relationships that were at the core of the Tetrarchic college. Galerius' colleges, however, were more difficult to control. The Iovii and the Herculii, previously united as different sides of one extended family, now competed for primacy.<sup>235</sup> The separation between the two was a result of this increased political competition. Even after Maximian's loss of power and ultimate death, the two sides of the college showed no signs of reconciliation. After Constantius' death, Galerius and Daza forged their own eastern imperial family—in which Licinius, although he professed himself a Iovian, was not included. Indeed, Daza could be considered the "last" Tetrarch—arguably more so than Licinius or Constantine.<sup>236</sup>

Williams' argument that dynastic claims brought down the Tetrarchic system is partially correct—dynastic claims were useful to the several emperors who competed for primacy. Leadbetter's narrative of the Second Tetrarchy as two competing dynasties, the *Iovii* versus the *Herculii*, is also partially correct. Yet this period as a tale of competing dynasties fails to properly appreciate the techniques of control that Galerius used to promote the Tetrarchic college in a different way than his family. As with the First Tetrarchy, the two systems—dynastic and Tetrarchic—could be simultaneously employed in the Second, although that does not mean they always were. Imperial legitimation strategies were a variety of techniques that were deployed according to the political nuances of the time, and Galerius could

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<sup>233</sup> For the *damnatio memoriae* on Daza in terms of statuary, see Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.11.2; Varner (2004) 220-221. Varner notes that no statues have been identified as Daza with any certainty.

<sup>234</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* 9.11.2. This also shows that Daza's regime, or those who wished to honour him, chose to honour his children as well.

<sup>235</sup> In this sense, Galerius is often made out to be the instigator of conflict, especially in Lactantius. Instead, the promotion of Galerius' Iovii may have been a response to Maximian's promotion of a new Herculan dynasty with Constantine and Maxentius. Of course, one could argue that Maximian's own endeavours follows on from Galerius' attempts to shut out his western competitors as Leadbetter (2009) 170-205 does.

<sup>236</sup> Lenski (2005) 73.

not always pretend that the Tetrarchy was a united dynastic college. The First and Second Tetrarchies should be viewed as discrete political formations.

Overall, however, Galerius' regime does show less interest in dynastic claims than those of his predecessors and his contemporaries. Although they were clearly important by Galerius' death, it is also obvious that dynastic heirs were to some extent purposefully overlooked in 305—that is, the Herculian heirs were overlooked, and Daza was incorporated into the new college. To some extent, this can also be seen in the elevation of Licinius over Daza in 308. It is in fact less curious from the perspective of dynastic tradition that Maxentius, and perhaps Constantine as well, were passed over as young men than that they were not made boy-Caesars, or some equivalent with new terminology, like the sons of the third century. The Tetrarchs used dynastic techniques to support the construction of the imperial college as a family, but dynastic claims did not dictate the future of the college.

It is during the period of the Second Tetrarchy and afterwards that 'family' and 'college' seem less synonymous. Galerius' influence—if we can attribute this innovation to him, as Lactantius suggests—did not last. The imperial college of Licinius and Constantine would once again clearly combine dynastic interests with the collegial form of rule, incorporating sons and nephews as Caesars and successors through third-century techniques of presentation, concepts of *concordia*, and a variety of imperial roles and titles.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Maxentius

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

To omit those things which are unsuitable for comparison, that he was Maximian's changeling, you Constantius Pius' son; he was of a contemptibly small stature, twisted and slack of limb, his very name mutilated by a misapplied appellation, you (it suffices to say) are in size and form what you are; I repeat, to omit these things, Constantine, you were attended by respect for your father, but he, not to begrudge him his false paternity, by disrespect; you were attended by clemency, he by cruelty...

*Ut enim omittam illa quae non decet comparari, quod erat ille Maximiani suppositus tu Constantii Pii filius; ille despectissimae parvitatibus, detortis solutisque membris, nomine ipso abusiva appellatione mutilato, tu (quod sufficit dicere) tantus ac talis; ut haec, inquam, omittam, te, Constantine, paterna pietas sequebatur, illum, ut falso generi non invidemus, impietas; te clementia, illum crudelitas...*

Panegyric of 313, *Panegyrici Latini* 12.4.3-4.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Panegyric of 313 was given in celebration of Constantine's victories in Gaul, the main focus of the speech is on Maxentius, who had been defeated at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge a year earlier.<sup>2</sup> The panegyrist praises Constantine through the denigration of his political enemy, a *synkrisis* or *comparatio* which highlights Constantine's best qualities through comparison with Maxentius' worst vices.<sup>3</sup> This passage is the earliest surviving example of the rhetoric that characterizes Maxentius as a *tyrannus*, which would continue in the literature of the Constantinian period and beyond, especially in authors like Eusebius, causing him to become the "textbook tyrant".<sup>4</sup> Maxentius, according to the anonymous author

<sup>1</sup> Trans. Nixon & Rodgers (1994).

<sup>2</sup> On the date and context: Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 289-290. On the exciting discovery of Maxentius' regalia, likely buried before the battle, see Panella (2008).

<sup>3</sup> Buckland (2003) 21.

<sup>4</sup> Barnes (2011) 82. The panegyric does not explicitly term Maxentius a *tyrannus*—the first time it appears is on the Arch of Constantine, according to Drijvers (2007) 18, n. 23—but its characterization of the emperor is similar to those accounts which follow. See section 5 for more discussion of this *topos*, and also Kriegbaum (1992) 9-15.

of the panegyric, is physically deformed as well as cruel, lustful and superstitious, a man who despoiled temples, slaughtered senators, and brought famine to the Roman people.<sup>5</sup> Similar charges would be made by Lactantius, Aurelius Victor, Zosimus, Eutropius, and especially Eusebius.<sup>6</sup> All of these were important to the *topos* of the *tyrannus* that would evolve to not only describe Maxentius, but Daza, Licinius, and other emperors as well.<sup>7</sup> A *tyrannus* (or Greek *turannos*), as Mark Humphries has argued, was an emperor who had been defeated in civil war.<sup>8</sup> A *tyrannus* could, according to Timothy Barnes, also be a persecutor of Christians.<sup>9</sup> Whether these so-called *tyranni* were truly Christian persecutors or not, they were often depicted as such; Maxentius, for example, was framed as a pretend friend to Christians, though there is no good evidence that he did indeed persecute.<sup>10</sup> He is not counted as one of the “adversaries of God” (*adversariis dei*) in Lactantius’ *De Mortibus Persecutorum*.<sup>11</sup> Invariably, a *tyrannus* was cruel, sexually perverse or insatiably lustful, cowardly, and an oppressor—Maxentius was characterized as all of these.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 12.3.5-7, 4.2, 4.4. Cf. Opelt (1973) 100f.

<sup>6</sup> The most common tropes include: oppressive and cruel (Eusebius, *Vita Const.* 1.26.1, 1.35.1; *Hist. Eccl.* 8.14.3, 8.14.6; *Aur. Vict.* 40.23; *Eutrop.* 10.4; *Zos.* 2.14; *Pan. Lat.* 12.3.5-7, 4.6.2, 4.7.4, 4.31.4); avaricious (Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.35.2, *Hist. Eccl.* 8.14.4); bringer of famine (Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.36.2); sexually voracious and deviant, especially in sleeping with married women (Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.33.1-4; *Hist. Eccl.* 8.14.2, 8.14.16-17; *Aur. Vict.* 40.19); overly superstitious and user of magic (*Lact. Mort. Pers.* 44.8-9; Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.27.1-2, 1.36.1; *Hist. Eccl.* 8.14.5, 9.9.3; *Zos.* 2.16.1-2); cowardly and unwarlike (*Aur. Vict.* 40.20; *Jul. Caes.* 329; *Lact. Mort. Pers.* 44.1). Cf. Dunkle (1971) 13-15, 19. Dunkle looks at the trope of the tyrant in Roman political invective and in early Roman historiography, identifies the use primarily of the vices of *crudelitas* or *saevitia*, *superbia*, *avaritia*, and *libido*, as well as associations with *vis*.

<sup>7</sup> See especially Drijvers (2007) on the *topos* in Eusebius’ accounts of Maxentius’ reign.

<sup>8</sup> Humphries (2008) 85. For more on the definition of *tyrannus* and the modern term ‘usurper’, see **Intro.2.iii**. Also Cf. Hedrick (2000) 123: “From the time of Constantine unsuccessful pretenders to the throne are routinely designated ‘tyrants’ (*tyrannus*) in all sorts of public documents.”

<sup>9</sup> Barnes (1975a) 19.

<sup>10</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.14.1. Cf. Curran (2000) 63: “So favourable to the Christian community were Maxentius’ policies that a hostile tradition was able to assert that he was a ‘false’ Christian, although no other evidence points to a personal devotion to Christianity.” The increased Christian building in Rome during this period also indicates that Maxentius supported Christians to some degree, and at the very least that he did not persecute them. Curran (2000) 63-65; Leadbetter (2009) 222; Corcoran (2000) 144-145. De Decker (1968) argued for Maxentius being a Christian himself, though this is refuted at length by Kriegbaum (1992) 15-22. Later Kriegbaum (1992) 22-34 discusses in great detail the evidence for Maxentius’ tolerance for Christians.

<sup>11</sup> *Lact. Mort. Pers.* 43.1: “One of the adversaries of God still lived, of whose fall and death I shall now add an account.” *Unus iam supererat de adversariis dei, cuius nunc exitum ruinamque subnectam.* Lactantius then launches into an account of Maximinus Daza’s reactions to the alliance between Licinius and Constantine. Although this narrative leads into the war between Maxentius and Constantine, it is impossible to believe that the one remaining ‘adversary’ was anyone but Daza.

<sup>12</sup> As seen, there was a great variety of tropes to choose from. Most of these authors do not use all these vices in their characterizations. As was common in panegyric and invective, the selection process may come down to authorial choice and motivation, the evolution of the trope, or both factors simultaneously.

This characterization can be compared to the denigration of Daza as a persecutor after his death, especially in Eusebius; many of the same tropes were used.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Eusebius calls them “brother[s] in wickedness” (ἀδελφὸν τὴν κακίαν).<sup>14</sup> Nor was this characterization new. These tropes would appear again in the Panegyric of 321, with a parade of vices attributed to Maxentius, among them insolence, cruelty, arrogance, luxury, and lust.<sup>15</sup> This parade is followed by Maxentius’ own severed head. The late antique *tyrannus*, a legacy which began with Maxentius, was both a continuation and an extension of the trope that was used so often in earlier Roman historiography; emperors who have been portrayed as tyrants in the ancient historiography include Tiberius (especially in Tacitus), Galba (in Suetonius), Nero, and Domitian.<sup>16</sup> Even Maxentius’ death by drowning in the Tiber can be linked to the existing trope of the *tyrannus*.<sup>17</sup>

Yet the panegyrist in 313 also focuses on something that later invectives like those of Eusebius or the panegyrist of 321 do not often include: Maxentius’ status as the son of Maximian. In the passage above, however, Maximian’s paternity is explicitly refuted. Maxentius is no imperial son and heir, he is a changeling (*suppositus*) of false paternity (*falso generi*). That his name was ‘mutilated by a misapplied appellation’ similarly attacks Maxentius’ dynastic claims: it is ‘misapplied’ (*abusiva*) because Maxentius is not Maximian’s legitimate son.<sup>18</sup> This mutilation of his name is mirrored in Maxentius’ physical mutilation

<sup>13</sup> See II.5 for this discussion; cf. Harries (2012) 116: “The conduct ascribed to Maximinus and Maxentius contravened not only sexual but also social and legal norms. By their unlawful behavior, they were ‘proved’ also to have been unlawful rulers.”

<sup>14</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.14.7: “But Maximinus, the tyrant in the East, having secretly formed a friendly alliance with the Roman tyrant as with a brother in wickedness, sought to conceal it for a long time.” ὁ δ’ ἐπ’ ἀνατολῆς τύραννος Μαξιμίνοσ, ὡς ἂν πρὸς ἀδελφὸν τὴν κακίαν, πρὸς τὸν ἐπὶ Ῥώμης φιλίαν κρύβδην σπενδόμενος, ἐπὶ πλεῖστον χρόνον λανθάνειν ἐφρόντιζεν.

<sup>15</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4.31.3: “It certainly seemed to everyone that the vices which had grievously haunted the City were led in a subjugated procession: Crime was mastered, Treachery conquered, Daring without its self-confidence and Insolence enchained. Fettered Fury and bloody Cruelty gnashed their teeth without the power to frighten; Pride and Arrogance were vanquished, Luxury was kept restrained and Lust bound with iron bonds.” *Duci sane omnibus videbantur subacta vitiorum agmina quae Urbem graviter obsederant: Scelus domitum, victa Perfidia, diffidens sibi Audacia et Importunitas catenata. Furor vincit et cruenta Crudelitas inani terrore fredebant; Superbia atque Arrogantia debellatae, Luxuries coercita et Libido constricta nexu ferreo tenebantur.*

<sup>16</sup> Dunkle (1971): Tiberius: 17-18; Galba: 15, 18; Nero: 18; Domitian: 18-19. Eusebius’ story of the Christian woman, wife of a prefect of Rome, who killed herself rather than submit to Maxentius’ lust may be inspired by Suetonius’ story of Tiberius and the woman Mellonia, a woman of high birth who likewise refused to permit Tiberius’ debauchery and kills herself following the humiliating experience: Suetonius, *Tiberius* 45.

<sup>17</sup> Kristensen (2015) 334: “The disposal of the dead bodies of defeated enemies and criminals into the Tiber held an important role in Roman memory politics...” See *Pan. Lat.* 12.18.1; and especially Eusebius’ extended metaphor for Constantine as Moses and Maxentius as the Egyptian pharaoh in *Vita Const.* 38.4. Cf. MacCormack (1981) 37f; Van Dam (2011) 71f, 80, 86f, 118.

<sup>18</sup> Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 301 n. 26 are not satisfied with the suggestion that the ‘misapplied appellation’ refers to the similarity between the names of Maxentius and Maximian, but offer no good alternative. As the panegyrist is already attacking Maxentius’ parentage, the explanation makes sense.

after death, when his severed head was paraded through Rome and then sent to Africa.<sup>19</sup> Constantine was the victor at the Milvian Bridge, but it was important nonetheless to show that Maxentius was an illegitimate emperor in every way. Thus, not only was he made into a twisted oppressor, but his dynastic claims—the basis for his coup and his support, as Lactantius and others state outright—were explicitly undermined.

This panegyrist may have been the first to claim that Maxentius was not Maximian's own son, but he was not the last. The *Origo Constantini* reveals an effort on the part of Constantine's regime to dismiss his parentage. "When his mother [Eutropia] was questioned about his parentage, she admitted that he was the son of a Syrian."<sup>20</sup> The claim was clever; Maximian had previously campaigned in Syria, and Eutropia herself was of Syrian origin.<sup>21</sup> Pseudo-Victor repeats a variation of the story, suggesting that Eutropia had substituted him as a baby so as to win her husband's affections for having produced him a son and heir.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, this story of Maxentius not being the legitimate son of Maximian—Eutropia's bastard, a 'changeling' substituted by womanly wiles—was one that had found traffic and even some acceptance in the Constantinian period and after.

Yet the panegyrist does not stop at denying that Maxentius was the son of Maximian. He attacks his behaviour, specifically his filial piety, as well. This 'changeling' was not even worthy to be Maximian's son, as he shows his father nothing but *impietas*, disrespect. *Pietas* to both gods and family was, of course, one of the greatest Roman virtues. This *impietas*, along with pride, is the most persistent way in which Maxentius was characterized throughout the sources. His introduction in Lactantius' *De Mortibus Persecutorum* is the most well-known: "He was a man of dangerous and evil outlook, so proud and stubborn that he used not to do homage either to his father or to his father-in-law – and for this reason he was disliked by both of them."<sup>23</sup> Lactantius' treatment of Maxentius' *impietas* is a nuanced subversion of Maxentius' claims, composed with less blatant invective than the Panegyric of 313, and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter (5.i). It is important, however, to remember this characterization throughout the following discussions of the various aspects of Maxentius' claims to dynastic legitimacy, and that authors chose to represent him as a bad son as well as a

<sup>19</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4.32.6-8; cf. *Origo* 4.12 (head cut off in Rome).

<sup>20</sup> *Origo* 4.12: *de cuius origine mater eius, cum quaesitum esset, Syro quodam genitum esse confessa*. Trans. Rolfe (1952).

<sup>21</sup> Barnes (1982) 33-4. As Harries (2012) 258 comments, "We are not told what the consequences would have been had she refused." Cf. also Wienand (2015a) 179; Harries (2014) 200.

<sup>22</sup> *Ps.-Vict.* 40.13.

<sup>23</sup> *Lact. Mort. Pers.* 18.9: *erat autem Maximiano <filius> Maxentius, huius ipsius Maximiani gener, homo perniciosae ac malae mentis, adeo superbus et contumax, ut neque patrem neque socerum solitus sit adorare, et idcirco utrique invisus fuit*. Cf. Opelt (1973) 103.

bad ruler. Additionally, this characterization is another example of direct *synkrisis* with Constantine, whose respect for his imperial father is made more exemplary by Maxentius' lack of filial *pietas*.

The panegyric's account of Maxentius' false parentage and of his filial impiety was just one of many techniques which authors of this time employed to undermine his imperial legitimacy. This is because dynastic claims were only one of many parts to the imperial legitimacy constructed by Maxentius' regime, as with the Tetrarchs before him. Like these other emperors, Maxentius' coinage includes references to the divine and to collegial constructions. Yet Maxentius' familial links were both more numerous and more blatantly expressed than those of his predecessors.<sup>24</sup> The strength of Maxentius' dynastic claims are no doubt the reason why his parentage and his filial *pietas* were attacked in the Panegyric of 313 and other authors.

These claims will be discussed throughout this chapter. **Section 2** will explore Maxentius' place as a potentially Tetrarchic and dynastic heir, especially his relationships with Maximian and Galerius. **Section 2** will further build upon these relationships, focusing on Maxentius' place as a member of the Herculii and his place in the political sphere. **Section 5** will examine Maxentius' creation of a prospective, forward-looking dynasty through his son Romulus that also incorporated retrospective dynastic links.

## 2. TETRARCHIC PRINCE, DYNASTIC HEIR

Maxentius was acclaimed as emperor in Rome in October 306, a few months after Constantine's acclamation in York. His success can be attributed to a variety of factors—the support of the disgruntled local populace, the loyalty of an elite unit of soldiery, the wider appeal of his dynastic connections. It would be difficult, as well as unwise, to suggest that one type of support held a greater significance over the others. Yet the strength of his dynastic connections, especially to his father Maximian, is impossible to ignore, as even the briefest of accounts includes this information. It is thus vital to examine Maxentius' place in the political world of the Tetrarchy in which he was raised.

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<sup>24</sup> His commemorative coin series with the reverse legend AETERNAE MEMORIAE features the majority of known examples of kinship terms on ancient coinage. Cf. Hekster (2015) 295.

### i. Maximian's Heir?

Little is known of Maxentius before 306, and what evidence we have for his early years is largely circumstantial. He could have been born any time between 277 and 287, although Barnes leans towards 282-283.<sup>25</sup> Barnes prefers this date based on the evidence of the Panegyric of 289, which implies that Maxentius was not yet seven since he did not yet have a tutor, and also because of the anti-legitimation claim suggesting that Maxentius' true father was a Syrian, since Maximian was campaigning in Syria around 282.<sup>26</sup> This would make Maxentius a young man of around 23 during the coup in October 306. It is also known that he was married with at least one son by this time.<sup>27</sup>

If this date is accepted, then Maxentius was still a boy of two or three years when Maximian was made Diocletian's co-emperor in 285. By the time Maximian was praised in the Panegyric of 289, it was possible to speak of Maxentius' imperial expectations. The panegyrist calls Maxentius a "divine and immortal scion" (*divinam immortalemque progeniem*),<sup>28</sup> which perhaps says more about the concern for linking Maximian with the divine than it does about Maxentius' right to rule. But it shows that the panegyrist thought to flatter Maximian through references to his young son as a future heir. In 289, the establishment of the Tetrarchy was still some four years away, although Constantius had likely already become part of the extended family.<sup>29</sup>

It is striking that beyond this brief reference, Maxentius does not seem to have been celebrated in any official capacity, even before the establishment of the Tetrarchy, but that is tied to the decision not to make Maxentius a young Caesar. Recent history suggests one possibly reason for this: Caesars were a target in civil unrest.<sup>30</sup> The deaths of Valerian II and Saloninus, Gallienus' young sons, provide a good historical comparison. The first had apparently died in battle, but the second was killed when Postumus, who had apparently been established as his advisor and guardian in Gaul, became emperor of the breakaway Gallic empire.<sup>31</sup> To set Maxentius up as an heir when he was still so young, even if provided with

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<sup>25</sup> Barnes (1982) 34 suggests 283 because the Panegyric of 289 (10.14.1) implies that Maxentius was not yet seven since he did not yet have a tutor, and also because the bastardy claim suggests that Maxentius' true father was a Syrian, and Maximian was campaigning in Syria c. 282.

<sup>26</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.14.1; *Origo* 4.12.

<sup>27</sup> Leadbetter (1998a) 76.

<sup>28</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.14.1.

<sup>29</sup> See the discussion on the dating of Constantius' marriage to Theodora in **I.4.i**.

<sup>30</sup> Despite what Cullhed (1994) 16 suggests, sons were not always made Caesars while still young.

<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, our sources for this account are limited; the *Historia Augusta* specifically discusses Postumus' stewardship and then murder of the boy, but of course questions can be raised about its accuracy. (*Hist. Aug., Tri. Tyr.* 3.1-3).

capable advisors, was therefore dangerous, both for his life and for the safety of the empire. After all, from 285-293 the empire was still far from secure; Carausius and later Allectus were still rulers of Britain, and other campaigns against Persians and Germanic tribes were necessary. A boy Caesar had proven to be a liability before and could easily be so again in the wrong hands. The case of Saloninus also provides an important precedent in that it is clear that sons were not automatically made Caesars. Saloninus seems to have only become Caesar, and was only celebrated on coins, after the death of his elder brother, Valerian II. Other young Caesars seem not to have been named immediately upon their fathers' accession.<sup>32</sup> As Diocletian did not have a son, there may also have been objections to Maximian's elevation of Maxentius—though it may be evidence of Maximian's loyalty that he did not promote his son at the expense of his imperial partner.

Little is known about Maxentius' activities until 306. Stephenson surmises that he had been engaged in military service like Constantine during this period, but there is no evidence for this conclusion.<sup>33</sup> On the contrary, Julian suggests that Maxentius did lack a military career. In the *Caesars*, he writes dismissively of his grand-uncle Constantine, "He had defeated two tyrants, but, to tell the truth, one of them was untrained in war and effeminate, the other a poor creature and enfeebled by old age, while both were alike odious to gods and men."<sup>34</sup> Julian was writing to belittle Constantine's victories, but the characterization of the two nameless conquered must have been apt enough to be understood by Julian's audience. Since the emperor "enfeebled by old age" must be Licinius, the one "untrained in war" can only be Maxentius. There are suggestions that, in contrast to Constantine, Maxentius pursued a more political career instead.<sup>35</sup> As well as proposing that Maxentius may have been present at Diocletian's court,<sup>36</sup> Barnes argues that both Constantine and Maxentius had been "groomed for the purple since 293."<sup>37</sup> However, there is little evidence to support this in the case of Maxentius (and it is perhaps a push in the case of Constantine as well.) What is known is that by 304, Maxentius was advantageously married to Galerius' daughter, Valeria Maximilla.<sup>38</sup> Although Leadbetter

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<sup>32</sup> For example, Maximus, the son of Maximinus Thrax, seems to have been made a Caesar a year after his father's accession; Tetricus II only seems to have been made Caesar towards the end of the short reign of his father, Tetricus I. Carinus' son Nigrinus had never been made Caesar.

<sup>33</sup> Stephenson (2009) 114.

<sup>34</sup> *Jul. Caes.* 329.

<sup>35</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 178.

<sup>36</sup> Barnes (1981) 9; cf. 288, n. 58: "Lactantius, *Mort. Pers.* 18.9, implies his recent presence at the court of either Diocletian or Galerius."

<sup>37</sup> Barnes (2011) 60, also 47, 51ff; (1981) 9, 25-6. Barnes argues this from evidence of Constantine's position at Diocletian's court, primarily Lactantius, but the assumption that Maxentius had likewise been trained is just that: a presumption.

<sup>38</sup> *Lact. Mort. Pers.* 18.9; Leadbetter (1998a) 76, (2009) 178.

has suggested that Valeria Maximilla was also the granddaughter of Diocletian through Galerius' marriage to Valeria, both the dating and the comment by Lactantius that Valeria was barren suggests otherwise.<sup>39</sup> It is also probable that this marriage, as well as being profitable for Maxentius, was designed to promote loyalty between the two branches of the imperial collegial family.<sup>40</sup> In 306 he was living—probably with his wife and with at least one son, Romulus—on an estate near the Via Labicana, not far outside of Rome.<sup>41</sup>

In 306, Maxentius could therefore claim a variety of familial links with the imperial college of the Tetrarchs. He was the son of Maximian, the son-in-law of Galerius, both the brother-by-adoption and the brother-in-law of Constantius, and the husband of Valeria Maximilla, who may be regarded as an imperial 'princess', though she was never elevated to the position of Augusta.<sup>42</sup> Not since the second century had an emperor's dynastic claims to imperial power been so complex. Yet, as was also true of earlier emperors, the later empire was not necessarily dictated by dynastic hierarchy. As Henning Börm comments: "The son of an *augustus* inherited only a claim to rule, not the rule itself."<sup>43</sup> However, he also says that dynastic claims were most often held up by the soldiers.<sup>44</sup> It is a common trope that the soldiers automatically support dynastic claims, and while it certainly is portrayed in that manner in the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* for both Constantine and Maxentius, it is difficult to see any evidence of it from the third century. Börm does acknowledge, however, that in the early fourth century, specifically through the success of Constantine's claims, "the dynastic principle was established as an *explicit* element of the legitimation of Roman rulers once and for all."<sup>45</sup> The circumstances of Maxentius' coup and the six years of his reign certainly contributed to the evolution of claims to dynastic legitimacy in late antiquity—Constantine was not the only emperor during this period to do so.

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<sup>39</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 178, who also says that this marriage meant that Maxentius "might have served a key role for the dynasty" but that in itself might have been a contributing factor in Diocletian and Galerius' choice to pass him over for Caesar. Barnes (1982) 38 notes that Lactantius' comment on Valeria's infertility (*Lact. Mort. Pers.* 50.2) "could be taken to mean that Valeria was unable to conceive any children except a single daughter." I.e. that she became infertile after Valeria Maximilla's birth. Cf. Barnes (2010) 321.

<sup>40</sup> Cullhed (1994) 16.

<sup>41</sup> The Via Labicana villa should not be confused with Maxentius' later villa on the Via Appia. Eutrop. 10.2; Ps.-Vict. 40.2; ILS 666, 671; Barnes (2011) 67; Cullhed (1994) 32. Cullhed further comments "That Maxentius could use a *villa publica* seems to reflect some kind of status beyond that of simple *privatus*." For the evidence of Maxentius' sons, at least by 312; cf. ILS 667; *Pan. Lat.* 12.16.5.

<sup>42</sup> She was merely a *nobilissima femina*; cf. CIL 14.02826.

<sup>43</sup> Börm (2015) 253. Börm also argues that dynastic legitimacy was not as important as 'merit', especially for the Tetrarchy; in fact, dynastic links and 'merit' could be simultaneously claimed by the members of the First Tetrarchy. For example, 'merit' could have led to the inclusion of these men in the imperial *domus*.

<sup>44</sup> Börm (2015) 252, citing the massacre of Constantine's relatives after his death being due to the soldiers' unwillingness to accept anyone other than a son of Constantine as emperor.

<sup>45</sup> Börm (2015) 239.



## ii. The Coup at Rome

Maxentius' coup in Rome might be hailed as the failure of the Tetrarchy, or of Galerius' control over the Tetrarchy.<sup>46</sup> Equally, it could be seen as evidence of the triumph of dynastic legitimization over collegial claims to power. Yet the accounts of his coup, and the reasons for it, are so varied that it is unwise to pin such importance on it. In Lactantius' account, Maxentius' prominence is gained through local concerns over taxation and the priorities of Rome, in direct opposition to Galerius' policies, and then at the instigation of the soldiers.<sup>47</sup> In Zosimus, it is a carefully calculated attempt at seizing power, fuelled by personal pride and ambition, as well as the support of a chosen few administrators and the Praetorian Guard, rather than the acclamations of the populace.<sup>48</sup> In briefer accounts, he is merely proclaimed by the soldiers, particularly the Praetorian Guard.<sup>49</sup> In many of these accounts, his dynastic links also provide either the reason for or an explanation of his rise to power.

Maxentius is often seen as the quintessential outsider whose claims were never acknowledged by Galerius, making him thus an 'illegitimate' emperor, since imperial legitimacy was—in theory, at least—dictated by the acceptance of the other Tetrarchs or especially the 'senior' Augustus.<sup>50</sup> His claims were, however, recognized at least temporarily by Constantine. Maxentius' power base was his support from the local populace, a legitimization by *consensus* beyond (although not excluding) dynastic claims.<sup>51</sup> Ando on *consensus* is particularly relevant here: "In ancient terms, *consensus* as expressed through acclamation distinguished the *princeps* from the *tyrannus*."<sup>52</sup> *Consensus* could also be given but then withdrawn—or said to be withdrawn, which explains why Constantine was painted as a *liberator urbis* on the Arch of Constantine.<sup>53</sup> Maxentius' claims to popular support were also erased.

<sup>46</sup> However, Ch. 2, especially section 3.iii, has discussed Galerius' efforts to exert control over the political chaos of 306-311 and the presentation of the situation.

<sup>47</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 26.1-3.

<sup>48</sup> Zos. 2.9.2-3.

<sup>49</sup> Eutrop. 10.2; Aur. Vict. 40.5; *Origo* 3.6. On the role of the Praetorian Guard in imperial acclamations of the third century, see Arena (2007) 334f.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. the discussion on typical views of Maxentius in Cullhed (1994) 11.

<sup>51</sup> In this way, Maxentius could claim some form of legitimacy through the support of the local populace, he could be considered a "local ruler" rather than a usurper—similar, perhaps, to Carausius and Allectus' reigns in Britain in the 280s and 290s. Thanks to Jill Harries for discussions on this topic during supervision for my MA thesis on Maxentius at St Andrews in 2010-11.

<sup>52</sup> Ando (2000) 200.

<sup>53</sup> CIL 6.1139; the phrase *liberator urbis suae* also appears on Constantine's post-victory coinage, RIC VI, Rome, nos. 303-4. Cf. Marlowe (2010) 217.

To summarize these views, Maxentius could be represented as a usurper, a local ruler, an opportunist, or a combination of these and more.<sup>54</sup> Dynastic legitimation is the one constant in these explanations and representations. Almost all accounts mention his relationship to his father.<sup>55</sup> Maxentius is popular with the soldiers because of his father. Lactantius' version of events presents the power of his claims against Severus: "he could win his father's troops over to himself by invoking the right of heredity (*iure hereditatis*)."<sup>56</sup> Zosimus' Maxentius seizes power because it is his right: "Maxentius, son of Maximianus Herculeus, thought it intolerable that Constantine, the son of a harlot, should realize his ambition, while he the son of so great an emperor, should stand idly by and let others possess the power rightly his by inheritance."<sup>57</sup> The people of Rome who provided him with "local" legitimation would have recognized Maximian as their now Senior Augustus. Additional local support, coming from Africa, was almost certainly based on their preference for Maximian rather than for Maxentius himself.<sup>58</sup>

The return of Maximian to power was therefore vital for Maxentius' regime. Again, the literary sources do not agree on the events or the implications of his return. In the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, Maxentius "looked to see how far he could fortify himself against impending peril. He sent the purple to his father...and he nominated him to be Augustus for the second time."<sup>59</sup> The return of Maximian is thus presented as given to him by his son, with the father providing support rather than leadership. Leadbetter argues that the early coinage supports this arrangement of power, since Maximian was termed Senior Augustus, not an active *imperator*.<sup>60</sup> Lactantius' later accounts of Maximian's jealousy and treachery relies on this subordinate status of father to son.<sup>61</sup> The *Origo* also implies that Maxentius summoned his father for his

<sup>54</sup> It is interesting that Maxentius does not appear on Polemius Silvius' list of usurpers: Burgess (1993) 499-500.

<sup>55</sup> Only Ps.-Vict. 40.2 and Eusebius' *Vita Const.* do not.

<sup>56</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 26.6.

<sup>57</sup> Zos. 2.9.2: δὲ τῇ Ῥώμῃ τῆς εἰκόνας αὐτοῦ δειχθείσης κατὰ τὸ σύνθηρες, οὐκ ἀνασχετὸν εἶναι νομίσας Μαξέντιος ὁ Μαξιμιανοῦ τοῦ Ἐρκουλίου παῖς, εἰ Κωνσταντίνῳ μὲν ἐκβαίη τὸ σπουδασθὲν ἐξ ἀσέμνου μητρὸς γεγονότι, βασιλέως δὲ τοιοῦτου παῖς αὐτὸς γεγονὼς εἰχῆ κείμενος μείνοι τὴν πατρῶαν ἀρχὴν ἐτέρων ἐχόντων,

<sup>58</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 184-5 (Cf. Zos. 2.12.1). Cullhed (1994) 68 is probably wrong to say that Severus' territories passed to Maxentius, it is more likely that Africa declared their support (at least temporarily) and northern Italy was either conquered or declared support likewise. The transition of territories would not have been that clear-cut. Cullhed does note that Pannonia, which had been Severus', passed to Licinius instead of Maxentius. He also attributes the control of Sardinia and Corsica to Maxentius. There have been arguments that Spain had also been under Maxentius' control; this was based on the suggestion that the T mint mark indicated Tarraco, but it has since been shown to mean Ticinum in Northern Italy. See Cullhed (1994) 68-69 on this discussion, as well as Sutherland (1967) 6f on Ticinum. The panegyric of 313 A.D. only lists Italy and Africa as areas freed from Maxentius' "tyranny" (*Pan. Lat.* 12.25.3).

<sup>59</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 26.6-7: *quaerebat quatenus se a periculo impendente muniret. patri suo post depositum imperium in Campania moranti purpuram mittit et bis Augustum nominat.*

<sup>60</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 187, citing RIC VI, Rome no. 136: FELIX INGRESSVS SENIORIS AVGVSTI/VOT XXX.

<sup>61</sup> Especially the account of Maximian's attempt to overthrow Maxentius, Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 28.

support.<sup>62</sup> In Zosimus, however—who often presents Maximian in a more favourable light than many previous authors do—Maximian returns to the political sphere (although not explicitly to imperial power) to fight Severus in Ravenna out of anxiety for his son.<sup>63</sup> Eutropius’ Maximian is greedier: he hurries to Rome “filled with hopes of regaining the imperial dignity, which he had not willingly resigned.”<sup>64</sup> Victor is vague, saying only that Maximian restrained Maxentius, and others do not mention Maximian’s return to power at all.<sup>65</sup> Importantly, the Panegyric of 307 depicts Maximian’s return not as being in support of his son, but as a response to the pleas of Rome.<sup>66</sup> Clearly it was not advisable to suggest that the emperor’s power was in any way supplied or limited by his relationship to his son.

Upon his return, Maximian retained the title of *Senior Augustus* which he had held during his retirement. During retirement, however, it was expressed in the dative: D N MAXIMIANO SEN AVG. Sutherland calls this a characteristic of an ‘honorary’ or ‘inactive’ emperor.<sup>67</sup> Upon his return to power, it reverts to the aforementioned ‘active’ nominative, though still with the appellation of *Senior*.<sup>68</sup> On gold medallions from late 306 and early 307, he is also given the reverse legend FELIX INGRESSVS SEN AVG, featuring Roma inscribing VOT XXX, a prayer for thirty years’ reign, upon a shield (fig. 3.1).<sup>69</sup>



Fig. 3.1: Maximian as Senior Augustus.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *Origo* 4.10: “Herculius came there on behalf of his son after being summoned...” *pro Maxentio filio evocatus illuc venit Herculius...* Trans. Stevenson (1996).

<sup>63</sup> *Zos.* 2.10.2. “On receiving news of this, Maximianus Herculius was properly anxious for his son Maxentius and, leaving Lucania where he then was, came to Ravenna.” Ταῦτα γνοὺς Μαξιμιανὸς ὁ Ἐρκούλιος, καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ παιδὸς εἰκότως ἀγωνιῶν Μαξεντίου, τῆς Λουκανίας, ἐν ἧ τότε ἦν, ἐξορμήσας ἐπὶ τὴν Ῥάουενναν ἦει.

<sup>64</sup> *Eutrop.* 10.2. *Quo nuntio Maximianus Herculius ad spem arrectus resumendi fastigii, quod invitus amiserat, Romam advolavit...*

<sup>65</sup> *Aur. Vict.* 40.5.

<sup>66</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 7.10-12.

<sup>67</sup> Sutherland (1967) 39-40, 49, 526. See **II.2.iii** for further discussion on the *senior Augustus* title and attributes.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. *RIC VI*, Rome nos. 136, 145 (gold); 156-7 (silver). = *Drost* gold nos. 2, 15; silver no. 1.

<sup>69</sup> *RIC VI*, Rome no. 136 = *Drost* no. 2. Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 187.

<sup>70</sup> *RIC VI*, Rome no. 136. Reverse: FELIX INGRESSVS SEN AVG.

The legend is reminiscent of the Panegyric of 307, where the panegyrist depicts Roma begging Maximian to return to power.<sup>71</sup> This legend can also be linked to the ‘retired’ obverse legends, which sometimes included the honorific *Felicissimus*, “most fortunate.”<sup>72</sup> In terms of epigraphy, however, the term *felicissimus* does not seem to be relegated only to retired emperors, although *senior* does.

Maxentius’ relationship with Maximian was vital to his early regime, not only because of the legitimation Maximian offered but also for the political and military experience which he was able to provide, resulting in the defeat of Severus, the alliance with Constantine, and the loyalty of Africa. Even those who push for a picture of Maxentius as an independent monarch, such as Cullhed, are forced to acknowledge the influence that Maximian seems to have had in the political network around his son’s coup.<sup>73</sup> At the very least, Maxentius’ ties through Maximian to the Tetrarchic colleges and their complex political arrangements cannot be overlooked. Rather than being the regime of Maxentius alone, it is likely that Maximian—at least during the times he was in Rome—was able to exert some control over his son’s choices. The political networks formed during 306-307 are evidence not only of a Maxentian regime, but one that employed ‘Herculian’ dynastic links.

### iii. The Title of Princeps

Perhaps the most notable and unconventional aspect of Maxentius’ usurpation at Rome was his use of the title *Princeps*, or, more commonly, *Princeps Invictus*, in lieu of *Augustus* or *Caesar*. The title has been discussed before, most extensively by Mats Cullhed. The use of the *princeps* title on the obverse of coinage was, as Cullhed puts it, “unprecedented.”<sup>74</sup> A perhaps unavoidable connotation of the term *princeps* is in Augustus’ use of it three centuries earlier—almost in a sense of a *recusatio*—and given Maxentius’ attention to the mythology and history of Rome, it is certainly a link worth noting.<sup>75</sup> There are, however, also caveats to this connection. For one thing, Augustus does not seem to have employed the term on coinage. For another, it is tenuous to suggest that the connection would have been readily obvious three

<sup>71</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 7.10-11; cf. Nixon (1981b).

<sup>72</sup> *Felicissimus* e.g. D N MAXIMIANO FELICISS SEN AVG/PROVIDENT DEOR QVIES AVGG, RIC VI, Rome no. 131b.

<sup>73</sup> For instance, in the confusing affair of the consuls at Rome in the early years of Maxentius’ rule; cf. Cullhed (1994) 34-35.

<sup>74</sup> Cullhed (1994) 33, though this may not be entirely true; a coin of Gallienus’ reign that uses it in the accusative (RIC V.1, no. 257). Gallienus also has a reverse legend OPTIMO PRINCIPI (RIC V.1, p. 165 no. 393, p. 189 no. 659).

<sup>75</sup> As does Curran (2000) 53.

centuries later. The word *princeps* is used in the Gallic panegyrics, but apparently more as a synonym of *imperator* than any specific title. For example, the exact phrase *invictissimi principes* is used several times in panegyrics, usually in reference to the four Tetrarchs.<sup>76</sup> Nixon and Rodgers comment that the phrase also appears on inscriptions.<sup>77</sup> Clearly there was some use of the title before Maxentius, although never on coinage, especially in the form of *Princeps Invictus*.

Cullhed succinctly lays out the various arguments for Maxentius' use of the title. The "standard" explanation is that "Princeps" served as a temporary title, a placeholder, while Maxentius waited to be formally accepted into the imperial college by Galerius, thereby perhaps implying cooperation or "co-existence."<sup>78</sup> Another suggestion is that the title, while still serving as a placeholder, implied more innovation or ambition.<sup>79</sup> Cullhed's own thesis is that the title is a result of a *recusatio*, part of a power play manufactured by both father and son, and a pious act towards Maximian by Maxentius—and one that ultimately backfired when Maximian did not raise his son to co-Augustus, meaning that Maxentius had to fight for it.<sup>80</sup> Although the focus on the relationship between Maximian and Maxentius instead of that of Galerius and Maxentius is both interesting and likely relevant to the political situation of the time, some aspects of this theory do not seem to fit. For instance, the issues from Lyons which celebrate the new alliance between Maximian and Constantine also recognize, at least nominally, Maxentius as Augustus.<sup>81</sup> Although the dating is hard to determine, it is more probable that Maxentius claimed the title after the defeat of Severus.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Cullhed (1994) 33, n. 123 noted *Pan. Lat.* 8.3.2; but it also appears at 8.20.5, 7.1.4 (in reference to Maximian and Constantine), 12.20.2, and 10.11.1.

<sup>77</sup> E.g. ILS 617: *Iovi Herculi Victoriae Imperator Caesar [G]aius Aurelius Diocletianus Pius Felix Invic(tus) Aug(ustus)...et Imperator Caesar Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus Pius Felix Invictus Augustus...Invictissimi principes n(o)stri totius orbis restitutores...* (abbreviated). Cf. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 54-55, n. 7.

<sup>78</sup> Cullhed (1994) 33 n. 125 summarizes the primarily German scholarship of the early- and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and following, quoting Barnes (1981) 30: "Indeed, he [Maxentius] went further than Constantine in modesty and styled himself merely *princeps*, deliberately avoiding the official titles of Augustus or Caesar until he should receive appointment from the senior emperor." He stands by this interpretation in his most recent work: Barnes (2011) 67, in which he presents the use of the title almost as a 'recusatio': "Maxentius...refused at first to accept the title of Augustus, styling himself merely princeps or princeps invictus..." The suggestion for "co-existence" was given to me by Hartmut Leppin in a colloquium in Frankfurt in June 2016. Cf. also Hekster (2015) 293.

<sup>79</sup> Cullhed (1994) 33-34; cf. Sutherland (1963) 18-20, who argues for the title as representing Maxentius as an independent fifth colleague. Cullhed misrepresents the argument somewhat, and does not acknowledge the links with the divine comrades Mars and Hercules that forms part of the basis for Sutherland's thesis.

<sup>80</sup> Cullhed (1994) 41-44; Barnes (2011) 67. On *recusatio*, see Ando (2000) 147-148 on how the reluctant emperor trope pretended to or ostensibly acted for the people, since it was 'their' will, not the emperor's. Unlike Constantine, Julian, and others who can be linked to the *recusatio* trope, however, Maxentius actually does seem to have rejected the title, at least at first.

<sup>81</sup> RIC VI, Lyons nos. 256 (GENIO POP ROM), 274 (PRINCIPI IVVENTVTIS).

<sup>82</sup> The date of Severus' death is difficult in itself to determine (see **II.3.ii**) and to some extent the dating of the coinage is based upon this assumption that the title of Augustus followed Severus' defeat. In this dating,

What then was the reason for the *Princeps Invictus* title until that point? All theories agree that *Princeps Invictus* did not fit into the model of the Tetrarchy; the only debate is why. My proposal is that it engages with the title of *Princeps Iuventutis* that was gaining increasing popularity, predominantly for Constantine, at around the same time,<sup>83</sup> and thus presents Maxentius first and foremost as a dynastic heir.<sup>84</sup> It has already been noted that the only common information given about Maxentius' coup is that he was Maximian's son. If his claim to imperial power rested largely upon his status as Maximian's son and 'rightful' heir, it makes sense that his regime would want to promote that claim. He could not easily be promoted as a Caesar without appearing as though he were trying to claim a (subordinate) place in Galerius' imperial college.<sup>85</sup> *Princeps* was a safer option, one that engaged with political discourse without demanding or aspiring to a particular place within Galerius' Tetrarchy. Yet Maxentius' regime was not content with merely promoting a claim that others possessed as well. It has been shown in previous chapters that *Princeps Iuventutis* was a legend that was still employed during the First and Second Tetrarchies, although not to the same extent as in the third century or early fourth. Both Constantine and Maximinus Daza were celebrated on Maxentius' gold coinage with the legend PRINCIPI IVVENTVTI, showing that this was still important in Rome under Maxentius' regime.<sup>86</sup> These dynastic claims were increasingly important in the fourth century, where Maxentius was one of three young men with dynastic links to current or prior emperors.

Support of the interpretation of the *Princeps Invictus* title as dynastic is provided by the coinage of Carthage early in Maxentius' reign. Africa, having independently declared for Maxentius and Maximian, initially interpreted the new political arrangement as having Maxentius as a Caesar alongside Constantine and Maximinus Daza, and Maximian as Senior Augustus.<sup>87</sup> Severus and Galerius are nowhere to be found.<sup>88</sup> Although the mint swiftly switches to the 'official' titulature propagated at Rome, it is telling that the initial interpretation

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Sutherland follows King (1959) 67: "Maxentius probably took the title of Augustus either some time after the end of Severus' campaign in late February to March 307 or at the beginning of Galerius' invasion, roughly in April 307." Barnes (1982) 13 also dates the assumption of the Augustus title to early 307.

<sup>83</sup> Although not in such high quantities as later, some of these coins for Constantine as *princeps iuventutis* can be dated to as early as 306, following Sutherland: RIC VI Trier nos. 679-680 (aes). There are aurei as well, but Depeyrot (1995) 53 dates them to summer 307. It is possible that Constantine's even greater promotion of the legend over the few years after 306 indicates competition with Maxentius' claims.

<sup>84</sup> Potter (2013) 116 and Leadbetter (2009) 181 both state that Maxentius actually took the title of *princeps iuventutis*, but they are sadly mistaken. The closest he came was *princeps* without *iuventutis*, but this is rare.

<sup>85</sup> Maxentius' involvement with the Tetrarchic system is equally complicated, and will be discussed in section 3.i.

<sup>86</sup> RIC VI, Rome nos. 149-151; Drost (2013) Rome nos. 20-24. Cf. Sutherland (1967) 343.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 185-186.

<sup>88</sup> Though Kuhoff (2001) 810-813 does argue that he is found at Rome and Carthage; cf. 3.i.

of events in Africa was the return of Maximian as Augustus with his son Maxentius as his Caesar, no matter the titles they employed themselves. As Leadbetter notes regarding this interpretation, “what was being celebrated was the dynastic link with a retired emperor and not collegiality with a ruling one.”<sup>89</sup> Of course, it was actually celebrating the dynastic link and collegiality with a retired emperor now returned to power.

The *Invictus* part of the title, however, is incongruous, and more problematic even than the title *Princeps*. It does not seem probable that Maxentius would have been able to claim any military victories by the time he assumed this title. *Invictus* was commonly associated with Sol during the third and early fourth centuries, but Sol does not appear anywhere on Maxentius’ coinage. As an obverse title, it is not as unusual as *princeps*. It was employed by some later third-century emperors, especially Probus.<sup>90</sup> These men could claim military victories, however. There is thus no clear reason for *Invictus* in Maxentius’ case. Perhaps he could claim his coup with the Praetorian Guards as a military victory, or perhaps it was a title assumed for aspiration or implied connotations of military success—a combination of the dynastic and the charismatic. It could be merely that it was assumed as a way of distinguishing Maxentius from the other ‘princes’ Constantine and Daza, or even a more powerful claim—they were “Princes of the Youth”, but Maxentius was a step above them, the “Undefeated Prince.”<sup>91</sup> Maxentius does not reject the dynastic claims of Constantine and Daza, but he can top them. There is, intriguingly, a rare example from Trier which celebrates Maxentius as Augustus with a *Princeps Iuventutis* reverse, possibly as an extension of the large output for Constantine with this reverse type.<sup>92</sup> It would be foolish to wholeheartedly believe Zosimus’ report that Maxentius’ coup was born out of jealousy towards Constantine,<sup>93</sup> but the political situation following 306 shows that there was definite competition between the new emperors in the early fourth century.<sup>94</sup>

Although Maxentius drops the *Princeps Invictus* title from his coinage in 307, *Invictus* alone is still employed in epigraphy from Rome afterwards, for instance on an inscription to

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<sup>89</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 186.

<sup>90</sup> PROBUS: RIC V Probus nos. 324, 353, 368, 377, 389, 431, 438, 445, 475, 482, 492, 501, 510, 518, 527, 677-678, 683, 823, 825, 840, 847-848, 858-859, 867-868, 881-882, 885. Also, to a lesser degree, Tetricus (RIC V nos. 202-203), Carus (RIC V no. 117, on reverse), and Carausius (RIC V no. 520).

<sup>91</sup> Emperors did not necessarily need a military victory in order to claim the title of *Invictus*; cf. Hölscher (1967) 168-169; Manders (2014) 86; Bardill (2012) 86.

<sup>92</sup> Not in the RIC; [http://wildwinds.com/coins/ric/maxentius/trier RIC\\_840ADD.txt](http://wildwinds.com/coins/ric/maxentius/trier RIC_840ADD.txt).

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Zos. 2.9.2: “Maxentius, son of Maximianus Herculeus, thought it intolerable that Constantine, the son of a harlot, should realize his ambition, while he the son of so great an emperor, should stand idly by and let others possess the power rightly his by inheritance.”

<sup>94</sup> Thanks to Dr Meaghan McEvoy (Macquarie) and Simone Mehr (Frankfurt am Main) for a stimulating discussion on the possibilities of the use of *Invictus*.

Divus Romulus c. 311-312.<sup>95</sup> By this time, Maxentius had earned the ‘right’ to term himself *Invictus*, as his regime had successfully defeated or withstood Severus, Galerius, and Domitius Alexander in Africa. The title appears on inscriptions—some from milestones, some uncertain but with similar inscriptions—from various places in Italy.<sup>96</sup> The exact title of *Princeps Invictus*, however, does not seem to appear in epigraphy at any point—although *Princeps Iuventutis* was used often in epigraphy, as has been seen in previous chapters.<sup>97</sup> This confirms that the use of the title was limited or perhaps even only a ‘placeholder’. Similarly, the term *Princeps* alone is not used in Maxentius’ epigraphy, but there are various issues in gold from after his elevation to Augustus which feature the legend PRINCIPI IMPERII ROMANI and Mars.<sup>98</sup> Sutherland comments that this legend “amplifies the conception of the title ‘Princeps’” and promotes him as the “first man.”<sup>99</sup> Sutherland dates the coins to 308, after the break with Maximian, although Drost has dated one issue to mid-307, contemporary with issues to Maximian.<sup>100</sup> The title may then suggest that promotion of his status as a *princeps* could be simultaneous with his claim on the title of Augustus. If *Princeps* is considered to be a title that promotes dynastic legitimacy, there is no reason why the two could not be concurrently true.

In summary, the proposed explanation for Maxentius’ assumption of the *Princeps Invictus* title is partly to illustrate his dynastic claims, but also to indicate a position—whether it was intended to be temporary or not—outside Galerius’ imperial college, but still linked to the First Tetrarchy through his father. It states his position as heir and his right to be emperor, but does not claim either the full power of an Augustus or the subordinate power of a Caesar, even though his claim is temporarily interpreted as such in Carthage. Cullhed argues for an interpretation of Maxentius as not waiting for Galerius’ recognition, but Cullhed is overeager to ascribe independence to the emperor.<sup>101</sup> It is equally possible that the title indicates the demonstration of a claim towards imperial power based upon his lineage and the support of the people and the troops of Rome—whether that claim was intended as angling to gain access to

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<sup>95</sup> CIL 6.01138.

<sup>96</sup> Examples found in Arsoli, AE (1990) 0224a; Minturno, AE (1989) 0139; Cupa Orlando, AE (1971) 0117; Brescia, AE (1973) 0243; Fano, AE (1983) 0378; and Rome, AE (1972) 0061, CIL 6.40846. Most of the inscriptions are similar to the most complete example from Cupa Orlando given above, which is: *D(omino) n(ostro) Imp(eratori) / M(arco) Aur(elio) Val(erio) / Maxentio Pio Felici / Invicto / Aug(usto) / XV*. Instead of the epithet *Pio Felici*, *Clementissi* is used on the example from Arsoli, and *Aeterno* on the ones from Minturno and Brescia.

<sup>97</sup> The epigraphic evidence seems to jump straight to titling Maxentius as Augustus, aside from a few inscriptions from North Africa where he is mistakenly titled Caesar, e.g. CIL 8. 22346.

<sup>98</sup> E.g. a medallion from c. 308, RIC VI, Rome no. 172.

<sup>99</sup> Sutherland (1967) 343; cf. RIC Rome nos. 172, 186, Drost (2013) nos. 34, 41, 53.

<sup>100</sup> Drost (2013) no. 34.

<sup>101</sup> Cullhed (1994) 35-36.



Galerius' imperial college, or to be allowed to remain as an independent ruler of Rome and other territories, is uncertain.

### 3. THE TETRARCHY AND THE HERCULII

Whatever independence Maxentius was trying to achieve with the *Princeps Invictus* title, he nonetheless engaged with the politics of the Tetrarchy. Over the first few years of his reign, different combinations of the existing emperors were promoted on coinage from Rome and the other mints that came under his control: Carthage, Pavia (ancient Ticinum), and Aquileia. Of these, the mint at Rome is most reliable for interpreting any actual imperial message. As has been seen, Carthage was in some confusion as to the correct titles accorded to Maxentius and Maximian; although this was corrected, it is difficult to determine whether the mints followed a particular and exact programme. Rome, as Maxentius' capital, is therefore the most likely to have received regular instructions and to have followed them explicitly.

#### i. Recognition of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Colleges in 306-307

That Maxentius' regime acknowledged some—though not all—of his fellow emperors in 306-307 is beyond doubt. Early coinage from Rome honours Maxentius, Maximian, Constantine, and Maximin Daza.<sup>102</sup> Galerius and Severus are notably missing.<sup>103</sup> Africa seems to follow this for the most part. Coinage from later in 307 drops Daza but keeps Constantine, probably in recognition of the alliance between Constantine and Maximian after the former's marriage to the latter's daughter, Fausta.<sup>104</sup> For instance, the CONSERVATORES VRBIS SVAE bronze coinage of c. mid-307 is minted to the three now-united emperors.<sup>105</sup> This legend would become one of the most common ones of Maxentius' reign, minted in multiple denominations, although during his period of later 'independent' rule it was adapted to the singular CONSERVATOR. Around April 308, the time of Maximian's attempted deposition of his son, Constantine and Maximian are both dropped from recognition.<sup>106</sup> In Carthage, the situation reflects similar attitudes as at Rome. The same four emperors are recognized on the

<sup>102</sup> Cf. RIC VI, Rome nos. 134-141 (gold, late 306 to early spring 307), 142-152 (gold, late spring-summer 307), 153-157 (silver, 306-7), 162-165 (aes, summer 307).

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Cullhed (1994) 38.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. RIC VI, Rome nos. 194-205 (aes, later half of 307). For accounts of the marriage, see Panegyric VII(6), Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 27.1, Zos. 2.10.6-7.

<sup>105</sup> RIC VI, Rome nos. 162-165; cf. Drost (2013), Rome nos. 73-75.

<sup>106</sup> The change of consuls is dated to April 20<sup>th</sup>, 308; cf. Sutherland (1967) 30, Cullhed (1994) 44.

gold coinage of 306-307: Maxentius, Maximian, Constantine, and Daza.<sup>107</sup> Maxentius' ubiquitous CONSERVATOR legend is adapted to CONSERVATOR(ES) KART SVAE or CONSERVATOR(ES) AFRICAE SVAE.<sup>108</sup> Carthage was therefore combining Maxentius' new message with the old formula: SALVIS AVGG ET CAESS FEL KART, which had been used during the First and Second Tetrarchies from c. 298 onwards.

Initially, these emperors were also recognized to some degree using the formula developed by the Tetrarchy, with legends proclaiming an imperial college of two Augusti and two Caesars: Maxentius and Maximian as Augusti and Constantine and Daza as Caesars. Hekster terms this “an attempt to aim at collegial rule”,<sup>109</sup> although of course imperial colleges in the tradition of the third century do not have to consist of precisely four members. These legends are primarily seen on the gold coinage of 306-307, indicating that the message was both important and promoted from the beginning of Maxentius' reign. Maxentius and Constantine receive coins featuring Hercules and Mars, where Maxentius is first *Princeps* and then Augustus, and Constantine is Caesar.<sup>110</sup> Maximian and Daza are recognized on other gold issues, though none survive with the collegial legends. Around mid-307, Daza is dropped from all denominations of coinage. Constantine and Maximian are still recognized, this time with the simplified collegial expression of AVGG ET CAES N added on to other legends.<sup>111</sup> This undoubtedly reflects the alliance between Maximian and Constantine—although, of course, Constantine is not termed ‘Augustus’ by the mints of Maxentius' regime, even though the panegyrist of 307 called him a newly-made Augustus, and Constantine's own mints followed suit. The legends are simultaneously expanded in scope; Hercules and Mars are joined by Pietas and Victoria. It is not until the expulsion of Maximian that many legends—perhaps pointedly—display only the addendum of AVG N. Maxentius' regime goes from recognizing an imperial college—although not Galerius' imperial college—to promoting the emperor explicitly as sole ruler.

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<sup>107</sup> RIC VI, Rome nos. 45-46 (Maxentius), 47-48a (Maximian), 48b (Constantine), 48c (Daza).

<sup>108</sup> RIC VI, Carthage nos. 52-61; Drost (2013), Carthage nos. 15-30.

<sup>109</sup> Hekster (2015) 293.

<sup>110</sup> HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAESS NN: RIC VI, Rome nos. 137-138, 147, 184 (Maxentius), 139 (Constantine); Drost (2013), Rome nos. 4-5, 16, 18 (Maxentius), no. 7 (Constantine). MARTI CONSERV AVGG ET CAESS NN: RIC VI, Rome no. 140, 148 (Maxentius); Drost (2013), Rome nos. 6, 11, 19 (Maxentius), no. 8 (Constantine).

<sup>111</sup> HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAESS N: RIC VI, Rome no. 170 (Maximian), nos. 171, 182-183 (Maxentius); Drost (2013), Rome no. 25 (Maximian), nos. 30, 31 (Maxentius).

MARTI CONSERV AVGG ET CAES N: Drost (2013), Rome no. 31 (Maxentius).

PIETAS AVGG ET CAES N: RIC VI, Rome no. 185, Drost (2013), Rome no. 33 (Maxentius).

VICTORIA S-AVGG ET CAES N: Drost (2013), Rome no. 35.

The interpretation of these collegial legends is problematic, partly due to chronological confusion.<sup>112</sup> Notably, these issues in gold also do not feature the whole ‘college’ of emperors on the obverses which accompany the legends, lessening the impact. Can Daza truly be said to be included in the phrase ‘AVGG ET CAESS NN’ if no coins are minted for him with that reverse legend, or can his absence be explained purely by questions of survival? One of the most puzzling points is that on the earliest issues of these coins Maxentius is titled *Princeps Invictus*, not Augustus. Are we then to assume that *Princeps* is a ‘stand-in’ for Augustus, as Cullhed tentatively offers?<sup>113</sup> The idea is not entirely convincing, but the other ‘spaces’ can be easily filled: Maximian was an Augustus, and Constantine and Daza certainly Caesars. If we proceed with the assumption that *Princeps Invictus* indicated a position somewhere above Caesar, the mints could hardly issue ‘AVG ET CAESSS NNN’ and place Maxentius as Caesar. Perhaps the symmetry familiar from the Tetrarchic colleges was preferable by this point. Any other variation was wholly impractical and would risk adding more confusion or breaking wholly with tradition. It seems that the *Princeps Invictus* title, though perhaps not wholly synonymous with *Augustus*, could at least be classified as such for simplicity’s sake. It is notable that even after the title was dropped for coinage, it continued for Maxentius on epigraphy to the point of ubiquity.<sup>114</sup> Yet Cullhed also suggests that the plural AVGG would “demonstrate [Maxentius’] loyalty to Galerius”—if it were not true that Maxentius never mints for Galerius during that emperor’s lifetime.<sup>115</sup> The omission is perhaps even more striking since Galerius was Maxentius’ father-in-law.<sup>116</sup>

Kuhoff argues against Sutherland’s categorization that at Rome and Carthage it was Galerius who was recognized as Augustus and Maximian as Senior Augustus (e.g. that both emperors were recognized simultaneously), rather than the term switching back and forth for Maximian.<sup>117</sup> His argument rests on the suggestion that Sutherland confused the titles of Maximian and Galerius in late 306, and that Maximian would not be simultaneously IMP C

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<sup>112</sup> Another problem is that often such datings depend upon our understanding of the chronology of historical events and political alliances from other sources. It is worth noting that Drost’s catalogue of Maxentian coins offers a slightly different chronology than Sutherland in the *Roman Imperial Coinage VI*, and his chronological ordering is followed for these and other time-based arguments. Additionally, Drost includes many coins from later discoveries that Sutherland was not able to make use of.

<sup>113</sup> Cullhed (1994) 36.

<sup>114</sup> For only a small percentage of surviving examples, see e.g. CIL 5.8000, 8015, 5.8017, 8052, 8052a, 8054, 8055.

<sup>115</sup> Cullhed (1994) 36-7, especially n. 144, following Sutherland (1967) 338-340.

<sup>116</sup> Hekster (2015) 293.

<sup>117</sup> Kuhoff (2001) 810-813. Many thanks to Marius Kalfelis (Frankfurt am Main) for pointing me in the direction of this idea and offering an excellent discussion on its merits.

MAXIMIANVS P F AVG and SEN AVG. This makes some sense for Rome,<sup>118</sup> but for the Carthage issues dating from late 306, however, the theory does not pass closer examination. The first *aes* issue after Maxentius' coup, which just continued the typical Tetrarchic reverse legend SALVIS AVGG ET CAESS FEL KART, is minted to IMP MAXIMIANVS P F AVG, M AVR MAXENTIVS NOB CAES, and Daza and Constantine as NOB CAES.<sup>119</sup> Contrary to Kuhoff's theory, it would not make sense for this issue to be for Galerius, Maxentius, Daza, and Constantine. Instead, it should be interpreted as a misunderstanding of the positions Maximian and Maxentius have claimed at Rome. Rather than terming them SEN AVG and PRINC INVICT, respectively, they are mistakenly given the 'Tetrarchic' titles of Augustus and Caesar. Therefore, Galerius and Severus have both been completely replaced.

The continuation of the legend SALVIS AVGG ET CAESS FEL KART is also explained by the desire of Carthage's mint-masters to honour Maxentius' regime without an 'official' directive. Thus, for this instance Kuhoff's theory does not make sense. It would be incongruous for Galerius to be included in this issue and Maximian ignored, especially as Africa's change of loyalties is almost certainly due to their preference for Maximian. Maximian was therefore incorrectly honoured as Augustus, which was then changed to Senior Augustus in later issues. Likewise, Maxentius was initially honoured incorrectly as Caesar before Carthage switched to *Princeps Invictus*.

Lactantius' characterization of the relationship between Maxentius and Galerius is relevant to the political situation at this time. Lactantius refers to the pair as *gener* and *socer* on several occasions.<sup>120</sup> This happens especially when he plays the two emperors against each other in the narrative, such as in the account of Maxentius' coup. Galerius hears of the acclamation of "his own son-in-law Maxentius" (*generum ipsius Maxentium*, 26.1), with the *ipsius* being emphatic. Meanwhile, Maxentius contemplates the campaign against him, organized by "his father-in-law Maximian [Galerius]" (*Maximianus socer*, 26.6). Even the very first characterization of Maxentius is that he was "so proud and stubborn that he used not to do homage either to his father or to his father-in-law—and for this reason he was disliked by both

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<sup>118</sup> The argument for Rome largely revolves around the legend SAC MON VRB AVGG ET CAESS NN. This was a legend that had been previous in use at Rome only under the First and Second Tetrarchies: RIC VI Rome nos. 105a-106b, 11a-112b, 120a-124, 132a-133b, 158a-159b. The argument might make sense for this legend to be minted for Galerius throughout than to suddenly switch to Maximian alongside Constantine: i.e. RIC VI, Rome no. 161; cf. no. 158a. The issue can be easily explained as a continuation of coinage under Severus, perhaps by accident; the legend is not continued through Maxentius' reign.

<sup>119</sup> RIC VI, Carthage nos. 50-51c.

<sup>120</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 18.9, 26.1, 26.6, 27.3.

of them.”<sup>121</sup> Importantly, however, this lack of *pietas* was not solely Maxentius’ character flaw. Galerius displays *impietas* towards his son-in-law as well. Lactantius paints this as unpalatable to the troops and the reason for their defection from Galerius’ command to Maxentius’ during the former’s invasion of Italy:

Then some of the legions, detesting the crime (*scelus*) involved in a father-in-law attacking his son-in-law and in Roman soldiers attacking Rome, transferred their standards and abandoned his command.

*tunc quaedam legiones detestantes scelus, quod socer generum oppugnaret et quod Romani milites Romam, translatis signis imperium reliquerunt.*<sup>122</sup>

This crime (*scelus*) is not explicitly termed *impietas*, though the accusation remains—Lactantius even compares Galerius’ wrong behaviour towards a member of his family with the wrongness of troops marching on Rome in civil war. The account is similar in the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris*, especially in its use of kinship terms to heighten the stakes of the narrative.

Then [Galerius] sent Licinius and Probus to the city as envoys, asking that the son-in-law, that is Maxentius, should attain his desires from the father-in-law, that is Galerius, through entreaties more than arms.

*Tunc legatos ad urbem misit Licinium et Probum, per colloquium petens ut gener apud socerum, id est Maxentius apud Galerium, precibus magis quam armis optata mercaretur.*<sup>123</sup>

Although this narrative should not be taken as concrete proof that bad blood existed between the two, it can at least be seen as an interpretation of the political situation. A political fallout between emperors who became rivals despite their familial links was characterized as a relationship lacking in *pietas* on both sides.

Both the interpretation of the literary sources and the absence of Galerius from Maxentius’ coinage points to a situation in which Maxentius’ regime does not acknowledge the supremacy of Galerius. The consular lists of 307, however, complicate the matter further. Galerius had made Severus and Daza the consuls of 307, but both Constantine and Maxentius

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<sup>121</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 18.9: *adeo superbus et contumax, ut neque patrem neque socerum solitus sit adorare, et idcirco utrique invisus fuit.* Trans. Creed (1984), adapted. What I have translated as “performs *adoratio*” Creed translates as “do homage”, though he discusses the importance of *adoratio*, p. 98-9, note 9. It is worth noting that De Decker (1968) 497f contended that this refusal to perform *adoratio* was an indication of Maxentius’ profession of Christianity; Kriegbaum (1992) 18 instead connects it with Maxentius’ “traditionalistischen Grundhaltung” regarding Roman religion and court ceremonial. It is more likely that the phrase is part of Lactantius’ invective in his characterization of Maxentius and should not be understood as hinting to Maxentius’ true feelings or beliefs.

<sup>122</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 27.3.

<sup>123</sup> *Origo* 3.7. Trans. Rolfe (1952), adapted.

rejected this suggestion.<sup>124</sup> In Constantine's territories, therefore, the consuls were initially himself and Galerius, while Rome nominated Galerius and Daza.<sup>125</sup> In early 307, the alliance between Maximian and Constantine had not yet taken place; it is probable that the choice of consulships at Rome was engaging with Galerius' choice rather than Constantine's. Cullhed explains this historical oddity as Maximian's controlling influence over Maxentius,<sup>126</sup> though the answer is not entirely satisfactory—would Maximian have control over the nomination of consuls but not the output of the mints, for example? Instead, the inclusion of Galerius on the consular lists at Rome in 307 can be explained more effectively through the omission of Severus.

## ii. The Missing Emperor: Severus and Maxentius

In the ancient literature, Maxentius' coup is followed immediately by Severus' campaign against him. The two emperors are therefore narratively opposed. Lactantius presents Severus as a rather lacklustre figure, sent to march against Maxentius with the army of the usurper's father, and unable to combat the trump card that Maxentius plays: inviting Maximian to join him. Deserted by his troops, Severus is at least allowed a more noble death by suicide.<sup>127</sup> The *Origo* gives Maximian the agency of the victory, as well as the perfidy of Severus' death.<sup>128</sup> By the time Zosimus tells the story, Maxentius is more involved with Severus' defeat, having bribed and corrupted his troops, and even ambushes him and hangs him.<sup>129</sup> To some degree, these accounts are merely reporting versions of the same historical fact, that Maxentius took control of much of Severus' allotted territory, and then when Severus campaigned to recover his portion of the empire, Maxentius and Maximian defeated him.<sup>130</sup> Even before Severus' march into Italy, he had been undermined by Maxentius' successful proclamation as emperor in Rome and Northern Africa alike.

<sup>124</sup> Cullhed (1994) 34, following Bagnall (1987) 149, Barnes (1982) 94.

<sup>125</sup> Barnes (1982) 94 gives the timing of consulships in 307 as follows: a) Severus and Daza (the former until September); b) Galerius and Constantine (January-September) followed by Maximian and Constantine (September onwards); c) Galerius and Daza (January until April). Cf. *Chr. Min.* 1.66f.

<sup>126</sup> Cullhed (1994) 39, 42.

<sup>127</sup> *Lact. Mort. Pers.* 26.4-11. Eutropius' version (10.2), though extremely simple, is most similar to Lactantius' in terms of the agency and subversion of Maxentius. The account in Panegyric 12.3.4 is so simple it is difficult to pair it with a similar account.

<sup>128</sup> *Origo* 3.6, 4.9-10; similarly, *Ps.-Vict.* 40.3.

<sup>129</sup> *Zos.* 2.10.1-2. Aurelius Victor 40.7 tells a similar, though simplified, version of the tale.

<sup>130</sup> For evidence for the territory controlled by each emperor being strictly 'allotted', Leadbetter (2009) 156-167; discusses the evidence and offers a solution to the problem, namely that the divisions of the empire became more strictly defined in 305.

The historical facts worked well at least for Lactantius' representation of affairs. We have seen in the previous chapter how Daza's legitimation claims were belittled by the author because they contradicted Constantine's. Instead of pitting Constantine against Severus, who had been adopted by Constantius and therefore might have been said to have usurped Constantine's place, Constantine is instead pushed aside—literally—by Galerius' choice of Daza. We can view Maxentius' success against Severus in a similar light. Lactantius never presents the new emperor of Rome as sympathetic, but Severus' ignominious defeat is both ironic and almost inevitable, another example of the poor judgement of Galerius. He was never worthy of being emperor in the first place. If in Lactantius' account it was Daza who had taken Constantine's place in the Tetrarchy proclaimed in 305, then it must have been Severus who usurped Maxentius, since Lactantius' Diocletian had suggested both Constantine and Maxentius as new Caesars. Certainly, there is no sign that Maxentius ever acknowledged Severus' status as an emperor. Maxentius may even have removed his predecessor's name from inscriptions.<sup>131</sup>

There are hints of conflict between Daza and Constantine through the fraught years of political turmoil and uncertainty after 306, and the consular nominations of 307 reflect that.<sup>132</sup> Constantine, by nominating himself and Galerius, refuses to acknowledge Severus and Daza's right as emperors; instead, he asserts his own place in the Tetrarchy under the benefaction (so he asserts) of Galerius. It is clever, and able to be disguised as celebration of Galerius' supremacy even while undermining his authority. Maxentius is even more cautious. As has been seen on coinage, his regime accepts and even promotes Daza's claims. His problem is with Severus. While he does not go so far as putting his own name as consul (at least until 308), he uses Galerius' seniority as a tool to undermine Severus. The territory under disputed rule is in the west, while both emperors (temporarily) accept Galerius' authority in the east.

Additionally, Maxentius' early and extensive use of the ideology of *Romanitas*, especially on his coinage, may have been a way to undermine Severus' claims to sovereignty over Rome. On coinage, Maxentius is proclaimed CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE, the preserver of his city;<sup>133</sup> perhaps a pointed statement to its perceived neglect at the hands of Severus in particular, though this is a legend that is used throughout Maxentius' reign and

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<sup>131</sup> AE (1964) 00235, from Tuscania, Italy. It is an inscription to Diocletian *senior* with (probably) Maximian (also *senior*) and the other Tetrarchs, which fills in Severus' name in a space that had been erased. This is somewhat guesswork, as most of the names were erased, but there seems to be enough remaining to properly fill in the blanks. The erasure, however, does not have to be Maxentian in origin.

<sup>132</sup> See too the discussion on *fili Augustorum* in **II.3.iv**.

<sup>133</sup> On the *conservator* title, see Ziemssen (2011) 62-68.

perhaps most clearly defines his imperially-promoted image. After all, Maxentius' success at Rome may have been more to do with the city's dislike of Severus and Galerius than the fervent espousal of Maxentius himself.<sup>134</sup> This dislike may have extended to Africa, which, as we have seen, was quick to embrace Maxentius and Maximian in lieu of Galerius and Severus. There is no evidence that Severus was in Rome or Africa; his base was to the north, in Milan, and nearby Aquileia and Ticinum seem to have been his main mints.<sup>135</sup> Maxentius is portrayed, therefore, as not only the rightful ruler because of his descent from the previous emperor of Rome and the West, but also because his *pietas* towards the city is greater than Severus'.

I have previously brought up the common theory that Maxentius was vying for a place within Galerius' Tetrarchy. The evidence does not quite fit, as Cullhed has discussed extensively, but neither does it support Cullhed's ultimate assertion that Maxentius "planned to restore the monarchy."<sup>136</sup> After all, in his early years it is evident that Maxentius' regime was comfortable with collegial rule. Yet at the same time, there were definite and visible conflicts with certain members of Galerius' imperial college. Therefore, I wish to assert that instead of competing against the 'Tetrarchy' (as embodied by Galerius' college), Maxentius was instead initially vying for a particular place within that college—Severus' place.<sup>137</sup> Ultimately, the return of Maximian, so helpful during Severus' invasion, proved an obstacle to this goal, as did Galerius' determination to campaign against Maxentius himself. While the potential conflict between Constantine and Daza never quite came to a head, for Maxentius, the conflict was resolved but without the resolution that he desired.

### iii. Maxentius and Maximian

It is clear that the most important influence on the early years of Maxentius' reign was Maximian. Their cooperation in the campaigns against Severus and Galerius was vital to Maxentius' success, but their later conflict was also important to the evolution of Maxentius' self-legitimation. Their relationship was reflected not only in dynastic implications in the title of *Princeps Invictus*, but also in Maxentius' status as a 'Herculian' emperor—a link that would be complicated further by Maximian's alliance with Constantine. The West, therefore, was

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<sup>134</sup> Potter (2013) 115: "Just as the acclamation of Constantine was a collective action by Constantius' senior staff, so too the proclamation of Maxentius was the act of a government faction heartily sick of Severus."

<sup>135</sup> Especially Aquileia; Sutherland (1967) 47ff, noting that SM was minted at Aquileia during Severus' reign, indicating the emperor's presence at the mint.

<sup>136</sup> Cullhed (1994) 93.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. the aforementioned theory of Kuhoff (2001) 810-813 that Galerius was initially recognized at Rome (although, as I have shown, likely not at Carthage).



controlled by the ‘Herculii’: Maximian, his son Maxentius, and his new son-in-law Constantine. Hekster comments, “it appears that in the period in which Maxentius and his father jointly ruled Rome, they tried to gain support from other tetrarchs to get rid of Galerius and Severus II, and to be included in the system instead.”<sup>138</sup> Yet it seems more likely that the aim was to set up an alternative, competing college in the west. The regimes of the three members of this new Herculanian college acknowledged the competition to varying degrees. As has been noted, Maxentius’ ignoring of Galerius and Severus is the most obvious. The role of Daza was more unclear, though he too was dropped from coinage in Rome by c. mid-307.

Indeed, this status as a ‘Herculanian’ is vital to Maxentius’ early regime. In the coinage of Maxentius’ first few years of rule, there are definite attempts to align the emperor with Hercules. The god featured on several obverses from 306-307.<sup>139</sup> Another excellent example of ‘Herculanian’ overtones can be found on a medallion (a quaternion) from 308 which depicts Maxentius wearing a lion skin headdress—a feature which can be found on coins from throughout Maximian’s twenty-plus years of power.<sup>140</sup> The reverse celebrates Maxentius’ consulship in 308 (**fig. 3.2**).



Fig. 3.2: Maxentius in a lionskin.<sup>141</sup>

There are other examples of Maxentius wearing a lion skin headdress, mostly on aurei and medallions. The reverse of one features Maxentius receiving a globe from Roma with the legend CONSERVATOR VRB SVAE.<sup>142</sup> Divine legitimacy via Roma is thus portrayed alongside the dynastic legitimation inherent in the lion skin headdress—the connections to Maximian would have been unmistakable, especially as Maximian continued to be portrayed wearing the headdress on gold coinage minted just the year before.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Hekster (2015) 293.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. RIC VI, Rome no. 134 (Maximian), 137, 139, 147 (Maxentius).

<sup>140</sup> Drost (2013) Rome, no. 40 = RIC VI, Rome no. 167.

<sup>141</sup> RIC VI, Rome no. 167. IMP C M VAL MAXENTIVS P F AVG / FELIX PROCESS CONSVLAT AVG N.

<sup>142</sup> Drost (2013) Rome, no. 50 = RIC VI Rome, no. 166.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Drost (2013) Rome no. 25 (which he dates to mid 307) = RIC VI, Rome no. 170.

Hercules is also used on coins from Maxentius' mints celebrating the new 'Herculian' alliance and Constantine's marriage to Fausta.<sup>144</sup> Clearly Maxentius' regime promotes the new familial relationship between the emperors, although using the existing framework employed by the Tetrarchs of reverse legends, *signa* gods, and minting obverses in (sometimes mutual) acknowledgement. In many ways, this new imperial college of Herculii stood in direct defiance of Galerius' Tetrarchic college. Yet it made use of inherently Tetrarchic elements to do so, hearkening back to the First Tetrarchy for legitimacy in order to compete with Galerius and his Iovii. It is not, therefore, 'anti-Tetrarchic' (i.e., 'anti-collegial'), merely 'anti-Galerian'.

The existence of this alliance, however, shows Maximian's influence rather than Maxentius'.<sup>145</sup> As has been mentioned, there is no large output from Constantine's mints in recognition of Maxentius, though any recognition at all is interesting considering Maxentius' place outside the Tetrarchy which Constantine was, to some degree, still a part of. It may indicate Constantine's growing (albeit transitory) independence from Galerius' Tetrarchy around 307 up until Carnuntum in late 308 or, as Sutherland suggests, the dependence of Constantine upon Maximian.<sup>146</sup> The mint of Lyons may also show Maximian's influence in the western political sphere to some degree.<sup>147</sup> The mint was arguably pro-Constantinian in nature—it was certainly not Maxentian—but it shows notable differences from the other western mints of Trier and London.<sup>148</sup> These oddities, datable to just before Carnuntum, include a 'cursory recognition of Maxentius'; 'the almost calculatedly derogatory title' of Iunior for Galerius; the fact that the title *Aeternus Augustus* instead of *Senior* is given to Diocletian along with 'reverses appropriate to an active ruler'; and a 'remarkable emphasis on Divus Constantius'.<sup>149</sup> These do not prove Maximian's influence, but many of these oddities may reflect the alliance between Maximian and Constantine or the presence of one or both emperors in the area in 307.<sup>150</sup> Certainly Divus Constantius was employed to a notable extent in the Panegyric of 307 that celebrated the new alliances; Constantius was a dynastically unifying

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<sup>144</sup> Most notably with the reverse legend HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAES N. Drost (2013) Rome nos. 25, 30, 31 = RIC VI, Rome no. 170, 183, 182; Drost Carthage no. 8 (to Maxentius). Ticinum mints the similar HERCVLI COMITI AVGG NN to both Maxentius and Constantine as Herculii and Augusti. Drost (2013) Ticinum nos. 1-3 = RIC VI, Ticinum nos. 89-90.

<sup>145</sup> Ando (2000) 247 claims that Maximian had greater *auctoritas* than Galerius, so Constantine allied with him and Maxentius. The claim is too difficult to substantiate; the perception of greater *auctoritas* is ultimately a subjective one.

<sup>146</sup> Sutherland (1967) 41.

<sup>147</sup> Sutherland (1967) 238, n. 78; Sutherland (1963) 17; Leadbetter (2009) 193.

<sup>148</sup> Sutherland (1967) 42.

<sup>149</sup> Sutherland (1967) 237-238; Sutherland (1957).

<sup>150</sup> Sutherland (1967) 238 also attributes a later list of discrepancies to Maximian's input after Carnuntum.

factor between the two emperors.<sup>151</sup> The return of Diocletian to a more active role is particularly interesting in light of Lactantius' claim that Maximian's "policy had been to eliminate his son as well as everyone else and then restore the rule of Diocletian and himself."<sup>152</sup> If Lyons was controlled by Maximian, it is interesting that Maxentius was given only a 'cursory' inclusion. This interpretation, however, may derive too much from Lactantius' account of the relationship between father and son. Throughout the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, Lactantius cultivates a sense that Maximian's relationship with Maxentius was only to use the latter as a stepping stone to power.

This is certainly the story Lactantius cultivates throughout the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*; one of the most dramatic episodes involving Maxentius is Maximian's attempt to depose him before the soldiery, possibly in April 308.<sup>153</sup>

But more obedience was shown to the young man than to the old; for the son's power had been gained earlier and was superior, since it was he who had given his father back his imperial position. The old man was discontented at not being able freely to do what he wanted, and in a childish spirit of envy he begrudged his son his position. He planned therefore to drive the young man from power in order to claim for himself what he regarded as his own.

*Sed iuveni magis parebatur quam seni, quippe cum prior et maior filii potestas, qui etiam patri reddiderat imperium. ferebat iniquo animo senex quod non posset libere facere quae vellet, et filio suo puerili aemulatione inuidebat. cogitabat ergo expellere adulescentem, ut sibi sua vindicaret.*<sup>154</sup>

Maximian executes his plan: he calls together the people and the soldiers (*populum ac milites*) and lays the blame for their troubles at Maxentius' feet, then dramatically tears away Maxentius' imperial regalia (*purpuram*). To Maximian's surprise, the soldiers support the son over the father—possibly led by the Praetorian Guard who favoured Maxentius from the beginning, and the soldiers present, according to Lactantius, were Severus' soldiers who had turned coat for Maximian himself. These *milites* drive out Maximian, who is here termed a *senex impius*, from Rome "like a second Tarquin the Proud" (*Superbus alter*).<sup>155</sup> His *impietas*

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<sup>151</sup> Cf. Panegyric 7.14.3-7. This panegyric, and the alliance between Maximian and Constantine, will be discussed in more detail in V.3.i.

<sup>152</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 43.6: *nam id propositi habebat, ut et filio et ceteris extinctis se ac Diocletianum restitueret in regnum.*

<sup>153</sup> Barnes (1982) 13; Leadbetter (2009) 198-199.

<sup>154</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 28.1-2.

<sup>155</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 28.3-4.

here is a defining characteristic, and detestable to the soldiers, like Galerius' army before them. It is important to remember, however, that although Lactantius has little respect for most of the emperors from this period, in many ways Maximian is represented as more of a villain of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* than his son. The characterization of the older emperor here as childish, treacherous, and envious of power is one that is used again, most notably in Maximian's future betrayal of Constantine (*impius* is specifically used in both plots). Lactantius portrays Maximian as constantly power-hungry and willing to use his kinship links to increase his own power. This attempted coup against Maxentius is in many ways a precursor to the one against Constantine: they are two of Maximian's many attempts to gain power at the expense of others. Like many of Lactantius' villains, Maximian is defined by his *impietas*, his refusal to properly honour his familial relationships.

There is no reason to doubt the bones of Lactantius' narrative, or even necessarily the meat. Cullhed paints a credible picture of the struggle for power between the two Roman rulers after Maximian's return to Rome, which also offers an explanation for the lack of consuls named at Rome in early 308.<sup>156</sup> The estrangement is also reflected in the numismatic record and is corroborated by a range of other sources, some of which carry their own nuances for the purpose of maligning Maxentius, Maximian, or both.<sup>157</sup> For example, Aurelius Victor's narrative in chapter 40 has Maximian as a restraining influence on Maxentius (40.5), who is an "beast and inhuman" (*ferus inhumanusque*, 40.19), and claims that the father had sought power because he was "dismayed by his son's apathy."<sup>158</sup> In Zosimus' version, Maximian again tries to use the soldiers against Maxentius, but this time Maxentius "won them by gifts and piteous supplications".<sup>159</sup> By the early sixth century, Maxentius was painted only as a weakling, and Zosimus' portrayal of Maximian throughout the history is also less pejorative than Lactantius'. This characterization may stem from a tradition like Julian's *Caesares*, where Maxentius is unwarlike and "effeminate".<sup>160</sup> Even as early as 313, however, Maximian may have been "on the road to rehabilitation," according to Barbara Rodgers, who mentions Constantine's *Divus*

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<sup>156</sup> Cullhed (1994) 43.

<sup>157</sup> Eutropius' account is, as usual, too spare to offer much food for thought (10.3).

<sup>158</sup> Aur. Vict. 40.21: *namque Herculis natura impotentior, simul filii segnitiam metuens inconsulte imperium repetiverat*. Trans. Bird (1994), who also comments, "Victor, unlike Eutropius and Lactantius, chooses to ignore the rivalry between father and son and play up Maxentius' supposed apathy and inertia in contrast with Maximian's energy and intractability." (pp. 184-185, n. 17). Aurelius Victor was a native of Africa, who had an obvious reason to dislike Maxentius after the campaign against Domitius Alexander—nor was Victor shy about it (Cf. Aur. Vict. 40.19).

<sup>159</sup> Zos. 2.11.1: Ἐρκούλιος δὲ Μαξιμιανὸς ἀναλαβεῖν, ὡς εἶρηται μοι, τὴν βασιλείαν ἐπιχειρήσας ἀλλοτριῶσαι μὲν τῆς πρὸς Μαξέντιον εὐνοίας τοῦ στρατιώτου ἐσπούδασεν, τοῦ δὲ δωρεαῖς καὶ ἐλεειναῖς ἰκεσίαις αὐτοῦ ἐπισπασαμένου.

<sup>160</sup> Julian, *Caes* 329.

*Maximianus* coinage that would appear a few years later.<sup>161</sup> Returning to the Panegyric of 313, the panegyrist is careful to distance Maxentius from Maximian, to both the detriment of the former and the possible benefit of the latter.

Finally, he who was believed to be his father, after attempting to tear the purple from his shoulders, perceived that his own destiny had passed over to that abomination.

*Ipse denique qui pater illius credebatur discissam ab umeris purpuram detrahere conatus senserat in illud dedecus sua fata transisse.*<sup>162</sup>

The panegyrist is less than subtle in his characterization of Maxentius, and the idea of his false paternity was an important claim (see section 1). It is also probably the earliest surviving source on the matter. Clearly, Maxentius' breach with his father was an important political event, if surprising; some perhaps sought to explain it by suggesting that the quarrel was feigned in order to gain more power. Lactantius addresses these rumours as well, asserting that Maximian's goal was to eliminate all opponents and restore power to himself and Diocletian,<sup>163</sup> and therefore implying that there was no love lost between father and son. Partly this assertion may be another way to discredit Maxentius, who sought to rehabilitate his father after his death as a *Divus Pater* on coinage (4.ii). Yet it also underlines how important the relationship between the two was for Maxentius' regime.

Leadbetter notes that the breach between the two would have undermined Maxentius' position and legitimacy, since he was now opposed to Galerius, his father, and by extension, Constantine.<sup>164</sup> Furthermore, North Africa's revolt in 308 under the *vicarius* Domitius Alexander was probably due to Maximian's expulsion from Rome,<sup>165</sup> after all, as has been said, it is likely that Africa supported Maxentius only because of Maximian.<sup>166</sup> It may also be, however, that the breach between father and son reflected Maxentius' local support at Rome. All the sources agree that although Maximian was useful in winning over Severus' army, Maxentius was more popular (the bribes, as in Zosimus, notwithstanding). Although Cullhed is often overly concerned with rehabilitating Maxentius' image, his examples of evidence for

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<sup>161</sup> Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 301.

<sup>162</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 12.3.4.

<sup>163</sup> *Lact. Mort. Pers.* 43.5-6. Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 198.

<sup>164</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 185, 198.

<sup>165</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 198 notes the argument to date the revolt after Carnuntum and Maxentius' more official rejection, but, as he puts it, "This is an unnecessary connection to make. Maxentius was as much a usurper before Carnuntum as after it." He continues (pp. 199-200) to summarize the account of the revolt, including disentangling Zosimus' "garbled" account. Cf. a similar interpretation in Cullhed (1994) 44, 70-71. Odahl (2004) 89 does not explicitly link the two, and neither does Barnes (1981) 37, (2011) 71.

<sup>166</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 184-185.

the emperor's local support are striking.<sup>167</sup> In Zosimus' account of a riot in the city, Maxentius is able to calm the angry troops.<sup>168</sup> Even the efforts Constantine made to eliminate Maxentius' memory suggests his popularity in Rome.<sup>169</sup> Local support may have been all that was needed to be a successful emperor—as Cullhed comments fairly, “there is little doubt that his subjects did not see him as a usurper”<sup>170</sup>—but presentations of legitimacy were still important. (It also seems true that these presentations were not as successful in North Africa.) Maxentius' regime promoted other forms of legitimacy besides dynastic, especially those which invoked *Romanitas*,<sup>171</sup> but the estrangement between Maxentius and Maximian does not mean that the son entirely rejected his useful connections to Hercules through his father.

It is notable that the coin above (**fig. 3.2**) celebrating Maxentius in a lion skin (and thus as a ‘Herculian’ of sorts) alongside his consulship must have been minted after the break with his father.<sup>172</sup> As has been mentioned, the break is conventionally dated to April 308 based on the evidence of the consular nominations at Rome. If this is true, then Maxentius' regime is not denying his dynastic connection to Maximian. It would have been difficult to use Hercules without recalling Maximian—the god and emperor had been linked for more than twenty years by this point, often in the exact same way as Maxentius was now depicted, even by Maxentius' own regime (**fig. 3.3**).



Fig. 3.3: Maximian in a lionskin.<sup>173</sup>

<sup>167</sup> Cullhed (1994) 73-74 summarizes these examples thus: loyalty of the praetorians, Severus' soldiers, and later the African legions; support from his generals/officers; the quick subjugation of Domitius Alexander; a decent economy and tax breaks for Rome; the religious care for the traditions of Rome and lack of persecutions for the Christians.

<sup>168</sup> Zos. 2.13.1; compare to Eusebius *Vita Const.* 1.35.1.

<sup>169</sup> Humphries (2015) 162.

<sup>170</sup> Cullhed (1994) 74.

<sup>171</sup> See Cullhed (1994) 41-67 for a detailed discussion of Maxentius' expressions of *Romanitas* in a variety of media. See also Ziemssen (2011) 122-129 on Maxentius and Roma on coinage.

<sup>172</sup> RIC VI, Rome no. 168. However, it is very difficult to determine the accurate dating of coins; cf. Hekster (2015) 294: “Unfortunately, coin types from Rome and Ostia cannot be sufficiently closely dated to systematically differentiate between Maxentius' numismatic imagery between April 308, the summer of 310 (when Maximian died), and Maxentius' ultimate defeat at the hands of Constantine in October 312.”

<sup>173</sup> RIC VI, Rome no. 170. IMP C M AVR MAXIMIANVS P F AVG/HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAES N.

The lion skin headdress is not continued for long on Maxentius' coinage in 308 and afterwards, so perhaps it was deemed unsuitable. At the same time, Hercules was sometimes still featured on Maxentian coinage, although certainly not to the same degree as in 306-308.<sup>174</sup> Some of the images are even 'Tetrarchic' in nature. Consider one of Maxentius' CONSERV VRB SVAE coins featuring Roma seated in a temple; in one example she sits alongside Jupiter and Hercules.<sup>175</sup> Cullhed argues that Maxentius' "propaganda of *romanitas* stressed his independence of the Tetrarchy and his intention of setting it aside and returning to the traditions of the earlier Principate, with imperial power centred at Rome."<sup>176</sup> Although Rome and *Romanitas* were undoubtedly important to Maxentius' self-representation, Cullhed's theory does not quite fit. Especially in the early years, Maxentius' mints simultaneously produced imagery centred around Hercules (which embodied both dynastic and Tetrarchic ideas) and imagery featuring 'Roman' gods: Mars, Roma, the Dioscuri, the wolf and twins. Certainly the Hercules imagery fell out of favour to a noticeable degree with the expulsion of Maximian, but the ramped-up promotion of Roma and specifically Roman mythologies, especially Mars,<sup>177</sup> did not mean that promotion of Hercules (and the now even more complicated divine-and-dynastic legitimacy that Hercules implied) could not fruitfully coexist for a time.

It is reductive to say that legitimacy was an 'either-or' affair. Maxentius had received power from Rome, not from Galerius, so it is clear that he would promote his legitimacy via the city—Roma giving power (symbolized by a globe) to Maxentius is a common reverse type. But Maxentius' further connections to Maximian, as a popular western emperor, were equally important, and connections to the First Tetrarchy through Maximian were unavoidable—nor were they avoided. Different legitimacies supplemented, not contradicted each other. Thus, Maxentius was simultaneously a Roman emperor, the heir to Maximian, and an ally of several emperors (with Tetrarchic connections, albeit featuring in the construction of two semi-distinct rival colleges).

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<sup>174</sup> Cf. HERCVLI COMITI AVG N: RIC VI, Rome no. 181 (308); CONSERV VRB SVAE (featuring Jupiter and Hercules, sometimes with a giant): Drost (2013) Rome, no. 89a-d; CONSERV VRB SVAE (featuring Roma in a hexastyle temple with Jupiter and Hercules): Drost (2013) Rome, no. 93 (310-311);

<sup>175</sup> Drost (2013) Rome, no. 93.

<sup>176</sup> Cullhed (1994) 66.

<sup>177</sup> Curran (2000) 61; Bardill (2012) 85; Cf. Fears (1977) 299 on Mars in lieu of Jupiter. Hekster (1999) 731 notes the primacy given to Mars on Maxentius' coinage. Cf. Hekster (2015) 294 on the use of Mars as a potentially 'dynastic' deity, especially considering Maxentius' son Romulus (see section 4).

#### 4. MAXENTIUS, ROMULUS, AND THE PROMOTION OF DYNASTY

With the expulsion of Maximian from Rome, as has been seen, Maxentius' regime seems to have cut back on the promotion of Hercules and the Herculan college. While it is true that references to Maximian and Maxentius' legitimacy through him do not appear as often, there is another type of legitimacy at play—one used by Diocletian and Maximian during the First Tetrarchy, and by most of the third century emperors before them. Through the promotion of his young son Valerius Romulus, Maxentius' regime was able to hint at a 'prospective', forward-looking legitimacy, the idea that the stability of the Roman Empire would depend upon this dynasty created by Maxentius and carried forward by Romulus, propped up by links to past emperors as well. This was supported through a series of potentially dynastic building structures. It has been suggested that even Romulus' name indicates dynastic succession, since his great-grandmother (mother of Galerius, grandmother of Valeria Maximilla) was named Romula.<sup>178</sup>

The announcement of new consuls for Rome in 308, as has been discussed, marks the clearest breach of Maxentius' regime from that of the emperors around him. While Constantine chose to promote his own legitimacy alongside the implied acceptance by the senior Augustus Galerius, Maxentius' choice of consuls was himself and Romulus. Consul seems to be the pinnacle of Romulus' short career; he was not made Caesar and he never appeared on coinage during his lifetime. Unlike the third century emperors, Maxentius apparently chose not to promote his son as a Caesar.<sup>179</sup> Instead, Romulus' highest title was only *nobilissimus vir* (abbreviated to N.V. on coinage) having previously been *clarissimus puer*.<sup>180</sup> This lack of promotion is not unprecedented; Carinus' son Nigrinus provides a similar example of a boy who was not made Caesar but was commemorated on coinage after his early death.<sup>181</sup> Perhaps Romulus too had simply not lived long enough to be promoted to Caesar, or was purposefully not promoted due to the dangers that threatened young Caesars (see 2.i).

There may have been other ways to promote Romulus' status, however, primarily through statuary. A statue to Mars *Pater* set up by Maxentius in the Forum Romanum may have also shown reliefs of Mars with his twin sons Romulus and Remus, alongside Maxentius

<sup>178</sup> Aur. Vict. 40, 16; Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 9, 9; PLRE 1.770 s.v. Romula; Cf. Hekster (1999) 726, (2015) 293.

<sup>179</sup> On imperial children holding office, and the evolution of this from the first century AD (when children could not hold consulships) to the heightened promotion of imperial sons as Caesars and co-Augusti, see Wiedemann (1988) 124-129.

<sup>180</sup> PLRE 1.772 s.v. Valerius Romulus 6, citing CIL 14.2825-6; ILS 666-7, 672. Cf. Wiedemann (1988) 128.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. RIC V.2, Rome nos. 471, 472, 472a, 474.



with his own son Romulus.<sup>182</sup> The statue may be connected to the Tetrarchic *decennalia* monument. If so, Hekster argues, this emphasis on Mars and Romulus instead of on Hercules reinforces the idea of a break between Maxentius and the Tetrarchic ideology of the *Herculii*.<sup>183</sup> A counter-argument using the same evidence might be made. By constructing a statue (which may present Maxentius' dynasty) in close proximity to Tetrarchic statues, the aim might have been instead to showcase Maxentius' connections to his imperial heritage,<sup>184</sup> giving added weight to the new dynasty Maxentius was promoting through Romulus. Other statuary evidence has been suggested for Romulus, but inconclusively.<sup>185</sup>

This new form of dynasty was, however, short-lived. Romulus died in 309, before the consuls of 310 were announced.<sup>186</sup> Both the building programme and the output of Maxentius' mints would use Romulus' death to continue to promote the dynasty in new ways, from the construction of the imperial mausoleum at the imperial villa on the Via Appia to the novel AETERNAE MEMORIAE commemorative coinage from Rome and Ostia. His importance to Maxentius' promotion of dynasty is revealed by the efforts of later panegyrists to denigrate Romulus as well as his father. Divine will (here the 'Sacred Tiber'), the panegyrist of 313 proclaims, did not permit the "false Romulus" to live long.<sup>187</sup> The later panegyrist of 321 adds that Rome is strengthened by the annihilation of her enemies, who "have been destroyed root and branch."<sup>188</sup> The fate of Daza's family indicates that even if Romulus had lived to 312, he would almost certainly not have survived his father's defeat.

### **i. *Aeternae Memoriae* and the Reintroduction of Retrospective Dynastics**

After death, Romulus took on a new purpose as a divine member of an extended imperial family which revolved around Maxentius. Maxentius was forced to change from

<sup>182</sup> Hekster (2015) 294, Hekster (1999) 727. The inscription to Mars *Pater* also calls the god and the emperor both *invictus*: CIL 6.33856 = ILS 8935.

<sup>183</sup> Hekster (1999) 727.

<sup>184</sup> As Bardill (2012) 85 suggests.

<sup>185</sup> It has been suggested that the bust of a young boy in a lionskin, found at the Villa of Maxentius on the Via Appia, might be Romulus (or a son of Constantine). Cf. Delbrueck (1933) fig. 53; <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk>, LSA-566 (J. Lenaghan). Similarly, a colossal statue of Sol (or Nero) may have been dedicated to Romulus at one point: Marlowe (2006) 225-229; Curran (2000) 61-2; Peirce (1989); Oenbrink (2006) 199. However, this evidence is based upon an unpublished inscription from the Arch of Constantine, evidence which has been called into question by Hauke Ziemssen in a PhD dissertation from 2011 at Hamburg: Ziemssen (2011) 35-36, especially n. 123. <http://d-nb.info/1010855883/34>

<sup>186</sup> PLRE 1.772 s.v. Valerius Romulus 6.

<sup>187</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 12.18.1: *Sancte Thybri, quondam hospitis monitor Aeneae, mox Romuli conseruator expositi, tu nec falsum Romulum diu uiuere nec parricidam munitor moenibus ambiendis...*

<sup>188</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4.6.6: *Constitutata enim et in perpetuum Roma fundata est, omnibus qui statum eius labefactare poterant cum stirpe deletis.*

promoting his son's place in a forward-looking dynasty to memorialising him as a *divus filius* on coinage and some inscriptions. This new formulation of dynasty culminated in the AETERNAE MEMORIAE coinage. The coinage, produced at Rome and Ostia from early 310 onwards,<sup>189</sup> was the beginning of an extensive Maxentian programme of simultaneous expressions of *pietas* through commemoration and also of dynastic legitimacy. Yet while *pietas* was important, MacCormack notes “the presence of the divinised kinsmen which Maxentius claimed, was of far greater value to the ruling emperor than the obligation, *pietas*, of performing his deceased predecessor's cult.”<sup>190</sup>

The earliest Romulus coinage commemorated him in terms of his earthly achievements, as DIVO ROMVLO N V BIS CONS. The reverse bore the legend AETERNAE MEMORIAE, along with a typical image of a hexastyle temple or mausoleum with open doors and an eagle, a sign of apotheosis, perched upon the top.<sup>191</sup> There were some variations of these details, such as differently-styled temples, but the image almost always remains remarkably similar. The reverse legend at Ostia usually is AETERNA MEMORIA instead of the dative form, but the reverse image remains the same. It may be that the mausoleum depicted is in fact the Mausoleum of Romulus in the Maxentian complex on the Via Appia (see 4.ii). Romulus' deification—one in a long tradition of deifying imperial children—was not only intended to honour him, but also benefitted the surviving members of his family.<sup>192</sup> This is seen also through the expansion of the commemoration coinage.

After the deaths of Maximian and Galerius, this AETERNAE MEMORIAE programme was extended considerably from early 310 through to late 312 in order to include the divine imperial members of Maxentius' family.<sup>193</sup> What is remarkable is that the obverse legends in this series soon began to explicitly state their dynastic connections to Maxentius (who is named explicitly as part of the obverse legends), as follows:

<sup>189</sup> For a discussion of Ostia as a “political” rather than military mint, see the detailed study of Ostia under Maxentius by Albertson (1985) 119-141.

<sup>190</sup> MacCormack (1981) 113.

<sup>191</sup> Drost (2013), Rome nos. 116-118, 129-130, 171-172; Ostia nos. 2, 72, 74, 96-97 = RIC VI, Rome nos. 207, 226, 239, 240 (corr.), 257; Ostia nos. 1, 34, 58-59. Wreath variation: DIVO ROMVLO N V BIS C/VOT Q Q/MVL/X, Drost (2013), Ostia no. 95. On the eagle and apotheosis, see MacCormack (1981) 99-100. On the Roman habit of including buildings on coins, see Burnett (1999) 137-160, especially 153ff.

<sup>192</sup> McIntyre (2016) 2-3: “In many cases, mostly those involving the deification of small children and other family members, the act of deification and the ritual surrounding the consecration resulted in a change of status not only of the individual deified but also of those immediately connected to him or her. In these cases of the consecration of small children, the promotion of these individuals to divine status served as a way to console the imperial family for their loss as well as involve the entire empire in their commemoration.” Cf. McIntyre (2013) on *consecratio* as *consolatio*.

<sup>193</sup> E.g. DIVO MAXIMIANO IVN AVG: Drost (2013), Rome nos. 186-187 = RIC VI, Rome no. 248; DIVO MAXIMIANO SEN AVG: Drost (2013), Rome no. 77 = RIC VI, Rome no. 24.

- Romulus is the deified son (*filius*) of Maxentius: DIVO ROMVLO N V FILIO MAXENTIVS AVG,<sup>194</sup> IMP MAXENTIVS DIVO ROMVLO N V FILIO (**fig. 3.4**).<sup>195</sup> The N V of the legend indicates Romulus' status, *nobilissimus vir*, perhaps as part of his identification; the other figures would have been far more familiar.
- Maximian is the deified father (*pater*): DIVO MAXIMIANO PATRI MAXENTIVS AVG,<sup>196</sup> IMP MAXENTIVS DIVO MAXIMIANO PATRI (**fig. 3.5**).<sup>197</sup> Maximian is depicted as veiled, the typical indication of a *divus*; Galerius and Constantius are likewise veiled.
- Galerius is the deified father-in-law (*socero*): DIVO MAXIMIANO SOCERO MAXENTIVS AVG,<sup>198</sup> IMP MAXENTIVS DIVO MAXIMIANO SOCERO (**fig. 3.6**).<sup>199</sup> It is interesting to note that the portraiture of Maximian and Galerius is markedly different. In the AETERNAE MEMORIAE series, Galerius is also honoured with the legend DIVO MAXIMIANO IVN AVG without reference to his kinship with Maxentius.<sup>200</sup>
- Constantius is even included, as both the adopted brother (*cognatus*) and the brother-in-law (*adfinis*, via his marriage to Maxentius' half-sister or adopted sister Theodora) of Maxentius (with emphasis on *cognatus*, although it "created a fiction" according to Hekster, who seems to be overlooking Constantius' adoption by Maximian):<sup>201</sup> DIVO CONSTANTIO COGN MAXENTIVS AVG,<sup>202</sup> IMP MAXENTIVS DIVO CONSTANTIO COGN,<sup>203</sup> DIVO CONSTANTIO ADFINI MAXENTIVS AVG,<sup>204</sup> IMP MAXENTIVS DIVO CONSTANTIO ADFINI (**fig. 3.7**).<sup>205</sup> It is interesting that Maxentius' regime chose to highlight both of Maxentius' connections to Constantius, although the *cognatus* connection seems to have featured more often, appearing both at Rome and Ostia, while the *adfinis* connection appeared only at the latter.

<sup>194</sup> Drost (2013), Ostia no. 75 = RIC VI, Ostia no. 32.

<sup>195</sup> Drost (2013), Rome nos. 173-176; Ostia no. 76 = RIC VI, Rome nos. 249, 256; Ostia no. 33.

<sup>196</sup> Drost (2013), Rome nos. 177-178; Ostia no. 78 = RIC VI, Rome no. 243; Ostia no. 25.

<sup>197</sup> Drost (2013), Rome nos. 179-181; Ostia no. 79 = RIC VI, Rome nos. 244, 251; Ostia no. 26.

<sup>198</sup> Drost (2013), Rome nos. 188-190; Ostia no. 84 = RIC VI, Rome no. 247; Ostia no. 30.

<sup>199</sup> Drost (2013), Rome nos. 191-194; Ostia no. 85 = RIC VI, Rome nos. 248, 255; Ostia no. 31.

<sup>200</sup> E.g. RIC VI, Rome no. 246.

<sup>201</sup> Hekster (2015) 295: "The term *cognatus*, however, created a fiction. It might be translated as 'kindred', but emphatically describes those related by blood. After his death, the deified Constantius was made closer kin than he really was."

<sup>202</sup> Drost (2013), Rome nos. 183-185; Ostia no. 80 = RIC VI, Rome nos. 245, 251; Ostia no. 27.

<sup>203</sup> Drost (2013), Ostia no. 82 = RIC VI, Ostia no. 28.

<sup>204</sup> Drost (2013), Ostia no. 81 = RIC VI, Ostia no. 328a

<sup>205</sup> Drost (2013), Ostia no. 83 = RIC VI, Ostia no. 29.



Fig. 3.4 (left): Divus Romulus 'Filius' with reverse of mausoleum.<sup>206</sup>

Fig. 3.5 (right): Divus Maximian 'Pater' (obverse only).<sup>207</sup>



Fig. 3.6 (left): Divus Galerius 'Socer' with reverse of mausoleum.<sup>208</sup>

Fig. 3.7 (right): Divus Constantius 'Cognatus' (obverse only).<sup>209</sup>

The different forms of the legends offer slightly different interpretations. In the form where the dedicatee appears first, the relationship between the two is conspicuous but the second emphasizes Maxentius as the dedicator, thereby highlighting his *pietas* towards his divine and imperial ancestors while also implying his own status as an important political figure.<sup>210</sup>

The extent of this programme was unprecedented under Tetrarchic rule. Hekster links it to the commemorative coinage by Decius c. AD 250-251, but notes “the massive difference that where Decius suggested continuity, Maxentius claimed kinship.”<sup>211</sup> Previous Tetrarchic

<sup>206</sup> RIC VI Rome 249. IMP MAXENTIVS DIVO ROMVLO NV FILIO/AETERNAE MEMORIAE.

<sup>207</sup> RIC VI Ostia 26. IMP MAXENTIVS DIVO MAXIMIANO PATRI/AETERNA MEMORIA.

<sup>208</sup> RIC VI Rome 255. IMP MAXENTIVS DIVO MAXIMIANO SOCERO/AETERNAE MEMORIAE.

<sup>209</sup> RIC VI Rome 252. IMP MAXENTIVS DIVO CONSTANTIO COGN/AETERNAE MEMORIAE.

<sup>210</sup> MacCormack (1981) 105f; Gesche (1978) 380-381: “...vielmehr wird erkennbar, daß die Divinisierung vor allem auch für den Sohn/Nachfolger bedeutsam gewesen sein muß und bezogen auf ihn erst eigentlich politisch wirksam wurde; er ist es offensichtlich gewesen, der ein besonderes (Eigen-)Interesse an der Consecration des Vorgängers hatte.” Gesche’s overall arguments about the importance of divinizing imperial predecessors as a marker of dynastic legitimacy are largely focused on emperors up until the early third century. Maxentius (who is not mentioned) constitutes an interesting case; Gesche (1978) 383f shows that divinization was most important in the earliest years of an emperor’s reign, but Maxentius was only able to promote these connections after several years in power, due to the political events of the period. He divinized his relatives when he could, but it was not at the beginning of his reign.

<sup>211</sup> Hekster (2015) 295.

commemorative coinage, primarily for Constantius from mints under Constantine's control, had employed the familiar images of eagles and altars with CONSECRATIO or MEMORIA FELIX.<sup>212</sup> Maxentius' mints chose a different method. He was able to capitalize upon the recent deaths of Maximian and Galerius to use their names and legacies posthumously in ways which would not have worked during their lifetimes.<sup>213</sup> He had never recognized Galerius' imperial status while his father-in-law was alive, and he had cast Maximian out of Rome three years earlier. In death, however, their approval could be implied, and Maxentius could simultaneously express his *pietas* towards them.<sup>214</sup>

The statement made by the AETERNAE MEMORIAE coinage is clear: Maxentius could claim a variety of important relationships that are simultaneously imperial, divine, and dynastic. It was not, as Peirce dismisses it, an attempt to praise "almost all the members of the first and second tetrarchies at one time or another, reflecting above all the vagaries of the ever-changing political situation."<sup>215</sup> This was no clumsy attempt to link his regime with his predecessors; the honorees of the commemorative coinage were specifically chosen based upon their relationships with Maxentius. They are further linked by the mausoleum of Romulus, a physical reminder of Maxentius' dynasty, depicted on every reverse. None of Maxentius' rivals could claim so many connections (although Constantine could claim Maximian and Constantius, and Daza could claim Galerius). Maxentius therefore had primacy over his rivals according to at least one factor of legitimation.

This dynastic continuity, intermingled with the divine implications of deified relatives, is also expressed in an inscription from Maxentius' imperial villa on the Via Appia, near Rome, that puts Maxentius amongst a number of *divi*:

To the divine Romulus, a man of most noble memory, ordinary consul twice, the son of our lord Maxentius, unconquered and perpetual Augustus, and the grandson of the divine Maximianus senior [Maximian], and of the divine Maximianus junior [Galerius](?), and...  
*Divo Romulo n(obilissimae) m(emoriae) v(iro) / co(n)s(uli) or[d(inario)]*  
*I]I filio / d(omini) n(ostri) Maxent[is] Invict(i) / [ac perpet(ui)] Aug(usti)*

<sup>212</sup> Frazer (1966) 389.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. Frazer (1966) 389 against the argument by King (1959) 73 that the inclusion of Constantius was antagonistic towards Constantine; Frazer rightly points out that Constantius, like Maximian, was a Hercules. Galerius may not have been, but he could still be included in the context of *Maxentius'* dynasty rather than a *Herculian* one.

<sup>214</sup> Cullhed (1994) 78; Hekster (1999) 732-733.

<sup>215</sup> Peirce (1989) 391.

*nepoti / [di]vi [M]axim[i]ani Sen(ioris) / [e]t divi [Maximiani  
 Iu]/[ni]oris ac...*<sup>216</sup>

It is tantalizing to wonder what connections would follow Galerius (if that interpolation is indeed correct—precedent may be found in a statue base from North Africa dedicated to Maxentius, “the son of divine Maximian and the son-in-law of divine Maximian [Galerius]”).<sup>217</sup> Connections to Constantius might be convoluted, but it is possible that he could be commemorated again as *cognatus*. Equally possible—though perhaps unlikely in terms of Tetrarchic-era imperial epigraphic traditions, which tended to exclude women—is his mother, Valeria Maximilla.<sup>218</sup> Romulus was used even after death to link Maxentius within this narrative of divine and imperial legitimacy, a narrative that began with Maxentius’ father and extended to his son, who had previously embodied the promise of continued dynastic succession and stability. It is interesting that Maxentius does not begin to promote another son as his heir after Romulus’ death. The Panegyric of 313 implies that he had another son (name unknown), but the fact that he does not feature in the epigraphic or numismatic records raises questions about his actual existence.<sup>219</sup> Perhaps he was too young to actively promote, as with Carinus’ young son Nigrianus,<sup>220</sup> or perhaps the gaps in the ancient records have eliminated any trace of him.

Cullhed interprets the AETERNAE MEMORIAE coinage as evidence for Maxentius’ promotion of a “Valerian dynasty” as something separate from Tetrarchic influence.<sup>221</sup> While it is clear that Maxentius’ creation of a dynasty was for his own self-promotion, a problem with Cullhed’s theory is that the ‘Valerius’ part of Maxentius’ name is inherently Tetrarchic. As Van Dam states conclusively, “The adoption of the name Valerius indicated subordination to Diocletian, as well as membership in the Tetrarchic imperial college or at least acceptance of its ideals.”<sup>222</sup> Maxentius’ full title of Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maxentius indicates

<sup>216</sup> CIL 6.01138.

<sup>217</sup> CIL 8.20989: *Filio divi Maximi/ani, genero divi / Maximiani, felicis/simoru(m) Imp(eratorum), Imp(eratori) to/tius orbis perpetuo, / (6) d(omino) n(ostro) M(arco) [A]ur(elio) Val(erio) Maxen/tio, Pio, Felici, Invicto / et gloriosissimo sem/per Aug(usto); Val(erius) Faustus, / (10) v(ir) p(erfectissimus), p(raeses) p(rovinciae) Maur(etaniae) Caes(ariensis), devo/tus numini maiesta/tique eius.* Cf. <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk>, LSA-2557 (G. de Bruyn).

<sup>218</sup> As in CIL 14.02826: *Dominae matri / Val(eriae) Maximillae / nob(ilissimae) fem(inae) / Val(erius) Romulus c(larissimus) p(uer) / pro amore / adfectionis eius / matri carissimae.* For the Tetrarchic exclusion of women, see Hekster (2015) 280-287.

<sup>219</sup> The evidence of the second son is extrapolated from the (perhaps slim) evidence of *Pan. Lat.* 12.16.5: *cum uxore et filio*. Others do not seem to find this problematic: e.g. PLRE 1.576 s.v. Valeria Maximilla 2; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 320. The panegyrist may have known of Romulus’ existence but not necessarily of his death.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. Hekster (2015) 97 n. 145.

<sup>221</sup> Cullhed (1994) 76-78; Van Dam (2011) 240 agrees.

<sup>222</sup> Van Dam (2007) 90.

Maximian's role as an emperor of the Tetrarchy, a titulature that was then passed on to his son, not Maxentius' claims to be 'Tetrarchic'. Cullhed insists too firmly on a separation between Maxentius and the Tetrarchic system throughout his book. The AETERNAE MEMORIAE coinage suggests that, while Maxentius was not a part of 'the' Tetrarchic college (i.e. Galerius' college), his regime nevertheless could make use of the roles set out by this 'system'—as he had done with the AVGG ET CAESS NN collegial coinage from early in his reign. His divine ancestors were no longer Augusti explicitly; they were *divi*, but the substance of their imperial statuses remains at the forefront, as well as the implicit fact that they were *Tetrarchic* emperors. They were repurposed and repackaged, branded with a distinctively Maxentian flavour which no other emperor could copy to the same degree.

## ii. Dynastic Architecture

Maxentius' reign was marked by an intensive building programme in Rome, including the Basilica Nova, the restoration of the Temple of Venus and Roma, and the strengthening of the city walls.<sup>223</sup> These buildings left a distinct 'Maxentian' impression on the eastern end of the Forum Romanum.<sup>224</sup> The archaeologists who worked on the Villa of Maxentius in 2005 said of Maxentius' Forum buildings, "With the design and placement of these massive structures, Maxentius projected two significant, albeit contradictory, positions; he wished to be seen as a legitimate tetrarch capable of public euergetism on a grand scale and as the rightful inheritor of the imperial throne through traditional dynastic succession."<sup>225</sup> These two positions are not as contradictory as they are made out to be—Tetrarchs were not the only emperors who pursued programmes of public building. Maxentius certainly was both invested in public building programmes—like Diocletian and Maximian before him—and dynastic investment in the years following his break with Maximian.

The buildings primarily associated with Maxentius' dynasty seem to revolve around Romulus. The mausoleum of Romulus in the Via Appia complex "was probably also destined to be Maxentius' own and that of his dynasty."<sup>226</sup> The complex itself can be compared to other

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<sup>223</sup> Oenbrink (2006) 169-202 provides an overview of the Maxentian building programme, especially in the context of Maxentius as *conservator* (which Oenbrink contrasts explicitly with the Tetrarchic building programme), but also some of the relevant dynastic architecture. Cf. Curran (2000) 57; Cullhed (1994) 49-60. For details on the Basilica and the Temple's reconstruction under Maxentius, see Ziemssen (2011) 217-308 and 134-216 respectively.

<sup>224</sup> Conlin et al (2006/2007) 348.

<sup>225</sup> Conlin et al (2006/2007) 348.

<sup>226</sup> Curran (2000) 63; Frazer (1966) 388-389 notes that Romulus was the first to be interred in the mausoleum but it need not have been built especially for him, but Rasch (1984) 78 believes the mausoleum was intended for "für

Tetrarchic palaces and residences across the empire,<sup>227</sup> but it is likely significant that Maxentius built the mausoleum in an area which was distinctly his, part of the connotations of *Romanitas* his regime cultivated. Hekster has suggested that the mausoleum also expressed links to Hercules, or at least the ‘Herculians’,<sup>228</sup> adding that “we interpret the complex as broadcasting an interest in dynastic claims of a type which is far from surprising for someone who mainly ruled because his father had done so before him.”<sup>229</sup> These possible connotations of Hercules do not have to be accepted in order to acknowledge the clear dynastic indications of the Via Appia complex and especially the Mausoleum. Neither should the circus part of the complex be overlooked, because of its connotations with imperial victory. Frazer concludes on the whole of the complex that the “cult of the emperor victorious both alive and acclaimed and dead and divinized was served.”<sup>230</sup>

It was once thought that the ever-present temple on the AETERNAE MEMORIAE coinage may be the “Temple of Romulus”, previously thought to be one of Maxentius’ buildings erected in the Forum Romanum,<sup>231</sup> it has also been suggested to be the Mausoleum of Romulus from the Via Appia complex.<sup>232</sup> (The most familiar version can be seen in **fig. 3.6**; **fig. 3.4** shows a variant.) The discrepancies between the different temples might be explained by it being one temple in varying degrees of construction, or else both the temple and the mausoleum of Romulus.<sup>233</sup> Johnson is reticent to make a positive identification; he also rejects outright the identification of the coins as featuring the ‘Temple of Romulus’, noting that the temple’s identification with Romulus “stems from a much later tradition” and that the temple lacked any funerary functions.<sup>234</sup> The coins, therefore, should not be taken as depictions of the ‘Temple of Romulus’, though they may be depictions of the Mausoleum from the Via Appia. It may be also that the temples on the coinage were meant to evoke the collective memory of a new structure which would probably have been familiar to many living in Rome, and that the

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seine Familie und seine Nachfolger innerhalb der herculischen Dynastie”. On the dating of the Mausoleum, cf. Johnson (2009) 92; Rasch (1984) 70-73.

<sup>227</sup> Johnson (2009) 86-93; Rasch (1984) 78; Cullhed (1994) 59; Hekster (1999) 728; Frazer (1966) 386.

<sup>228</sup> Hekster (1999) 728-729; Frazer (1966) 391: “Hercules and the idea of victory thus may be associated with Maxentius’ buildings in Via Appia on several bases: analogous architectural representations on dynastic commemorative coins; a topographical resemblance of the arrangement of the Domus Augustana, the Circus Maximus and the Herculean cult centers at the mouth of the latter; and a sculptural decoration from the Maxentian circus’ spina.”

<sup>229</sup> Hekster (1999) 729.

<sup>230</sup> Frazer (1966) 389.

<sup>231</sup> Curran (2000) 60; Cullhed (1994) 52-55. The temple is no longer identified with Romulus: Ziemssen (2011) 16, 18-19.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. Johnson (2009) 92.

<sup>233</sup> Curran (2000) 60.

<sup>234</sup> Johnson (2009) 92.



variations are due to the normal inconsistencies and aberrations of detail in the output of Roman mints.

The chronology of Maxentius' buildings in general is difficult to determine with any confidence.<sup>235</sup> Complicating the matter further is the modifications and rededications of many of them under Constantine, who erased Maxentius by taking over his building projects.<sup>236</sup> Archaeological work done at the Villa of Maxentius shows that one of the distinct building periods took place in the early fourth century, the period attributable to Maxentius.<sup>237</sup> The break with Maximian has been said to indicate a break with dynasty; Frazer has suggested that this is visible in the Via Appia complex, in that work ceased for a short period after the expulsion of Maximian, but this is difficult to prove.<sup>238</sup> This also implies a false dichotomy made between dynasty and Maxentius' break with Maximian. If Frazer's conjecture were shown to be true, it is also feasible that the complex might have been begun with a distinctly 'Herculian' dynastic flavour that was then amended to a more forward-looking form of dynasty centred around Maxentius and Romulus. Overall, Maxentius' buildings seem to promote a legitimacy that was based in his present and future, but this does not mean that it did not also recognize the past. Cullhed has argued for the building projects' importance in determining Maxentius' dedication to *Romanitas*, which could also be expressed in dynastic ways through the intermediary function of Romulus, especially when deceased.<sup>239</sup> It bears repeating that multiple claims to legitimacy could easily coexist, for example in the divine links to Roma and Mars, the support of the local populace of Rome, and dynastic legitimacy (looking both at the past and towards the present.)

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<sup>235</sup> Johnson (2009) 92-93 on the chronology of the Mausoleum and the Via Appia complex.

<sup>236</sup> Aur. Vict. 40.26. Humphries (2015) 157-158; Marlowe (2010) 202.

<sup>237</sup> Delfino & Rossi (2013) 333-345 identify three different building periods, and attribute Period 2 (in the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD) to him: "Il periodo e databile con certezza a Massenzio che da avvio alla trasformazione della villa suburbana in Palazzo Imperiale."

Suggestions that the villa at Piazza Armerina in Sicily can also be dated to Maxentius have been refuted—suggestions proposed by, e.g. Kähler (1973); cf. Polzer (1973); refuted by e.g. Wilson (1983) 34-39. Although some of the figures in the mosaics of the villa have been identified as various figures from Maxentius' family—especially a picture of a woman with two sons as Valeria Maximilla, Romulus, and the other unnamed boy—these will not be considered. Kähler (1973) 34 identified the major figures of the mosaics as follows: "So waren alle, auf die die es ankam, in den Mosaiken der Villa dargestellt: Maxentius selbst in der Mitte des grossen Tierfanges (A), sein Vater Maximianus Herculus vor dem Zugang zu der Villa der beiden Enkel (B) und diese mit ihrer Mutter in dem Raum, der aus den Thermen ins Peristyle führt." Wilson (1983) 86-92 counters Kähler's hypothesis.

<sup>238</sup> Frazer (1966) 392; Marlowe (2010).

<sup>239</sup> Cullhed (1994) 49-60.

### 5. DE-LEGITIMIZING MAXENTIUS: *TYRANNUS* AND *IMPIETAS*

The introductions to this chapter and to this thesis both discuss the term *tyrannus* and its connections to legitimacy and usurpation in late antiquity, but the word is particularly relevant with regard to Maxentius.<sup>240</sup> The epithet seems to have evolved partly as a way to deal with men like Maxentius; indeed Drijvers has noted that the first time that *tyrannus* was used to denigrate a Roman emperor (rather than a king), was on the Arch of Constantine, referring to Maxentius.<sup>241</sup> In the pro-Constantinian sources after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, Maxentius is vilified, turned into a power-hungry monster, a malicious oppressor, in order to undermine his varying claims to power. As Barnes states, summarizing the literary evidence, “Maxentius was a *tyrannus* because he had never been recognized empire-wide as a member of the imperial college; he was also a *tyrannus* because he both oppressed his subjects and persecuted Christians.”<sup>242</sup> It was not only Maxentius’ building programme that was adapted to suit Constantine’s purposes, but ultimately the very image and memory of his vanquished opponent.<sup>243</sup> Maxentius’ name on inscriptions and his images were also removed, destroyed, or mutilated in a *damnatio memoriae* after his defeat.<sup>244</sup> It was important for Constantine’s regime to sever any ties with his erstwhile brother-in-law—and to depict Maxentius as the one who had broken those ties.<sup>245</sup>

The introduction has discussed the picture of Maxentius as a *tyrannus* that was created in the Constantinian-era sources and afterwards: cruel, greedy, superstitious, cowardly, among other vices.<sup>246</sup> Some traditions go further than the *tyrannus* portrait in linking Maxentius and Daza. Eusebius’ characterization of Maxentius seems to have been based on that of Daza, which also is similar to the picture of Daza given in Lactantius (see **II.5.iii**). Lactantius’ narrative points to Daza (his primary villain after Galerius’ death) as the instigator of an alliance between the two emperors, in response to the marriage of Licinius to Constantia and

<sup>240</sup> See especially Humphries (2008) on the term *tyrannus* and Drijvers (2007) on Maxentius in particular, also Barnes (2011) 82 and Grünwald (1990) 64-71.

<sup>241</sup> Drijvers (2007) 18, n. 23.

<sup>242</sup> Barnes (2011) 82.

<sup>243</sup> Consider the Constantinian coins which proclaim him LIBERATOR VRBIS SVAE, compared to Maxentius’ CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE, thus marking Maxentius a tyrant; Cf. Marlowe (2010) 217-218: “If Constantine is a liberator, then Maxentius is a tyrant, from whose rapacious clutches Constantine mercifully freed the city.” On the ‘literary’ *damnatio*, cf. Kriegbaum (1992) 9: “Anscheinend ist es Konstantin gelungen, durch die Verhängung der *damnatio memoriae* über den gestürzten Usurpator und durch den gezielten Einsatz propagandawirksamer Mittel die Historiographie für anderthalb Jahrtausende in seinem Sinne festzulegen.”

<sup>244</sup> Varner (2004) 215-219 on Maxentius’ *damnatio* in statuary; cf. Cullhed (1994) 11-12, 49; Drijvers (2007) 25.

<sup>245</sup> Cf. Wienand (2015a) 178-179: “Only by excluding Maxentius posthumously from Maximian’s family could Constantine dismantle the imperial identity of his enemy without detracting from his own prestige.”

<sup>246</sup> Kriegbaum (1992) 9-15 provides an overview of Maxentius’ reception in post-Constantinian literature.

the subsequent alliance between Constantine and Licinius.<sup>247</sup> Similarly, but in an even more pejorative way, Eusebius uses the ‘secret alliance’ as a way to blacken both emperors’ names and to compare the two so-called *turannoi* to each other.<sup>248</sup> Maxentius and Daza are also linked by their defeats at the hands of Constantine and Licinius, whose contrasting piety was rewarded with victory.<sup>249</sup> This tale of an alliance should not be taken at face value,<sup>250</sup> but should instead be understood as part of the *tyrannus* trope that was being crafted around both Maxentius and Daza.<sup>251</sup> For Eusebius in particular it was rhetorically convenient, as his invective against Daza, recast to fit Maxentius as well, contributed to an enormous degree to the evolution of the *tyrannus* topos that became Maxentius’ primary characterization in historical accounts for the next sixteen centuries. It was not until around 1930 that scholars began to question seriously the accuracy of Eusebius’ account.<sup>252</sup>

### i. Dynastic Legitimacy and Filial Piety

The undermining of dynastic legitimacy was also important in the literary creation of a *tyrannus*, as the introduction to this chapter showed. Maxentius’ mother Eutropia was said to have pretended he was the son of Maximian when he was only her bastard by a Syrian.<sup>253</sup> Moreover, his filial *pietas*—portrayed for the world to see on the AETERNAE MEMORIAE coinage—was denied and undermined. One of these methods denies the existence of Maxentius’ dynastic claims to legitimation; the other depicts Maxentius as self-sabotaging these claims.

<sup>247</sup> The story of an alliance with Maximinus Daza is complicated, stemming primarily from Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 43.2-3 and 44.10-11. In this narrative, Maxentius received Daza’s envoys amicably, and “a friendship was established” (*fit amicitia*). Later, after Maxentius is defeated, Constantine discovers Daza’s “treachery” (*perfidiam*) and the stage is set for further conflict and Daza’s ultimate defeat.

<sup>248</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.14.7; cf. Kriegbaum (1992) 13.

<sup>249</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* 9.9.1. Οὕτω δῆτα Κωνσταντίνου, ὄν βασιλέα ἐκ βασιλέως εὐσεβῆ τε ἐξ εὐσεβεστάτου καὶ πάντα σωφρονεστάτου γεγονέναι προειρήκαμεν, πρὸς τοῦ παμβασιλέως θεοῦ τε τῶν ὅλων καὶ σωτήρος κατὰ τῶν δυσσεβεστάτων τυράννων ἀνεγερμένον πολέμου τε νόμῳ παραταξαμένου, θεοῦ συμμαχοῦντος αὐτῷ παραδοξότατα, πίπτει μὲν ἐπὶ Ῥώμης ὑπὸ Κωνσταντίνου Μαξέντιος, ὁ δ’ ἐπ’ ἀνατολῆς οὐ πολὺν ἐπιζήσας ἐκείνῳ χρόνον, αἰσχίστῳ καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπὸ Λικίννιον οὐπῶ μανέντα τότε καταστρέφει θανάτῳ.

<sup>250</sup> As it is by some, most notably Barnes (1981) 41, (2011) 91; Odahl (2004) 94. The numismatic record does not reflect such an alliance in 311-312 (although both Lactantius and Eusebius state that it was made in secret). The attempts by Cullhed (1994) 84-85 to show how the alliance would have benefitted both Maximinus Daza and Maxentius, however, falls flat. It seems implausible that Maximinus Daza, as the senior emperor after Galerius’ death—not that such a title would have been acknowledged by Constantine or Licinius—would have anything to gain by allying with Maxentius, who had never been recognized by the eastern emperors.

<sup>251</sup> Cf. Cullhed (1994) 83: “To Lactantius, Maximinus was the real enemy, and he may have added to his vicious description of Maximinus’ bad qualities by showing the eastern augustus making a treaty behind the backs of Constantine and Licinius. Maximinus’ perfidy would fit into the perfect tyrant *topos*...”

<sup>252</sup> Groag (1930) 2417ff.

<sup>253</sup> *Origo* 4.12; Cf. Ps.-Vict. 40.13.

The passage from the Panegyric of 313 quoted at the opening of this chapter calls Maxentius Maximian's "changeling" of "false paternity" (*Maximiani suppositus, falso generi*); Maxentius is also full of *impietas* towards his father.<sup>254</sup> In this invective, the panegyrist cleverly avoids using the word *pater* here; the phrase might be better translated as "false ancestry." It is thus not only Maximian that could be included in this accusation of false lineage, but also possibly Galerius, to whom Maxentius was a son-in-law (*gener*).<sup>255</sup> In repudiating the paternal legitimacy of these emperors through both these methods—the explicit and the implicit—their detractors were directly countering dynastic claims, such as those found on Maxentius' *Aeternae Memoriae* coinage.

This illegitimacy or de-legitimation that *impietas* implies is also used to great effect by Lactantius. After all, Lactantius first introduces Maxentius as a man who does not pay the proper respect to his father or to his father-in-law.<sup>256</sup> Pseudo-Victor, perhaps following Lactantius, offers a more succinct characterization: "Maxentius was dear to no one at all, not even to his father or father-in-law, Galerius."<sup>257</sup> Pseudo-Victor also repeats the claim of Maxentius' false parentage, which Lactantius does not do—even though this story certainly existed and was circulating by the time Lactantius wrote the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*. Pseudo-Victor, therefore, could be combining the two ways of disputing Maxentius' legitimacy—the direct refutation and the implied unworthiness—or else reporting two distinct traditions separately.

Maxentius' impiety, along with his pride (Lactantius calls him *superbus*),<sup>258</sup> forms the basis for his characterization throughout the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*. It may not be as ostentatious as that found in Eusebius, but Lactantius' depiction was nevertheless important for the evolution of Maxentius as a *tyrannus*. As Dunkle notes, "impiety was an important characteristic of the tyrant in Roman political oratory."<sup>259</sup> This picture of Maxentius' *impietas* continues after Maximian's death. Maximian was killed after his failed coup against Constantine—in Lactantius' version, Maximian's treachery is discovered because Fausta told her husband of her father's plot, perhaps to liberate her from her unfortunate family connections in Maximian and Maxentius.<sup>260</sup> Interestingly, Potter notes that Maxentius is painted as an "arch

<sup>254</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 12.4.3-4.

<sup>255</sup> In Lactantius, however, the impiety of the relationship between Maxentius and Galerius seems more to the latter's detriment (see section 3.i).

<sup>256</sup> *Lact. Mort. Pers.* 18.9: ...*adeo superbus et contumax, ut neque patrem neque socerum solitus sit adorare...*

<sup>257</sup> *Ps.-Vict.* 40.14: *is Maxentius carus nulli umquam fuit ne patri aut socero quidem Galerio.*

<sup>258</sup> Cf. Maximian's being called a "second Tarquin the Proud" (*superbus alter*), *Lact. Mort. Pers.* 28.3-4.

<sup>259</sup> Dunkle (1971) 15.

<sup>260</sup> *Lact. Mort. Pers.* 30.1-3. Cf. Harries (2012) 258 on Lactantius' purpose in including this story, and Van Dam (2011) 249 on how Constantine "appropriated Maxentius' family," i.e. Fausta and Eutropia (and later Maximian).

bogeyman” in the Panegyric of 321, a few years away from the time that Fausta was exalted to Augusta and had coinage minted in her name.<sup>261</sup> Maxentius’ subsequent war with Constantine could have been understood as one born of filial duty (even if it were not Constantine who had instigated it).<sup>262</sup> Yet Lactantius is careful to undermine that perception, saying: “[Maxentius] had already declared war on Constantine, claiming that he was going to avenge his father’s murder.”<sup>263</sup> The hint is in the claiming; this is the same point where Lactantius mentions a rumour of Maxentius still working with Maximian even after the latter was expelled from Rome. If the latter is false—as Lactantius states it was—then Maxentius’ display of piety was also false.

This tale of feigned piety in avenging Maximian’s murder appears in other authors. Zosimus, writing in the early sixth century, repeats from his sources (probably Eunapius):<sup>264</sup>

Thereupon he sought excuses for a war against Constantine, feigning grief for his father’s death which Constantine had caused.

Ἐντεῦθεν προφύσεις ἀναζητεῖ τοῦ πρὸς Κωνσταντῖνον μολέμου, καὶ ποιησάμενος ἐπὶ τῷ θανάτῳ τοῦ πατρὸς ὀδυνᾶσθαι, Κωνσταντίνου δεδωχότος.<sup>265</sup>

For his part, Aurelius Victor states: “[Maxentius] was unmoved by the destruction of his father.”<sup>266</sup> Victor’s Maxentius does not even pretend to be filial, whereas Lactantius and (it is assumed) Eunapius actively rejected what may have been seen as acts of piety, such as those found on Maxentius’ *Aeternae Memoriae* coinage.

In the end, Maxentius was denied one of the most basic historical truths about him: that he was the son of Maximian. Every account of his regime reports that fact, yet many of them also sought to deny him that very thing. This denial shows that Maxentius’ relationship to his father was perceived as a legitimizing factor and was important to his regime. Without the legitimacy that that truth implied, he was merely a usurper or another *tyrannus* conquered by Constantine—and that was precisely what the authors of the Constantinian world and beyond

<sup>261</sup> Potter (2013) 171 suggests that Fausta was elevated c. 318-319, but c. 324 is more commonly accepted, from the evidence of coinage.

<sup>262</sup> As even Barnes (2011) 81 admits.

<sup>263</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 43.4: *Maxentius tamquam divi num auxilium libenter amplectitur; iam enim bellum Constantino indixerat quasi necem patris sui vindicaturus*. As has been discussed (3.iii), Lactantius adds that, though there was a rumour that the quarrel had been feigned and that Maxentius and Maximian were said to have been working together against all other emperors, Maximian had indeed planned to eliminate all rivals, including his son (*Mort. Pers.* 43.5-6; compare to Eutrop.10.3).

<sup>264</sup> See, for example, Breebaart (1979) on Eunapius.

<sup>265</sup> Zos. 2.14.1.

<sup>266</sup> Aur. Vict. 40.20.

sought to do. The denigration of Maxentius as *suppositus* with *falso generi* in the Panegyric of 313 is juxtaposed with the end of the panegyric, which celebrates Constantine's dynasty:

Although, invincible Emperor, your divine offspring has already come forward in accordance with the republic's prayers and more to come are still expected, yet that future will truly be blest so that when you have installed your sons at the helm of the world you may be the greatest Emperor of all.

*Quamuis enim, imperator invicte, iam divina suboles tua ad rei publicae vota successerit et adhuc speretur future numerosior, illa tamen erit vere beata posteritas ut, cum liberos tuos gubernaculis orbis admoveris, tu sis omnium maximus imperator.*<sup>267</sup>

As Hekster comments, this passage is “the clearest anticipation of dynastic succession from *panegyric* up to that date.”<sup>268</sup> In a panegyric which celebrates the annihilation of Maxentius' line and which actively seeks to destroy the remnants of his legitimacy, it is striking that Constantine's future succession is promoted so strongly. His divine offspring (*divina suboles*) have not only replaced *divus* Romulus, the son of Maxentius, but the *Princeps Invictus* himself has been replaced by another *Imperator Invictus*: Constantine.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This chapter began and ended with discussions on the ways in which Maxentius' dynastic legitimacy as a son of Maximian could be refuted and undermined in a variety of sources. What is most clear from these attacks is that Maxentius' position as Maximian's son was important to his regime and to the way in which he was viewed by others. For Constantine's regime, therefore, it was important that Maxentius be denied all possible claims to legitimacy. His status as a 'local ruler' of Rome, in a time when that city's importance was waning, was transformed into the picture of a tyrant ruling over a subjugated people—even by his own subjects, as on the Arch of Constantine.<sup>269</sup> His building projects in that city were rededicated to Constantine himself.<sup>270</sup> His status as Maximian's son—which could not be obfuscated to the same degree as Daza's relationship to Galerius—was both outright denied and undermined through accusations of *impietas*. Even Maxentius' most striking expressions

<sup>267</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 12.26.5. Trans. Nixon & Rodgers (1994), adapted.

<sup>268</sup> Hekster (2015) 310.

<sup>269</sup> Dedicated by the Senate to Constantine, the inscription on the Arch calls Maxentius a *tyrannus*.

<sup>270</sup> Marlowe (2010) 203-204.

of dynastic legitimacy and *pietas* were ultimately converted into expressions of *Constantinian* legitimacy. In 317-318, when war with Licinius was coming to a head, Constantine's mint at Rome issued coins to Divus Maximian (as well as Divus Constantius and Divus Claudius) with the reverse legend MEMORIAE AETERNAE, and sometimes with distinctly Herculean imagery (as in **fig. 3.8**).<sup>271</sup> The transposition of the legend both recalls and erases Maxentius' previous commemoration of his divine relatives.



**Fig. 3.8: Divus Maximian with reverse of lion and club.** <sup>272</sup>

Cullhed has argued for a view of Maxentius as both a legitimate and an independent or 'non-Tetrarchic' ruler,<sup>273</sup> but this picture is too restrictive. Maxentius' regime (possibly influenced by his father) used the collegial 'Tetrarchic' structure to define their positions, and those of their allies, in the political sphere. Not all emperors mentioned were necessarily allies, however—there was no alliance with Daza in 306, yet he was still acknowledged on coinage, perhaps because there was no direct conflict with him as there was with Galerius and Severus. Maxentius was never a member of Galerius' Tetrarchy, but neither did he necessarily claim to be. Instead, his regime put forward the claims that he and Maximian were instead members in a 'Tetrarchy', an imperial college in which Maximian replaced Galerius and Maxentius replaced Severus—although, as has been shown, the titles of *Senior Augustus* and *Princeps Invictus* also did not map perfectly onto the structure of the First and Second Tetrarchies. It bears repeating that the imperial colleges of the Tetrarchic period were not novel constructions: imperial colleges structured on families were prevalent throughout the third century and before. Thus, the ultimate configuration of the 'Herculean' college mirrors this origin most closely. Although all three emperors were named Augusti and there were no designated heirs in the Caesars, the college was still based around the idea of a family unit: Maximian and his two

<sup>271</sup> E.g. RIC VII, Rome no. 120.

<sup>272</sup> RIC VII, Rome no. 120. DIVO MAXIMIANO SEN FORT IMP/MEMORIAE AETERNAE.

<sup>273</sup> Cullhed (1994), especially pp. 11, 89-95.

sons, one his own and another an adopted-grandson turned son-in-law. It would be the college of Constantine's imperial family, however, that would triumph in the end.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Licinius

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

[Galerius] himself had at his side Licinius, a friend who had for long shared his tent and had been an intimate of his since the beginning of his military career and whose advice he always sought when making decisions; but he did not wish to make him Caesar so that he could avoid calling him his own son. He wanted rather to appoint him later as his fellow-Augustus and brother in place of Constantius...

*Habebat ipse Licinium veteris contubernii amicum et a prima militia familiarem, cuius consiliis ad omnia regenda utebatur; sed eum Caesarem facere noluit, ne filium nominaret, ut postea in Constantii locum noncuparet Augustum atque fratrem...*

Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 20.3.<sup>1</sup>

Licinius' introduction in the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* has been influential in shaping his perception in modern scholarship. In many ways, he is seen as 'the last of the Tetrarchs', especially through his elevation at the Council of Carnuntum in 308.<sup>2</sup> Potter suggests that Licinius "represented stability, continuity with the ways of Diocletian" while Barnes states that his appointment "reconstituted the imperial college on the model of the Diocletianic Tetrarchy."<sup>3</sup> Certainly, we know almost nothing of Licinius' background before his elevation; he is grouped in with the other Tetrarchs as being from the Balkans (specifically Dacia).<sup>4</sup> There do not seem to be any familial links between Licinius and any of the other emperors,<sup>5</sup> although he had previously entered other historical narratives in a minor role as an envoy to Maxentius and may have served under Severus.<sup>6</sup> He was said to be "of somewhat common origin" (*vilioris originis*, *Origo* 5.13). Pseudo-Victor presents Licinius' descent from 'farmer stock', albeit in a

<sup>1</sup> Trans. Creed (1984).

<sup>2</sup> Though others, such as Lenski (2005) 73, consider Maximinus Daza to be the last of the Tetrarchs, or at least that his death symbolized the end of the Tetrarchy. Kovacs (2012) discusses the potential importance of Carnuntum to Licinius after his elevation.

<sup>3</sup> Potter (2013) 207; Barnes (2011) 71. See also Harries (2012) 44; Leadbetter (2009) 202-3; Lenski (2005) 65.

<sup>4</sup> PLRE 1.509 s.v. Val. Licinianus Licinius 3; Leadbetter (2009) 203; Barnes (1982) 43; Lenski (2005) 65; from *Origo* 5.13; Eutrop. 10.4.1; Ps.-Vict. 41.9; Zonar. 12.34.

<sup>5</sup> Hekster (2015) 294.

<sup>6</sup> Envoy: Eutrop. 10.4.1; *Origo* 3.7. Severus: Potter (2013) 107.

neutral manner.<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere, Licinius is linked with Daza in lacking imperial origins (e.g. *novis hominibus* in contrast to *filiis Augustorum*.)<sup>8</sup> Thus Licinius can also be perceived as ‘Tetrarchic’ when the term is considered to be synonymous with ‘non-dynastic’, e.g. he was not directly related to his fellow emperors.

This passage from Lactantius comes just before his presentation of Galerius’ idealized post-retirement imperial college, consisting of Severus and Licinius as co-Augusti and his sons Maximin Daza and Candidianus as Caesars (see **II.2.i**). Galerius’ goal, Lactantius claims, was to eventually provide himself with “an impregnable wall behind which he could enjoy a carefree and calm old age”—that is, protected in retirement by his closest allies in power.<sup>9</sup> Leadbetter explains this passage as “coarse hindsight on Lactantius’ part” regarding his account of Galerius’ later death,<sup>10</sup> but it may as well be an explanation for the political manoeuvrings at the time, especially in the immediate elevation of Licinius to Augustus. As we have seen in the discussion of this passage in Ch. 2, this Galerian ‘Tetrarchy’ is at least partly dynastic in character, in that Galerius’ sons were Caesars and (perhaps) his ‘brothers’ were to be Augusti after him. This picture would never be realized. Severus and Licinius were never co-Augusti, and Candidianus was never made Caesar.<sup>11</sup>

Yet this suggestion of Lactantius’—that Galerius wanted Licinius to be “his brother in place of Constantius”—tells us more about ancient perceptions of the imperial college than it does about Galerius’ intentions. Specifically of interest is that Licinius, in being elevated immediately to Augustus instead of serving time as Caesar beforehand, was never adopted by Galerius. This we can tell from the titulature—he assumed the title of ‘Valerius’ only, unlike Daza and Severus, who became Galerius Valerius and Flavius Valerius respectively, after their adoptive fathers. If Licinius was adopted, it was only by Diocletian, and the evidence for that is conjectural at best, though it may have been one of the reasons why Diocletian was recalled from retirement to Carnuntum.<sup>12</sup> After all, Licinius did bear the name of Valerius in his official titulature, as did the other Tetrarchic emperors. Any suggestions that Licinius was adopted by Galerius should be rejected outright.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ps.-Vict. 41.9: *Agraribus plane ac rusticantibus, quod ab eo genere ortus altusque erat...*

<sup>8</sup> Eutrop. 10.4. See also Zonar. 12.34.

<sup>9</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 20.4.

<sup>10</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 204-205.

<sup>11</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 138, 203-5, 239; Van Dam (2007) 233; Odahl (2004/2013) 176.

<sup>12</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 205. Chantraine (1982) 484-487 makes intriguing arguments for Licinius’ adoption by Diocletian, but as Licinius makes no claims to be a *filius* of Diocletian, I will not argue conclusively for a dynastic relationship in this way.

<sup>13</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 204-5 makes this error. It is unclear why he suggests that Licinius was adopted by both Galerius and Diocletian.

Additionally, it is significant that Lactantius represents the relationship between two Augusti as ‘brothers’ and that of an Augustus and his Caesar as ‘father and son’. This passage serves as Lactantius’ explanation for Licinius’ elevation immediately to Augustus (coincidentally bypassing both Daza and Constantine); it is also interesting that this event merits an explanation. Clearly by this time, progression was assumed. Licinius’ representation as a ‘brother’ to Galerius echoes the earlier presentation of Maximian and Diocletian as co-Augusti and (therefore) brothers, rather than father and son (i.e. Augustus and Caesar) in the *Panegyrici Latini* and elsewhere (see **I.3.ii-iii**).

It is important for Licinius’ characterization that he is set up as Galerius’ man from the beginning; he is initially defined by his relationship to the eastern Tetrarch. By the end of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, when allied with Constantine, however, he plays a role in eliminating Galerius’ descendants and was responsible for defeating Maximin Daza, arguably the worst of the persecutors in Lactantius’ narrative. It is Licinius, not Constantine, who is responsible for the destruction of the last of the persecutors:

Where now are those surnames, recently so magnificent and famous, of the Jovii and the Herculii, which were first of all assumed with such arrogance by Diocles and Maximian, and then transferred to their successors and kept in active use by them? Assuredly the Lord has destroyed them and erased them from the earth.

*Ubi sunt modo magnifica illa et clara per gentes Ioviorum et Herculiorum cognomina, quae primum a Dioclete ac Maximiano insolenter adsumpta ac postmodum ad successors eorum translate viguerunt? Nempe delevit ea dominus et erasit de terra.*<sup>14</sup>

Lactantius gloatingly asserts that the Jovii and the Herculii have been destroyed. Previously he had implied that it was Licinius (as an instrument of God) who brought about that destruction. Just before the account of how Licinius destroys Galerius’ and Daza’s relations, Lactantius writes: “In this way God vanquished all the persecutors of his name, so that no stem or root of theirs remained.”<sup>15</sup> But just as Constantine, one of the Herculii, would continue to promote his Herculian ancestors when it suited him, so too did Licinius continue to promote the Jovii. From the beginning, as we shall see, Licinius adopted and promoted a ‘Jovian’ identity (an identity previously associated with Galerius but that should not be considered exclusively ‘Galerian’ or even ‘Diocletianic’), rather than a ‘Herculian’ one,

<sup>14</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 52.3.

<sup>15</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 50.1. *Hoc modo deus universos persecutors nominis sui debellavit, ut eorum nec stirps nec radix ulla remaneret.*

although previously the western emperors had been Herculii.<sup>16</sup> The Iovii lived on—embodied by Licinius and the dynasty he created and promoted through his son Licinianus (the Caesar Licinius II)—though this dynasty was not, in fact, a continuation of Galerius and Daza’s Iovian family.

This chapter will explore the representations of Licinius as a Tetrarch, a dynast, and a Iovian: three terms which, despite their usual connotations in modern scholarship, can be synonymous. **Section 2** explores the period of cooperation and competition between Licinius and Constantine and the promotion of their joint imperial college. **Section 3** focuses instead on Licinius’ promotion of his new ‘Iovian’ dynasty and of his son Licinianus. **Section 4** discusses Licinius’ ‘non-dynastic’ co-emperors, and **Section 5** explores the posthumous characterization of Licinius as a *tyrannus*.

## 2. LICINIUS AND CONSTANTINE: COOPERATION AND COMPETITION

After Licinius’ elevation in 308 at Carnuntum, he does not play a major role in the historical narratives of the early fourth century until his alliance with Constantine. This may be erasure; material evidence suggests some military action against Maxentius in northern Italy, though he would then be forced to campaign against the Carpi.<sup>17</sup> Combating Maxentius may have been the primary goal of his reign, although of course it was Constantine who eventually pushed through to Rome and claimed that victory.<sup>18</sup> It is after the death of Galerius, when Licinius and Constantine allied against Maximinus Daza and Maxentius, who were perhaps also allies,<sup>19</sup> that Licinius becomes a major player in the historical narrative. While Constantine is the victor in the west against Maxentius, Licinius becomes celebrated in the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* and elsewhere as the conqueror of Daza in the east.<sup>20</sup>

Licinius becomes linked with Constantine in more than just political terms. Lactantius represents the so-called ‘Edict of Milan’ as a joint effort between Licinius and Constantine,

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Chantraine (1982) 484. As has been discussed, Severus is a more difficult example, but overall, despite his clear links to Galerius rather than to Maximian’s side of the family, he should be counted amongst the Herculii due to his adoption by Constantius. (See **II.3.ii**).

<sup>17</sup> Barnes (2011) 71, citing the closure of Ticinum and Aquileia in 310, cf. Sutherland (1967) 276, 308; and a dedication to Licinius in Istria (now parts of Croatia and Slovenia), cf. ILS 678.

<sup>18</sup> Barnes (2011) 71; Potter (2013) 135; Odahl (2004) 90.

<sup>19</sup> Though the evidence for this is convoluted; see the discussion in **III.6**. It does not affect the current argument whether this alliance existed or whether the alliance between Licinius and Constantine was a response to this other (potential) alliance.

<sup>20</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 45-47, 49

when in fact it was a letter issued by Licinius.<sup>21</sup> The alliance was solidified by a betrothal—and the event made it clear that Daza was excluded.<sup>22</sup> In 313, Licinius married Constantia, Constantine’s half-sister, the daughter of Constantius I and Theodora, and the granddaughter of Maximian (possibly by blood, though certainly by Constantius’ adoption by Maximian).<sup>23</sup> Constantia was probably somewhere between thirteen and twenty at the time.<sup>24</sup> As Humphries puts it, the marriage “remind[s] us once again of the importance of dynastic arrangements in articulating the power relationships between emperors.”<sup>25</sup> It was a political marriage, but it nevertheless had important implications for the relationship—and perceptions of the relationship—between Licinius and Constantine.

There are also suggestions that Licinius might have been celebrated on the Arch of Constantine alongside Constantine in the scenes of a boar hunt, a lion hunt, and a sacrifice to Diana which had been reused from a Hadrianic monument, though it seems more likely that the figure represented Constantius instead, and scholarly consensus points to the latter.<sup>26</sup> For example, Peirce argues for an identification of Constantius as Constantine’s companion in the Hadrianic *tondi*, based on the political situation of Constantine’s early reign and on Constantius’ apparent affinity for Sol Invictus.<sup>27</sup> His argument that it cannot be Licinius is based upon a few factors: that the arch was dedicated to Constantine and not both emperors, that Licinius and Constantine were at war in 314, and that the figure in question is depicted sacrificing to Hercules and Sol.<sup>28</sup> Peirce’s dating of the war to 314 instead of 316 is problematic, but this in itself is not enough to claim identification for Licinius. In fact, Peirce’s arguments for Constantius are convincing—although the evidence that Constantius was a particular devotee of Sol is often exaggerated, the links with both Sol and Hercules on the Arch do suggest Constantius, one of the Herculi who was also associated with Sol to some degree.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 48. See especially the thorough and impassioned discussion on the “bogus” phrase by Barnes (2011) 93-97, who especially takes umbrage with the phrase because of the implications it has in modern scholarship concerning Constantine’s conversion. Cf. Barnes (2007) 186-189.

<sup>22</sup> Humphries (2008) 97.

<sup>23</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 43.2, 45.1; *Origo* 5.13; Zos. 2.17; Aur. Vict. 41.2; Ps.-Vict. 41.4; Eutrop. 10.5; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 10.8.3-4; Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.49.2; Zonar. 13.1.4.

<sup>24</sup> Barnes (2011) 41 notes that Constantia must have been born before 300, though as Constantius and Theodora were almost certainly married by 289, she could easily be older. Pohlsander (1993) 151-154, however, rejects this interpretation, concluding that Constantia was eighteen years at most.

<sup>25</sup> Humphries (2008) 98.

<sup>26</sup> Peirce (1989) 412-414; Potter (2013) 167; Odahl (2004) 162; Elsner (2000) 163 n. 22.

<sup>27</sup> Peirce (1989) 407, 412-414.

<sup>28</sup> Peirce (1989) 412.

<sup>29</sup> As has been argued in **I.4.iii** and previously demonstrated convincingly by Smith (2000), this picture of a special relationship with Sol is misconstrued and wrongly emphasized. While Constantine’s mints showed a very high level of promotion for the god, Constantius’ did not, or at least did not present a much higher promotion than, e.g. Mars. This particular aspect of the argument, therefore, should be discounted: Constantius may have worshipped Sol, but this is not as obvious as it is presented.

As we will see, it was Jupiter to whom Licinius seems to have paid special attention, and had done before the building and rededication of the Arch. Though it would be intriguing for Licinius to be included on the Arch as an imperial colleague, the arguments for Constantius are more substantial—importantly, as Bardill suggests, Constantius’ presence on the Arch “would have emphasized Constantine’s dynastic claim to power.”<sup>30</sup>

With the elimination of Maximinus Daza, there remained only two emperors for the first time in twenty years, since the elevation of Constantius and Galerius in 293 (or even as far back as 286, if one considers Carausius’ regime in Britain). Just as Diocletian and Maximian had been called brothers, so too were Licinius and Constantine brothers, or at least brothers-in-law. Licinius had left his potential ‘brotherhood’ with Galerius behind him with his systematic elimination of all Galerius’ family: Daza, Candidianus, Valeria, Daza’s children. To ensure there were no imperial claimants from outside the Licinii and Constantii/Constantini, he also had Severianus, son of the now long-dead Severus, killed on the grounds of imperial aspirations.<sup>31</sup> Just as Constantine would found a dynasty whose reigns dominated much of the fourth century, so too did Licinius begin to promote his own dynasty. Although he could not promote imperial ancestors as Constantine did—he issued coins in 311 commemorating Galerius’ death, but not as an imperial relation as Daza was able to do—he nevertheless began to celebrate the imperial potential of his young son Licinius Licinianus, thereby establishing a dynasty through the promotion of his heir. Equally importantly, he committed to a Iovian identity for himself and his family, one that could boast of previous (though non-dynastic) imperial connotations, but that could be adapted to his new forward-looking dynasty.

The cooperation between Licinius and Constantine would be tested throughout their twelve years of joint rule, resulting in two wars.<sup>32</sup> It would culminate with the deposition and later assassination of Licinius and of his son Licinianus. During these twelve years, however, the expressions of joint rule would change depending on the circumstances. In fact, expressions of cooperation were at their highest c. 323, just before the second and final war between them. It is difficult to determine the timeline of these wars due to their conflation and compression in the sources, especially Eusebius.<sup>33</sup> Most modern historians now date these wars to c. 316-317 and c. 324.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Bardill (2012) 227.

<sup>31</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 50.4.

<sup>32</sup> Mirković (2012) discusses the border between Constantine and Licinius’ territories, as well as the period of cooperation between 317-324.

<sup>33</sup> Harries (2012) 177; Cameron & Hall (1999) 4-12. Elliott (1992) 224-225 summarizes this debate in scholarship.

<sup>34</sup> The best accounts which disentangle the narrative of the wars are Harries (2012) 111-113; Potter (2013) 163-171; Barnes (2011) 90-106, (1981) 62-77. See also Barnes (1973) 36-38, which through its discussion of the

### i. The First War and the New Caesars

The causes of the first war seem to have been due to arguments over succession; at around this time, both Licinius' and Constantine's wives gave birth to sons.<sup>35</sup> Constantia apparently bore Licinianus in the summer of 315, but it was not until around a year later, in 316, that Constantine II was born.<sup>36</sup> The appearance of Licinius' heir and potential claimant for imperial power may have put pressure on Constantine in late 315 and early 316, before Constantine II's birth—although he already had a son: Crispus, a young man in his early teens, who was the son of Constantine and an unknown woman named Minervina.<sup>37</sup>

Constantine seems to have responded to the birth of his nephew by elevating another brother-in-law to imperial office. This was Bassianus, the husband of Constantine's half-sister Anastasia (also a daughter of Constantius and Theodora).<sup>38</sup> The exact imperial office, and indeed the nature of Bassianus' elevation is more unclear than many accounts of the period present them to be. These uncertainties will be discussed further in **IV.4**, along with Licinius' co-emperors Valens and Martinianus. The ill-fated Bassianus became embroiled in the conflict between the Augusti.<sup>39</sup> The *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* states that Bassianus' purpose was to be a “mediator” (*medius*, 5.14) between Constantine and Licinius. In this narrative, however, Bassianus, at the instigation of his brother Senecio, who was a supporter of Licinius, attempted to assassinate Constantine and was therefore executed. Constantine demanded retribution against Senecio, and when Licinius refused, Constantine had a reason to go to war—or, as the author of the *Origo* puts it, “the *concordia* between them was broken” (*fracta concordia est*, 5.15).

The common interpretation of this rather odd story is that, while Bassianus' elevation may have been intended to give Constantine the upper hand in the makeup of the imperial college, the apparent assassination attempt was used as an excuse by Constantine to declare

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chronological issues surrounding Lactantius contributed greatly to the current understanding of the wars between Licinius and Constantine.

<sup>35</sup> Harries (2012) 112.

<sup>36</sup> Barnes (2011) 102, following Ps.-Vict. 41.4, Zos. 2.20.2. Note that some, such as Harries (2012) 112 n. 35, argue that Constantine II may have been the child of a concubine rather than of Fausta due to the problems in chronology of this time.

<sup>37</sup> Pohlsander (1984) 80-83 discusses and summarizes the theories behind Crispus' birth and parentage in detail. He concludes that c. 305 is a reasonable date to postulate for his birth. He also presents the arguments for and against Minervina's being a wife instead of a concubine, though hinting that he deems the latter to be more likely. See **V.5.ii** for more on this discussion.

<sup>38</sup> PLRE 1.150 s.v. Bassianus 1. Cf. PLRE 1.58 s.v. Anastasia 1; PLRE 1.820 s.v. Senecio 1 (Bassianus' brother).

<sup>39</sup> The Bassianus narrative is found in *Origo* 5.13-15 (translations my own). Barnes (2011) 100-103 provides the most detailed and nuanced explanation of these events.

war on Licinius.<sup>40</sup> This was not the only reason given for this first war, however. There were also claims that Licinius began destroying statues in Emona (Ljubljana), a city on the border of their respective territories, effectively performing a *damnatio memoriae* on Constantine's name and annexing the city.<sup>41</sup> During the war, Licinius raised Aurelius Valerius Valens, a *dux limitis* (a leader of border troops) in Dacia, to imperial office—which precise office is up for debate, like Bassianus' status. This elevation was represented as a personal slight to Constantine (see IV.4 for more on both Valens' station and the perceived slight).<sup>42</sup> After a few losses and a far more successful retreat manoeuvre, Licinius was in a position to negotiate terms of peace with Constantine. It was arguably Constantine who received the better terms of the truce—he gained more territory, specifically the western Balkan region, and Valens was executed on Licinius' own orders.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, Constantine had two sons, Crispus and Constantine II, admitted into the imperial college as Caesars, whereas Licinius only had Licinianus. It is impossible to say whether this was intended to be a method of reinforcing Constantine's superiority, or merely because Licinius only had one son while Constantine had two.

The imperial relationship between Constantine and Licinius, who were simultaneously brothers-in-law and co-emperors, is an integral part of the presentation of their period of joint reign and of their political and military competition. For example, Aurelius Victor's explanation for the truce is based upon these familial ties:

[Licinius] was, indeed, defeated in various battles but, since it seemed difficult to suppress him completely and at the same time because of their marriage ties, the partnership was renewed and their respective children, Crispus and Constantine, the sons of Flavius, and Licinianus, the son of Licinius, were admitted to the rank of Caesar.

*Quo sane variis proeliis pulso, cum eum prorsus opprimere arduum videretur, simul affinitatis gratia reffectum consortium ascitique imperio Caesarum communes liberi Crispus Constantinusque Flavio geniti, Licinianus Licinio.*<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Barnes (1981) 66-67, (2011) 102-103; Potter (2013) 169-170; Odahl (2004) 163-164 (in a narrative highly sympathetic to Constantine); Elliott (1992) 225ff.

<sup>41</sup> Lenski (2005) 73; cf. *Origo* 5.15; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 10.8.5-7, *Vita Const.* 1.47.2; Zos. 2.18.1.

<sup>42</sup> PLRE 1.931 s.v. Aur. Val. Valens 13. Cf. *Origo* 5.17-18; Zos. 2.19.2, 2.20.1; Ps.-Vict. 40.2, 40.9; Petr. Patr. fr. 15.

<sup>43</sup> Lenski (2005) 73-74 offers a succinct account of the battles and the truce; Barnes (1981) 67 does as well. For the ancient sources, Zosimus 2.18-20 offers the most detailed account of the same. Cf. *Origo* 5.14-19; Aur. Vict. 41.2-10, who only discusses this first war in detail, mostly omitting the second; Ps.-Vict. 41.5-7, who compresses both wars into one (the second).

<sup>44</sup> Aur. Vict. 41.6.



The ties of kinship (*affinitas*) are presented as a reason for the renewed co-emperorship and for the inclusion of the Caesars in the imperial college. In Eutropius' account of the period, Constantine makes war on Licinius in spite of the ties (*necessitudo et adfinitas*) between the two emperors.<sup>45</sup> Eusebius, unsurprisingly, puts the blame on Licinius, who broke the “connection by marriage and the most exalted kinship” (ἐπιγαμβρείας τε και συγγενείας τῆς ἀνώτατω) between them.<sup>46</sup> The war is invariably viewed and represented by all these authors as an internecine war—even an “impious” war (πόλεμον δυσαγῆ).<sup>47</sup> The blame for the dispute shifts depending upon the authors involved, but, moral judgements aside, the perception that it was a war within an extended imperial family is constant. Likewise, the truce is explained because of their kinship as in-laws. Constantia, though she does not play a significant role in the narrative until the conclusion of the second war, is nevertheless an important part of the perceived relationship between the two emperors.

It has been mentioned above that *concordia* was used to describe the relationship between Licinius and Constantine in the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* (*fracta concordia est*, 5.15). The term also appears in Pseudo-Victor:

But, indeed, as powers preserve concord with difficulty, a rift arose between Licinius and Constantine...

*Verum enimvero ut imperia difficile concordiam custodiunt, discidium inter Licinium Constantinumque exoritur...*<sup>48</sup>

The use of *concordia* to describe this relationship is significant to the wider discussion of familial relationships and the nature of the imperial college. Far too often, *concordia* is expressed as a ‘Tetrarchic’ virtue. As I have argued throughout this thesis, it should instead be seen more often as a collegial virtue—thus, it is ‘Tetrarchic’, and is also equally applicable to the relationship between Licinius and Constantine, in that both of these arrangements were different forms of the imperial collegial system. It is also important that Pseudo-Victor represents the rule of Licinius and Constantine not as a joint rule, but as two separate rules (thus, the use of the plural *imperia*), though this may be a retrospective view. *Concordia* was also an ideology propagated after the first war, when the legend CONCORDIA AVGG NN was used at some of Constantine's mints, including for Licinianus (**fig. 4.1**).<sup>49</sup> Most notable of

<sup>45</sup> Eutrop. 10.5: *Constantinus tamen...Licinio bellum intulit, quamquam necessitudo et adfinitas cum eo esset; nam soror Constantia nupta Licinio erat.*

<sup>46</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 10.8.2.

<sup>47</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 10.8.3.

<sup>48</sup> Ps.-Vict. 41.5. Trans. Banchich (2009), edited.

<sup>49</sup> Aquileia nos. 11 (Licinius), 12-13 (Licinianus);

these examples is a paired issue of gold *solidi* from Ticinum to both Constantine and Licinius.<sup>50</sup> Expressions of collegiality become even clearer and more important in the language and imagery promoted in the period between the wars, when Licinius and Constantine promoted not only their own dynasties but also the links between them.



Fig. 4.1: Licinianus and Concordia.<sup>51</sup>

## ii. Expressions of Collegiality and Competition, c. AD 317-323

During the period between the wars, Licinius and Constantine's dynastic and imperial self-representation differed widely (see **IV.3** and **V.5.i** respectively), but this divergence in iconography and expression makes the promoted structures of collegiality between the two dynasties easier to trace. There is also a heightened focus on including and promoting the new Caesars during this period, although Licinius does not employ any of the third-century numismatic conventions like the *Princeps Iuventutis* title or the iconography of *Spes* or *Salus* for this purpose. In contrast, Constantine uses *Princeps Iuventutis* and variations on *Princeps* to honour his own sons as well as Licinianus, while *Spes* is used somewhat, as is *Salus*, but in a different context, that of the Constantinian women (see **V.5.iii**). The promotion of the Caesars is most visible in consular lists, coinage, and inscriptions for the group of emperors. What is also visible in these media, especially in the consular lists, is the gradual breakdown of the relationship between the two dynasties and the emperors at their heads.

Constantine and Licinius held office as co-consuls in 312, the second half of 313, and 315.<sup>52</sup> After the first war, however, between 318 and 320 the named consuls were different combinations of the members of the two imperial families, representing unity between the two dynasties and between the western and eastern halves of the empire. Thus, Licinius was paired

<sup>50</sup> Ticinum nos. 101 (Constantine), 102 (Licinius), 103 (Crispus); cf. RIC VII Plate 10 for images. There may be other examples, not yet found or catalogued, for Licinianus and Constantine II.

<sup>51</sup> Aquileia, no. 12. C. AD 317.

<sup>52</sup> Bagnall (1987) 158-161, 164-165; Barnes (1982) 95.

with Crispus in 318 and Constantine with Licinianus the following year.<sup>53</sup> This type of cross-pairing had been seen before under Diocletian's Tetrarchy, where Diocletian was proclaimed consul with Constantius in 296 and Maximian with Galerius in 297.<sup>54</sup> More often, however, when the members of the Tetrarchy were consuls together, it was as pairs according to equal rank—either Diocletian and Maximian together or Constantius and Galerius.<sup>55</sup> In 320, however, Constantine was paired with Constantine II, for the latter's first consulship. Perhaps in reaction to this, Licinius took a different approach in 321, where he proclaimed himself and Licinianus as co-consuls in the east, ignoring Constantine's proclamation of Crispus and Constantine II together.<sup>56</sup> Barnes uses fragmentary evidence (the phrase "...Kal. Mar. Licino VI", designating Licinius' sixth consulship) from an inscription in Rome to suggest that Licinius and his son had originally been co-consuls in Constantine's western areas of the empire, rather than Crispus and Constantine II, as well as in Licinius' east.<sup>57</sup> This would fit with the previous nomination of Constantine and Constantine II the previous year, a father and son pairing. At least the fragment shows that Licinius' sixth consulship might have at one point been recognized in the west in 321. Thus, it could be Constantine who ceased to honour Licinius rather than Licinius refusing to accept Constantine's nominations. In the years following this apparent breakdown in relations in 321, Licinius continued to not recognize Constantine's consuls, who were high officials with no known dynastic links to either family, although he did not put forward any of his own in direct opposition.<sup>58</sup> Regarding this, Bagnall suggests, "Licinius reacted during these years...by not recognizing his colleague's consuls but not proclaiming any of his own. The effect is what has been called a 'postconsular era'."<sup>59</sup>

Before the breakdown of the relationship between Licinius and Constantine, the group of emperors were celebrated together as a college on inscriptions as well as coinage. A probable statue base from Ephesus, within Licinius' territory, was first dedicated to Maximinus Daza, Constantine, and Licinius c. 312-313, but then Daza's name was erased and the names of the Caesars added in after 317.

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<sup>53</sup> Bagnall (1987) 170-175; Barnes (1982) 95. The mint at Antioch minted a gold coin issue to celebrate one of Constantine's consulships in 319 or 320 with the legend CONSVL P PROCONSVL; cf. RIC VII Antioch no. 22.

<sup>54</sup> Bagnall (1987) 126-129; Barnes (1982) 93.

<sup>55</sup> Diocletian and Maximian 287, 290, 293, 299, 303, 304; Constantius and Galerius 294, 302, 305, 306; but intriguingly there are no examples of Diocletian and Galerius as co-consuls until 308, after Diocletian's retirement, and none at all for Maximian and Constantius. Cf. Barnes (1982) 93.

<sup>56</sup> Bagnall (1987) 176-177.

<sup>57</sup> Barnes (1982) 96, from the fragmentary *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae* 1.34.

<sup>58</sup> Bagnall (1987) 178-181; Barnes (1982) 96.

<sup>59</sup> Bagnall (1987) p. 181.

To our lords the emperors, Galerius Valerius Maximinus, and Flavius Valerius Constantinus, and Valerius Licinianus Licinius, pious, fortunate, unconquered Augusti. And to our lords Flavius Valerius Crispus and Valerius Licinianus Licinius and Flavius Claudius Constantinus, most noble Caesars.

*Dd(ominis) nn(ostris) imp(eratoribus) / [[[Gal(erio) Val(erio) Maximino]]] / et Fl(avio) Val(erio) Constantino / et Valerio Licinniano Licinio, / piis felicibus in/victis Augustis, et / dd(ominis) nn(ostris) Fl(avio) Val(erio) Crisp(o) et / Val(erio) Liciniano Licinio et / Fl(avio) Cl(audio) Constantino / no. ibb. (sic, for 'nobilissimis') Caess(aribus).<sup>60</sup>*

In his discussion of the inscription as part of the Last Statues of Antiquity database, Sokolicek makes a number of errors, but his conclusion that this may have been an inscription on a statue base to all five (although he erroneously says six) emperors is an intriguing one, although he does note that it is unusual for the name of a dedicator to be absent in such an inscription.<sup>61</sup> The inscription nevertheless shows that in the east as well as the west the emperors were presented as a complete college rather than only individually, highlighting attempts to promote the ideas of *concordia* and unity amongst the two families. Examples of inscriptions recognizing both families of the imperial college together can be found across the empire—this should not be seen as unusual, merely standard practice to honour all rulers together.<sup>62</sup> Some inscriptions seem dedicated only to the Caesars, however, such as one on a milestone from modern Portugal, where they are ranked by age.<sup>63</sup> This may indicate increased promotion of the Caesars together as an equal group.

Overall, the coinage of both Licinius and Constantine also shows cooperation and mutual recognition of both dynasties throughout the inter-war period from 318 to c. 323. Licinius' mints in the east—Heraclea, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antioch, and Alexandria—mint coins to Constantine and the Caesars under the legend IOVI CONSERVATORI and variations,

<sup>60</sup> <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk>, LSA-749 (A. Sokolicek). Last accessed 05/12/2017.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. Sokolicek incorrectly identifies the erased name as Galerius', not Daza's; he does not discuss the different dating of the inscriptions; and he suggests that statues to all six names were set up at the same time (which would have been impossible with the dating), so his conclusion that the block of marble was originally a statue base may also be suspect.

<sup>62</sup> Examples from Italy: AE (2006) 440; AE (2011) 399; AE (1991) 00412; CIL 5.8015; AE (1985) 340; CIL 9.5955; CIL 10.6959; CIL 11.6670; CIL 11.6671a; AE (1987) 294; AE (1990) 224b; AE (2012) 579. Moesia: AE (1981) 751. Thrace: AE (1995) 1360; CIL 3.14207; AE (1978) 727. Germany: AE (1967) 341. France: AE (1995) 1018. Portugal: AE (1977) 376. Noricum: CIL 3.5206; CIL 3.6969. Africa: AE (1992) 1886; AE (1978) 846. Turkey: CIL 3.7200a; CIL 3.13675, CIL 3.319; CIL 3.14184; CIL 3.6969; CIL 3.14186; AE (1993) 1520; AE (2012) 1577c; AE (2010) 1545. Syria: AE (1986) 696.

<sup>63</sup> AE (1977) 376. *D(ominis) n(ostris) / Flavio Iuli/o Crispo / Valerio Lici/niano Lici/nio Iuni/ori e[t F]la/vio Clau/dio Co(n)sta/ntino no/bi(lissimi)s Caes(aribus)*. Cf. AE (1992) 1886, where both Crispus' and Licinianus' names have been erased.

which was the reverse type and legend minted almost exclusively in Licinian territory.<sup>64</sup> In the west, according to Bruun's dating of Constantine's coinage, mints no longer included Licinius or Licinianus from c. 321 onwards. Bruun's dating of these coins should not be taken as set in stone, however. The chronology of this period can be difficult to determine, and the literary sources, which sometimes conflate the two wars into one (see **2.iii**) offer little help. Therefore, although the coinage during this period as it has been dated by Bruun includes Licinius' recognition of Constantine and his Caesars until the beginning of the war in 324, the evidence of the consulships show that rifts began as early as 321. This discrepancy may be due to the limitations in dating coinage, or it may reveal that the imperial minting programme at certain mints in the east continued to honour the western emperors despite the disagreements over consuls, even while the western mints ceased to recognize Licinius' claims. There are even examples of Sol coinage to the Licinii, although for the most part this legend was reserved for Constantine and his sons, whilst Jupiter coinage was minted for Licinius and Licinianus.

For the period of 317 to c. 321, it appears that the message from Constantinian mints was that the Licinii were included alongside the Constantinian dynasty on a variety of legends, but most notably IOVI CONSERVATORI, which was reserved only for Licinius and Licinianus in Constantinian mints. This picture of the period of cooperation opposes Van Dam's claim that Licinius had no part in the Constantinian dynasty despite his marriage to Constantia.<sup>65</sup> Clearly, he was included to some degree, as was his son, if not under the umbrella of the 'Constantinian' dynasty, then at least in a unified college. Indeed, in some inscriptions from the east, 'Constantinus' is even given as part of Licinianus' titulature.<sup>66</sup> This may represent a misunderstanding on the part of the dedicators, but it is an intriguing and possibly revealing mistake nonetheless.

Constantine's mints were more explicit than Licinius' in promoting the college as two distinct families, or at least two family names, but these two families were promoted side-by-side with similar coin types. For example, there are multiple issues in bronze from c. 320-321 with a bust and legend of Licinius on the obverse and a reverse displaying prayers for future rule (usually VOT/XX or a variation) under a legend also to Licinius—usually some variation

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<sup>64</sup> Bruun, *RIC* VII (1966). CONSTANTINE: Antioch nos. 25-26, 34; Heraclea no. 51; Nicomedia nos. 23, 43; Cyzicus no. 14; Alexandria nos. 22, 27. CRISPUS: Antioch no. 28; Nicomedia nos. 25, 43; Cyzicus nos. 10, 17; Alexandria nos. 24, 29. CONSTANTINE II: Antioch no. 30; Nicomedia nos. 28, 30, 50; Cyzicus nos. 12, 19; Alexandria nos. 26, 31. All bronze folles, dated by Bruun to 318-324.

<sup>65</sup> Van Dam (2007) 101.

<sup>66</sup> E.g. CIL 3.06969. These inscriptions are discussed by Christol & Drew-Bear (1986) 41-87.

of D N LICINI AVGVSTI (**fig. 4.2**).<sup>67</sup> Constantine received similar issues with variations of the reverse legend D N CONSTANTINI AVGVSTI.<sup>68</sup>



**Fig. 4.2: Licinius with reverse of votive wreath.**<sup>69</sup>



**Fig. 4.3: Licinianus with reverse of votive wreath.**<sup>70</sup>

The Caesars, however, were all celebrated together under the reverse DOMINORVM NOSTRORVM CAESS or CAESARVM NOSTRORVM, with VOT/V on the reverse (**fig. 4.3**). Licinianus had previously been included alongside Constantine's sons in other issues with legends appropriate for the new heirs, such as PRINCIPIA IVENTVTIS, the new plural version of the *Princeps Iuventutis* type minted just after the first war.<sup>71</sup> In the votive coinage of AD 320-321, the two emperors were each celebrated in his own right, but their sons were treated as equals, a collective group of sons and heirs—similarly to how they were presented on some inscriptions, as shown above.

The output from Licinius' mints, although there was less variation in the types and legends than the Constantinian mints, presented much the same ideology of cooperation and

<sup>67</sup> Lugdunum no. 94 (LICINI AVG); Ticinum nos. 132-133, 146-147 (D N LICINI INVICT AVG); Aquileia nos. 67 & 86 (DOMINI N LICINI AVG); Siscia nos. 141 (LICINI AVGVSTI), 149 (D N LICINI MAX AVG), 150 & 160 (D N LICINI AVGVSTI); Arles nos. 224, 229, 234, 240 (D N LICINI AVGVSTI), 209-214, 218 (LICINI AVG), 219 (LICINI AVGVSTI); Rome nos. 228, 233 (D N LICINI AVGVSTI).

<sup>68</sup> CONSTANTINI AVGVSTI: Aquileia no. 140; D N CONSTANTINI AVG: Aquileia no. 64; Thessaloniki no. 88; D N CONSTANTINI MAX AVG: Thessaloniki no. 96;

<sup>69</sup> RIC VII, Arles no. 240. IMP LICINIVS AVG/D N LICINI AVGVSTI.

<sup>70</sup> RIC VII, Siscia no. 162. LICINIVS IVN NOB C/CAESARVM NOSTRORVM.

<sup>71</sup> Siscia no. 40; Rome no. 139. The significance of PRINCIPIA in the plural will be discussed in **V.5.i**.

mutual inclusion. Under the umbrella of the IOVI CONSERVATORI (“To Jupiter the Protector”) legend, imperial ranks were differentiated in a way comparable to the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI coinage of the Second Tetrarchy. Just as Galerius’ territories had continued to promote the Genius type but with the new variations GENIO AVGVSTI and GENIO CAESARIS as a method of controlling the ranks of the various emperors, so too did Licinius’ mints use the preferred Jupiter Conservator type to express the ranks of the new imperial college. He and Constantine were often honoured with types minted to IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG, while the three heirs were paired with IOVI CONSERVATORI CAESS.<sup>72</sup> The designation of Crispus, Licinianus, and Constantine II as Caesars on the reverses as well as obverses was less a method of control (as it was for Galerius) but more a way of promoting the heirs alongside their fathers the Augusti. Jupiter was the defender of Licinius and Constantine, and so too was he the preserver of their heirs. With the advent of the second war, Licinius’ mints largely drop the ranks and return to the simple IOVI CONSERVATORI to Licinius and his son without Constantine and the other Caesars.<sup>73</sup>

Within this focus on Jupiter, the mints of Heraclea, Cyzicus and especially Nicomedia, where Licinius may have based his court,<sup>74</sup> have more unusual issues, in both gold and bronze, also from this period of increased promotion of collegiality (c. 320-321). These coins display Licinius and Licinianus facing each other on the obverses. This technique of presentation was common on coinage from third-century imperial families, which depict father and son together, often facing each other in a similar way to this (**I.2.ii**). The series was extended to include the wider imperial collegial family, i.e. to include Constantine and his sons. To use a bronze series from Nicomedia as an example, the reverse legend for the paired Licinius and Licinianus coin reads I O M ET FORT CONSER DD NN AVG ET CAES—I O M being an abbreviation for IOVI OPTIMO MAXIMO—which can be translated as “To the Highest and Greatest Jupiter and to Fortuna, protectors of our lords the Augustus and the Caesar (**fig. 4.4**).”<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> E.g. Nicomedia nos. 23-30, 37, 41-42; Cyzicus nos. 8-12; Antioch nos. 20-21, 24-30; Alexandria nos. 16-26. Note that these types were minted in gold and bronze.

<sup>73</sup> E.g. Nicomedia nos. 43-50; Cyzicus nos. 14-19; Antioch nos. 34-36; Alexandria nos. 27-33.

<sup>74</sup> Barnes (1982) 80.

<sup>75</sup> RIC VII, Nicomedia no. 38. The obverse of this coin contains the title IOVI for the Licinii; this will be discussed in **3.i**.



Fig. 4.4: The Licinii, facing, with reverse of Fortuna and Jupiter.<sup>76</sup>

The reverse image shows Fortuna standing on the right, holding a rudder and a cornucopia, facing Jupiter, who holds a sceptre and Victory on a globe. If taken alone, this coin promotes imperial collegiality between father and son, the Augustus and the Caesar, through methods that had been used throughout the preceding hundred years and before to portray father and son. What is important is that this is then broadened to include members of the extended family, additional imperial colleagues. A closely related coin—from the same mint, the same time, and with the same reverse type—features Licinius and Constantine together, once again facing, and with the Jupiter and Fortuna legend adapted for two Augusti instead of an Augustus and a Caesar. A third coin presents Licinianus with his cousin Constantine II, with the legend for two Caesars.<sup>77</sup>

The increased focus on messages (on a variety of media) of collegiality and—to some extent—equality, as well as *concordia*, between the two imperial families is clearly a response to the political situation after the first war. *Concordia* in particular might be said to be promoted more visibly during periods of political unrest; its use in 317-318 may be a reflection of the instability caused by the first war, but also of the new alliance. The focus on the unity and equality of the two families therefore may represent a political ideal more than an actuality, especially as tensions grew during the early 320's in the lead-up to the second war. The two emperors chose different methods of representing the equality of the other's family: Constantine's method was more pointed, including celebrating the Caesars as equal heirs to the empire; Licinius' method was instead to incorporate honouring his co-emperors within his Jupiter-centric ideology.

<sup>76</sup> RIC VII, Nicomedia no. 38. DD NN IOVI LICINII INVICT AVG ET CAES/ I O M ET FORT CONSER DD NN AVG ET CAES.

<sup>77</sup> RIC VII Nicomedia nos. 39-40, I O M ET FORT CONSER DD NN AVGG and I O M ET FORT CONSER DD NN NOBB CAESS respectively. There is no known equivalent for Constantine I and Constantine II, but it may have existed.



### iii. The Second War

War, almost inevitably, broke out again between Licinius and Constantine around AD 323-324.<sup>78</sup> The reasons for the war were apparently twofold. The accusation against Constantine was that he was invading Licinius' territory; that against Licinius was that he was persecuting Christians.<sup>79</sup> Licinius again chose a non-dynastic co-ruler in Martinianus, his *magister officiorum*<sup>80</sup>—a move which, as the author of the *Origo* put it, showed his “customary vanity” (*solita vanitate*, 5.25), implying another slight against Constantine.<sup>81</sup> In the battles which followed—which incidentally offered the teenaged Caesar Crispus a chance to shine—Licinius was driven back to Byzantium and then ultimately defeated at Chrysopolis in 324. He was initially spared, all accounts agree, thanks to the intervention of his wife Constantia.

Constantia features little in the accounts of Constantine's reign except with regard to her marriage to Licinius. Clearly, however, she was an important part of the imperial family, even though she was not (at this point) honoured on coinage or commemorated as an Augusta; she continued to be important even after her husband's death.<sup>82</sup> Sister to one emperor, wife to another, and mother to a Caesar, her pleas seem to have been powerful, since Constantine initially consented to let Licinius live in exile. The sources are not entirely reliable, some conflating the two wars into one, but they seem to agree that Licinius was initially spared thanks to Constantia's efforts in securing an oath from her brother.<sup>83</sup> The account in Pseudo-Victor reports a similar story, with a change in that Constantine granted Licinius ‘regal garb’, along with a pledge for his safety, through Constantia (*pacta salute indumentum regium offerre per uxorem*, 41.7). The mention of *indumentum regium* is probably because of a confusion with the

<sup>78</sup> Grünewald (1990) 113-132 shows that the troubled relationship between the two emperors is visible in the epigraphic record.

<sup>79</sup> The most detailed accounts of the initial conflict and the ensuing war are found in *Origo* 5.20-29; especially Zos. 2.21-28. For modern narratives, see Barnes (2011) 104ff; Harries (2012) 113; Potter (2013) 207-214; Odahl (2004) 175-181; Lenski (2005) 75-77. Cf. Odahl (2004) 347 n. 29 rails against the “anti-Constantinian propaganda of Zosimus”, calling Licinius an “unreliable ally”. This is an unfair assessment, as Constantine could equally have been said to be an unreliable ally.

<sup>80</sup> I.e. the “head of the central administration (excluding finances) and chief of ceremonies at the court”, *BNP* s.v. ‘Magister Officiorum’ (Groß-Albenhausen).

<sup>81</sup> *Origo* 5.25; Ps.-Vict. 41.6-7; Zos. 2.25.2, 2.26.2, 2.28.2; Aur. Vict. 41.9.

<sup>82</sup> Harries (2012) 260-261; Pohlsander (1993) 158, 160ff. Constantia's status as a member of the Constantinian family will be discussed more in **V.5.iii**.

<sup>83</sup> *Origo* 5.28; Ps.-Vict. 41.7; Eutrop. 10.6; Euseb. *Vita Const.* 2.18; Zonar. 13.1.5-6. See especially Zos. 2.28.2: Ἐθάρρει γὰρ ὡς βιώσεται, τῆς αὐτοῦ γαμετῆς ὄρκους ἐπὶ τούτῳ παρὰ Κωνσταντίνου λαβούσης... cf. Harries (2012) 113, 260; Potter (2013) 213; Odahl (2004) 166, 181.

first war, after which Licinius was still able to keep imperial power—Pseudo-Victor’s narrative only mentions one war.<sup>84</sup>

That Constantine later had Licinius and Licinianus (the former apparently in 325, the latter possibly a year later)<sup>85</sup> executed does not inform us about the limits of Constantia’s influence, but rather (as some ancient sources agree) about the characterization of Constantine, who was said to have broken his oath in doing so (*contra religionem sacramenti*, Eutrop. 10.6). Of these sources, Zosimus chastises him most harshly for it, saying that Constantine broke this promise “as he was accustomed to do”.<sup>86</sup> Zonaras, writing much later, preserves two versions of Licinius’ death, one blaming zealous soldiers for Licinius’ death rather than Constantine.<sup>87</sup> However, none of these sources condemn Constantine explicitly for killing his brother-in-law, only breaking his oath. Eusebius, unsurprisingly, does not mention Constantine’s oath to Constantia, and instead places the oath-breaking accusations—as well as the breaking of family bonds—upon Licinius’ shoulders (as will be explored more in **IV.6**).

### 3. A NEW IOVIAN DYNASTY

There is a small danger when studying Licinius’ reign in looking at it retrospectively with the knowledge that he would be defeated by Constantine. It is important to study him not as a lesser emperor in Constantine’s shadow, but a man with ideological links to previous emperors as well as to the family of his co-ruler, and with his imperial future embodied in his son. Key to understanding the evolution of Licinius’ ideology is the figure of Jupiter, who, as has been mentioned above (**2.ii**), was prominent—indeed, almost ubiquitous—in Licinian coinage from his elevation at Carnuntum through to the second war with Constantine. Previously, Diocletian, Galerius, and Daza had been presented as Iovii in a number of sources, although only Daza was titled ‘Iovius’ on coinage.<sup>88</sup> This title was adopted for Licinius and Licinianus, who were also explicitly Iovii in a variety of sources.

<sup>84</sup> There is much narrative confusion in the sources over the two wars. Vogt (1954) 463-471 had argued for Eusebius’ conflating of the two in the *Vita Constantini*; Cameron & Hall (1994) 233 argue against this interpretation of the text.

<sup>85</sup> Lenski (2005) 77 says Licinianus died in 326; Barnes (1982) 45 says at the same time as his father.

<sup>86</sup> Zos. 2.28.2: ...μετ’ οὐ πολὺ τοὺς ὄρκους πατήσας (ἦν γὰρ τοῦτο αὐτῷ σύνηθες) ἀγχόνῃ τοῦ ζῆν αὐτὸν ἀφαιρεῖται.

<sup>87</sup> Zonar. 13.1.6.

<sup>88</sup> See **II.4.i**, for discussion of Daza and a coin (probably) to him as *Iovius* (RIC VI, Antioch no. 134).

### i. Promotion of Licinius as Iovian

Licinius' focus on the IOVI CONSERVATORI type certainly has its roots in Tetrarchic ideology, especially the Diocletianic and Galerian ideologies regarding Jupiter and identification with him that has been explored in previous chapters (see **I.3.ii**, **I.4.iii**, **II.2.ii**). To some degree, Jupiter's appearance on Licinian coinage could be explained as the eastern mints continuing with the familiar, if it were not for the almost exclusive extent to which Jupiter is present on Licinian coinage. Licinius' associations with Jupiter go beyond the god's looming presence, however. During the period 317-321, the eastern mints present Licinius and Licinianus as a specifically Iovian family.

To illustrate 'family' first, a gold medallion from Nicomedia provides an excellent example. It features Licinius and Licinianus, side-by-side and facing forward, with the reverse legend IOVI CONSERVATORI LICINIORVM AVG ET CAES and reverse type of Jupiter enthroned with Victoria (**fig. 4.5**).<sup>89</sup>



Fig. 4.5: Licinius and Licinianus, facing forward, with reverse of Jupiter.<sup>90</sup>

This was clearly an important ideological point coming from one of Licinius' most important mints; the medallion is the size of four aurei and would have been a significant issue, whoever the intended recipients were. The importance of the joint busts has been discussed before (see **I.2.ii**, **I.4.ii**, **IV.2.ii**); it was a technique often employed by third-century families—most notably the family of Valerian and Gallienus—to show *concordia* and to promote family members (whether wives or sons) alongside emperors. This presentation was used to a limited extent during the First Tetrarchy and not at all during the Second. Licinius' mints, however, demonstrate a resurgence of interest in this sort of presentation—that is, of Licinius and Licinianus as paired emperors, and as an imperial family. There are numerous examples of this

<sup>89</sup> RIC VII, Nicomedia no. 37. Obverse legend: DD NN LICINIVS P F AVG ET LICINIVS CAESAR. The coin was described by Babelon (1933) no. 232, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k399046w/f40.image>, though neither Babelon nor the Paris Cabinet des Médailles provides a photo.

<sup>90</sup> Nicomedia no. 37.

presentation from several of the eastern mints, as Bastien points out in his study of the ‘double effigy’ (e.g. facing busts) coinage.<sup>91</sup> Usually, however, they face each other; the ‘facing outward’ presentation of this medallion is striking.

To show that the mints presented Licinius and his son as Iovian even beyond the explicit links with Jupiter as *Conservator*, we return again to the coinage featuring Jupiter Optimus Maximus (**fig. 4.4** above). This was discussed above in **2.ii** as part of a series that featured links between the two families, which portrayed the facing busts of imperial pairs—respectively, Constantine and Licinius, Licinius and Constantine II, and Licinius and Licinianus. It is the obverse legend of the last pairing which is most interesting: DD NN IOVII LICINI INVICT AVG ET CAES. This use of ‘Iovius’ is unique to this pairing; the other pairings with Constantinian emperors list only the names of the emperors depicted on the obverse. The message was clear: the Licinii were also the family of the Iovii. Even in coinage which was ostensibly to promote imperial collegiality, this claim of superiority was made. Nor is this the only example of this legend with the Licinii as Iovii. One example from Bastien shows the facing busts (with a trophy between them) of Licinius and Licinianus paired with a reverse type of Jupiter and captives (I O M ET VIRTVTI DD NN AVG ET CAES, **fig. 4.6**).<sup>92</sup>



**Fig. 4.6: The Licinii, facing, with reverse of Jupiter and captives.**<sup>93</sup>

This coinage series, in silvered bronze, is an unusual size and weight for the time, which may indicate their special nature.<sup>94</sup> Even if they were not in gold, they were no doubt intended to be a significant issue, and perhaps one that was more easily disseminated to a wider audience due to the baser metal.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Bastien (1973), especially pp. 89-91.

<sup>92</sup> Bruun assigned this coin to Heraclea (RIC VII, Heraclea no. 50) but Bastien has reassigned it to Antioch (Bastien (1973) 91).

<sup>93</sup> Bastien (1973) 91, no. 5; c.f. RIC VII, Heraclea no. 50. DD NN IOVII LICINII AVG ET CAES. / I O M ET VIRTVTI DD NN AVG ET CAES.

<sup>94</sup> Bastien (1973) 96.

<sup>95</sup> Though they are not common; Bruun gives this example from Heraclea/Antioch a rarity rating of R4, which is 2-3 coins known. There are also very similar issues with the facing busts from other mints, Nicomedia and Cyzicus

It is important to discuss Bastien's conclusions concerning the 'double effigy' coinage of Licinius, as they demonstrate some misconceptions of Licinius' reign and his ideology. First, the question of Licinius' links to the Tetrarchic system must be considered. Bastien views the extensive promotion of Jupiter as *Conservator* to be proof that Licinius was promoting himself as a "Tetrarchic heir" in opposition to Constantine.<sup>96</sup> This may very well be true, especially as Licinius had minted commemoration coinage for Galerius right after the latter's death. But aside from Jupiter, there are no explicit links to Diocletian or Galerius. Bastien assumes that the assumption of 'Iovius' only after defeating Daza, alongside the abandonment of the *Genius* type coinage, indicates that Licinius was taking Daza's place as a Iovian emperor.<sup>97</sup> But these two phenomena, of abandoning *Genius* and promoting the IOVI CONSERVATORI legend, taken together, contradict Bastien's claims that Licinius was a Tetrarchic emperor. It is not the promotion of Jupiter, but the setting aside of the *Genius*-type coinage in 311, that informs about Licinius' status as a 'Tetrarchic' emperor.

Under Galerius, the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI legend of the First Tetrarchy had been continued, modified to types expressing the *Genius* of imperial ranks (see **II.3.iii**). These related types dominated the low-denomination coinage, but they stopped in mints under Licinius' control after Galerius' death in 311, continuing in the east only in mints under Daza's control—to the extent that Daza's capture of Heraclea is reflected by the reintroduction of this type in 312.<sup>98</sup> In contrast, Constantine's mints did continue to mint the *Genio* type—but with the legend more common to the First Tetrarchy, not the Galerian-twist of GENIO AVGVSTI, etc.<sup>99</sup> By discontinuing the *Genius* type so soon after Galerius' death, Licinius' regime stepped away from associations with the Tetrarchy, with Galerius, and with Daza. The promotion of Jupiter, while it reflects a continuation of Tetrarchic ideology and links that went back through Galerius to Diocletian, was more personal. Licinius minted coins to Jupiter both before and after Galerius and Daza's deaths—although he was a 'western' emperor upon his elevation, there was no sign of his claims to 'Herculian' status, because that belonged without question to Maximian's side of the family (including Constantius and Constantine, if they wished to promote it). Thus, Licinius was 'Iovian' in that he was loyal to Galerius. The claims to be

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<sup>96</sup> Bastien (1973) 88: "The persistence in loyalty to Jupiter demonstrates not only Licinius' paganism but also his attachment to the tetrarchic system and thus to the division of the empire, whereas Constantine, by removing Jupiter from his coins, asserted his claims to sole direction." See also

<sup>97</sup> Bastien (1973) 89.

<sup>98</sup> Sutherland (1967) 65, 528.

<sup>99</sup> For example, after Maxentius' defeat, Rome under Constantine produced GENIO POPVLI ROMANI for all three emperors (RIC VI, Rome nos. 287-297b).

explicitly ‘Iovius Licinius’ came later, in the midst of the period of conflict and cooperation with Constantine.<sup>100</sup>

We must then reconsider Bastien’s suggestion that “By readopting this type [Jupiter Optimus Maximus] in his coinage Licinius clearly asserts his close links with the Tetrarchic system.”<sup>101</sup> First of all, the ‘Tetrarchic system’ was instead an imperial college bound together with familial and ideological links, not a constitutional ‘system’ as Bastien would like to see it. The Constantinian and Licinian families formed a new college that effectively replaced the old—and, importantly, Licinius’ status in the new college would have been infinitely stronger than under the Tetrarchy, where Maxentius controlled most of his allotted territory and where rivals threatened in both the east and the west. That is not to dismiss, however, the idea that in his use of Jupiter Licinius might be recalling and promoting the links he had with Diocletian and Galerius. After all, he owed his elevation to those two emperors, neither of whom had been given the same treatment of erasure as Daza, Maxentius, or Maximian. However, Licinius as far as we can tell did not try to retroactively adopt himself into the family of the Iovii.

At the same time, it is likely that the invocation of Jupiter as a divine patron was also intended to represent divinely-sanctioned legitimacy, not only legitimacy stemming from his imperial predecessors.<sup>102</sup> Jupiter as *Optimus Maximus* is present on inscriptions honouring Licinius, such as this example from the Balkans:

To Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Mars Conservator, for the safety of  
our lords the Augusti Constantine and Licinius...

*I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / et Marti Con/servatori pro / salute  
dd(ominorum) nn(ostrorum) / Imper(atorum) Augg(ustorum) /  
[Cons]tant[ini] / [et Lic]i[ni]...*<sup>103</sup>

The inclusion of Mars makes it tempting to date this inscription to early in the period of joint rule, when the god was still common on Constantinian coinage before the heightened prevalence of Sol. If so, this may suggest that the use of Jupiter, specifically *Optimus Maximus*, as Licinius’ patron deity predates the coinage (or that, as Bastien suggests, the coinage should be ascribed to an earlier date than Bruun gives it; c. late 317 or 318 instead of c.320-321.)<sup>104</sup> Several years had still passed between Daza’s defeat and the end of the Tetrarchy; enough time, perhaps, to begin to promote the historical links between Licinius and the previous Iovii.

<sup>100</sup> cf. Kolb (1987) 177: “Über einen göttlichen Beinamen des Licinius erfahren wir erst ab ca. 320, und da ist er ein Iovius.”

<sup>101</sup> Bastien (1973) 92.

<sup>102</sup> Fears (1977) 302 counts Licinius’ use of Jupiter as an example of divine investiture.

<sup>103</sup> AE (1976) 00622. Findspot: Istria/Histria.

<sup>104</sup> Bastien (1973) 95.

The concept of Licinius as Iovian does not extend to other material to the same degree, however. It is only on one surviving inscription, likely from the period between the wars, that Licinius is given the appellation ‘Iovius’:

To our lord Iovius Licinius, unconquered, eternal Augustus.

*D(omino) n(ostro) Iovio / Licinio In/victo sem/per Aug(usto).*<sup>105</sup>

It is notable that this inscription was found in Italy, meaning that someone from Constantine’s territories chose this method of honouring the other emperor, and including both the titles of ‘Iovius’ and ‘Invictus’ (the latter of which Constantine often used himself). The rarity of the name on inscriptions may be due to accidents of survival or to the process of *damnatio memoriae*, but it may also reflect a lack of interest third parties had in presenting Licinius in that way. For while Diocletian and Daza had both been called Iovius in the literature, the title is not found for Licinius. Lactantius also does not count Licinius as one of the Iovii at the end of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*:

Where now are the surnames of the Jovii and the Herculii, once so glorious and renowned amongst the nations; surnames insolently assumed at first by Diocles and Maximian, and afterwards transferred to their successors? The Lord has blotted them out and erased them from the earth.

*Ubi sunt modo magna illa et clara per gentes Ioviorum et Herculiorum cognomina. Quae primum a Dioclete ac Maximiano insolenter adsumpta ac postmodum ad successores eorum translata vigerunt? Nempe delevit ea dominus et erasit de terra.*<sup>106</sup>

Clearly by this time (c. AD 314-315—i.e. before the first war)<sup>107</sup> Licinius had not yet assumed the title of Iovius, or Lactantius would have had difficulty claiming that the cognomen had been erased from the earth. Likewise, Lactantius does not count Constantine as ‘Herculian’; by this time, Constantine seems to have dropped associations with Hercules.<sup>108</sup> Licinius and Constantine are not considered by Lactantius to be the successors of the Tetrarchs—this may be merely due to Lactantius’ own agenda, as he presents the co-emperors as defenders of Christianity and defeaters of the persecutors (most notably Daza), and thus he would be unlikely to uphold their links to their predecessors. At the same time, modern efforts to labelling either Constantine or Licinius as ‘Tetrarchic successors’ does an injustice to the

<sup>105</sup> CIL 09, 6026; ILS 676. Findspot: Canne della Battaglia / Cannae.

<sup>106</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 52.3.

<sup>107</sup> According to Barnes (1973) 39, which makes a persuasive argument.

<sup>108</sup> The last Hercules legends for Constantine are from Rome (nos. 298-302) and Ostia (no. 79). They are uncommon, especially compared to the coins to Mars and Sol, but reserved for Constantine.

efforts of their regimes to adapt and create imperial ideology. This passage also provides more evidence for Licinius' adoption of the title of 'Iovius' as a propaganda aspect only between the wars with Constantine.

Licinius' promotion of himself and Licinianus as 'Iovian', therefore, stems from past connections but ultimately reflects the contemporary situation. It may have been a way "to place Licinius and his son in an advantageous position" but not "as the heirs to the Tetrarchic system."<sup>109</sup> It was instead as a new dynasty alongside Constantine's. Licinius makes no attempt to honour Diocletian and Galerius by minting commemorative coinage at this time. Thus, the use of 'Iovius' should not merely be considered as a link to past emperors, but especially as the promotion of the present (Licinius) and the future (Licinianus). While the promotion of a new Iovian dynasty seems to have been important for Licinius, however, it was omitted or ignored by authors writing under Constantine and his successors. To them, it was Diocletian, Galerius, and Daza who were the Iovii. This is another reason why Licinius should not be viewed primarily as a 'Tetrarchic' emperor. Certainly the links were there, especially in his elevation at Diocletian's hand and at Galerius' behest, but authors chose not to make these connections. Even Eusebius does not directly connect Licinius with the Tetrarchs when saying that Licinius did not learn from his predecessors' deaths—he connects them in their actions, but not by giving any ties of family or co-rule.<sup>110</sup>

## ii. Licinius II

It is clear that Licinianus, also called Licinius II, played a vital role in the presentation of the new Licinian dynasty, as has been seen previously. He was promoted to a great extent on coinage across the empire, but especially alongside Licinius as his co-ruler and son. Without dynastic imperial forebears, Licinius—like Maxentius after the split with Maximian (see **III.4**)—focused on the future of his dynasty, much as the third century emperors, including those with no claims to imperial lineage, had done. It has also been shown that Licinius was not alone in celebrating his son as a junior emperor and heir; the Caesars were visible in every mint and in inscriptions alongside the Augusti, or even alone. As well as the milestones mentioned previously (**2.ii**),<sup>111</sup> an example of a dedication to the Caesars without the Augusti is found on a possible statue base:

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<sup>109</sup> Bastien (1973) 95.

<sup>110</sup> Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.56-59.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. AE (1977) 376, AE (1992) 1886.



To our lords, Flavius Iulius Crispus, and Licinius Licinius the younger,  
and Flavius Claudius Constantinus the younger...

*DD(ominis) n[n(ostris) Fl(avio)] Iul(io) / Crispo et Lic(inio) Lic(inio)  
[i]u[n]io[r]i et /(4) F[l]a(vio) [Cla]u(dio) Co[n]sta[n]tino iuniori...*<sup>112</sup>

Constantine and Licinius may have appeared later on in the inscription, although as members of the college were given in order of rank, this seems unlikely. What is likely, then, is that the Caesars were deemed worthy of honour, perhaps even in the form of a statue group, by an unknown dedicator.

Licinius did not only present his son as one of the Caesars, but also alongside himself, as his son—even explicitly, as can be seen from medallions from Nicomedia and Antioch, c. 321 (figs. 4.7-8). One features Licinianus on the obverse, the other Licinius, and they both present very similar reverses, that of Jupiter enthroned, with votives for the reigns of the emperors.



Figs. 4.20 & 4.8: Licinianus (left) and Licinius (right) with reverse of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (centre).<sup>113</sup>

The similarity of the reverses (only the years given in the votive changes—SIC X/SIC XX for Licinius, SIC V/SIC X for Licinianus) indicates that they should be considered together. These legends can be compared to a silver *largitio* dish marked with the same votive years, accompanied by an inscription reading LICINI AUGUSTE SEMPER VINCAS, “Licinius Augustus, may you always be victorious.”<sup>114</sup>

The coin for Licinianus clearly marks him out as the Caesar, but what is of particular importance is the legend on Licinius’ coin: LICINIVS AVG OB D V FILII SVI. The meaning of the D V is uncertain, but a few explanations are substantiated by the probable circumstances of the issue: it is probably a phrase referring to Licinius’ *decennalia* and the *vicennalia* of

<sup>112</sup> <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk>, LSA-2653 (U. Gehn). cf. CIL 3.5206. Findspot: Celje / Celeia.

<sup>113</sup> RIC VII, Nicomedia, nos. 42 (r.) and 41 (l.). Obv. (r.): D N VAL LICIN LICINVS NOB C. Obv. (l.): LICINIVS AVG OB D V FILII SVI. Rev (r.): IOVI CONSERVATORI CAES (SIC V/SIC X).

<sup>114</sup> The bowl, from Nis (an area that had been under Licinius’ control), is in the British Museum, ID 1969,0904.1: [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=61548&partId=1&](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=61548&partId=1&)

Licinianus, which the medallions were clearly commemorating.<sup>115</sup> Whatever the exact meaning of the phrase, the coin marks one of the few times where kinship terms were used explicitly on coinage. The reigns of father and son—and prayers for their continued rule—were clearly promoted through these medallions and through the rest of the numismatic output from the eastern mints.

It seems likely that Licinianus' status as an imperial heir was promoted in other forms of media as well. R. R. R. Smith discusses the dynastic implications of the statuary of Licinius and Licinianus. He notes that that the "corpulent physiognomy" of Licinius (heavy-jowled and smiling) was also reflected in his son. In terms of the portraiture on the medallions that have just been discussed (fig. 4.7), Smith says that Licinianus is presented "as a plump-cheeked, round-faced boy in an obvious junior version of his father's image."<sup>116</sup> This can also be seen, to some degree, in a damaged statue head which Smith has potentially identified as that of Licinianus (fig. 4.9) compared to that of his father (fig. 4.10).<sup>117</sup>



Fig. 4.9: Head of Licinius II. Edincik.

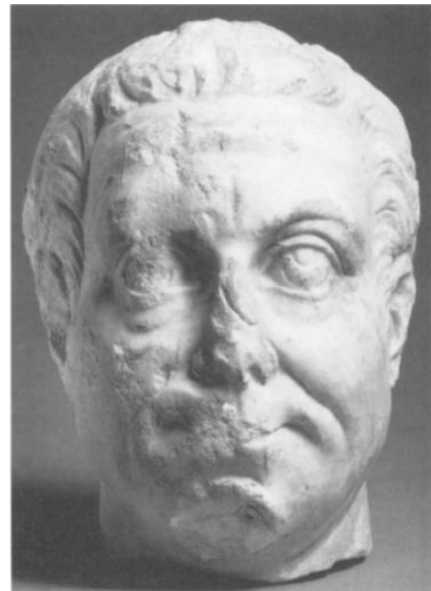


Fig. 4.10: Head of Licinius. Canberra.

Furthermore, Licinius' portrait upon which Licinianus' was based (which Smith says shows "strong personal individuation") was visually opposed to the style preferred by Constantine.<sup>118</sup> At the same time, the "boy-portraits of Licinius II and Constantine II put out in the early 320s made the same point in a junior register: opposed personal and physiognomical styles became

<sup>115</sup> Bruun (1966) 662 gives two possible readings for the obverse legend: *D(ecennalia) v(ota) filii sui* and *ob d(iem) V [annorum] filii sui*. He prefers the latter, because of a parallel with a medallion of Licinius from a silver plate reading *Licinius invict(us) Aug(ustus) ob diem X anorum*.

<sup>116</sup> Smith (1997) 190.

<sup>117</sup> Identified as Licinius by Smith (1997) 189-190.

<sup>118</sup> Smith (1997) 191. Smith deems Licinius' portraiture as "tetrarchic" at various points (cf. especially 188), referring to the dating of the artistic style rather than a political identification.

opposed dynastic styles.”<sup>119</sup> In short, the individualization important to both dynasties during the period between 317 and 321—which has been seen in the different choices made in the eastern versus the western mints—was manifested in portraiture as well, to the extent that some of the father’s features were attributed to the son programmatically.

To some degree this may be explained as realism, but it may also be realism which was “visually enhanced as a statement of distinctive character.”<sup>120</sup> Certainly the depiction of Licinianus from the Constantinian mints is stylistically as well as physiognomically different than the portraits examined by Smith (see **figs. 4.1, 4.3**, compared to the eastern portrayal in **fig. 4.7**). Most important for the present discussion is the fact that Smith attempts to identify a number of Licinian marble portraits which seem to be based upon the same model, and that these portraits were found at various places across the empire.<sup>121</sup> It is difficult to trace the same for Licinianus outside of coinage (where he does appear frequently), but if the same were true, then this would add to the picture that Licinianus was being celebrated as his father’s son, imperial heir, and future emperor. It is important not to place too much emphasis on the evidence of statuary, however, as identification is unreliable—for instance, it is often impossible to identify individual portraits of the members of the First and Second Tetrarchies.<sup>122</sup>

It was perhaps the visibility of Licinianus’ promotion that made his death an inevitability. He was killed, possibly along with his father in 325, or else a year later in 326.<sup>123</sup> If the latter, his death may also have coincided with that of the teenaged Crispus.<sup>124</sup> It was clearly important for the security of Constantine’s dynasty that all potential rivals were eliminated and Licinianus, through his mother, had connections to the Constantinian dynasty that could not be overlooked as easily as Licinius’ connection as a brother-in-law. The death of Licinianus also marked the end of any claims of imperial legitimacy by members of the Tetrarchic dynasties outside of the families descended from Constantius I.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Smith (1997) 191.

<sup>120</sup> Smith (1997) 191.

<sup>121</sup> Smith (1997) 171-179; 187-191.

<sup>122</sup> Hannestad (1988) 306-307. Smith (1997) 180 and Elsner (2005) 261 discuss in terms of the artistic stylings of Licinius and Constantine as compared to Tetrarchic art.

<sup>123</sup> Pohlsander (1993) 160 n. 40, against Barnes (1981) 214 on the dating of Licinianus’ death. Cf. Orosius 7.28.26 (*Nam Crispum filium suum et Licinium, sororis filium, interfecit.*); Jer. *Chron.* 231d: *Crispus filius Constantini et Licinius iunior Constantiae Constantini sororis et Licinii filius crudelissime interficiuntur..*)

<sup>124</sup> cf. Pohlsander (1984) for a relatively balanced discussion of Crispus’ death.

<sup>125</sup> It is worth noting here, as a postscript to this section, the question of Licinius’ assumed illegitimate son, a personage derived from a reading of the Theodosian Code in which a son of ‘Licinianus’ is sent to the mines: *Cod. Theod.* 4.6.2-3; cf. Corcoran (1993) 117; Barnes (1982) 44; PLRE 1.509-510 s.v. Val. Licinianus Licinius 4. Licinius was not an uncommon name, as inscriptions show, but Corcoran discusses the unlikelihood of this rescript referring to an actual hitherto unknown illegitimate son of Licinius. Corcoran (1993) 117 concludes that

#### 4. LICINIUS' CO-EMPERORS

The joint rule of Licinius and Constantine marks a period of intensive construction of imperial legitimacies based around dynasticism, as well as competition between dynasties in which the establishment and promotion of heirs played an important role. It is because of this intensified focus on dynastic interests that the elevations of the non-dynastic co-emperors, especially Valens and Martinianus, seem so strange. It is worth exploring the place of these co-emperors in the political atmosphere of the time of their elevations in order to better understand their function. It is also important to notice the problems with exploring the short-lived reigns of these co-emperors, especially the issue of evidence. Knowledge of Bassianus' elevation survives only in a single source, the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris*, with no surviving material evidence such as coins or inscriptions to support this text's narrative, which may cast doubts upon the story's veracity.<sup>126</sup> The reigns of Valens and Martinianus appear in various authors and on coinage, and their persons are slightly better attested outside of their brief imperial statuses.<sup>127</sup> Valens was a *dux limitis* (a military commander) before his elevation,<sup>128</sup> and Martinianus was a *magister officiorum*, a high-ranking civilian official.<sup>129</sup>

There is a worrying discrepancy in the evidence concerning these later two emperors, however. The *Origo* calls both of them Caesars (other texts are noncommittal on the exact rank; e.g. Aurelius Victor says Martinianus *in imperium cooptato*, 41.9), but the coinage proclaims them both as Augusti.<sup>130</sup> Zosimus says that Valens was made a Caesar after the flight from Cibalis (and he does not mention Martinianus).<sup>131</sup> More recent scholarship, such as Barnes and Lenski, rightly sides with the evidence from the coinage.<sup>132</sup> The elevations of these men are

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“the easiest solution is to suppose that the son of Licinianus is no relation of Licinius at all”, and this is the best solution to this unnecessary problem.

<sup>126</sup> Elliott (1992) suggests that the affair is mentioned by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 10.8.5, *Vita Const.* 1.50.2), but the references are so vague that they can hardly support the *Origo*'s narrative.

<sup>127</sup> TEXTS: Valens: *Origo* 5.17-18; Ps.-Vict. 40.2, 40.9; Zos. 2.19.2-2.20.1; Petr. Patr. fr. 207. Martinianus: *Origo* 5.25, 5.28-29; Ps.-Vict. 41.6-7; Zos. 2.25.2, 2.28.2; Aur. Vict. 41.9. COINAGE: Valens: RIC VII, Alexandria no. 19, Cyzicus RIC VII 7 ((IMP C AVR VAL VALENS P F AVG/IOVI CONSERVATORI reverses). Martinianus: RIC VII, Nicomedia nos. 45-47 (as D N M MARTINIANVS P F AVG), Cyzicus no. 16 (as IM CS AR MARTINIANVS P F AVG). all bronze, IOVI CONSERVATORI reverses.)

<sup>128</sup> PLRE 1.931 s.v. Aur. Val. Valens 13; Barnes (1982) 15. On the *duces*, see Jones (1964) 44-49.

<sup>129</sup> PLRE 1.563 s.v. Martinianus 2; Barnes (1982) 15; Lenski (2005) 88 n. 89. It is noted there that Martinianus was the first *Magister Officiorum* known to Petrus Patricius. On the title of *magister officiorum* and Martinianus, see Jones (1964) 103, 368-369.

<sup>130</sup> As noted by e.g. Barnes (1982) 15; Lenski (2005) 87 n. 83. Others, e.g. Stephenson (2009) 181 erroneously follow the texts.

<sup>131</sup> Zos. 2.19.2: Οὐάλεντα Καίσαρα παρ' αὐτοῦ μετὰ τὴν ἀπὸ Κιβάλεως φυγὴν καταστάντα. Cf. also Zos. 2.20.1: ...Οὐάλεντα δὲ τὸν ὑπὸ Λικιννίου Καίσαρα καθεσταμένον ἀναيرهθῆναι, τῶν συμβεβηκότων κακῶν αἰτίων εἶναι λεγόμενον.

<sup>132</sup> Even if their narratives do not directly mention the coinage as the basis for their assumptions. Lenski (2005) 74, 76; Barnes (2011) 101-102, in a discussion on the *Origo*'s use of the term 'Caesar'.

problematic within the context of the dynastic emphasis of this period, but it is easier to understand if we accept that they were indeed Augusti rather than Caesars. They were both made emperors as a result of the stress of war and Licinius' need for loyal commanders to support his regime. Making them Caesars would have not just indicated their inequality—and we have seen that Augusti could be considered unequal, especially if one owed their elevation to another, as with the case of the Dyarchy. Making Valens and Martinianus Caesars would have threatened the status of Licinius II as Licinius' heir, a status that was inherent in the position of Caesar. It is also worth remembering that there was no need to be a Caesar before one became an Augustus: Licinius himself is an excellent example of this, as is (arguably) Maximian.

It is also important that the elevation of Valens was presented by the sixth-century writer Petrus Patricius as an insult to Constantine. The fragment in question gives the account of an envoy, one Mestrianus, who comes to negotiate peace between Licinius and Constantine. Constantine's purported reply is significant:

“We did not bring things to the present state of affairs nor did we... arrive here to be unwilling, on account of his abominations, to have our own relative as a colleague and to renounce the bond of kinship and to admit into the sovereignty with him a no-account slave.”

Οὐχ οὕτω μέχρι τοῦ παρόντος διαγενόμεθα, οὐδὲ διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ ὠκεανοῦ μέχρι τῶν ἐνταῦθα πολεμοῦντες καὶ νικνῶτες ἀφικόμεθα, ὥστε μὴ ἐθέλῃν τὸν οἰκεῖον γαμζπὸν κοινωνὸν ἔχειν διὰ τὰ μύση αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀγχιστεῖαν ἀπαγορεύειν, εὐτελὲς δὲ ἀνδράποδον μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰ βασίλεια προσδέξασθαι.<sup>133</sup>

Licinius is specifically stated to be a relative of Constantine's as well as a colleague. The elevation of Valens—a man who, unlike Licinius, has no bonds of kinship to tie him to Constantine—is perceived as an insult precisely for this reason, the lack of kinship. Clearly, Licinius' status and relationship to Constantine was something of a bargaining chip, as was shown in Constantia's mediation between her brother and her husband.

The situation of Bassianus in 316, however, was different than that of Valens and Martinianus, precisely because he was a relative of Constantine: his brother-in-law, husband of Constantius' and Theodora's daughter Anastasia. The *Origo* also says that Bassianus was made a Caesar. It is tempting to dismiss this statement straight away, arguing that if Valens and Martinianus were incorrectly stated to be Caesars, then Bassianus' role was also not Caesar.

<sup>133</sup> Petr. Patr. fr. 207. Trans. Banchich (2015).

This argument should be considered in more depth, however, as the situations were drastically different. Since Bassianus was a relative by marriage of Constantine, he was not someone who could be called a “slave”. Secondly, when he was elevated, the dynastic settlement of the Caesars had not yet been made: Crispus was a boy, but Constantine II had not yet been born and it is possible that Bassianus’ elevation was entirely due to a political manoeuvre by Constantine to gain the upper hand against Licinius because of the birth of Licinianus. Indeed, this is the argument made by Barnes, who originally postulated that “Constantine’s plan was surely designed to preclude Licinius’ newly born son from the imperial succession by nominating his own son and his brother-in-law as Caesars: in the new tetrarchy, as in the old, there would be no room for a fifth emperor...”<sup>134</sup> Barnes later restates his argument in less definitive terms, though still asserting (without evidence) that Crispus was made a Caesar at the same time.<sup>135</sup> The evidence of coinage indicates that in fact, Crispus was not made a Caesar until the same time as Constantine II, in the dynastic arrangement of AD 317.

Even aside from the debatable rank of Bassianus and the confusion about Crispus’ elevation, the argument does not stand. The new imperial college after the war clearly shows that neither Constantine nor Licinius seemed to consider the four-member college as sacrosanct. The elevation of Bassianus should not necessarily be seen as a way of keeping Licinius’ son out of the imperial college, but a pre-emptive strike to gain the upper hand in the relationship between Licinius and Constantine. If Bassianus was a co-Augustus linked by marriage to Constantine, instead of merely his Caesar, this arrangement would be even more powerful.<sup>136</sup> Constantine already had at least one heir: Crispus. He did not need Bassianus—even if, somehow, having two Caesars compared to Licinius’ one made him more powerful.<sup>137</sup> This argument is not enough to say that Bassianus was certainly an Augustus instead of a Caesar, but it calls into question Constantine’s motives for making him a Caesar (if indeed he did so). Admittedly, at this point in 316, Bassianus could have been made a Caesar—an adult heir—without directly competing with pre-existing Caesars since Crispus had not yet been made a Caesar. This can be compared to the elevations of Constantius and Galerius, who were not elevated in addition to pre-existing (young) Caesars. The whole scenario is so strange that

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<sup>134</sup> Barnes (1981) 66.

<sup>135</sup> Barnes (2011) 102 “It seems probable, therefore, that the *Origo* preserves a muddled and incomplete account of a plan under which Bassianus was to be co-opted into the imperial college at the rank of Caesar together with Constantine’s son Crispus.”

<sup>136</sup> As Lenski (2005) 73 states: “Far from representing an attempt to revive the Tetrarchy, however, the proposal must have been designed to help Constantine secure control over his succession with a dynastic ally.”

<sup>137</sup> Though it is worth noting that Constantius was not made Caesar until after Licinius’ defeat, even though he was apparently born a year after Constantine II, so perhaps it would have instigated unrest if Constantine had elevated another Caesar after the settlement had been made.

perhaps its very existence should be questioned, as it appears only in the *Origo*. But it is equally futile to base arguments about the nature of Licinius and Constantine's relationship and political manoeuvring on the story of Bassianus until more information can be confirmed about his status. This examination of Licinius' co-rulers, however, also shows that the literary sources, for whatever reason, defaulted to calling new-made emperors Caesars instead of Augusti, which is in itself interesting for discussions of imperial power in this period.

## 5. LICINIUS AND *IMPIETAS*

After death, Licinius received the same treatment as Maxentius and Daza before him: the posthumous characterization as a *tyrannus* and persecutor.<sup>138</sup> His name was erased from inscriptions, such as on milestones in his own territories.<sup>139</sup> His legislation was retroactively condemned and erased, and he was called a *tyrannus* in laws that survive in the Theodosian Code.<sup>140</sup> Even Constantine's choice to build his new city at Byzantium may have been influenced by his victory and the need to erase Licinius' legacy. Byzantium had likely been one of Licinius' imperial residences, and much as Constantine had done with rewriting the memory of Maxentius in Rome, Byzantium was reformulated and refounded as a wholly Constantinian city.<sup>141</sup> In fact, as Barnes points out, Constantine's erasure of Licinius' name and presence was even more dramatic: he destroyed the old city completely in order to create the new.<sup>142</sup>

Nonetheless, Licinius' characterization as a *tyrannus* employs some features that are not present in depictions of Daza and Maxentius, and these are important to our understanding

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<sup>138</sup> Note that Corcoran (1993) 103 says it is unfair to term Licinius a *tyrannus*; Humphries (2008) 85-87 points out that as the term *tyrannus* is usually applied retroactively to "emperors who had been defeated in civil war", it is accurate in the case of Licinius as well.

The tropes are familiar from previous discussions of Daza and Maxentius. Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* is the most detailed picture of Licinius as a *tyrannus*. There, Licinius is portrayed as greedy (1.52, 55.2), sexually licentious (1.53.1), harsh and cruel (specifically in legislation, 1.54.2-55.1), and permitting (though not himself committing) the rapes of married women and young virgins (1.55.3). See also *Origo* 5.22: "During the interval before the civil war began, but while it was in preparation, Licinius gave himself up to a frenzy of wickedness, cruelty, avarice and lust; he put many men to death for the sake of their riches, and violated their wives." *Per tempora quibus nondum gerebatur bellum civile, sed item parabatur, Licinius scelere, avaritia, crudelitate, libidine saeviebat, occisis ob divitias pluribus, uxoribus eorum corruptis*. Trans. Rolfe (1952).

Nor is this characterization limited to the Christian authors; Aurelius Victor compares Licinius unfavourably with Constantine, even claiming that "Licinius carried out tortures reserved for slaves in unlimited numbers even on innocent philosophers of noble rank." Aur. Vict. 41.5: *Licinio ne insontium quidem ac nobilium philosophorum servili more cruciatus adhibiti modum fecere*.

<sup>139</sup> Harries (2012) 117; Humphries (2008) 98-99, cf. Grünwald (1990) 244-46, nos. 418, 424-425, 426-427.

<sup>140</sup> Corcoran (1996) 275-292; Corcoran (1993) 99; cf. *Cod. Theod.* 15.14.1.

<sup>141</sup> Harries (2012) 121; Potter (2013) 240 (not in same context); although Barnes (1982) 80 initially suggested Nicomedia; he later noted Licinius' involvement in the city in (2011) 112, cf. Stephenson (2009) 192-194; 339.

<sup>142</sup> Barnes (2011) 111-113.

of Licinius' relationship to Constantine. In Eusebius, this relationship was especially used to denigrate him—specifically how he abused and broke the bonds of family between them.<sup>143</sup> This disregard for the bonds of kinship has been seen above, in the fragment from Petrus Patricius on the elevation of Valens (see **IV.4**). It is in Eusebius, however, that this rhetoric of kinship and the disregard for it is taken furthest. This is seen most clearly when Eusebius is enumerating Licinius' misdeeds:

[Licinius] had been privileged with a connection by marriage to so great an Emperor as Constantine...yet he attempted to follow their [the Tetrarchs'] policy rather than terms of friendship with his superior. He therefore waged constant war against his benefactor, and had no regard in his mind for laws of friendship, oaths, kinship, or treaties. That most generous man had provided him with tokens of good will by granting him the privilege of sharing his paternal descent and the ancestral imperial blood by joining him in marriage to his sister ...

...ὅς εὖ φερομένης τῆς ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ Κωνσταντίνου τε τοσοῦτου βασιλέως ἐπιγαμβρίας ἠξιομένος [...] τούτων ἔπεσθαι τῇ γνώμῃ μᾶλλον ἢ ταῖς τοῦ κρείττονος φιλικαῖς δεξιαῖς ἐπειρᾶτο. πόλεμον δ' οὖν ἄσπονδον πρὸς τὸν εὐεργέτην αἴρεται, οὐ φιλικῶν νόμων οὐχ ὀρκωμοσιῶν οὐ συγγενείας οὐ συνθηκῶν μνήμην ἐν διανοίᾳ λαμβάνων. ὁ μὲν γὰρ φιλανθρωπότατος εὐνοίας αὐτῷ παρέχων ἀληθοῦς σύμβολα, τῆς ἐκ πατέρων συγγενείας βασιλικοῦ τ' ἀνέκαθεν αἵματος κοινωνὸν γενέσθαι ἠξίου γάμῳ τὴν ἀδελφὴν συνάψας[.]<sup>144</sup>

Eusebius makes no attempt to hide the relationship between Constantine and Licinius, as he had done with Constantine's other relationships (i.e. to Maxentius and Maximian.) Instead, he uses it against the defeated emperor to show that one of Licinius' worst traits was breaking the bonds and conventions of their brotherhood. He ignores the "laws of friendship" and "kinship" and (in Eusebius' version of events) instigates the wars by attacking Constantine. Much like the posthumous characterizations of Maxentius, Daza, and Maximian, Licinius demonstrates a form of familial *impietas*, this time towards his brother-in-law.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Previously Licinius had been favorably treated in Eusebius' account in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Licinius' victory over Maximinus, at least in an earlier edition: Elliott (1992) 223f, 228.

<sup>144</sup> Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.49.2-50.1. Trans. Cameron & Hall (1994). See also Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 10.8.3-4, the wording of which is extremely similar to this passage.

<sup>145</sup> See especially Lactantius and the *Panegyrici Latini* for the characterizations of these men as showing *impietas* towards their family members. See **II.4.iii** (Daza), **III.5.i** (Maxentius), **V.3.i** (Maximian) for further discussions of this theme.



Most interesting as well is that in this passage, Eusebius says that Constantine “grant[ed] [Licinius] the privilege of sharing in his paternal descent and the ancestral imperial blood.” First, Eusebius implies that Constantine was ‘more legitimate’ than, or at least superior to, Licinius because of his ancestry—his descent from Constantius is meant here, as this lineage had already been discussed earlier in Book 1.<sup>146</sup> Secondly, the suggestion that Constantine could somehow “share” this lineage with Licinius—while not exactly possible in terms of Roman kinship and law—is fascinating in that it adds weight (in Eusebius’ narrative) to connections that were constructed, such as those of marriage and the relationship between brothers-in-law. Thirdly, it is clear that Eusebius wants Licinius’ reign to appear as though it was based upon the good will of Constantine, i.e. that Constantine (his benefactor, εὐεργέτης) allowed him to rule alongside him. It is their kinship that allows this sharing of power.

Nowhere in this narrative is Licinius the ‘equal’ of Constantine; instead, his claims to imperial power are presented as entirely based upon both his relationship with Constantine and Constantine’s good will in sharing the empire with him. In throwing away these kinship bonds and oaths, Licinius—according to Eusebius’ rhetoric—is also setting aside his legitimacy to rule. The Tetrarchs are mentioned with regard to Licinius a few times (such as in 1.50, where they are referred to as “the ungodly”, δυσσεβῶν), but Eusebius discusses them to highlight Licinius’ foolishness in not ignoring their fates, not as a source of legitimacy.<sup>147</sup> Although mentioning Licinius’ elevation at the hand of one of the instigators of persecution might have made further unfavourable connections and cast a disparaging light upon him, Eusebius carefully does not mention any other potential source for Licinius’ imperial legitimacy, such as Diocletian or Galerius. In the *Vita Constantini*, Licinius owes his imperial rule to Constantine alone, and is thus proven unworthy of holding power due to his rejection of his relationship with Constantine. Eusebius’ version is, of course, suspect; it implies that Licinius chose to ‘disqualify’ himself, by Eusebius’ reasoning. In actuality, Licinius’ claims to rule were more complicated, as has been shown, and he could rely upon other legitimization claims outside of his relationship with Constantine.

The evolution of the portrayal of Licinius can be seen when comparing Eusebius’ account to that of Lactantius, whose *De Mortibus Persecutorum* pre-dates the *Vita Constantini* by at least 20 years. Christensen argues that, as favourable as Lactantius was towards Constantine, the same can be said for his portrayal of Licinius.<sup>148</sup> Even the rather dark last few

<sup>146</sup> Especially Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.13-21.

<sup>147</sup> cf. Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.52.6.

<sup>148</sup> Christensen (1980) 29.

chapters of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, in which Licinius eliminates all the extended family members of the Tetrarchic emperors including the virtuous Valeria, is presented as a good, or at least as a necessary evil, for it meant the wholesale destruction of the families of the persecutors.<sup>149</sup> Lactantius also represents Licinius as a “proto-Christian”, especially in his war against Daza, where he prays to the “Summe, sancte deus” after receiving a message from an angel.<sup>150</sup> Notably for our previous discussions of Licinius’ ideology, this apparition and prayer are presented in direct opposition to Daza’s prayers to Jupiter. The war against Daza is followed by the account of the so-called “Edict of Milan”, the law granting religious freedom, which again sets Licinius up as a protector of Christians, albeit not directly as a Christian himself.<sup>151</sup> Harries calls Lactantius’ careful technique here “masterly”, noting that he does not directly connect Licinius to the Christian God, but instead heavily implies that his success was due to God’s benefaction.<sup>152</sup>

This careful association set up by Lactantius is undone by the events which followed the publication of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* (and the probable death of Lactantius, as he did not edit the work as Eusebius was able to do with the *Historia Ecclesiastica*.)<sup>153</sup> In the wars against Constantine, blame for the war is laid upon Licinius’ shoulders because of his renewal of persecution—but only in Eusebius’ narrative and those who follow him.<sup>154</sup> In all the other major sources, a renewed persecution is omitted entirely.<sup>155</sup> Whether the war was instigated by Licinius or by Constantine, what matters is the outcome; Licinius’ defeat meant that the narrative could be rewritten. Like Daza and Maxentius before him, Licinius was painted by Eusebius as a persecutor as well as a *tyrannus*.

## 6. CONCLUSION

It is vital to compare Licinius’ reign and ideology to Constantine’s in order to fully understand the developments in collegiality and dynastic legitimacy during the period of their

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<sup>149</sup> Christensen (1980) 30-31; cf. Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 52.3. But note that this characterization is still debatable; for example, Corcoran (1993) 99 mentions how even in Lactantius, Licinius “still emerges in a rather sinister light as both miserly and cruel.”

<sup>150</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 46.3-6.

<sup>151</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 48.

<sup>152</sup> Harries (2012) 111-112.

<sup>153</sup> Though Barnes (2011) 106 cites Lact. *Div. Inst.* 1.1.13-16 to suggest that Lactantius added the passage to invite Constantine to “rescue” Licinius’ Christian subjects.

<sup>154</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 10.8.8-18; expanded in *Vita Const.* 1.55.1-1.59.2, 2.1.1-2.3.

<sup>155</sup> It does not appear as a reason in the *Origo*, Zosimus, Aurelius Victor, Pseudo-Victor, or Eutropius. Barnes (2011) 105, although he follows Eusebius’ narrative, terms Licinius’ actions “repressive policies” rather than persecutions.

joint rule. Collegiality and competition are the key ideas present during this time of innovations and reworkings of techniques used to express dynastic legitimacy on coinage, in inscriptions, and in texts. Later authors view the conflict between them as inevitable, but it is important to closely examine the picture of cooperation and the methods used to create and promote this picture—and the Caesars provide the key.

On the Caesars, Frakes writes that “These links helped Constantine and Licinius to rule as co-Augusti... once again following Diocletian’s pattern of shared empire. Nevertheless, they also cleaved to the older, dynastic model when each chose his son or sons as Caesars...”<sup>156</sup> Yet the picture throughout this thesis so far has been one in which imperial colleges (even Diocletian’s) and imperial families are very closely linked, and often even the same. The Constantinian-Licinian college and family is no different. This is clearly seen in the promotion of the Caesars together as well as under the specific ideologies of the two branches of the family. Even the elevation of temporary co-emperors in times of crisis does not undermine this image, because they were given the status of junior co-rulers, not of dynastic sons and heirs. The titles of Augustus and Caesar had meaning and implications beyond mere rank.

The relationship between the two emperors was also presented as familial in a range of sources, and often employed to denigrate Licinius as an ‘oath-breaker’—specifically a breaker of familial oaths and loyalties. The relationship could also be turned against Constantine to the same effect; Constantine was also said to have broken his oaths to his sister Constantia when he assassinated his deposed brother-in-law Licinius. The *Origo* does not preserve a similar accusation against another unlucky relation, Bassianus, but it is undeniable that Constantine had a history of ignoring the implied bonds of kinship against his relatives; Maxentius must be included here as a third ill-fated brother-in-law. The picture that emerges from ancient sources is that the relationship between Licinius and Constantine, and its breakdown, was not merely imperial and collegial, but particularly familial.

Licinius and Constantine represent simultaneously a unified imperial family as well as two opposing dynasties. The concepts of family and collegiality should not be separated, just as they were not in the sources that survive. It was Constantine’s dynasty that was ultimately successful, but because of his military might, not the strategies employed by his regime over Licinius’. Likewise, Licinius’ dynasty failed, not because of some perceived lesser strength of his dynasty or a lack of basis for his claims to legitimation, but because he lost the Battle of Chrysopolis in 324.

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<sup>156</sup> Frakes (2005) 93.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### Constantine

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Constantine, the son of the illegal intercourse of a low woman with the emperor Constantius, and whose previous ambition to be emperor was intensified now that Severus and Maximinus had gained the honour of Caesar, decided to leave the place where he was and to join his father Constantius ...It so happened that the emperor Constantius died just then. His soldiers, thinking none of his legitimate children worthy of the purple and seeing Constantine in good health, and also excited by hopes of magnificent rewards, conferred the rank of Caesar on him.

Κωνσταντῖνος ἐξ ὀμιλίας γυναικὸς οὐ σεμνῆς οὐδὲ κατὰ νόμον συνελθούσης Κωνσταντίῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ γεγεννημένος, ἤδη μὲν ἔχων ἔννοιαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ βασιλείας, εἰς μένος, ἤδη μὲν ἔχων ἔννοιαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ βασιλείας, εἰς μείζονα δὲ καταστάς ἐπιθυμίαν ἀφ' οὗ Σεβήρος καὶ Μαξιμῖνος τῆς τοῦ Καίσαρος τιμῆς ἔτυχον, ἔγνω τοὺς τόπους λιπεῖν ἐν οἷς ἔτυχεν διατρίβων, ἐξορμηθεῖν δὲ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα Κωνσταντίον... Συμβὰν δὲ τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Κωνσταντίον ἐν τούτῳ τελευτῆσαι τῷ χρόνῳ, τῶν μὲν ὄντων αὐτῷ γνησίων παιδῶν οὐδένα πρὸς βασιλείαν ἔκριναν ἀξιοχρεῶν, ὁρῶντες δὲ Κωνσταντῖνον εὖ ἔχοντα σώματος οἱ περὶ τὴν ἀλλήν στρατιῶται, καὶ ἅμα δωρεῶν μεγαλοπρεπῶν ἐπαρθέντες ἐλπίσιν, τὴν τοῦ Καίσαρος ἀξίαν αὐτῷ περιέθεσαν.

Zosimus, *Nova Historia* 2.8.2, 9.1.<sup>1</sup>

The account of Constantine's accession in this passage from the sixth-century pagan writer Zosimus is flavoured by a hostility rarely found in other sources. The basics of the accepted historical narrative of Constantine's accession are still there: Constantine is with Constantius at the latter's death, and is proclaimed emperor by the soldiers. It is interesting that Zosimus says that Constantine was specifically chosen by the soldiers over Constantine's 'legitimate' siblings (Constantius' γνησίων παιδῶν). These points will be discussed later, but first I wish to focus on the brunt of Zosimus' hostility, the claim that Constantine was an

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<sup>1</sup> Trans. Ridley (1981), adapted.

illegitimate son of Constantius, born from Helena (here simply a γυναικός) from a union that is more literally translated as ‘neither solemn nor lawful’ (ἐξ ὀμιλίας... οὐ σεμνῆς οὐδὲ κατὰ νόμον συνελθούσης). Zosimus later elaborates on this claim when he compares Maxentius’ lineage with that of Constantine, born from an undistinguished mother (ἀσέμνου μητρὸς).<sup>2</sup>

The truth of the circumstances and status of Constantine’s birth is unclear from the sources that survive.<sup>3</sup> The *Origo* calls Helena Constantius’ first wife (*priore uxore*) twice in quick succession, and also comments that she was of very low birth, a *matre vilissima*.<sup>4</sup> For Eutropius, possibly the first to write about Helena’s origins,<sup>5</sup> Constantius’ marriage to Helena was also a *matrimonio obscuriore*.<sup>6</sup> Pseudo-Victor states only that Constantine was the son of Constantius and Helena (*Constantii imperatoris et Helenae filius*) without providing details.<sup>7</sup> It is more typically the later sources, like Zosimus, who seem to make the claims of illegitimacy; it is likely that these sources follow a version from Eunapius.<sup>8</sup> For instance, Philostorgius calls Helena “a common woman no better than a harlot” (φαύλης τινὸς γυναικὸς καὶ τῶν χαμαιτύπων οὐδὲν διαφερούσης).<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the *Chronicon Paschale* reports in vague terms that Constantine was Constantius’ son “by another union (τινὸς μίξεως) with Helena”, but later calls Constantine “the bastard whom Constantius had by Helena” (ὁ νόθος ἐξ Ἑλένης αὐτῷ γενόμενος).<sup>10</sup> In the Christian Latin tradition, Jerome calls Helena a concubine

<sup>2</sup> Zos. 2.9.2.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed look into the sources, see especially Drijvers (1992) 15-19.

<sup>4</sup> *Origo* 1.1-2: “...for he put away his former wife Helena and married Theodora, daughter of Maximianus, by whom he afterwards had six children, brothers of Constantine. But by his former wife Helena he already had a son Constantine, who was later the mightiest of emperors. This Constantine, then, born of Helena, a mother of very common origin...” *Relicta enim Helena priore uxore, filiam Maximiani Theodoram duxit uxorem, ex qua postea sex liberos Constantini fratres habuit. Sed de priore uxore Helena filium iam Constantinum habuit, qui postea princeps potentissimus fuit. Hic igitur Constantinus, natus Helena matre vilissima...* (trans. Rolfe 1952).

<sup>5</sup> Drijvers (1992) 15.

<sup>6</sup> Eutropius 10.2: “Certainly Constantine, after Constantius’ death, his son from an obscure marriage, was made emperor in Britain...” *Verum Constantio mortuo Constantinus, ex obscuriore matrimonio eius filius, in Britannia creatus est imperator...*

<sup>7</sup> Ps.-Vict. 41.2. It is worth noting that Aurelius Victor does not mention Helena at all.

<sup>8</sup> Barnes (2011) 34; Blockley (1981) 2. Blockley (1981) 26 also offers the rather acidic comment: “Had Eunapius’ *History* survived complete, it would probably appear that Zosimus has preserved most of what was valuable in it.”

<sup>9</sup> Philostorg. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.16a.21-23: “Constantine, however, was born to him from Helena, a common woman no better than a harlot, and that while he had not yet become Caesar but was still of private station.” ὁ δὲ Κωνσταντῖνος ἐξ Ἑλένης αὐτῷ γέγονε, φαύλης τινὸς γυναικὸς καὶ τῶν χαμαιτύπων οὐδὲν διαφερούσης, καὶ ταῦτα μήπω γεγονότι Καίσαρι ἀλλ’ ἐν ιδιώτου τυγχάνοντι σχήματι. (Trans. Amidon 2007). C.f. Barnes (2011) 34, also Drijvers (1992) 16: “Philostorgius may be referring here to the sexual servitude of *stabulariae*.”

<sup>10</sup> *Chron. Pasch.* 516-517 Dindorf: “For Constantine, who was emperor after Diocletian and his partners, was son to this Constantine by another union, with Helena. ...Constantius died after being Celtic emperor for 13 years, and his son Constantine, the bastard whom he had by Helena, succeeded him; for the children borne to him by Theodora were infants.” ὁ γὰρ Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ μετὰ Διοκλητιανὸν καὶ τοὺς μετ’ αὐτοῦ βασιλεύσας ἐξ ἑτέρας τινὸς μίξεως ὑπῆρχεν αὐτῷ Κωνσταντίῳ παῖς ἀπὸ Ἑλένης. ... Κελτῶν δὲ βασιλεύσας Κωνσταντίος ἐπὶ ἔτη γ’ ἀπέθανεν, καὶ διεδέξατο αὐτὸν ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ νόθος ἐξ Ἑλένης αὐτῷ γενόμενος· οἱ γὰρ ἀπὸ Θεοδώρας αὐτῷ τεχθέντες μικροὶ ὑπῆρχον. On the sources of the *Chronicon Paschale*, see Whitby & Whitby

(*concupina*) but also an *uxor* (which Drijvers here interprets as similar to *concupina*),<sup>11</sup> while Ambrose calls her a *stabularia* (suggested to be, in this context, an innkeeper, or at least someone belonging to a low social class).<sup>12</sup> The later tradition which would represent Helena as a “virtuous innkeeper”, reflected a change in the status of elite women—she could be simultaneously an *Augusta* and a *bona stabularia*.<sup>13</sup>

Two important sources from the reign of Constantine are missing from this debate: Eusebius and Lactantius. Despite his praise of Helena as Constantine’s mother in his account of her death, Eusebius does not explicitly mention Constantius and Helena’s matrimonial status.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* makes no mention of Constantine’s mother in any way, nor of Constantius’ marriages in general. There is no doubt in Eusebius’ and Lactantius’ narratives that Constantine is Constantius’ son,<sup>15</sup> but Lactantius and Eusebius either feel no need to explain Constantius’ marital situation or they carefully gloss over the question entirely. That the truth was uncertain even in the ancient and medieval world can be seen from the discussion by the twelfth-century historian Zonaras’ account:

Constantine was born to his father from the blessed Helena, about whom the writers disagree and are discordant and among them there is no consensus as regards her. For some say that she dwelt with Constans by ordinance of marriage, but was sent away when Maximian Herculius, as has previously been said, betrothed to him his daughter Theodora and appointed him Caesar. Others have reported that she was not Constans’ legitimate spouse, but a diversion of his erotic desires, and that it was actually from that that Constantine was conceived.

ὁς ἐκ τῆς μακαρίας Ἑλένης γεγέννητο τῷ πατρὶ, περὶ ἧς διαφωνοῦσιν οἱ συγγραφεῖς καὶ παρ’ αὐτοῖς τὰ περὶ ταύτης οὐχ ὁμολόγηται. οἱ μὲν γὰρ τῷ Κώνσταντι νόμῳ γάμου φασὶν αὐτὴν συνοικεῖν, ἀποπεμφθῆναι δέ,

(1989) xvii-xviii: “It [CP] appears to be derived ultimately from an expanded Constantinopolitan consular list, written in Latin, which incorporated some 3rd and 4th-c. Alexandrian information...this text provided the framework to which were added isolated long passages from Malalas, some material from Eusebius, and a collection of Arian (and other) notices that appear in Theophanes.”

<sup>11</sup> Drijvers (1992) 17-18: “a woman who has a relationship with a man and lives with him under the same roof without being formally wedded to him”, but he also notes that the term *concupine* was not necessarily pejorative in this context (p. 18); Jer. *Chron.* 228g: “In the 16th year of his reign Constantius died in Britain at York; after him his son Constantine, born from the concubine Helena, takes possession of the empire.” *Constantius XVI imperii anno 2 diem obiit in Britannia Eboraci, post quem filius ejus Constantinus ex concubina Helena procreatus, regnum invadit.*

<sup>12</sup> Ambrosius, *De Ob. Theod.* 42; cf. Drijvers (1992) 15-16 and Barnes (2011) 34-35.

<sup>13</sup> Harries (2002) 273.

<sup>14</sup> Euseb. *Vita Const.* 3.46; see also Cameron & Hall’s comment (1994) 196: “Helena, Constantine’s mother, whom he had married early and presumably divorced (though some sources claim that she was merely his mistress or concubine...is not mentioned, despite the eulogistic section about her at VC III.”

<sup>15</sup> For instance, c.f. Lactantius 18.10; 24.3, 8-9.

τοῦ Μαξιμιανοῦ Ἐρκουλίου, ὡς ἔμπροσθεν εἴρηται, τὴν οἰκεῖαν παῖδα τὴν Θεοδώραν τούτῳ κατεγγυήσαντος καὶ ἀναδείξαντος Καίσαρα· οἱ δὲ οὐ γαμετὴν αὐτὴν γενέσθαι νόμιμον τοῦ Κώνσταντος ἰστόρησαν, ἀλλὰ πάρεργον ἐρωτικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῦτον δὴ συλλαβέσθαι τὸν Κωνσταντῖνον.<sup>16</sup>

Helena is not mentioned in the panegyrics, and she and Constantius do not appear on coinage during the same periods, but she is represented as the wife (*uxor*) of *divus* Constantius on a few inscriptions.<sup>17</sup> The legitimization claims of Constantine's rivals are not challenged regarding their mothers (except that Lactantius certainly uses Galerius' mother against him in accusations of paganism and barbarianism).<sup>18</sup> The earlier sources do not use Helena to impugn Constantine, though Eunapius (visible through Zosimus) would imagine Maxentius doing so.<sup>19</sup>

The uncertainty of the sources is reflected in modern scholarship. Taking Zosimus' side (though not basing his argument on this passage), Bill Leadbetter has argued that “the invention of Helena's marriage to Constantius swiftly became history within the canonical narratives of Constantine's reign,” and that such a marriage had never even existed.<sup>20</sup> Yet the most fervent champion against Constantine's bastardy and arguments like Leadbetter's is Timothy Barnes, who first argues that Helena's origin was not so *vilissima* as is often reported,<sup>21</sup> and then that the marriage did in fact exist.<sup>22</sup> Jan Willem Drijvers' approach is more measured, arguing against Barnes that while Constantius and Helena's union would not have been legal, it would not necessarily have been objectionable: “Helena and Constantius lived in concubinage and nobody would have raised any objection to this.”<sup>23</sup> To some extent, these two different arguments are predicated on not only the possibility of Constantine's bastardy but on a related question—when Constantius' marriage to Theodora took place.<sup>24</sup> But if Constantius' marriage

<sup>16</sup> Zonar. 13.1.1. Trans. Banchich (2009).

<sup>17</sup> CIL 10.1483; Boll. Arch. (1994) 27: *Piissimae d(ominae) n(ostrae) / Augustae Helenae / matri d(omini) n(ostri) / victoris semper / Aug(usti) Constantini et / aviae dd(ominorum) nn(ostrorum) Caess(arum) / beatissimorum / u(c)xori divi Cons(tantii) ordo et po(pulus) civitatis Saepini.*

[http://www.edr-edr.it/edr\\_programmi/res\\_complex\\_comune.php?do=book&id\\_nr=EDR134304&partId=1](http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/res_complex_comune.php?do=book&id_nr=EDR134304&partId=1)

<sup>18</sup> Lact. 9.2, 9; 11.1.

<sup>19</sup> Zos. 2.9.2.

<sup>20</sup> This is the topic of the whole of Leadbetter (1998a); the quotation is from (1998a) 81.

<sup>21</sup> Barnes (2011) 30-33.

<sup>22</sup> Barnes (2011) 33-38. Cf. Grant (1993) 16 for a perhaps pointed comment on this scholarly debate (although not pointing at any historian in particular): “some modern authorities refuse to accept this view [lack of legal marriage], out of a pious determination to regard Constantine as legitimate.”

<sup>23</sup> Drijvers (1992) 18; see also this page for Drijvers' arguments against Barnes.

<sup>24</sup> This issue has been brought up before, especially in **I.4.i**. To summarize, Leadbetter's argument that Constantius was not married to Helena is based upon Leadbetter's desire to show that Constantius was married to Theodora before 293. The problem arises, as Leadbetter sees it, when the sources equate Constantius' marriage to Theodora with his elevation to Caesar; Leadbetter (1998a) 82. Barnes has no such compunctions about combining the two traditions; in his view, Constantius was legally married to Helena and then divorced her at some point before 289



to Theodora is not dependent on whether or not he was legally married to Helena, the debate is then reduced once again to whether Constantine was a bastard or not—and this does not seem a question that can be adequately answered.

Lactantius' silence on the matter may be the most telling evidence of all. Either the circumstances of Constantine's birth were potentially embarrassing, in which case they were left out—which is pure conjecture—or they were deemed unimportant, a matter omitted along with much of the detail from the beginning of Diocletian's reign.<sup>25</sup> I propose that for the matter of Constantine's bastardy, we follow Lactantius' lead and give no verdict. Ultimately, the status of Helena or the question of her 'marriage' did not matter to Constantine's presentation of his legitimacy: he was a son of Constantius, and that fact is never questioned. Certainly, Helena became important to Constantine's regime after the death of Fausta, and she was raised to the rank of Augusta (see **5.iii**), but women were not involved in Tetrarchic legitimation to a large extent (see **II.4.ii**). It was Constantius who formed the basis for the most prominent legitimation strategies from Constantine's regime, especially in the periods of his joint rule. None of the ancient authors debates Constantine's descent from Constantius; there is no attempt, even in the most hostile sources, to deny those claims in the same way that Maxentius' descent from Maximian was challenged by Constantine's own regime (see **III.1**).

It is impossible to say what the truth was, but in fact the 'truth' does not matter to Constantine's dynastic claims, nor to Helena's later elevation to Augusta. To argue that Helena's rehabilitation indicates the creation of a fictive legitimacy, as Leadbetter does,<sup>26</sup> is to put too much emphasis on the lateness of Helena's inclusion on coinage, when in reality she appears at the same time as Fausta.<sup>27</sup> Her appearance should therefore be connected to the decision to promote these women to *Augustae* rather than a specifically matrilineal legitimation claim. Leadbetter also links the 'story' to the invented kinship with Claudius Gothicus; this too is a non-sequitur—Claudius Gothicus first appeared on coins in 317 or 318, Helena in 324.<sup>28</sup> These points against Leadbetter only undermine his argument; they do not, however, necessarily support the opposing theory. It is enough to say that Constantine portrayed himself as the son of Constantius and Helena—though, as mentioned, not simultaneously. All these

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to marry Theodora; Barnes (2011) 38-41. It is worth questioning whether it even would have mattered; gone were the days when the emperors were taken from the elite senatorial classes—as Barnes (2011) 33-34 points out himself, though he clearly does not believe the question to be of little importance. Cf. Drijvers (1992) 17-18.

<sup>25</sup> Lactantius does not often fill in the narrative from before 303, when the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* truly begins.

<sup>26</sup> See the aforementioned quote from Leadbetter (1998a) 81: "the invention of Helena's marriage to Constantius swiftly became history within the canonical narratives of Constantine's reign."

<sup>27</sup> And relatively late in her life: Hekster (2015) 314; Harries (2012) 120 n. 70; Bardill (2012) 258.

<sup>28</sup> Hekster (2015) 231 notes that Helena's promotion far outweighed Claudius'.

claims have some grounding in reality, but it is the presentation and use of them that is important for this thesis.

Expanding upon this introduction's exploration of legitimacy-by-birth, **Section 2** will further examine the early years of Constantine's reign, exploring the promotion of his relationship with Constantius and his place in the Tetrarchy—legitimation claims which have been presented as inherently opposite, but which could, in fact, work together. **Section 3** will examine Constantine's place amongst the western 'Herculii' and his alliance with Maximian. Constantine's dynastic links to past emperors will be further explored in **Section 4** through an examination of the commemoration of his divine imperial ancestors, which underlined many of his claims to legitimacy versus his various rivals. **Section 5** will discuss the *securitas* of dynastic legitimation and collegiality through the promotion of the Caesars and of Constantinian women, and the inclusion of Constantine's extended family, ending in a study of the dynastic murders of 337 after Constantine's death in **Section 6**. Constantine's claims to dynastic legitimacy were irrevocably tied up with the different imperial colleges of which he was a member, from Maximian's 'Herculian' college to the 'Constantinian Pentarchy' of 335-337. As with previous imperial colleges discussed throughout this thesis, explicitly dynastic techniques were used to promote the *concordia* of these colleges and the individual members of them. Some of these sections will recall discussions in other chapters, where Constantine has been a major figure but has not yet been the main study. In the previous chapters, I have tried to allow other emperors' self-representations and posthumous characterizations the centre stage. In this chapter, it is finally Constantine's turn.

## 2. CONSTANTINE AS CAESAR

Even Zosimus agrees that Constantine became an emperor in 306, but the exact circumstances of the earliest months of his reign incite as much debate as the circumstances of his birth. The scenario is roughly the same in all the sources but with some varying levels of drama: Constantine is present at Constantius' deathbed—often after a fast-paced ride from Galerius' clutches in the east—and is chosen by the troops to be Constantius' successor.<sup>29</sup> In truth, it is generally agreed that he arrived several months before Constantius' death and campaigned alongside him in Gaul and Britain.<sup>30</sup> The daring dash across the empire is probably

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<sup>29</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 24.8; *Origo* 2.4; Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.21-22, *Hist. Eccl.* 8.13.12; Aur. Vict. 40.2-4; Ps.-Vict. 41.2-3; Zos. 2.8.3, 2.9.1.

<sup>30</sup> Barnes (2011) 62 says Constantine arrived as early as 305; cf. Stephenson (2009) 116; Lieu & Montserrat (1996) 41. Lenski (2008) 257-8 suggests early in 306. Not all agree; cf. Harries (2012) 42-43 does not question the

only a dramatization, and despite some insubstantial arguments that Constantine's return to his father's side means that Galerius must have authorized his departure,<sup>31</sup> the true circumstances were probably more mundane. Showing a break between Constantine and Galerius was important for some narratives, Lactantius' included.

The early years of Constantine's reign are thus rhetorically manipulated to the extent that it is difficult to disentangle truth and political spin. As Potter notes, these different versions of Constantine's elevation (here specifically the 'escape' from the east) "all serve a purpose—to question the legitimacy of Galerius, to impugn the character of Severus, to conceal the amount of time that Constantine had with his father before his death (the less time, the less likely it could be that his proclamation was the result of an extensive conspiracy as opposed to the spontaneous act of soldiers, as the event was presented), and to make Constantine appear decisive, clever, and brave."<sup>32</sup> Thus, in the ancient sources, the truth of the story was twisted to reflect the concerns of the author's narrative, or even of the emperor himself. Galerius was painted as the conniving villain, Constantius as the noble father not long for this world, Constantine as the perfect successor whose claims Galerius was trying to obstruct.<sup>33</sup> The picture of conflict that survives in the sources does not need to be true.<sup>34</sup> Both Constantius and Galerius played important roles in Constantine's imperial beginnings. The following section will explore the different perspectives of the sources: first of Constantine's legitimacy as derived from popular acclamation by the soldiers due to his position as Constantius' son, and secondly of his role in Galerius' imperial college.

### **i. Constantius' Son, Constantius' Army**

What is clear from the literary evidence is that in all the accounts of Constantine's elevation, Constantius plays the most important role, but he was not the only legitimising factor. In several accounts, military support seems to be another vital cog in the machine of

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narrative of Lactantius. The evidence for the early arrival comes from statements that Constantine fought against the Picts with his father, cf. *Origo* 2.2.

<sup>31</sup> Stephenson (2009) 116, 330; supported by Barnes (2011) 62-63.

<sup>32</sup> Potter (2013) 112. Cf. Barnes (2011) 61: "Constantine deliberately distorted and misrepresented this episode [traveling to Constantius] for propaganda purposes, and it is his false version of events that dominates the surviving literary sources." In a caveat to Barnes, it is impossible to say whether Constantine himself, his regime, or those who wrote about his ascension were responsible for these narrative elaborations.

<sup>33</sup> Leadbetter (2009) 156ff excellently deconstructs the picture of Constantius as an invalid.

<sup>34</sup> But cf. Leadbetter (2009) 129-169. One of his primary arguments of two full chapters near the beginning of the book is that Galerius was able to gain power at the expense of Maximian and Constantius. Even if this argument is true, we should not necessarily buy into the sources' picture that there was conflict between Constantine and Galerius from the beginning.

Constantine's legitimation. But the two—dynastic legitimacy and popular or military acclamation—could work hand-in-hand, and did in several accounts. This section will explore Constantine's claims to legitimacy through both his dynastic links to Constantius and the support of his father's army, often simultaneously.

In the Zosimus passage above there is clearly a dichotomy set up between Constantine and Constantius' other 'legitimate' children by Theodora,<sup>35</sup> elevating the side of the family from which Julian was descended (Zosimus and Eunapius were extremely favourable to Julian and his regime<sup>36</sup>). It is certain that these children would have had more dynastic claims to choose from: an ancestry from Maximian as well as from Constantius.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps it was this ancestry that benefited the Caesar Delmatius, Constantine's nephew, in 337, and thereby threatened his rivals, Constantine's own sons (see 6.ii). It may be also that Constantine could have been threatened by his half-brothers' claims; Drijvers suggests that "according to the law of succession Constantine had fewer rights than the children produced by the marriage of the lawfully wedded Constantius and Theodora."<sup>38</sup> Although most sources ignore the proverbial elephant in the room, some authors use the children to support their rhetoric. In Eusebius, these children are presented as a choir around Constantius' deathbed, implicitly supporting Constantine's claims over theirs.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps following on from Zosimus' narrative, Zonaras also mentions the other children, but instead of saying only that the soldiers preferred Constantine, he claims that the children "were judged by their father to be unsuited for sovereignty."<sup>40</sup> This idea explicitly promotes Constantine's legitimacy from his dynastic lineage rather than from popular or military acclamation as well as explicitly denying the claims of the Theodoran line. It was Constantine's position as Constantius' eldest (and only adult) son, as well as his presence

<sup>35</sup> These children were three sons (Flavius Delmatius, Julius Constantius, and the short-lived Hannibalianus) and three daughters (Constantia, Anastasia, Eutropia). Cf. Barnes (2011) 41-42. Van Dam 2007 92 suggests probable explanations for the names of these sons: Dalmatius/Delmatius (the latter is how the name appears on coinage) because Constantius had once governed Dalmatia; Julius Constantius was a reminder of Constantius' previous name; Hannibalianus was possibly a maternal grandfather. Delmatius and Hannibalianus were also the names of Constantius' grandchildren, the sons of Flavius Delmatius.

<sup>36</sup> Blockley (1981) 8, 21-22; cf. Eunapius Fr. 8.1. On this passage in particular, see Burgess (2008) 18.

<sup>37</sup> Although, it is uncertain whether Theodora was Maximian's daughter by an early marriage or a step-daughter; most sources say the latter. Barnes 1982 pp. 33-4, 37 argues for daughter, following the *Origo* 1.2, Philostorg. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.16a, and suggestions by *Pan. Lat.* 10.11.4. Compare to the sources that suggest step-daughter: *Aur. Vict.* 39.25; *Eutrop.* 9.22; *Ps.-Vict.* 39.2, 40.12; *Jer. Chron.* 225g. See I.4.i.

<sup>38</sup> Drijvers (1992) 19; cf. Van Dam (2007) 109 who suggests that the other sons would have been considered 'more legitimate' than Constantine.

<sup>39</sup> Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.21.2: "He gave instructions to his sons and daughters, who gathered round him like a choir, and in the palace itself, on the imperial couch, he handed over his part of the Empire by natural succession to the senior in age among his sons, and expired." και δὴ τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὸν διατάττετο, υἱοῖς θ' ἅμα καὶ θυγατράσι συνταξάμενος χοροῦ δίκην αὐτὸν κυκλοῦσιν, ἐν αὐτοῖς βασιλείοις ἐπὶ βασιλικῇ στρωμνῇ, τὸν κληρὸν τῆς βασιλείας νόμῳ φύσεως τῷ {τῇ ἡλικίᾳ} προάγοντι τῶν παίδων παραδούς, διανεπαύσατο.

<sup>40</sup> Zonar. 12.33.

at his father's deathbed, that permitted his initial success. His relationship with Constantius would continue to be a factor that could be used for legitimation strategies when needed for much of the first half of Constantine's reign and beyond.

Zosimus' account of the soldiers' preference for Constantine is undoubtedly cynical, with the suggestion that the soldiers hailed him as emperor in "hopes of magnificent rewards" (δωρεῶν μεγαλοπρεπῶν...ἐλπίσιν).<sup>41</sup> The Panegyric of 310 strikes an altogether different tone, as one would expect from the genre, with the panegyrist proclaiming that after Constantius' death, "the whole army agreed upon you, and the minds and eyes of all marked you out."<sup>42</sup> The military's apparent preference for dynastic continuity is important here,<sup>43</sup> and certainly Zosimus' mention of the soldiers' "rewards" may be a clue as to the reason why such acclamations were traditional, though soldiers could surely expect rewards from anyone they acclaimed emperor. Less cynically, if Constantine had been campaigning with Constantius in Gaul and Britain for a year, he was no doubt familiar to his father's army. Additionally, he was no stranger to military matters. It certainly seems that before his return to the west he had had military training at Diocletian's court in Nicomedia, and may have served in Galerius' army.<sup>44</sup>

Yet military support does not feature prominently in all accounts. Aurelius Victor, although he does not mention the soldiers specifically, states that Constantine assumed imperial power with the support of all (the idea of *consensus omnium*),<sup>45</sup> and the *Origo's* account is similar.<sup>46</sup> Eutropius says only briefly that Constantine succeeded Constantius.<sup>47</sup> Even in some longer accounts, the army does not seem to be a legitimizing factor. Eusebius only shows the army's support for him more generally, not actually in making him emperor—that is, legitimation by popular acclamation, but not by military might.<sup>48</sup> The emphasis in Eusebius is on Constantine's role as the son of Constantius, and the right to rule that stems from that relationship. Lactantius represents the situation similarly; in his account Constantius "commended Constantine to the soldiers" and "transmitted the imperial authority to him with

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<sup>41</sup> Zos. 2.9.1.

<sup>42</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.8.2: ...*uniuersus in te consensit exercitus, te omnium mentes oculique signarunt et.*

<sup>43</sup> Lendon (1997) 254; Börm (2015) 242; Williams (1985) 209.

<sup>44</sup> Barnes (2011) 47, 51-56, (1982) 41-42; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 197 n. 16. Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 7.5.3ff, 6.3.3; Euseb. *Vita Const.* 4.1.2; *Origo* 2.2-3.

<sup>45</sup> On Constantine and *consensus*, see Ando (2000) 397-398. On *consensus* and accession on the Tetrarchy and Constantine more broadly, see MacCormack (1981) 168-185.

<sup>46</sup> *Aur. Vict.* 40.4: ...*cunctis qui aderant, annitentibus imperium capit. Origo* 2.4: *Constantinus omnium militum consensu Caesar creatus.* Cf. *Ps.-Vict.* 41.3, which adds an interesting touch, that Crocus, King of the Alamanni, was especially prominent amongst Constantine's early supporters and urged him, along with all who were present, to take *imperium*.

<sup>47</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 10.2.

<sup>48</sup> Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.22, *Hist. Eccl.* 8.13.12.

his own hands”.<sup>49</sup> The panegyrics also reflect the picture of imperial power passing from father to son: “for manifestly you were chosen, O Emperor, by your father’s vote.”<sup>50</sup> It is worthwhile to note that the sources generally most complimentary of Constantine—and, at least for Lactantius and Eusebius, most denigrating of the Tetrarchic college—are the ones who transmit the narrative of Constantine’s receiving imperial power directly from his father, rather than through his father’s army. After all, Diocletian had been proclaimed emperor by the army in 284, and more recently, Maxentius had been elevated by his praetorian guards. No doubt Lactantius and Eusebius would have wished to avoid such associations. Potter certainly goes too far when he suggests that “popular acclamation was a divinely inspired act, meaning that Galerius’ promotion of Maximinus in 305 could be seen as a usurpation.”<sup>51</sup>

These literary accounts support the interpretation of Constantine’s legitimacy as primarily (but not exclusively) stemming from Constantius, partly because it fits into the authors’ carefully constructed narratives. The evidence of the coinage, however, also lends some support to this reading. Although Constantine’s north-western mints (predominantly Trier, but also London and possibly Lyons) continued to issue the ‘Tetrarchic’ GENIO POPVLI ROMANI coinage and its variations,<sup>52</sup> they also began a programme of producing a variety of legends and types that were largely unique to Constantine. These included an early emphasis on reverses of Mars Pater as *Conservator* and *Propugnator*, Sol Invictus as *Comes*, and also—importantly—for Constantine as a *Princeps Iuventutis*. The low-denomination *Princeps Iuventutis* coinage begins early, in 306-307 in the western mints, and continues until around 313; this is supplemented by gold issues at Trier for this same period (**fig. 5.1**).<sup>53</sup> While

<sup>49</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 24.8: *At ille incredibili celeritate usus pervenit ad patrem iam deficientem, qui ei militibus commendato imperium per manus tradidit.*

<sup>50</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.4. This account also includes aspects of divine legitimation as well: *Pan. Lat.* 6.7.3-4: “Jupiter himself extended his right hand to him. What is more, he was immediately asked his opinion as to whom he would decree the command, and he spoke as befitted Constantius Pius...” *...Ioue ipso dexteram porrigente. Quin immo statim sententiam rogatus cui imperium decerneret, dixit ut decebat Constantium Pium...* C.f. also *Pan. Lat.* 6.4.1: “You entered this sacred palace, not as a candidate for empire, but as Emperor designate, and straightaway the household spirits of your father recognized you as his legitimate successor. For there was no doubt but that the inheritance would fall to him whom the Fates bestowed upon the Emperor as eldest son.” *Sacrum istud palatium non candidatus imperii sed designatus intrasti, confestimque te illi paterni lares successorem uidere legitimum. Neque enim erat dubium quin ei competeret hereditas quem primum imperatori filium fata tribuissent.*

<sup>51</sup> Potter (2013) 113.

<sup>52</sup> London has GENIO POP ROM for Licinius alone in 312-313 (no. 249); Trier also from 310-313 for Daza and Licinius (nos. 844a-853); and Ostia from 312-313 for all emperors (nos. 73-78). Ticinum has GENIO POPVLI ROMANI for Constantine and nominally Daza in 312-313 (nos. 115-119); Rome has GENIO POPVLI ROMANI but for all three emperors significantly (nos. 287-296b). Aquileia has the more Galerian GENIO AVGVSTI for all emperors in 312-313 (nos. 130-132). All references from RIC VI.

<sup>53</sup> All from RIC VI: Bronze: London nos. 111-2, 214-233, 263-8; Trier no. 679-680, 733b-735, 743, 780-787, 835-841a, 842-3; Lyons nos. 244-5, [270], 273, 298-301, 305-6. Gold, including medallions and fractions: Trier no. 615, 627, 755, 796-7, 801-807, 814, 822.

the type had been in use for the other Caesars intermittently under the previous Tetrarchic colleges, under Constantine the type reaches new levels of visibility. It was also expanded at certain points to include other emperors, for example in Lyons in 307-8, where Daza, Maxentius, and (rather oddly) Galerius were included—in the next issue, Constantine is once more the only one to receive this legend.<sup>54</sup>



Fig. 5.1: Medallion of Constantine as *Princeps Iuventutis*.<sup>55</sup>

It has been previously established that the *princeps iuventutis* type is tied primarily to the position of Caesar as a dynastic heir—Chapter One (I.2.iii) establishes the links between the type and the position of Caesar, Chapter Two (II.2.i) discusses the use of the type for Daza and (to more a limited extent) Severus, and Chapter Three (II.2.iii) links the type to Maxentius’ *Princeps Invictus*. In all previous discussions, I have argued that the type carries connotations of dynastic legitimacy. The evidence of the Constantinian coinage further supports this view. The prevalence of the *princeps iuventutis* type in the years 306-313 shows a marked preoccupation of Constantine’s regime with promoting the new emperor as son and heir.

This is further supported by the commemoration coinage to *Divus Constantius* from the north-western mints: Lyons minted CONSECRATIO in late 306-early 307, and Trier followed suit. From 307-308, these mints, as well as London, changed to the legend MEMORIA FELIX and Ticinum and Aquileia minted MEMORIA DIVI CONSTANTI, disseminating a more

<sup>54</sup> The inclusion of Galerius may not be entirely random, however—the mint of Lyons during this period seems to almost juvenilize Galerius, minting to him as MAXIMIANVS IVN AVG to distinguish him from Maximian Herculius, and he is IVN AVG on this coin in question (no. 272). Certainly, the *princeps iuventutis* reverse type was suitable for Galerius at one time, and had been issued for him when he was a Caesar. Perhaps this inclusion of Galerius as a *princeps iuventutis* alongside the other dynastic heirs was part of this programme of presenting Galerius as specifically junior to Maximian. At any rate, the rarity of the Galerius coins to the others is R<sup>2</sup> compared to scarce and rare classifications for the others, so although rarer, it was likely not a ‘misprint’. Compare RIC VI, Lyons nos. 272-275 with nos. 299-301. The Lyons mint is very difficult to interpret, but will come under more detailed scrutiny in V.3. For Daza see also Trier no. 733a, 841b.

<sup>55</sup> RIC VI, Trier no. 802. IMP CONSTANTINVS P F AVG / PRINCIPI IVVENTVTIS. Medallion (1.5x solidi).

cohesive message across the mints.<sup>56</sup> Commemoration coinage, specifically *consecratio*, had an implicitly dynastic message, as MacCormack points out: “An emperor would divinise his recognized predecessor and acknowledge the divinization of earlier emperors as a declaration of his own legitimacy and policy, which often meant a dynastic policy.”<sup>57</sup> It also was an act of *pietas*, a tradition stemming back to Augustus’ divinization of Julius Caesar, but MacCormack argues that the divinization of Constantius and the subsequent legitimacy this divinization offers was different, extending not only to Constantine but potentially to Constantine’s successors.<sup>58</sup> *Divus Constantius* would appear again in 318, alongside others of Constantine’s deified imperial ancestors.<sup>59</sup>

Yet these demonstrations of dynastic legitimacy do not have to be seen as ‘anti’ Tetrarchic.<sup>60</sup> Daza’s inclusion in the *princeps iuventutis* type at Constantinian mints, at least nominally, potentially recognizes his claim to be the son of an emperor. The ancient and modern accounts which present Constantine as non-Tetrarchic from the beginning should not be accepted without question.<sup>61</sup> Either they purposefully set Constantine up as dissimilar from his fellow emperors—his introduction in the succession conversation in Ch. 18 of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* is an excellent example of this—or else they retroject the outcome onto the beginning, i.e. they see hints of Constantine’s future alliances and eventual sole rule even in his acclamation. It is also important to remember that Constantius was initially a Tetrarch, and was not set apart from the other Tetrarchs until later narratives, like Lactantius’ and

<sup>56</sup> All coins RIC VI. CONSECRATIO: Trier no. 809 (gold, c. 310-313); Lyons nos. 202, 251, MEMORIA FELIX: London no. 110; Trier nos. 789-790. N.B. MacCormack (1981) 101 on the term *consecratio* and its commemoration of a specific event: the funeral.

<sup>57</sup> MacCormack (1981) 105.

<sup>58</sup> MacCormack (1981) 105-106, and especially 110: “Because Constantius reached heaven *love ipso dexteram porrigente* [*Pan. Lat.* 6.7.3], by the consent of the gods, not the consent of humans, the dynastic claim arising from his divinization was more pronounced than it had been in the case of earlier emperors. The divine approval which Constantius attained at death could at once be extended not only to his successor, who was praised as being like him, but also to his descendants at large.” MacCormack’s argument here is based around her exploration of the changes to *consecratio* following the accession of Diocletian (“as a result of Diocletian’s reformulation of the position of the emperor in this life”) that “the verdict of humans ceased to matter”.

<sup>59</sup> He appears in panegyric as well, such as in the poems of Optatian Porphyrius: *Carm.* 10.v.i., 15.13; Wienand (2012) 234.

<sup>60</sup> Although, of course, as has been mentioned above, *consecratio* was employed in both dynastic contexts and non-dynastic alike; cf. Decius’ commemoration coinage: MacCormack (1981) 105-6: “*Consecratio* became an act of *pietas* on the part of an emperor’s successor and thus lost its religious and objective validity.” Cf. Ando (2000) 207-209; Hekster (2015) 223.

<sup>61</sup> Scholars present different points for detecting a “break” between Constantine and the Tetrarchic ‘system’, though the Panegyric of 310 and the introduction of the Claudius Gothicus ‘lineage’ is a popular point of reference: Leadbetter (2009) 94-95; Ando (2000) 248; Drake (1975) 21. Cameron (2006) 23 goes earlier, suggesting Maximian’s death as the breaking point. Lenski (2016) 31 says it was Galerius’ death that allowed Constantine to “move definitively away from the tetrarchic pose”. Rarely, however, do these historical approaches view Constantine fully as a member of the Tetrarchy, cf. Cameron (2006) 23: Constantine from 306-310 “alternately played the loyal member of the tetrarchic apparatus and the dynastic successor.” The two could, as I argue, be combined.



Eusebius'.<sup>62</sup> It is therefore useful to explore Constantine's presentation as a Caesar of Galerius' Tetrarchy in both literary and numismatic evidence.

## ii. Galerius' Caesar

It has previously been shown (II.1) how Lactantius presents Constantine and Daza as opposites and rivals for the position of Caesar of the East, highlighted by the dramatic sweeping aside of Constantine in Daza's favour. But this rivalry does not exist to the same degree in other material. The coinage from the western mints under Constantine's control does not exclude Severus and Daza. In fact, Daza seems to have been included, however nominally, in issues on various types from Constantinian mints throughout the period of 306-313—even on a solidus from c. 312 alongside Constantine and Licinius.<sup>63</sup> At least at first, Constantine's mints present him as a member of Galerius' imperial college, and as simultaneously the son of Constantius and as a Tetrarchic Caesar.

In many of the ancient sources and the modern scholars that follow them, the focus on Constantine as the son of Constantius and the narrative of the passing on of imperial power serves as a way of eliminating the need for Galerius to be a part of Constantine's early legitimisation. In the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, although Constantine sends an imperial portrait to Galerius, it is unclear whether Constantine seeks the eastern Augustus' approval, or whether it was a show of power.<sup>64</sup> Galerius reluctantly accepts Constantine into his imperial college, but only at the rank of Caesar. Lactantius is very specific about the insult concerning ranks: "Galerius ordered Constantine to be called not emperor (*imperator*), as he had been appointed, but Caesar along with Maximinus, thus demoting him from second into fourth place."<sup>65</sup> Lactantius is careful to insinuate that Constantine's authority does not derive from Galerius, in order to suggest that Constantine should have been equal in rank to Galerius from the beginning, and to pave the way for Constantine's eventual assumption of the title of Augustus in 307 to be viewed as inevitable and legitimate. Regarding Constantine's place in the new 'Third Tetrarchy', there is never any question of a relationship, whether collegiate or adoptive,

<sup>62</sup> See Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 8.7; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.13.12-13.

<sup>63</sup> RIC VI, Trier no. 817b. Dated by Sutherland to 310-313, but 312 is the best guess—after Galerius' death and before Daza's war with Licinius. C.f. also an unusual silver issue of Sol minted for Daza, also from Trier (RIC VI no. 826).

<sup>64</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 25.1. Cf. Ando (2000) 246f, a fairly typical take on the situation where Ando states in no uncertain terms that Constantine was a "usurper" and that he found the acceptance of the Caesar title "intolerable".

<sup>65</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 25.5: ... *Constantinum vero non imperatorem, sicut erat factus, sed Caesarem cum Maximino appellari iuberet, ut eum de secundo loco reiceret in quartum*. It is possibly important that in Lactantius' specific language, *imperator* is used instead of *Augustus*; see **Intro.2.iv** on this terminology.

between Severus and his new Caesar. As far as the sources suggest, they did not have any contact or outright conflict. Narratively, Severus is set against Maxentius instead of Constantine, for Maxentius had succeeded in extending control over much of the territory under Severus' regime; Constantine's control of Gaul does not seem to have been as much of a point of contention.

A slightly different, and less antagonistic, version of Constantine's inclusion in the Tetrarchy is reflected in the Panegyric of 307—coincidentally at the point when Constantine is finally raised to the title of Augustus at Maximian's hand:

For your maturity is so great that although your father had left you imperial power nevertheless you were content with the title of Caesar and preferred to wait for the same man to declare you Augustus who so declared him. Thus indeed you judged that this imperial power would be finer not if you had acquired it as an inheritance by right of succession, but if you had earned it from the supreme Emperor as due reward for your merits.

*Cuius tanta maturitas est ut, cum tibi pater imperium reliquisset, Caesaris tamen appellatione contentus exspectare malueris ut idem te qui illum declararet Augustum. Siquidem ipsum imperium hoc fore pulchrius iudicabas, si id non hereditarium ex successione creuisses, sed uirtutibus tuis debitum a summo imperatore meruisses.*<sup>66</sup>

This version is, of course, a way of praising Maximian as much as it is an explanation of Constantine's taking of the title. Galerius has done Constantine a wrong by preventing him from holding the title of Augustus which Constantius bequeathed to him, but it is even more fitting, the panegyrist says, that Constantine receive it from Maximian. It is also carefully vague: Constantine, it suggests, did not first claim the title of Augustus (though he could have) but instead piously (though *pietas* is not referenced outright) accepted that of Caesar. His later acceptance of the title of Augustus (implied by *imperium...pulchrius*) from the *summo imperatore* (Maximian) is therefore even better.<sup>67</sup> The later Panegyric of 310 is forced to change the story somewhat because of Maximian's recent betrayal. In this panegyric, Constantine is still pious enough to have "referred to the senior rulers the question of what they thought should be done in the interests of the State", but that the soldiers who acclaimed him had already "anticipated in their eagerness what those leaders soon approved by their decision",

<sup>66</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 7.5.3.

<sup>67</sup> Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 197-198 n. 17.

going back to the point of military involvement in Constantine's elevation (not represented here as a negative).<sup>68</sup> Galerius and Maximian are both bypassed here as bestowers of imperial rank, at least in name; the reference to 'senior rulers' (*seniores principes*) is purposefully ambiguous and could also imply Diocletian's involvement at Carnuntum.

Here it is necessary to address the question of what Constantine's initial rank actually would have been—the topic of some debate. Barnes and others believe that Constantine was originally elevated to Augustus by the combined legitimation of Constantius' passing on of *imperium* and the acclamation of the troops, the two factors addressed at the beginning of this section.<sup>69</sup> It is probably unlikely that the troops would have acclaimed Constantine only as *Caesar*, which is the rank that Zosimus reports in the passage given in the introduction, though it is notable that Pseudo-Victor and the *Origo* also report this.<sup>70</sup> The only evidence for an acclamation as Caesar by the troops aside from Constantine's is from the *Historia Augusta*—the trustworthiness of which is obviously debatable—when Gordian III is made the Caesar of Balbinus and Pupienus in AD 238.<sup>71</sup> There is more evidence for a Caesar being elevated to the rank of Augustus by the support of the troops, as would happen with Julian, twenty-three years after Constantine's death.<sup>72</sup>

Other more contemporary sources definitely say that Constantine was made *Augustus* by the army, but their evidence is likewise difficult to trust outright.<sup>73</sup> Lactantius' account of the elevation is more rhetorical than straightforward: he says Constantius handed over his *imperium* to his son, and calls Constantine 'Constantinus Augustus' immediately afterwards when remarking on Constantine's attitude towards the Christians. Yet no early coins apparently survive depicting Constantine as Augustus in 306. This could be explained by the briefness of the period in question or the lack of control of a particular mint,<sup>74</sup> but it is better explained by

<sup>68</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.8.2: ...*quamquam tu ad seniores principes de summa re publica quid fieri placeret rettulisses, praeuenerunt studio quod illi mox iudicio probauerunt.*

<sup>69</sup> Barnes (2011) 62-66. Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 166; Lenski (2016) 29. Harries (2012) 43 carefully avoids the debate.

<sup>70</sup> *Ps.-Vict.* 40.1: *eodemque tempore Constantinus Caesar efficitur*; *Origo* 2.4: *Constantinus omnium militum consensu Caesar creatus.* Potter (2013) 113 goes along with these sources and says in his narrative that Constantine was elevated by the troops to Caesar.

<sup>71</sup> *Hist. Aug., Duo Max.* 20.2. "These were acclaimed Augusti by the people; and by the soldiers and the same people the little grandson of Gordian was hailed as Caesar." (*Quibus a populo Augustis appellatis per milites et eundem populum etiam parvulus nepos Gordiani Caesar est dictus.*)

<sup>72</sup> Harries (2012) 300; Lendon (1997) 261-262; Tougher (2007) 36-41. But also note that by Julian's time, there had been unequal rankings of Augustus and Caesar under the Tetrarchy and the colleges that followed for more than seventy years. It would be foolhardy to assume that the 'system' was as integrated in the minds of Constantius' troops. Of course, Caesars had existed for more than a century before the Tetrarchic college, and Caesars had certainly been elevated to Augustus before, but without the same circumstances at stake.

<sup>73</sup> Most notably Euseb. *Vita Const.* 22.1; *Hist. Eccl.* 8.13.13-14.

<sup>74</sup> The closest mint would have been London; all three northwestern mints included Constantine in 306 (though exactly when in 306 is undeterminable from dating techniques).

saying that in fact, Constantine bore no particular rank at all at his elevation. Several ancient sources, in fact, are carefully vague on the matter, choosing words like *imperator* or *imperium* instead, as we have seen.<sup>75</sup> It is to put too much emphasis and insistence on the idea of a Tetrarchic ‘system’ to say that Constantine was elevated to either *Augustus* or *Caesar* when in fact, the vaguer *imperator* is the most precise explanation.<sup>76</sup> The troops, no doubt, would have left it to the emperors to quibble over the specifics.

Discussions of Constantine’s place in the Tetrarchy, his descent from Constantius, and his elevation by the army are all entwined in modern scholarship with the question of whether Constantine was a ‘usurper’. This has been discussed previously,<sup>77</sup> but deserves a quick summary here. Humphries argues that since Constantine did not go through the ‘Tetrarchic’ route to legitimacy, e.g. through being chosen by the co-Augusti, he was technically a usurper.<sup>78</sup> MacCormack suggests that Constantine’s accession “in terms of the Tetrarchic *status quo*, was a usurpation.”<sup>79</sup> Ando says that Constantine was a usurper because he claimed the title of Augustus upon his accession.<sup>80</sup> In contrast, Barnes argues that it was Constantius’ right as the senior Augustus to appoint his son as his successor in the imperial college;<sup>81</sup> furthermore, he suggests, Constantine removed all doubts as to his legitimacy by accepting the position of Caesar within Galerius’ imperial college.<sup>82</sup> Van Dam paints Constantine as a local usurper at first, in line with the usurpers of the third century Gallic Empire.<sup>83</sup> Yet the debate is, in some ways, fruitless. Börm puts it best when he argues that it does not matter whether Constantine should be labelled a ‘usurper’ or not; the point is that he felt the need to assert his legitimacy.<sup>84</sup> Nor should this ‘need’ for legitimation be considered a mark against Constantine’s ‘actual’ or perceived legitimacy. All emperors asserted their claims to rule, and the third century had shown that the imperial office was unstable and unpredictable, no matter how long an emperor’s regime or how vocal his claims to legitimacy.<sup>85</sup> Constantine’s ‘legitimacy’ was,

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<sup>75</sup> As in Eutrop. 10.2 (*creatus est imperator*); Aur. Vict. 40.4 (*imperium capit*); and even Lactantius 24.8 (*imperium per manus tradidit*).

<sup>76</sup> For a discussion of the ‘vagueness’ of *imperator* and *imperium*, see **Intro.2.i**.

<sup>77</sup> See **Intro.2.ii**

<sup>78</sup> Humphries (2008) 87. Szidat (2015) 121-122 lists Constantine as a Gallic usurper.

<sup>79</sup> MacCormack (1981) 110.

<sup>80</sup> Ando (2000) 246.

<sup>81</sup> Barnes (2011) 63; (1981) 28.

<sup>82</sup> Barnes (1981) 29.

<sup>83</sup> Van Dam (2007) 37.

<sup>84</sup> Börm (2015) 239.

<sup>85</sup> As Börm (2015) 263 comments: “dynastic legitimacy did not protect emperors from usurpers in the least.”

more than anything, determined for posterity by his survival, his thirty-year reign, and his natural death.<sup>86</sup>

What we see from the earliest years of Constantine's reign, overall, is cooperation with Galerius and the other emperors. These co-emperors were honoured at the north-western mints under the control of Constantine's regime, just as Constantine was at mints across the empire. Yet Constantine's mints do not follow the same patterns seen elsewhere, or the patterns from Constantius' reign. Instead, they heavily promote Constantine as emperor and heir as well as minting the 'Tetrarchic' GENIO POPVLI ROMANI. These two facts—that there was both cooperation with Galerius' imperial college and that there was significant promotion of Constantine as an individual and dynastic heir—are not necessarily opposites, as is so often claimed in modern retellings of this period. Constantine could be, and was, simultaneously a 'Tetrarch' and the son of Constantius. It would be unwise to give in to the temptation to read Lactantius' narrative of antagonism into the period of Constantine's reign as Caesar, to read the individuality presented by the mints as Constantine taking advantage of his father's death to reclaim what was 'rightfully' his but had been taken from him by Galerius and Daza. It would also be unwise to assume that Constantine chafed against the Tetrarchic 'system' from the beginning, as is often represented in modern narratives.<sup>87</sup> At the same time, there is a demonstrable change towards promotion of Constantine as an individual, and this should not be omitted either. This individualization comes through more strongly after 307, when Constantine allied with other western emperors, Maximian and Maxentius.

### 3. CONSTANTINE AND MAXIMIAN

In contrast to Constantine's first year as emperor, which does not reflect a distinct break from Galerius' imperial college, the second stage of Constantine's political career shows a move towards a different locus of power focused in the West. This stage is defined by Constantine's alliance with Maximian, which began in 307 after the latter's return to power. Maximian provided Constantine with a wife, his younger daughter Fausta; a new title to claim (or reclaim), now as a co-Augustus in the West; and a new family to claim legitimacy from if he so chose, that of the western Herculii. Constantine had much to gain from a political alliance with his fellow western emperors, especially as it seemed Maximian and Maxentius' positions were strong: by mid- to late-307, when the wedding and alliance are thought to have taken

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<sup>86</sup> Keeping in mind the definition of *tyrannus* by Humphries (2008) 86-87: "a tyrannus was a failed Augustus."

<sup>87</sup> E.g., as in Ando (2000) 246-248.

place, Severus had been killed and Galerius had been successfully repelled from Italy.<sup>88</sup> It is Maximian, not Constantine, who should be viewed as the prime motivator in this alliance.<sup>89</sup> The alliance benefitted Maximian and Maxentius as much as Constantine, ensuring a neutral or friendly border to the north of Maxentius' newly expanded territory.<sup>90</sup> In many ways, the alliance can be seen as a product of Maximian's efforts to create a rival college to Galerius', one in which the Herculii controlled the west in opposition—or perhaps merely in contrast to, or in parallel with—the eastern Iovii (see **II.3.i**).

The relationship between Maximian and Constantine and the potential for the latter's legitimation that stems from it should be viewed in two separate stages: one of alliance (**3.i**) and one of separation (**3.ii**). The former is illustrated most clearly by the Panegyric of 307, given in honour of Constantine and Fausta's marriage in (probably) September of that year, and possibly at Trier or Arles.<sup>91</sup> Yet the panegyric offers more than a celebration of marriage—indeed, Fausta hardly features.<sup>92</sup> Instead, the panegyric is a masterful exercise in navigating the political atmosphere of 307, when tangible tensions flared between the eastern and western emperors.

### **i. A New Alliance and the Panegyric of 307**

The Panegyric of 307 is by far the panegyric most relevant to a study of dynastic legitimacy. The nuances of the different relationships that could be traced between Constantine and Maximian is impressive, especially when Constantius is thrown into the mix. Maximian and Constantine are newly father-in-law (*socer*) and son-in-law (*gener*). Maximian is grandfather (*avis*), Constantius father (*pater*), and Constantine son (*filius*). Metaphorically,

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<sup>88</sup> Though it is also possible to read suggestions that Galerius' campaign was still a threat from the wilful avoidance of the topic by the panegyrist of 307. Barnes (1981) 31 suggests that Galerius' campaign was around the same time as the wedding, and that the former was the impetus for the latter.

<sup>89</sup> Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 187, opposing Grünewald (1990) 26ff.

<sup>90</sup> It is worth noting that the coinage from Lyons does not match either the Constantinian mints of Germany and Britain or the Maxentian mints of Italy and North Africa. It is because of this unusual character, as well as the inclusion of Maxentius at least nominally, that has raised suggestions that Maximian's influence was strong in this region of Gaul.

<sup>91</sup> Dating: Rees (2002) 165; Barnes (2011) 64; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 180-184. Location: Rees (2002) 166 argues for Trier because Constantius (who had made his residence in the city) figures so largely in the speech, but I think Constantius' place has more to do with his being a connection between Maximian and Constantine rather than the location. Indeed, I believe Rees places too much emphasis throughout on local loyalty to Constantius playing a role in this panegyric (cf. p. 184). This, however, is not good grounds to dismiss Trier as a likely location, though Hekster (2015) 290 suggests Arles as the location based on the high number of milestones celebrating Constantine as the *nepos* of Maximian from the area; cf. Grünewald (1990) 33ff.

<sup>92</sup> Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 185: "The panegyric may celebrate a wedding...but the speech is scarcely a conventional epithalamium!"

Maximian is a new father and Constantine a new son, bound together by their relationships to *Divus Constantius*. The panegyric owes much to the panegyrics of the Dyarchy, and Diocletian, though not mentioned, must have been the elephant in the room for the panegyrist's audience.<sup>93</sup> The language and rhetoric of the panegyric deserves a detailed study; in terms of its use and manipulation of the relationships presented,<sup>94</sup> it is a masterpiece—Rees comments on the “rhetorical ingenuity” of the work, especially in light of the political unrest across the empire,<sup>95</sup> and he also notes that the language of address is grounded and literal rather than metaphysical.<sup>96</sup>

The structure of this section will depart somewhat from the usual format of this thesis in order to analyse this panegyric more closely. It will focus on particular passages to highlight important themes of dynastic legitimation that appear throughout the panegyric, in the order of their appearance in the text. This format will allow for a close reading of the panegyric, for references to these themes elsewhere in this thesis, and for the inclusion of other material or points when relevant.<sup>97</sup>

#### **a. 1.4: The marriage adds to familial harmony**

What event in human affairs could be more conducive to renown and glory, or more certain to provide security, than that there be added to your pristine harmony and your unbroken loyalty this pledge, too, venerable for its most intimate union of the highest names, inasmuch as an Emperor has given a daughter in marriage to an Emperor?

*Quid rebus humanis contingere potuit aut nobilius ad gloriam aut certius ad salute, quam quod pristinae uestrae concordiae perpetuaeque pietati hoc quoque pignus accessit, summorum nominum artissima coniunctione uenerabile, ut imperatori filiam conlocauerit imperator?*<sup>98</sup>

There are many potentially awkward problems the panegyrist has to overcome in the rhetoric of this passage, one of them being how to praise two apparently present emperors simultaneously.<sup>99</sup> He does this, unsurprisingly, by beginning with the connections between them. Ostensibly, this connection—this *artissima coniunctio*—is through the giving of an

<sup>93</sup> Buckland (2003) 182. Lenski (2016) says the Panegyric of 307 has a “tetrarchic disposition”. MacCormack (1981) 166 comments (potentially problematically): “The content of the panegyric of 307 indicates the overthrow of the Tetrarchy, but much of the ideology of the panegyric is still drawn from the Tetrarchy.”

<sup>94</sup> It is difficult to understand how Buckland (2003) 117 can argue that “there is also scant reference to Constantine’s ancestry in this speech.”

<sup>95</sup> Rees (2002) 166, 182. Cf. MacCormack (1975) 59: “The panegyric of 307 was an attempt at interpreting recent events.”

<sup>96</sup> Rees (2002) 168.

<sup>97</sup> For a discussion of various aspects of the panegyric and the alliance between Constantine and Maximian, see Nixon (1993) 229-246, who argues against Grünwald (1990) 25-41.

<sup>98</sup> All translations in this section are from, or adapted from, Nixon’s translation in Nixon & Rodgers (1994).

<sup>99</sup> Ware (2014) 91.

emperor's daughter in marriage to another emperor. Yet this marriage does not initiate the harmony between the two emperors, it merely reflects and augments it. It is striking that the language of *concordia*, which had been especially present in the Dyarchic panegyrics but not utilized as visibly in the ones to Constantius, is used again here. The union of Maximian and Constantine is a *pristina concordia*, supplemented by *perpetua pietas*, perhaps meant to recall the *concordia* of the First Tetrarchy.

The specific language here is important; many of these words and ideas will reappear throughout the panegyric. *Concordia* was a virtue vital to the presentations of imperial colleges and imperial families since the Antonines, including the Tetrarchy (see **I.4.v**, **II.2.ii**). In previous chapters, the invective of *impietas* has offered more scope for discussion than the praise of *pietas*, but here that greatest of familial virtues, epitomized by Aeneas and Roman tradition, is used to emphasize the harmony of the emperors' devotion. This is not a filial piety alone, but one which is shown by both parties to each other. Near the end of the panegyric in 13.3, the speaker would return to the importance of *concordia*: "May this relationship (*adfinitas*), which has always united the leading men in the State in harmony (*concordia*), grow firm from the everlasting stock (*perpetuis stirpibus*) of piety (*pietatis*)."<sup>100</sup> *Concordia* here rests upon the familial relationship (here specifically Constantine and Maximian's relationship by marriage, but also the relationship that already exists through Constantius), strengthened by the *pietas* which is due to family. *Stirps* also carries familial connotations, often being found referring to descendants or lineage (a figurative sprouting as the result of the relationship).<sup>101</sup> The phrase crops up again in 2.5 as specifically *imperatoria stirpe*, building upon the foundations laid in this section. The panegyrist thus begins to close the panegyric with an appeal not only to the *concordia* so important to imperial colleges and imperial families, but also by reiterating the theme of *pietas*, which comes up throughout the text. He is "figuring a political alliance in the language of personal relationships" according to Rees,<sup>102</sup> but he is also anchoring the conceptual in the reality of these relationships.

The *coniunctio* in the initial passage (1.4) is obliquely an actual marriage, but more importantly, an imperial bond. This union is explained in more depth in 1.5: "you have been so closely united, that you have so joined (*iunxisse*) not only your right hands (*dexteras*), but also your feelings and your thoughts, that, could it be done, you would each wish to enter into

<sup>100</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 7.13.3: *perpetuis profecto pietatis stirpibus adfinitas ista coalescat, quae semper summos in re publica uiros ad concordiam copulauit.* Trans. Nixon & Rodgers (1994), adapted.

<sup>101</sup> Lewis & Short, s.v. *stirps* 2.a-b.

<sup>102</sup> Rees (2002) 172.



each other's heart."<sup>103</sup> It is almost laughable, considering the wedding context, that this phrase is not describing the husband and wife, but rather the father-in-law and son-in-law. Yet this imagery of clasped right hands to symbolize a union between emperors has been used before in Tetrarchic panegyric, again to describe Maximian's relationship with a co-ruler.<sup>104</sup> The *concordia* between Maximian and Diocletian is illustrated by "joined right hands" (*iunctis dexteris*) in the Panegyric of 289,<sup>105</sup> and again in the Panegyric of 291, where the phrase is *coniunctas dexteris*.<sup>106</sup> According to Rees, the Panegyric of 307 draws heavily on these earlier Dyarchic panegyrics, perhaps partly to explain Maximian's abdication and return to rule through his relationship with Diocletian.<sup>107</sup>

Now, however, the roles have been re-cast: in 289 and 291 Diocletian and Maximian were represented as brothers and co-emperors, but in 307 Constantine is unmistakably the junior colleague.<sup>108</sup> At the same time, this *concordia* and the figurative 'marriage' between Maximian and Constantine is exclusive, shutting out the emperors of Galerius' college,<sup>109</sup> just as Carausius had been shut out by the *concordia* between Maximian and Diocletian in the Dyarchic panegyrics. Notably, through the representation of Maximian and Constantine as father-in-law and son-in-law, Maxentius is elided over; certainly, he is not mentioned.<sup>110</sup> This imagery of the joined hands and imperial *concordia* features on coinage from around the same time as the alliance, showing that this was an important message to the regime (minted in bronze for a wider audience), not just a callback to earlier panegyrics (**fig. 5.2**). The reverse shows Maximian and Constantine standing and clasping hands, and above them is the legend CONCORDIA FELIX DD NN. No doubt this is a visual portrayal of the new imperial alliance.

<sup>103</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 7.1.5: *ita uos, ita non dexteris tantum sed etiam sensus uestros mentesque iunxisse ut, si fieri possit, transire inuicem in pectora uestra cupiatis.*

<sup>104</sup> On the use of conjugal imagery to describe the relationship between emperors, Buckland (2003) 159 says that it is "a brilliant adaptation of the theme of the emperor's spouse that should be mentioned according to Menander."

<sup>105</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10.11.1: "For you rule the State with one mind, nor does the great distance which separates you hinder you from governing, so to speak, with right hands clasped." *Rem publicam enim una mente regitis, neque uobis tanta locorum diuersitas obest quominus etiam ueluti iunctis dexteris gubernetis.*

<sup>106</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 11.12.3: "...while I conjure up before my eyes your daily conversations, your right hands joined at every discourse..." *...dum mihi ante oculos pono cotidiana uestra conloquia, coniunctas in omni sermone dexteris...*

<sup>107</sup> Rees (2002) 166, 171-2, 175-6, 179.

<sup>108</sup> To illustrate this point, see MacCormack (1975) 50, who notes that in the Panegyric of 289 Diocletian is *sapienter* while Maximian is *fortiter*; this is reversed in 307 with Maximian as *sapienter* and Constantine as *fortiter*.

<sup>109</sup> Rees (2002) 179: "With the government of Maximian and Constantine figured as a marriage, there is no respect paid to the survivors of the Second Tetrarchy, Galerius or Maximinus Daia." Cf. Rees (2002) 183.

<sup>110</sup> Rees (2002) 181.



Fig. 5.2: Maximian with a reverse of imperial concordia.<sup>111</sup>

### b. 2.1: Mutual improvement

For what more precious thing could you give, or you receive, since with this marriage alliance of yours, Maximian, your youth has been renewed for you through your son-in-law while you, Constantine, have been enhanced by the name of Emperor through your father-in-law?

*Quid enim aut tu dare aut tu carius accipere potuisti, cum hac adfinitate uestra et tibi, Maximiane, per generum iuuenta renouata sit et tibi, Constantine, per socerum nomen imperatoris accreuerit?*

Continuing with his balancing act of mutual praise, the panegyrist's next technique is to show how the relationship between Maximian and Constantine benefits both emperors. There is no mention of political pressures that might sully their combined majesty; the focus is instead on more metaphorical benefits for Maximian, who can live vicariously through a renewed youth embodied in Constantine. It seems that Constantine's benefit may be a more practical one—the title of Augustus, though here only *imperator*,<sup>112</sup> perhaps out of caution. Here, it is worth noting, the 'actual' relationships are used, *socer* and *gener*. Constantine's youth is emphasized, with *iuuenta* being particularly reminiscent of the *princeps iuventutis* type which he seems to have adopted so wholeheartedly in 307. Later the panegyrist would offer another example of this mutually beneficial relationship, "The latter [Constantine] favors the former [Maximian] as he advances, while he in turn is at hand to aid the elder."<sup>113</sup> The two emperors did not necessarily have to be 'equal'—Constantine's status is seen to stem from Maximian's *auctoritas*—but they were at least now co-Augusti, as Constantius and Maximian had not been.

### c. 2.2, 2.5: Salus and Securitas: stabilizing the future through dynasty

<sup>111</sup> RIC VI, Lugdunum no. 246. AD 307-308. IMP C VAL MAXIMIANVS P F AVG / CONCORDIA FELIX DD NN.

<sup>112</sup> See previous discussions of *imperator*: **Intro.2.iv**.

<sup>113</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 7.13.3: *Fauet ille crescenti, adest iste seniori*.

And so we give you the most heartfelt thanks in the public name, eternal princes, because in rearing children and wishing for grandchildren you are providing for all future ages by extending the succession of your posterity, so that the Roman state...may at last be made strong through the everlasting roots of your house, and its Empire may be as immortal as the offspring of its Emperors is perpetual. [...] For you are propagating the State not with plebeian offshoots but with imperial stock...that the reins of our common safety not be handed down, subject to change, through new families, may last through all the ages, Emperors forever Herculian.

*Maximas itaque uobis, aeterni principes, publico nomine gratias agimus, quod suscipiendis liberis optandisque nepotibus seriem uestri generis prorogando omnibus in futurum saeculis prouidetis, ut Romana res...tandem perpetuis domus uestrae radicibus conualescat, tamque sit immortale illius imperium quam sempiterna suboles imperatorum. [...]*  
*Qui non plebeio germine sed imperatoria stirpe rem publicam propagatis...ne mutatoria per nouas familias communis salutis gubernacula traderentur, id ex omnibus duret aetatibus, imperatores semper Herculi.*

*Salus* had been mentioned by the panegyrist before, but has not yet been discussed in depth—in 1.4 (point a) the panegyrist says that the marriage and the alliance were “more certain to provide security” (*certius ad salute*)—the comparative perhaps implying that the previous connections provided security, but it is enhanced through the new relationships. Here, that point is elaborated upon more specifically in two nearby passages, which discuss the hope that the future offspring of these two emperors will provide security for the empire for years to come.<sup>114</sup> Several of the terms used here also have agricultural and nurturing undertones, e.g. *stirps*, *germen*, *radix*, *suboles*, which give the impression of a flourishing imperial house. The theme of the hope brought by offspring is visible on coinage from throughout the third and fourth centuries; *Spes*, *Salus*, and *Securitas* types were often minted for Caesars (see **I.2.iii**). In Constantine’s early reign, variations of these types were minted for Constantine himself. There is an early (306-307) gold aureus from Trier with *SPES PVBLICA*, and a medallion of

<sup>114</sup> A sentiment which Nixon deems “not in harmony with the Tetrarchic theory of appointment of the most meritorious”, Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 192 n. 3. While Maximian’s new formation of an imperial college, which is celebrated in this panegyric, is decidedly opposed to Galerius’ college, my discussions throughout this thesis have shown that dynasty and collegiality were not, in fact, at odds, even in the Tetrarchy.

SECVRITAS PERPETVAE from Aquileia dated to 312-313.<sup>115</sup> Medallions for Constantine and Securitas would continue to crop up at various points throughout his reign (fig. 5.3).



Fig. 5.3: Solidus of Constantine with reverse of Securitas.<sup>116</sup>

This passage is notable for the number of familial terms used: *liber* (child), *nepos* (grandchild), *genus* (here implying future generations), *suboles* (offspring), *stirps* (lineage), and *familia* (here family is more accurate than the broader sense of *familia* as household). The proliferation of these terms and the expressed hope for generations of imperial, not ‘plebeian’, children (*non plebeio germine sed imperatoria stirpe*, 2.5) paint a future in which this lineage thrives.<sup>117</sup> But these familial terms are used here to emphasize that it is the *combined* family of Constantine and Maximian which is needed in the future, rather than competing dynasties—a renewed and eternal Herculian family (*imperatores semper Herculii*) specifically.<sup>118</sup>

Although in reality Constantine’s mints do not demonstrate the same devotion to Hercules that they did for Maximian and Constantius, this is certainly meant as praise. Nor would this be the last time that Hercules was mentioned in Constantinian panegyric, though certainly the family of the Herculii would not again be presented so boldly. This in some ways was the zenith of Maximian’s imperial career, and not just in the flattery of the panegyric. Through Maxentius’ rapidly-stabilizing position in Italy and this new alliance with Constantine, Maximian was once again master of the west—and he did not need Galerius or Diocletian’s permission to achieve this. Though Maxentius is not mentioned here—it was

<sup>115</sup> All references from RIC VI. SPES PVBLICA: Trier no. 633. SECVRITAS PERPETVAE: Aquileia no. 129. There are also rare lower denomination examples of the type from London, such as SPES PVBLICA and SECVRITAS AVGG. For example, SPES: London no. 241 var. SECVRITAS: London no. 277 var. The latter was also minted for Licinius.

<sup>116</sup> RIC VII, Trier no. 246, c. 320. CONSTANTINVS P F AVG / SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE.

<sup>117</sup> Rees (2002) 173 sees this as specifically against ‘Tetrarchic’ principles, in line with the usual perception of the Tetrarchy as based on marriage/adoption and being thus anti-dynastic. This could also be understood as a jibe specifically against Galerius’ imperial college (and even dynasty). The proliferation of these terms and references make it difficult to understand how it could be said that the idea of future succession “is muted” in this panegyric; Warmington (1974) 373.

<sup>118</sup> Rees (2002) 173: “The Jovian dynasty of Diocletian, Galerius, and Maximinus Daia is pointedly ignored.” Cf. Rees (2002) 179-180.

difficult enough to balance two emperors without bringing in the potentially precarious position of a third to muddy the waters—it is likely that he would be present in the audience’s thoughts if not in name.

The panegyrist brings up the Herculian connection again in 8.2 in his explanation of how the new alliance benefits Constantine as well: “He is the one who gave you the name received from the god who was the founder of his family (*principe generis*), who has proved himself to be the scion (*progeniem*) of Hercules...”<sup>119</sup> By this new alliance, then, Constantine truly becomes a Herculian. This raises the question of whether Constantine could have already claimed to be one of the Herculi through his descent from Constantius. It is unclear whether this was sidestepped by the panegyrist in order to proclaim the highest benefits for the new alliance or if, while Constantius could claim to be a Herculian through his adoption by Maximian, this did not extend to his progeny (or to his progeny outside his union with Theodora). The wording of the panegyrist (that Maximian gave Constantine the name) is lacking specific temporal attributes; it could be either that Maximian gave him the name at a previous point when Constantius was adopted as Caesar and heir, or at this point of the alliance/marriage. The surrounding context of the panegyric suggests the latter: it is specifically in a section where the panegyrist discusses how an alliance with Maximian benefits Constantine, and Constantius is not mentioned at this point. However, this still tells us only how the panegyrist viewed the relationship (or wished to represent the relationship for rhetorical purposes), not whether Constantine could have previously claimed to be Herculian. The *signa* were flexible, as has been discussed (I.3.ii, I.4.iii) and presumably either alternative could have been ‘correct’ under different circumstances—this circumstance happens to best suit an interpretation that the *signa* were newly bestowed.

#### d. 3.3-4: Constantius as the Link between Emperors

O that divine judgment of yours, Maximian, who wished that man who was your grandson by right of adoption, your son by ranking in majesty, to be your son-in-law as well; the son, I say, of the deified Constantius, to whom the first blush of his father’s youth has been transmitted, upon whose face Nature has stamped his father’s heavenly features, who for us, still yearning for the sight of him who has been transported to the councils of the gods, takes the place of two. For not only does your father’s appearance manifest itself in you, Constantine, but also his

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<sup>119</sup> The use of ‘princeps’ here may possibly be another reference to Constantine’s self-promotion as a *Princeps Inventutis*. *Pan. Lat.* 7.8.2: *Hic est qui nomen acceptum a deo principe generis sui dedit uobis, qui se progeniem esse Herculis...comprobavit.*

temperance, his bravery, his justice and his wisdom, in response to the prayers of nations.

*O diuinum tuum, Maximiane, iudicium, qui hunc tibi iure adoptionis nepotem, maiestatis ordine filium etiam generum esse uoluisti, diui, inquam, Constantii filium, in quem se prima illius iuuenta transfudit, in cuius ore caelestes illius uultus Natura signauit, qui adspectum illius ad deorum concilia translate adhuc desiderantibus nobis sufficit pro duobus! Neque enim forma tantum in te patris, Constantine, sed etiam continentia, fortitudo, iustitia, prudentia sese uotis gentium {re}praesentant.*

This passage returns to the exploration of the complicated relationships between the two new emperors, here employing Constantius as the link between them.<sup>120</sup> There is a manipulation of these relationships as well, the presentation of the ‘actual’ beside the ‘metaphorical’. Constantine is Maximian’s grandson by adoption (*nepotem tibi iure adoptionis*) and his son-in-law by marriage (*generum*) but also figuratively his son by ranking of majesty (*maiestatis ordine filium*—which then implies that Constantine is lesser in majesty). The different presentations of relationships and the idea of a figurative or metaphorical *pater/filius* relationship beyond that of *avus/nepos* or *socer/gener* is returned to later: “Constantine, the new Emperor, has begun to be more than a son to Maximian, the eternal Emperor.”<sup>121</sup> Beyond the pairing of *aeternus/novus* emperors, not only is Constantine a *nepos* or a *gener*, but he is beginning to be even more than a *filius*. Whatever relationship that would be, the panegyrist does not say; it is clearly so metaphorical that it defies definition.

In many ways, it is the memory of Constantius that holds this panegyric together; certainly in this passage he is presented as the glue binding Maximian and Constantine, the implied *filius/pater* in between Maximian and his *nepos* by adoption. As Rees comments, “the ghost of Constantius looms large.”<sup>122</sup> The praise of Constantine which follows compares father and son by figuring Constantine as a ‘reborn’ Constantius, a replacement *gener/filius* to the one Maximian has lost.<sup>123</sup> The panegyrist spends all of chapters 4-5 describing the similarities between Constantius and Constantine: Constantine mirrors his temperance, bravery, justice,

<sup>120</sup> Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 194 n. 8: “...Constantine was Maximian’s grandson *iure adoptionis* but was not perhaps formally adopted as his son” but also “the phrase *maiestatis ordine filium* is not appropriate”.

<sup>121</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 7.13.3: *Maximiano aeterno imperatori Constantinus imperator nouus plus coepit esse quam filius.*

<sup>122</sup> Rees (2002) 166.

<sup>123</sup> Ware (2014) 91 takes a more negative view of this: “In this early panegyric there is no opportunity of viewing Constantine as a mature Augustus...the best Constantine can do is to imitate his father.”

wisdom, and piety, the four ‘cardinal virtues’ essential to a good ruler (3.4-4.1, 5.1);<sup>124</sup> he will prove to be even wiser than his father (5.2); he has campaigned bravely as Constantius did (4.2, 5.3). The panegyrist finishes this extended *synkrisis* by proclaiming that “...whatever you [Constantine] have done that is just and magnanimous necessarily demonstrates that you are the son of Constantius.”<sup>125</sup> Constantine is praised by reconfiguring him as his father and reframing Constantine’s successes as partly due to his lineage, or at least as living up to it.<sup>126</sup> There is also the suggestion of parallelism in 6.1—Maximian chooses Constantine as a son-in-law, just as he chose Constantius twenty years earlier. As Potter notes, “To some, including this speaker, Constantine was not so much a ruler in his own right as the natural extension of Constantius, repeating the pattern of his father’s marriage to secure his own power.”<sup>127</sup> The panegyrist will return to Constantius at the end of his speech, to address the *divus* in a grandiose apostrophe (see 3.i.g).

#### f. 7.2-4: The worthiness of the new alliance

For what could you have done that was more appropriate, what that was more worthy of your foresight, than that you should now hand over with feelings of deepest affection the pledge of supreme power to the son of the man whom you had long since joined to you by ties of marriage and associated with yourself in imperial majesty? ...you, with a nobler spirit than the rest, are endowing both what your dutiful affection holds dearest and your fortune most outstanding.

*Quid enim competentius, quid prouidentia tua dignius facere potuisti, quam ut eius filio, quem tibi pridem et adfinitate adsciueras et maiestate sociaueras, nunc ex intimis adfectibus traderes summi pignus imperii? ...tu, animo maiore quam ceteri, pariter indulges et quod pietas tua habet carissimum et quod fortuna praecipuum.*

In this section, the panegyrist again addresses Maximian, following a digression which suggests that the marriage had been planned since Constantine and Fausta were both children.<sup>128</sup> This alliance, the panegyrist suggests, is not a sudden decision but has been planned

<sup>124</sup> Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 194 n. 9: “These [cardinal virtues] were regarded by philosophers as essential to kingship.” Buckland (2003) 139 notes that this is a *praxis* which uses the four cardinal virtues and how Constantine emulates these virtues of his father. On the figure of the emperor and association with these virtues more generally, arguing against a ‘canon’ of virtues, see Wallace-Hadrill (1981).

<sup>125</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 7.5.1: ...*quidquid tu iuste ac liberaliter feceris, filium Constantii necessario praetitisse*. Cf. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 186.

<sup>126</sup> Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 186.

<sup>127</sup> Potter (2013) 118.

<sup>128</sup> Some take this fanciful detour as fact, often because it supports other arguments: e.g. Barnes (2011) 55, Van Dam (2007) 247, Leadbetter (2009) 67; Stephenson (2009) 120. Compare to Rees (2002) 168f who says that

for a decade. This short discussion of the ‘planned betrothal’ is the only point in the panegyric where Fausta gets much attention. In the numismatic record as well, she is little recognized at this point except for a single issue from Trier designating her a *nobilissima femina* (fig. 5.4).<sup>129</sup> The *Venus Felix* reverse can be compared to the later *Venus Victrix* coinage minted for Galerius’ wife Valeria. The panegyrist ends this fanciful betrothal episode with this passage, a declaration that the betrothal and the new alliance represents the culmination of Maximian’s fatherly *pietas* towards Constantius.



Fig. 5.4: Fausta as *Nobilissima Femina*, with reverse of *Venus*.<sup>130</sup>

The language in this passage is of interest: *adfinitas* (a relationship by marriage), *adscisco* (to adopt), *socio* (to unite, share in).<sup>131</sup> It is not the language of family by blood, but the extended family which the Tetrarchs had created for themselves.<sup>132</sup> Yet the praise stems from the panegyrist’s assertion that it is especially *pious* for Maximian to ally himself and give power to a man to whom he is already so closely bound. It is worth noting that a few chapters later, Maximian’s piety is highlighted again, but this time it is the fraternal piety (*pietate fraterna*) of his bond with Diocletian—an explanation for Maximian’s retirement with Diocletian, as a preface to the panegyrist’s attempt to legitimize Maximian’s return to power.<sup>133</sup>

#### g. 14.4-7: Closing address to Constantius

How much delight will you obtain, how much pleasure will you enjoy, when the same man, as father, father-in-law and Emperor, has ushered into the possession of your Empire this great son of yours who was the first to make you a father! For this is your special immortality, surpassing

the betrothal passage shouldn’t be taken as fact, as it is overly rhetorical in nature. Harries (2014) 203 says “A dynastic arrangement was glossed with a little romance.”

<sup>129</sup> Warmington (1974) 374.

<sup>130</sup> RIC VI, Trier no. 756: FAVSTAE NOBILISSIMAE FEMINAE / VENVS FELIX.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Rees (2002) 172: “*adfinitas* is the obligation the emperors have to each other as in-laws.”

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 200 n. 24, regarding the final lines of the passage quoted: “The claim is technically true in that Constantius and Galerius, presented both with imperial power and emperors’ daughters, had become only Caesars.”

<sup>133</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 7.9.2.



that of all the other deified Emperors, which we are now beholding: a son similar in appearance, similar in character, and equal in imperial power. Although they begrudged us you, the Fates could not, however, deprive your house of anything. For neither does Maximian lack a son such as you were, nor Constantine a father. On the contrary, in order that your relationship be renewed in every way, here again is a father-in-law, here again a son-in-law, so that the most blessed Empire may always be enriched by descendants from your stock.

*Quanto nunc gaudio poteris, quanta uoluptate perfrueris, cum talem hunc filium tuum, qui te primus patrem fecit, in imperii tui possessionem idem pater, idem socer, idem imperator induxerit! Haec est tua praeter omnes diuos propria immortalitas quam uidemus: filius similis adspectu, similis animo, par imperii potestate. Inuiderint licet nobis, nihil tamen auferre domui tuae Fata potuerunt: nec Maximiano filius qualis tu eras, nec Constantino pater deest. Quin etiam ut omnibus modis tua necessitudo renouetur, rursus hic socer, rursus hic gener est, ut beatissimus imperator semper ex tua subole nepotibus augeatur.*<sup>134</sup>

In many ways, this passage (the conclusion of the panegyric) sums up the main ideas that have featured throughout the analysis of this panegyric. The conclusion takes the form of an extended apostrophe to Divus Constantius. There are again a number of words employed that are specifically familial terms, all of which we have seen previously: the pairs of *filius* and *pater*, *socer* and *gener*, as well as *suboles* and *nepos*. The principal themes in this passage are: the panegyrist's manipulation of 'actual' and 'figurative' relationships; Constantine as a Constantius 'reborn'; the stability of future generations; and, throughout, Constantius as emblematic of the new alliance between Maximian and Constantine. To take the first three point-by-point:

- The multiplicity of relationships is highlighted by Maximian as *pater*, *socer* and *imperator*, emphasized by the trifold repetition of *idem*. More figuratively, Constantine has now taken Constantius' place as Maximian's son and Maximian as Constantine's father (*filius qualis tu eras/pater deest*). Finally, the vacancy which Constantius had left behind is filled again; Maximian is once more a father-in-law (*rursus hic socer*). The next iteration, however, *rursus hic gener est*, has caused Nixon and Rodgers some difficulties; the translation they suggest ("this man is again a father-in-law, this man

<sup>134</sup> Translation adapted from Nixon & Rodgers (1994), particularly *rursus hic socer, rursus hic gener est*. With thanks to R. Flower.

again a son-in-law”) does not quite fit with the grandeur of the statement.<sup>135</sup> Constantine had been a son-in-law previously (and his marriage had been referred to in 4.1 in praising terms) but his status as son-in-law is at odds with the panegyrist’s usual linking of the new imperial relationships with previous ‘Herculian’ ones. The suggested alternate translation I used above, of “here again is a father-in-law, here again a son-in-law”, suggests instead that the situation before 306 is restored, with the father-in-law (Maximian) and the son-in-law (Constantius first, but now Constantine) back in power in the west. Once again, Constantine takes Constantius’ place, refigured as his father restored.

- The panegyrist favourably summarizes Constantine’s status as Constantius’ son: similar in appearance and character (*similis ad aspectu similis animo*) but equal in imperial power (*par imperii potestate*), i.e. as an Augustus as Constantius was, and as he had willed Constantine to be after his death. As has been discussed in **2.i**, this likening of father and son was a way of proving Constantine’s legitimacy—or of claiming that his legitimacy stemmed from Constantius in particular rather than Galerius or, later, Maximian.
- This concern with the future imperial generations (generally *nepos*) reflects the desires of an empire that had faced near-constant civil war and conflict in the years before Diocletian’s reign—and recently with the conflict between Severus, Galerius, and Maxentius. The virtues which embody this hope for future stability, *Salus* and *Securitas*, will be picked up again in discussions of the Panegyric of 321, which is addressed partly to the two Caesars Crispus and Constantine II. *Salus*, *Securitas*, and *Spes* as well would appear on the coinage of others besides just Constantine; his later coinage would use these three types for the new empresses of his regime as well: *Securitas* linked with Helena, and *Spes* and *Salus* with Fausta, usually simultaneously (see **V.5.iii**). *SECVRITAS REIPVB* would be minted for all four Caesars in 337, near the end of Constantine’s life (see **V.6**).

Constantius was thus integral to presentations of Constantine’s legitimation, especially in the early stages of his reign—the reference to Constantine’s birth making Constantius a father for the first time also ties in with some of the discussion of Constantine’s birth in the introduction. Constantius’ use in the panegyric of 307 is in many ways similar to what we have seen before—e.g. Constantine as a new Constantius, embodying the virtues of his father—but

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<sup>135</sup> Nixon does comment on the awkwardness of the expression, Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 210 n. 52.

the panegyrist's use of him as a deified *pater* and *filius* to Constantine and Maximian respectively is an example of the dynastic rhetoric that could be employed when needed. Constantius' appearance here is not just to praise Constantine, but to specifically link the two new co-Augusti together. Thus, this panegyric represents a new way in which emperors could be praised, and also a discrete position in the different legitimization strategies at work throughout Constantine's reign. Constantine could rely on Constantius for legitimization, but in this panegyric the reminder is that ultimately Constantius' own legitimization came from Maximian.

Thus, the Panegyric of 307 and the alliance with Maximian seem to represent a turning point in Constantine's place within Galerius' imperial college, or at least it is often assumed that this represents a 'rejection' of the Tetrarchy.<sup>136</sup> The idea of a rejection at this point is supported by the numismatic evidence: for example, the aes issues from Trier (Constantine's main city) for the period of the alliance (c. 307-308) show that the only recipients of coinage from this period were Constantine, Maximian, Maxentius (nominally), and Divus Constantius (commemorative).<sup>137</sup> The panegyric, in its interpretation of events, tells us without a doubt that Constantine was willing to form an alliance with Maximian, and this is supported by the numismatic record as well, which shows that Maximian was honoured at mints under Constantine's control until around the time of the Council of Carnuntum. The precise dating is often based on numismatists' understanding of the historical chronology from other sources, but the progression of mint-marks supports the gist of the narrative. Much is made of Constantine's elevation to Augustus at Maximian's hand. While it is true that this would have been of some benefit to his claims, it was a benefit that was not recognized in the east—and Constantine's position as Caesar within Galerius' Tetrarchy was reinforced at the Council of Carnuntum. As Nixon notes, "upon the legitimacy of Maximian's status depended Constantine's status."<sup>138</sup> Ando suggests that Constantine allied with Maximian because the latter's *auctoritas* was greater than Galerius'.<sup>139</sup> It was not Constantine who benefitted most from the alliance, however, but Maximian, who was seeking to solidify his position and his supremacy in the West. As I stated above, this alliance should not be seen as driven primarily

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<sup>136</sup> Cf. MacCormack (1975) 61: "The content of the panegyric of 307 indicates the overthrow of the Tetrarchy, but much of the ideology of the panegyric is still drawn from the Tetrarchy. Constantine filled the role of a Tetrarchic Caesar, Maximian that of an Augustus." Barnes (2011) 191 says that the panegyric "fractures the unified extended family of Diocletian into two competing dynasties. This was the political cost of Constantine's ambition."

<sup>137</sup> Sutherland (1967) 217-219. Rees (2002) 164 characterizes the barest inclusion of Maxentius more as "icy disregard."

<sup>138</sup> Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 187.

<sup>139</sup> Ando (2000) 247.

by Constantine, but by Maximian. This clarification is important for studying the dissolution of the alliance a few years later.

## ii. The Death of Maximian

Maximian disappears from Constantinian coinage c. 309, possibly due to the Council of Carnuntum. That Maximian was forced to abdicate (again) is assumed by some modern scholars,<sup>140</sup> but Lactantius, at least, does not report this. In fact, in the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, Maximian is involved in the elevation of Licinius, and Lactantius specifically says that six emperors ruled together (*sic uno tempore sex fuerunt*, in the context of Licinius' elevation). Those six can only be: Galerius, Licinius, Constantine, Daza, Maxentius, and Maximian.<sup>141</sup> Lactantius and Zosimus suggest that Maximian, since he had by this point been expelled from Rome after a falling-out with Maxentius, stayed in Constantine's territories. How close he was to Constantine or to his daughter can only be speculative. The relationship ended in 310, apparently due to another attempt by Maximian to regain more power, and Maximian was decidedly the loser of the brief conflict. By this point, Constantine had finally been accepted as Augustus, along with Daza, by Galerius' mints as well, after a brief stint as one of the *filii Augustorum* (see **II.3.iv**). Lactantius goes into the most detail about the events of 310 and Maximian's final coup(s), though the Panegyric of 310 provides us with an insight into how potentially embarrassing relationships, even those which had once provided legitimation, were treated. In this case, it was the assertion of Constantine and Claudius Gothicus as imperial ancestors in lieu of Maximian (see **4.i-ii**).<sup>142</sup>

In the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, Lactantius presents an account of two separate attempts to seize power from Constantine, in which Maximian was: "intending by treacherous devices to overreach Constantine, who was not only his own son-in-law (*generum suum*), but also the son of his son-in-law (*generi filium*)."<sup>143</sup> Maximian's wickedness and impiety is highlighted by Lactantius' emphasis on their multifaceted familial relationships, and again

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<sup>140</sup> Most notably Barnes (2011) 70; Van Dam (2007) 84; although Potter (2013) 123 has a more nuanced view of the matter.

<sup>141</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 29.2. This may be supported in some ways by Zosimus 2.10.4, who says that Maximian begged Diocletian to return to power at Carnuntum; Diocletian refused, but there is no sense that Maximian set aside his power. Note too that Leadbetter (2009) 200-203 is suspicious of Lactantius' narrative.

<sup>142</sup> Rodgers (1986) 83; Potter (2013) 125; Ware (2014) 92-93; Cameron (2006) 23; Hekster (2015) 227; Fears (1977) 184. Van Dam (2011) 156 suggests that the panegyrist attempted to reintegrate Constantine into the Tetrarchy.

<sup>143</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 29.3: *...ut Constantinum imperatorem, generum suum, generi filium, dolo malo circumveniret.*

Constantius is used as a bridge between the two emperors, an extra layer of connections which demanded respect.

In the first attempt, Maximian takes advantage of a barbarian uprising and advises Constantine to take all of his troops to fight them, which then enabled him to resume the purple and attempt to take Constantine's place. Maximian's deeds and intentions are starkly contrasted with Constantine's piety, his willingness to trust and obey his father-in-law precisely because of their relationship, according to Lactantius.<sup>144</sup> Meanwhile, Maximian is a "rebel emperor, an impious parent, and a perfidious father-in-law" (*rebellis imperator, pater impius, socer perfidus*), a string of oxymorons to heighten his illegitimacy by nature.<sup>145</sup> The specific use of *impius* here is reminiscent of Lactantius' characterizations of Maximinus Daza and Maxentius: the rhetoric is explicitly *familial* impiety in these three cases. What is more, this is the first time that Maximian has been termed explicitly a *pater* to Constantine in the *De Mortibus Persecutorum*; he is both father and father-in-law in this damning epitaph.<sup>146</sup>

In the second 'coup', after Maximian has been allowed to live at Constantine's mercy, "having thus forfeited the respect due to an emperor and a father-in-law",<sup>147</sup> he then embroils Fausta in his plot to kill Constantine in his sleep. Again, Lactantius uses familial language throughout this narrative to heighten the drama; Fausta (named for the first and only time) is his *filia*, Constantine her *maritus* and Maximian's *gener*. Fausta, however, immediately tells Constantine, and they lay a trap for Maximian instead.<sup>148</sup> When the emperor's perfidy is revealed, Constantine accuses him of *impietas* and permits Maximian to commit suicide.<sup>149</sup> The second account mirrors the first in its use of familial language and the emphasis explicitly on Maximian's *impietas*, his lack of proper conduct in his relationships. He died as he had lived, having tried to overthrow both his son and his son-in-law, a rebel and a traitor. This story might be completely invented by Lactantius, possibly even as a way to explain how Fausta survived the backlash against the other members of her family.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 29.5: *Credit adulescens ut perito ac seni, paret ut socero: proficiscitur relicta militum parte maiore.*

<sup>145</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 29.8. Cf. Opelt (1973) 103.

<sup>146</sup> Arguably, this could be as 'pater' to Fausta here, but she had not yet been mentioned in the narrative at this point; she only comes into the narrative in the account of the second plot. It may also recall his behaviour towards Maxentius which resulted in his expulsion from Rome, in which he is likened to Tarquin *Superbus*: *Mort. Pers.* 28.3-4.

<sup>147</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 30.1: *Sic amisso imperatoris ac soceri honore...*

<sup>148</sup> Potter (2013) 125: "Fausta's involvement in the second story not only represents Maximian's further repudiation by his own daughter but also suggests that Constantine was a man of prenatually merciful disposition." Cf. Harries (2014) 203.

<sup>149</sup> Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 30.5: *...impietatis ac sceleris increpatur.*

<sup>150</sup> Harries (2012) 258; Potter (2013) 125.

The Panegyric of 310, which narrates only one plot (which should perhaps invite scepticism regarding Lactantius' narrative), struggles with the correct way to discuss Maximian.<sup>151</sup> The panegyric has to repudiate the legitimacies constructed in the Panegyric of 307 without damaging Constantine's reputation.<sup>152</sup> Buckland suggests that Maximian takes on some of the characteristics of the *tyrannus* trope in this panegyric.<sup>153</sup> The theme of his *impietas* runs through this account as well, but there is less of a focus on familial relationships. The panegyrist says the plots were from a man who "ought to have welcomed your successes warmly" (*quem successibus tuis maxime fauere decuisset*), and notes that men still wish to honour Maximian (who remains unnamed) because he had at first received such honours and favour from his bond (*necessitudo*) with Constantine.<sup>154</sup> *Necessitudo* is far less explicitly familial than other terms that could have been chosen. The panegyrist perhaps attempts to excuse Maximian by blaming Fate,<sup>155</sup> but also explicitly contrasts Maximian's actions with Constantine's piety in his welcoming of Maximian after his expulsion from Rome and forced abdication at Carnuntum.<sup>156</sup> Constantine's piety is also mentioned in 20.1 and 20.3, in the account of Maximian's defeat: "Thus as far as your piety is concerned, O Emperor, you saved both him and all whom he had welcomed as allies."<sup>157</sup> Constantine's filial piety, the panegyrist is implying, was such that he did not give an order to have Maximian killed; Fate, in a way, took care of that himself when Maximian committed suicide (as the official story goes).

It is only in 15.6 of the panegyric that Maximian's impiety is specifically linked to familial language. After implying that Maximian was unworthy of his fraternal bond with Diocletian,<sup>158</sup> the panegyrist exclaims: "I do not wonder that he betrayed his word even to his son-in-law!" (*non miror quod etiam genero peierauit*).<sup>159</sup> This is in contrast to Lactantius' careful use of this language to further his rhetoric; clearly it was possibly embarrassing to make too much of the many connections between Constantine and Maximian that had been so enthusiastically elaborated upon only three years earlier in the Panegyric of 307. The way that

<sup>151</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.14.1: "I am still very hesitant as to how I am to speak about this man, and I am awaiting for your divinity to advise me with a nod."

<sup>152</sup> Ware (2014) 87; Potter (2013) 126. Warmington (1974) 376 suggests that "it was impossible to treat Maximian with the virulence shown...towards Maxentius."

<sup>153</sup> Buckland (2003) 240.

<sup>154</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.14.2.

<sup>155</sup> See Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 237 n. 61.

<sup>156</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.14.6.

<sup>157</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.20.3: *Ita quod ad pietatem tuam pertinet, imperator, et illum et omnes quos receperat reseruasti.*

<sup>158</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.15.6: "So this fellow was ashamed to imitate that man who had adopted him as a brother, and regretted having sworn an oath to him in the temple of Capitoline Jupiter." *Hunc ergo illum, qui ab eo fuerat frater adscitus, puduit imitari, huic illum in Capitolini Iouis templo iurasse paenituit.*

<sup>159</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.15.6.

the panegyrist of 310 avoids giving the details of these connections is—ironically—through a focus on comparing Constantine and Constantius throughout.<sup>160</sup> Just as Constantius was used to highlight the bond between the two emperors in 307, now he is used to circumvent it. The closest the panegyrist gets to comparing Constantius and Maximian as fathers is to say that Constantine could not act like the latter because he was sired by the former.<sup>161</sup> Much of the rhetoric behind the use of Constantius serves as a way to bypass Maximian's role in Constantine's imperial title; we have seen much of the claims before in the discussion of Constantine's accession. Here too we find mention of the similarities (*similitudo*) between father and son, in appearance as well as in virtue.<sup>162</sup>

Averil Cameron suggests that “the death of Maximian was an important moment which marked Constantine's break with the Tetrarchic ideology and his assertion of his own personal and dynastic claim to power.”<sup>163</sup> But this is to put too much emphasis on the identification of distinct breaks or changes in ideology. In fact, the death of Maximian—and Constantine's whole alliance with Maximian—should not be regarded in light of ‘Tetrarchic ideology’ but of the pressures of contemporary politics. It is also ironic that those who wish to see a distinct break between Constantine and the Tetrarchy can claim either the alliance with Maximian as the point of departure, or else the definite end of that alliance. Constantine's engagement with Tetrarchic ideology and self-presentation as a member of an imperial college was constantly evolving. By the time of his death, Maximian's status as emblematic of the Tetrarchy is also questionable—clearly he had once been a Tetrarch, loyal to Diocletian, but after 306, and certainly after Carnuntum, he too could be considered to have broken with ‘Tetrarchic ideology’. Instead of seeing the Tetrarchy as having a distinct ideology, we should instead view it (in all its iterations) as an imperial college that evolved to reflect and combat the political challenges of the day.<sup>164</sup> Constantine's mints would continue to recognize Licinius and Daza until 313, and theirs would recognize him in turn.

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<sup>160</sup> Ware (2014) 94-95.

<sup>161</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.14.4: “Be thankful, Constantine, for your nature and your character, for Constantius Pius sired you such...that you cannot be cruel.” *Gratulare, Constantine, naturae ac moribus tuis quod te talem Constantius Pius genuit...ut crudelis esse non possis.*

<sup>162</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.4.3-4: This is why it is that such a close similarity in appearance has been transmitted from him to you that it seems that Nature herself has impressed and stamped it upon your features. For it is the same countenance that we revere once more in you, the same serious brow, the same calmness of eye and voice. In the same way your blush is an indication of your modesty, and your conversation a witness to your sense of justice.” *Inde est quod tanta ex illo in te formae similitudo transiuit, ut signante Natura uultibus tuis impressa videatur. Idem enim est quem rursus in te colimus aspectus, eadem in fronte grauitas, eadem in oculis et in ore tranquillitas. Sic est index modestiae rubor, sic testis sermo iustitiae.*

<sup>163</sup> Cameron (2006) 23.

<sup>164</sup> On theories of the Tetrarchy as a system, see **Intro.2.iv.**

The rhetorical manoeuvres in Lactantius and the Panegyric of 310 do show efforts to distance Constantine from Maximian and, by proxy, from Maxentius. Yet Fausta remained Constantine's wife and would bear him five children, all of whom could claim descent from three emperors, including their once-powerful grandfather. As the next section explores, dead (and deified) relatives could be powerful legitimization tools, and Maximian could be intermittently rehabilitated when the need arose. In 310, Maximian was unable to be employed successfully by Constantine's regime as a legitimization strategy and by those who wished to praise him. By the time he was at war with Licinius in 317-318, however, things had changed, and Constantine's ability to promote links to previous emperors was a dynastic strategy that Licinius could not use.

#### **4. DIVINE ANCESTRY**

The next step in Constantine's use of dynastic legitimacy is one that we have seen employed before by Maxentius: the honouring of deified relatives. This is a technique that had already been in use since Constantine's accession through the figure of Divus Constantius, who had been celebrated on coinage as early as 306. Yet there were adaptations and expansions to the arsenal of divine Constantinian relatives throughout his reign, particularly with the invention of the link to Claudius Gothicus in 310 and the reintroduction of Maximian as a divine ancestor in 317-318.

##### **i. Claudius Gothicus**

The first mention of Claudius Gothicus as a new divine, imperial ancestor comes from the Panegyric of 310, the same panegyric that is forced to deal with the awkwardness of Maximian's death:

And so I shall begin with the divinity who is the origin of your family, of whom most people, perhaps, are still unaware, but whom those who love you know full well. For an ancestral relationship links you with the deified Claudius, who was the first to restore the discipline of the Roman Empire...

*A primo igitur incipiam originis tuae numine, quod plerique adhuc fortasse nesciunt, sed qui te amant plurimum sciunt. Ab illo enim diuo*



*Claudio manat in te avita cognatio, qui Romani imperii solutam et  
perditam disciplinam primus reformavit...*<sup>165</sup>

The wording of the passage suggests that this is indeed the first time this previously ‘unknown’ relationship appeared in any literary evidence.<sup>166</sup> The appearance of this new dynastic connection is explained by the context of the panegyric itself. Confronted with the loss of one imperial ancestor—or source of dynastic legitimacy—it was convenient to create another.<sup>167</sup> The Panegyric of 310 also relies heavily upon promoting the figure of Constantius as a dynastic forebear.<sup>168</sup> The suggestion here is also that, just as Claudius was the first to ‘restore’ the empire, Constantine follows in his footsteps—later mentions of the ‘liberation’ of Rome from Maxentius, for example, framed Constantine as a *restitutor*.<sup>169</sup> The general consensus in scholarship is that this new dynastic claim was fed to the panegyrist by Constantine’s regime.<sup>170</sup>

The details of the exact relationship presumed to be between Constantine and Claudius is unclear. As Nixon and Rodgers note, “*avita cognatio* is ambiguous, suggesting kinship either through a grandfather or, more vaguely, through any ancestor.”<sup>171</sup> Hekster agrees, but adds that “it did indicate kinship by blood.”<sup>172</sup> The story is picked up in other sources, including the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris*, who states that Constantine was the “grandson of the brother of that best of emperors Claudius” (*divi Claudii optimi principis nepos ex fratre*).<sup>173</sup> In contrast, Eutropius asserts that Constantius was the grandson of the daughter of Claudius (*quorum Constantius per filiam nepos Claudii traditur*).<sup>174</sup> The Panegyric of 310 is carefully silent about the specifics of the relationship, perhaps leaving it open to interpretation.<sup>175</sup>

Optatianus Porphyrius, whose poems often focused on the Constantinian dynasty,<sup>176</sup> also uses Claudius as a Constantinian ancestor in his poems from the 320s. The emperor is

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<sup>165</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 6.2.1-2.

<sup>166</sup> Hekster (2015) 227.

<sup>167</sup> Ware (2014) 99.

<sup>168</sup> Rodgers (1985) 83; Cameron (2006) 23;

<sup>169</sup> RIC VI, Rome no. 312: IMP C CONSTANTINVS P F AVG/RESTITVTOR VRBIS SVAE, a legend which must be engagement with Maxentius’ most common legend, CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE. Cf. Potter (2013) on the implications of *restitutor*; he suggests that this was an attempt to ignore Diocletian’s claims to be a *restitutor* of the empire.

<sup>170</sup> Hekster (2015) 227 says the invention of the Claudius Gothicus ancestry is “too bold to have been put forward without (at least) imperial consent.” Cf. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 29; Nixon (1983) 93ff; Brosch (2006) 85.

<sup>171</sup> Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 219 n. 6; cf. Hekster (2015) 229; Syme (1983) 67f.

<sup>172</sup> Hekster (2015) 229.

<sup>173</sup> *Origo* 1.2.

<sup>174</sup> Eutrop. 9.22; Zonar. 12.31 preserves this tradition.

<sup>175</sup> In fact, Warmington (1974) suggests that “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.” I would not go this far; surely the Claudius Gothicus claim was notable and was used at various points when needed.

<sup>176</sup> Wienand (2012) 231ff. Cf. Barnes (1975b).

mentioned in nine poems, and assigned specific kinship terms in two.<sup>177</sup> At times, Porphyrius links Claudius with the success of Crispus (see **5.ii**), whose titulature sometimes includes ‘Claudius’ on inscriptions and coins.<sup>178</sup> Hekster, however, believes that the “vagueness” implied by the multiplicity of kinship terms suggests that “some were unconvinced” and that the poems constitute court flattery, not ‘official’ propaganda.<sup>179</sup> Nor does Claudius feature to a great extent on inscriptions.<sup>180</sup> Claudius as a divine ancestor (though still lacking a definite lineage) crops up in the Panegyric of 311 as well,<sup>181</sup> and, intriguingly, in Julian’s *Caesars*.

Next came Claudius, at whom all the gods gazed, and admiring his greatness of soul granted the empire to his descendants...

Τούτοις ἐπεισέρχεται Κλαύδιος, εἰς ὃν ἀπιδόντες οἱ θεοὶ πάντες ἠγάσθησάν τε αὐτὸν τῆς μεγαλοψυχίας καὶ ἐπένευσαν αὐτοῦ τῷ γένει τὴν ἀρχήν...<sup>182</sup>

Julian here does not claim Claudius as his own ancestor in explicit terms, but preserves the tradition (by this time half a decade old) of Claudius as a Constantinian ancestor, effectively claiming kinship all the same.<sup>183</sup> Additionally, within the narrative Claudius and Probus are the only third-century emperors prior to the Tetrarchs who are praised and permitted by the gods to stay at the feast.

This creation of a ‘fictive’ relationship between Constantine and Claudius Gothicus, no matter what the ‘official’ version of the relationship was, served to create a source of a new dynastic legitimacy that was conveniently excused from the politics of the time. Claudius was long dead—and what is more, he is the only emperor from the tumultuous third century who died a natural death.<sup>184</sup> If we recall Humphries’ definition of a usurper as a “failed Augustus,”<sup>185</sup> this fact seems vital to the decision of Constantine’s regime to choose Claudius amongst the multitude of emperors in recent generations past. Claudius was not assassinated or defeated in war; no one could retrospectively condemn his imperial career on this basis.<sup>186</sup> It did not matter that Claudius’ reign was brief, it mattered that he was not overthrown. What

<sup>177</sup> Hekster (2015) 229; Opt. Porf., *Carm.* 5, 7-10, 15, 16, 19, 20a. In 8 and 10, he is called *proavus* (8.11), *atavus* (8.14, 10.29), and *avus* (10.v.i); cf. Wienand (2012) 234.

<sup>178</sup> Van Dam (2007) 100, (2011) 165-166.

<sup>179</sup> Hekster (2015) 229.

<sup>180</sup> Hekster (2015) 229 notes only two: ILS 699 (Ravenna) and 702 (Rome) = CIL 6.31564. Cf. ILS 721, a milestone for Claudius Gothicus and Constantine II (indirectly).

<sup>181</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 5.2.5, 4.2.

<sup>182</sup> Jul. *Caes.* 313D; cf. Claudius and Constantius linked again in 336B.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Van Dam (2007) 126; Hekster (2015) 231-232; Börm (2015) 250; Tougher (2007) 20.

<sup>184</sup> Cf. Syme (1983) 70ff; Wienand (2012) 235f on the choice of Claudius.

<sup>185</sup> Humphries (2008) 86-7.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. another definition of ‘usurper’ in Humphries (2008) 85: “emperors who had been defeated in civil war and whose regimes were retrospectively condemned as illegal.”

is more, his family had perhaps been marginally more successful than others at attempting to hold on to imperial power—Claudius' brother Quintillus had also reigned for a short period but was defeated by Aurelian.<sup>187</sup> It is unlikely, however, that Quintillus is the brother mentioned by the *Origo* from which Constantine was supposedly descended; presumably the *Origo* would have named Quintillus directly. The *Historia Augusta*, perhaps rather cleverly, gives the brother's name as 'Crispus', providing a further link between Constantine's son and his distant imperial ancestor.<sup>188</sup> Claudius was thus a safe choice for a new imperial *divus* in the family; little enough seems to have been known about him to dispute such claims and his reign was not as easily disparaged as others.

The introduction of Claudius as a new divine ancestor has been considered a way of bypassing Tetrarchic connections. As Odahl argues, "By positing imperial ancestry through Constantius back to Claudius Gothicus, Constantine was rejecting the tetrarchic system and returning to dynastic tradition for determining political legitimacy."<sup>189</sup> These scholars look to the panegyric's circumstances—the simultaneous rejection of legitimacy from Maximian—to prove their point; Constantine was forced to break with Tetrarchic ideology.<sup>190</sup> Yet to see Constantine's alliance with and use of Maximian as inherently Tetrarchic is to misunderstand the nature of their relationship. The panegyrics employ typically 'Tetrarchic' tropes of praise (such as *imperatores semper Herculi*), but Constantine and Maximian had positioned themselves outside of Galerius' 'Tetrarchy' by the very nature of their relationship, forming an alternate imperial college. At the same time as these panegyrics were being presented, Constantine was still essentially a 'Tetrarch'. He had remained one even after the Council of Carnuntum (though this may be due to the risk of his outright rebellion if he had been excluded like Maxentius). Additionally, Constantius remains the foundation of Constantine's dynastic legitimation. The claims of descent from Claudius Gothicus are therefore not necessarily a method of snubbing Tetrarchic connections, but as adding to them. This becomes especially clear with the reintroduction of Maximian in 317-318, now as a *Divus*; Claudius is celebrated alongside Maximian as well; all are presented as a combined force of legitimacy which

<sup>187</sup> Eutrop. 9.12; Ps.-Vict. 34.5; Zos. 1.47.

<sup>188</sup> *Hist. Aug., Claud.* 13.2; cf. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 219 n. 6.

<sup>189</sup> Odahl (2004) 95; cf. Hekster (2015) 232; Potter (2013) 126; Van Dam (2007) 83; Ando (2000) 248; Drake (1975) 21; Grant (1993) 27; Lenski (2005) 74.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. Potter (2013) 126: "Through the invented link with Claudius, Constantine now asserts the sole principle of inheritance as grounds for holding power." Against this, see Warmington (1974) 374-5: "But this 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, 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."

Licinius—who was as much a Tetrarch as Constantine—could not replicate. Thus, it is not a question of either/or. Constantine’s dynastic forebears are not either Tetrarchic or dynastic, but both simultaneously.<sup>191</sup> They represent a variety of imperial connections that could be deployed in ways that best suited the political atmosphere of the time.

## ii. *Divus* Coinage

The commemoration of divine ancestors on coinage had already been in place since Constantine’s accession, but sporadically. There does not seem to have been an overall ‘message’ disseminated from Constantine’s mints regarding his imperial ancestry. That changed in 317-319 with the introduction of a distinct programme of commemoration similar to the one produced by Maxentius’ mints in 311-312. Coins were issued for the Constantinian imperial *divi*, Constantius, Maximian (now rehabilitated), and Claudius Gothicus (**figs. 4.5-7**), with the legend *REQVIES OPTIMORVM MERITORVM* and its various abbreviations. These issues were minted in *folles* at Siscia, Thessaloniki, Rome, Aquileia, Trier, and Arles, possibly beginning in the central provinces and extending west (according to Bruun’s dating). Hekster notes that the commemoration coinage constituted over 10% of the types issued during this period across the empire.<sup>192</sup> Although Hekster’s focus is on the different types of relationships presented—relationships of blood, marriage, and ‘invented’—the coinage displays no differences between the three figures. Yet neither are specific kinship terms used to designate the exact relationships that these emperors had to Constantine, unlike the series minted by Maxentius.



Fig. 5.5: *Divus* ‘Pius’ Constantius.<sup>193</sup>

<sup>191</sup> See **Intro.2.ii.-iii.**

<sup>192</sup> Hekster (2015) 227; cf. Bardill (2012) 93-4.

<sup>193</sup> RIC VII, Siscia no. 42: DIVO CONSTANTIO PIO PRINCIPI / REQVIES OPTIMORVM MERITORVM.



Fig. 5.6: Divus 'Fortissimus' Maximian.<sup>194</sup>



Fig. 5.7: Divus 'Optimus' Claudius.<sup>195</sup>

As was typical for commemoration coinage, the three *divi* are presented as veiled (though also with crowns). The reverse is not a temple as with Maxentius, or the more typical eagle or pyres, but an emperor (perhaps the *divus* himself) seated in a curule chair, holding a sceptre. Other commemoration issues, for example some of the MEMORIAE AETERNAE issues from Rome, do feature the eagle.<sup>196</sup>

The promotion of these three as divine ancestors is also reflected in the epigraphic record, and it is here that exact familial language is employed. Constantine is the grandson (*nepos*) of Claudius and the son (*filius*) of Constantius.<sup>197</sup> Another names Constantine as the son of *divus* Constantius and the grandson of *divus* Maximian (whose name has been erased).<sup>198</sup> Before 318, inscriptions had celebrated Constantine as the son of *divus* Constantius alone, though this practice may have continued afterwards as well.<sup>199</sup> Hekster notes that most of the

<sup>194</sup> RIC VII, Rome no. 104. DIVO MAXIMIANO SEN FORT IMP / REQVIES OPTIMOR MERIT.

<sup>195</sup> RIC VII, Thessalonica no. 26. DIVO CLAVDIO OPTIMO IMP / REQVIES OPTIMORVM MERITORVM.

<sup>196</sup> E.g. RIC VII, Rome nos. 110-119.

<sup>197</sup> Hekster (2015) 227-8. An inscription from Rome (ILS 702 = CIL 6.31564) An inscription from Ravenna reading *divi Claudi nepoti, divi Constantino* [sic] *filio* is now lost, but was dated to after 324 (ILS 699).

<sup>198</sup> E.g. CIL 5.08109; AE 1981 00520 = AE 1983 00607; CIL 12.05425; CIL 12.05470; CIL 12.05555; CIL 12.05662

<sup>199</sup> AE (1984) 0258, from Cannae, dated to 313-314; CIL 7.01154 from Britain, dated to 306-307; AE (1981) 0464 from near Ticinum, dated to 326-327. Dating attempts, taken from the Epigraphic Database Heidelberg, must be based on historical context and should not be given too much weight, though some inscriptions can be dated to

milestones dated between 306-307 title Constantine as *divi Constanti pii Augusti filius*.<sup>200</sup> Inscriptions from Spain list all three: Constantine is the son of Constantius, the grandson of Maximian, and the great-grandson (*pronepos*) of Claudius.<sup>201</sup> A later inscription to Crispus names him as the son of Constantine and the grandson of *divus* Constantius.<sup>202</sup>

In what must be direct engagement with Maxentius' AETERNAE MEMORIAE coinage, the mint of Rome simultaneously produced another commemorative type, this one bearing the legend MEMORIAE AETERNAE. Although the reverse of many of these features an eagle, some display a distinctly Herculian nature, with the MEMORIAE AETERNAE legend but a reverse of a lion.<sup>203</sup> These are found not only for Maximian, but for Constantius and Claudius as well. As two of Constantine's divine ancestors had also been claimed by Maxentius (Maximian and Constantius), this must be seen as a way of competing with and stealing Maxentius' earlier claims and promoting Constantine as the victorious liberator of Rome whose own legitimation claims had more power. These issues also mark the clear rehabilitation, to some degree, of Maximian as an imperial ancestor. Maxentius' death meant that Constantinian propaganda could subvert the relationship between father and son, and Fausta had finally produced a son for Constantine's new imperial college.<sup>204</sup> Enough time had passed that Maximian was ripe for rehabilitation; this was potentially too powerful a relationship to ignore forever.

Although Constantine's claims do not use dynastic language in the legends of the coinage as Maxentius did—Constantius is designated *pius*, Maximian *fortissimus*, Claudius *optimus*—the meaning behind the selection of emperors is still clearly dynastic.<sup>205</sup> The timing of the issues is also important; they are linked to propaganda circulating around the time of the first war with Licinius. However, this was the last time that Constantine's regime would employ such aggressive messages of dynastic legitimation that look back to imperial ancestors,

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earlier periods due to Constantine's rank. Other inscription examples include AE (1979) 00148; CIL 10.06837; CIL 12.05540

<sup>200</sup> Hekster (2015) 290.

<sup>201</sup> CIL 2.04742 = 2.06209, AE (1980) 00576.

<sup>202</sup> CIL 7.01153, from Britain.

<sup>203</sup> RIC VII, Rome nos. 120-128, some reverses with a club. For an image, see **fig. 3.8**.

<sup>204</sup> Some, particularly Harries (2012) 112 and PLRE 1.223 s.v. Fl. Claudius Constantinus 3, suggest Constantine II was not Fausta's child, based on the dating of his and Constantius II's births, but no ancient authors suggest anything to the contrary and we have no reason to doubt that Fausta was his mother. Harries (2002) 189 n. 16 adds that the hostility between Constantine II and Constans could be explained by the former not being Fausta's son, but being full brothers is no guarantee of concord; cf. Harries (2014) 204.

<sup>205</sup> It is unclear whether the specific titles were important. Maximian had previously been called *fortissimus* on the *seniores augusti* coinage (see **II.2.iii**). *Optimus* might imply links to Augustus or Trajan; cf. Manders (2012) 299. Wienand (2012) 240 notes that Claudius and Constantius represent military and civil achievements respectively in Optatian's poems.

although these ancestors would continue to be celebrated, for example in the panegyric poetry of Optatian Porphyrius.<sup>206</sup> The settlement after 317, in which Constantine and Licinius established their sons as Caesars, changed the focus from a retrospective one, looking back on the establishment of one's legitimacy, to a forward-facing one, which focused on the promotion of the emperors of the future. Instead of celebrating the past in Constantius, Maximian, and Claudius, panegyrists and mints alike celebrated the new Caesars: Crispus, Constantine II, and later Constantius II, Constans, and Delmatius.

## 5. SECURITAS: THE SOLIDIFICATION OF DYNASTY

After the settlement of c. 317, Constantine and Licinius adopted different strategies to promote their regimes.<sup>207</sup> These have been discussed in detail previously (IV.2.ii) but it is worthwhile summarizing them here. Licinius' mints focused on establishing the eastern emperor and his son as Iovii, employing both dynastic and divine legitimation. Constantine's regime displayed a concern with associating the Caesars (not only his sons) with types linked to their office and their status, such as the *princeps iuventutis* type, which undergoes a modification to PRINCIPIA IVVENTVTIS.<sup>208</sup> Bruun characterizes this common type as particularly belonging to Crispus, though it actually encompasses all the Caesars, including Licinius II. Bruun's explanation for the modification of the term is that it implies the Caesars' (or Crispus') military training at the military headquarters, the *principia*.<sup>209</sup> If true, this could be a further indication that the military role of the Caesars was expanding.<sup>210</sup>

Certainly dynastic interests seem prominent for Constantine as well as Licinius; for instance, coins featuring the 'dynastic' virtues *spes*, *salus*, and *securitas* were also minted during this period of cooperation and competition (see 5.i). After the second war with Licinius these virtues would be taken up in coinage for the women of the dynasty, Fausta and Helena

<sup>206</sup> For a detailed discussion on the place of the Constantinian dynasty in the poems of Optatian, see especially Wienand (2012).

<sup>207</sup> Notably, the date of March 1<sup>st</sup> for the promotion of Crispus, Constantine II, and Licinianus seems to have held dynastic connotations; it was the *dies imperii* of Constantius I: cf. e.g. Wienand (2012) 238; Marcos (2014) 763; Lenski (2005) 74.

<sup>208</sup> Bruun (1966) 50 n. 1: "The legend cannot be a die-cutter's error, though Trier consistently employs PRINCIPI. This is shown by London, where the first issue (no. 105) was struck with PRINCIPI, the second with the correct version PRINCIPIA (nos. 132-6). All other mints have exclusively PRINCIPIA." Bruun sometimes describes this type as representing Mars, but it should be instead understood as the *Princeps Iuventutis* himself, the Caesar in question, and a continuation of this important type.

<sup>209</sup> Bruun (1966) 50.

<sup>210</sup> Cf. Marcos (2014) 750, who considers the position under Constantine to be a "testing ground". Note also that the type continues under Gratian as PRINCIPIVM IVVENTVTIS: RIC IX Trier nos. 13a-c; Constantinople no. 24, Nicomedia no. 14; Antioch no. 19.

(see 5.iii).<sup>211</sup> There was also an interest from both sides of the empire to promote the links between the dynasties, such as on coinage promoting joint consulships and, in Constantine's mints, a proliferation of votive coinage to celebrate the upcoming *decennalia*. However, these demonstrations of cooperation began to fall away closer to 324 and the time of the second civil war.

This rest of this chapter will examine the different strategies of forward-looking legitimation that can be traced through this period, especially the evolutions in the promotion of the Caesars and of the women of the Constantinian family, the *domus divina*.<sup>212</sup> Tied to this new strategy is the theme of *securitas* and the future of the empire, which has been touched upon in previous discussions, but which especially comes to the forefront after the death of Licinius.

### i. The Caesars and the Imperial Family

The Caesars' appearance on coins from the period 317-324 is largely alongside Constantine, especially in types that form the bulk of the coinage like CLARITAS REIPUBLICAE, VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC(IPIVM) PERP(ETVA) and VIRTVS EXERCIT(VS), but more individually they appear as the Caesars (sometimes including Licinius II) on the PRINCIPIA IVVENTVTIS and CAESARVM NOSTRORVM types. The latter of these can be linked by the votives on the reverse to Constantine's *decennalia* and the Caesars' *quinquennalia*. There is therefore a distinction between the coins that celebrate the Constantinian dynasty and those which promote the two colleges (and extended imperial family, including the Licinii) together. The period from c. 321 onwards, however, shows increasingly individualized promotion of the Caesars on gold—see for example, this medallion of Constantine II as *Princeps Iuventutis* (fig. 5.8)—a more active *princeps* than is typical, with a captive underfoot and a globe to symbolize imperial power in his hand.

<sup>211</sup> E.g. SECVRITAS REIPUBLICAE, which was minted in gold for all the Constantinii at Trier c. 319-320, nos. 246 (Constantine), 247 (Crispus), 248 (Constantine II). See also SECVRITAS PERPETVAE, as a medallion for Constantine from Aquileia, no. 33, and as a *solidus* in Sirmium no. 42.

<sup>212</sup> A relatively late promotion, according to Wienand (2012) 225f.





Fig. 5.8: Medallion of Constantine II as *Princeps Iuventutis*.<sup>213</sup>

For the most part, the two Caesars (or later, three or more) were presented alongside each other on similar issues, but there seems to have been a particular interest in promoting Crispus on a number of types that he does not share with his brothers; this will be discussed in more detail (5.ii).

One new element in the coinage after 321 is the reappearance of the technique of double obverse and multiple busts. Most often, these feature Constantine on one side, and the facing busts of Crispus and Constantine II on the other (usually easily distinguishable by their size and age, figs. 5.9-10), although coins after 324 include Constantius II as one of the Caesars (fig. 5.11). In the east, facing busts promoted the Licinii as a Iovian family (see IV.3.i). In the west, the combination of techniques (facing and double obverse) serves as a way to celebrate more than two family members at once. These dynastic coins and medallions were issued primarily at the Balkan and eastern (after the defeat of Licinius) mints of Constantine's regime.<sup>214</sup> That these were issued on silver and gold shows the importance of the message; this is further shown by a large medallion which had been set into an elaborate pendant (fig. 5.10)—clearly this was a gift for someone of importance, and it is telling that the medallion chosen to complete it was one which presented all the members of the imperial family together.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>213</sup> RIC VII, Trier no. 360, c. AD 322-323: FL CL CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C / PRINCIPIA IVVENTVTIS. Gold (x1.5 solidi).

<sup>214</sup> CRISPVS ET CONSTANTINVS IVN NOBB CAESS: Siscia no. 26 (AD 317); Nicomedia nos. 51, 68 (324-5). CRISPVS ET CONSTANTINVS NOBB CAESS COSS II: Sirmium nos. 18, 20 (321). CONSTANTINVS ET CONSTANTIVS NOBB CAESS: Antioch no. 37 (326). NOBB CAESS (silver): Constantinople no. 6 (326); Thessaloniki no. 180 (330-1).

<sup>215</sup> Cf. British Museum catalogue, #1984,0501.1; Cleveland Museum of Art catalogue, #1994.98.



Fig. 5.9: Silver medallion of Constantine (obverse) and Crispus and Constantine II (reverse).<sup>216</sup>



Fig. 5.10: Pendant (r.) featuring medallion of Constantine (obv., l.), Crispus and Constantine II (rev., c.).<sup>217</sup>



Fig. 5.11: Medallion of Constantine (obverse), Crispus and Constantius II (reverse).<sup>218</sup>

This resurgence in the presentation of dynastic connections in this period does not reveal that dynastic legitimacy was of lesser importance in the period before, but that the establishment of the Caesars made this type of presentation more easily deployed. After all, in the period of cooperation, Licinius' mints did the same for their emperor with his son Licinianus (as facing busts), and there are other examples from that issue presenting different

<sup>216</sup> RIC VII, Sirmium no. 14, c. AD 320-324. CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG / CRISPVS ET CONSTANTINVS CC.

<sup>217</sup> RIC VII, Sirmium no. 18, AD 321: D N CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG / CRISPVS ET CONSTANTINVS NOBB CC COSS II. Gold (x4.5 solidi).

<sup>218</sup> RIC VII, Nicomedia no. 68, AD 324-325: D N CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG / CRISPVS ET CONSTANTIVS NOBB CAESS. Gold (x2 solidi).

combinations of the Constantinian and Licinian imperial college (or, what may be termed the extended imperial family—see **IV.2.ii**).<sup>219</sup> Constantine and Licinius' strategies in promoting their respective dynasties should not be taken as automatically in opposition to each other, since these were often in the context of promoting the imperial college as a whole, including both sides of the family.

Once Constantine's regime no longer had to contend with a rival (and also joint) dynasty in the Licinii, the mints continued to expand their programmes of promoting dynasty, especially through the Caesars. Other coins depict the imperial family (Constantine and his sons) as part of a scene on the reverse. One of these portrays the emperors with the qualities associated with the future of empire: *SALVS ET SPES REIPVBLICAE*, which in examples from Rome and Constantinople feature Constantine enthroned with two Caesars standing beside him. In Thessaloniki, a very large medallion from c. 335 depicts Constantine enthroned, surrounded by his four Caesars (**fig. 5.12**).<sup>220</sup> The Caesars Constantine II, Constantius, and Dalmatius (with the exception of Constans, the youngest and smallest) are dressed in military attire and holding spears in the style of the *princeps iuventutis* type. The attention to depicting the boys as different heights and ages is a fascinating touch of verisimilitude.



**Fig. 5.12: Medallion of Constantine, with reverse featuring Constantine and four Caesars.**<sup>221</sup>

The importance of the Caesars survives in literary evidence as well, in the Panegyric of 321. This panegyric was given, apparently by one Nazarius, specifically in honour of the Caesars' *quinquennalia*. The panegyrist's main technique is to praise the Caesars by describing how like their father they are—a good way to praise Constantine and his sons simultaneously.

<sup>219</sup> RIC VII, Nicomedia nos. 38-40.

<sup>220</sup> *SALVS ET SPES REIPVBLICAE*: Rome no. 280 (AD 326, aes medallion); Heraclea no. 99 (326-335?, does not include Caesars); Constantinople no. 43-44 (330), no. 88 (335); Thessaloniki no. 204 (335). Other examples are *FELICITAS ROMANORVM*, Rome no. 275 (326, reverse showing emperor and three Caesars); *GLORIA SAECVLI VIRTVS CAESS*, Rome no. 279 (326, aes medallion, reverse showing emperor and Caesar, with Constantine offering globe with a phoenix to his son).

<sup>221</sup> RIC VII, Thessaloniki no. 204, c. AD 335: *CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG / SALVS ET SPES REIPVBLICAE*. Gold (x9 solidi).

The Caesars are the “images of his own virtues” (*virtutum suarum effigies*) and their “nature is like his” (*indoles similis*), and “their expectation of becoming equal to their father is assured” (*spes aequiparandi patris certa sit*).<sup>222</sup> The future is bright for these Caesars because they are like their father, so Constantine’s reign will continue through them,<sup>223</sup> and even Constantine sees that the empire will benefit most of all from their future reign.<sup>224</sup> Nixon and Rodgers have translated *spes* in 4.2 as the Caesars’ own expectation, but it is worth considering an alternative translation: that the *spes* here is the hope of the people that the Caesars would someday prove to be the equal of their father in his rule. This hope comes up again towards the end of the panegyric: “Rome also derives enjoyment from the enormous hopes which she has conceived of the most noble Caesars and their brothers, whose very names we already revere, even if our prayers are deferred in the meantime.”<sup>225</sup> Yet Nazarius is careful not to promise a bright future without praising the deeds that have already been done. For Crispus, who was by then a teenager, the task was not difficult; Crispus had been involved to some degree with military campaigns, and Nazarius focuses on his valour and bravery, and on the love the soldiers have for him.<sup>226</sup> For Constantine II, praise required more rhetorical flourishes, as he was only around five. Nazarius says that he is *aware* of his consulship, that he listens intently to the tales of his family’s valour, and that he is apparently a prodigious scribbler.<sup>227</sup> Constantius I also makes an appearance as the leader of a heavenly army, although Maximian and Claudius are nowhere to be seen.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4.4.1, 4.2: “To perfect their inherent good qualities training is given them, no indifferent artisan of virtues, so that; since their nature is like his, but with him as director of their learning their circumstances are more fortunate.” *Quibus ad perficienda quae ingenerata sunt bona non segnīs uirtutum opifex disciplina coniungitur, ut spes aequiparandi patris certa sit; quippe indoles similis, sed sub eodem magistro discendi fortuna felicior.*

<sup>223</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4.2.5-6: “But what are we doing in limiting with twenty or even thirty years what we perceive to be eternal?” The merits of the princes are more abundant than our prayers’ desires. Rather, let the course of his fortunate reign run to infinity, and let those who always contemplate what is divine give no heed to human boundaries.” *Verum quid agimus uicenis aut iam tricenis annis circumscribendo quae aeterna sentimus? Ampliora sunt merita principum quam optata uotorum. Eat quin immo in immensum felicitis cursus imperii, nec humanorum terminos curent qui semper diuina meditantur.*

<sup>224</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4.4.1: “[T]he most excellent leader finds it particularly pleasing that in their earliest years lines have already been drawn by which the image of his own virtues can be encompassed, and the best of fathers, but a better Emperor, rejoices not so much for himself as for the State when he gazes upon children like himself.” *[P]raestantissimum principem hoc maxime iuuat quod in annis primoribus iam sunt ductae lineae quibus uirtutum suarum effigies possit includi, et pater optimus, sed melior imperator, non tam sibi quam rei publicae gaudet, cum liberos sibi similes intuetur.* Trans. Nixon & Rodgers (1994), adapted.

<sup>225</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4.36.1: *Tantorum Roma compos bonorum, quae quidem ei sunt cum toto orbe communia, haurit insuper ingentis spei fructum, quam propositam sibi ex Caesaribus nobilissimis habet eorum fratribus. Quorum iam nomina ipsa ueneramus, etsi uota nostra interim proferuntur.*

<sup>226</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4.3.5, 17.1-2, 36.3, 37.4.

<sup>227</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4.3.5, 37.1, 37.3; cf. Warmington (1974) 381.

<sup>228</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4.14.6.

There is little explicit dynastic language on the Constantinian coinage, even those that celebrate the Caesars and other members of the family. One of the few examples where it does appear is on another medallion that features Crispus on the obverse, with the reverse legend FELIX PROGENIES CONSTANTINI AVG. The reverse depicts the two Caesars clasping hands with Fausta behind them, her hands on their shoulders (fig. 5.13).<sup>229</sup>



Fig. 5.13: Medallion of Crispus with reverse of Fausta and Caesars.<sup>230</sup>

It is unclear whether the two boys on the reverse are Crispus (again) and Constantine II, or the latter and Constantius (the younger), who had just been made a Caesar and who was recognized as such at Trier on coins from the same period.<sup>231</sup> The combination of the legend, especially the word *progenies* (here probably meaning ‘family’, but also possibly ‘lineage’, with potential connotations for the future) and the type makes this a vital piece of evidence for the presentation of Constantine’s dynasty and family. Harries has said of this coin that “The handshake suggests a reconciliation or settlement, after some kind of conflict, and supports the hypothesis that Fausta was agitated that Crispus, now a successful general, might threaten the succession of her sons, as Constantine himself had sidelined the sons of his father’s second wife.”<sup>232</sup> This is perhaps taking the situation too far; instead of addressing a particular conflict that happened, the coin might be merely promoting a sense of more generic *concordia*, addressing the *potential* for conflict.

There also survive possible depictions of the Constantinian family on other forms of art, such as the Ada-Kameo from Trier (fig. 5.14) which survives as the centrepiece of the cover to a medieval gospel, and the ‘Great Cameo’, now in Leiden (fig. 5.15).<sup>233</sup> What members of

<sup>229</sup> On the dating, importance, and potential interpretation of this coin, see Filippini (2016) 225-238.

<sup>230</sup> RIC VII, Trier no. 442, AD 324. FL IVL CRISPVS NOB CAES / FELIX PROGENIES CONSTANTINI AVG. Gold (x2 solidi).

<sup>231</sup> Delbruck (1933) identifies them as Crispus and Constantine II, but the other alternative is just as likely.

<sup>232</sup> Harries (2014) 205. Cf. Filippini (2016) 232: “In sintesi, l'emissione qui presa in esame riflette con grande chiarezza la volontà di comunicare ed affermare i legami interni alla domus costantiniana, in un momento di svolta cruciale per l'assetamento ed il consolidamento dell'autorità imperiale.”

<sup>233</sup> On cameos as donatives and the relationship with donative gold coins and medallions, see e.g. Marsden (1999).

the family specifically are represented in these engravings, however, remains a topic of debate.<sup>234</sup> On the Ada-Kameo, one suggestion is that the figures should be understood (from left to right) as Helena, Constantine the Great, Constantine II, Fausta, and Crispus.<sup>235</sup> On the Great Cameo, Bardill says that the figures are Constantine, Fausta, and a young boy (whom he identifies as Crispus, saying that “it is unlikely that Constantine Junior would have been shown without his older half-brother at any time before Crispus' death.”)<sup>236</sup> The female figure behind Constantine is not identified; Stephenson says that the woman is normally labelled as Helena.<sup>237</sup> As these cameos do not seem to be able to be dated securely to the fourth century, much less to Constantine's family specifically, it is not helpful to speculate overmuch on the possible identification of the figures.<sup>238</sup> Yet it is worth briefly examining possible representations of the Constantinian family beyond what appears in coinage.



Figs. 5.14 & 5.15: (left) Ada-Kameo; (right) 'Great Cameo'.<sup>239</sup>

Overall, the evidence from the proclamation of the Caesars in 317 onwards shows a shift in the ways in which Constantine's legitimation was presented. Initially this was an increased interest in the promotion of his dynasty and their roles in the future of the empire. After the defeat of Licinius, Constantine's regime no longer needed to push his connections with deified ancestors, but the lessened focus on Divus Constantius corresponds with an even

<sup>234</sup> Summarized by Drijvers (1992) 191-2.

<sup>235</sup> Drijvers (1992) 191-2; Pohlsander (1984) 94-95; Henig (2006) 71. Drijvers contends that the cameo must have been made before 317 because it does not depict Constantius II.

<sup>236</sup> Bardill (2012) 170-1. Cf. Halbertsma (2015) 221-235; Drijvers (1992) 192-3; Pohlsander (1984) 96-7; Potter (2013) 242. Bardill tentatively dates the cameo to the decennalia celebrations of 315; cf. Zadoks-Josephus Jitta (1951) 182-185. Stephenson (2015) 237-240 argues that the young boy should be seen as Constantius II, and that the cameo was made to honour his appointment as Caesar.

<sup>237</sup> Stephenson (2015) 237, but Drijvers (1992) 192 notes that the woman looks too young to be Helena.

<sup>238</sup> The cameo was originally dated to the Claudian period; Halbertsma (2015) 222 notes this but adds that “stylistically this is not possible” due to apparent 4<sup>th</sup>-century elements in its composition.

<sup>239</sup> Ada Kameo: Trier Stadtbibliothek. Great Cameo: Currently in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden, but previously in the Utrecht Geldmuseum.

clearer pattern of promotion for Constantine's sons. Although Constantius appears in the Panegyric of 321, it is hardly to the same degree that he does in earlier panegyrics; the focus is instead on the current members of the imperial family, including Crispus' military prowess. *Securitas*, the stable future of the realm, is the theme that dominates the material from later in Constantine's reign, even if it does not appear directly. When it does, it has clear implications for the preoccupations of the time: *SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE* appears on coins for many of the Constantinian family throughout Constantine's reign, including for Crispus, as the eldest of the sons and the closest to manhood and the future of imperial power (fig. 5.16).



Fig. 5.16: Solidus of Crispus with reverse of *Securitas*.<sup>240</sup>

## ii. Crispus

Special attention should be paid to Crispus, Constantine's eldest son, who was celebrated on coins and in literature until his mysterious death in 326. Crispus' tale is a dramatic rise and fall, and is shrouded even more by the fanciful interpretations of later historians. Little is known of his birth, the date of which is, predictably, debated, but by 322 he was married to a woman named Helena and they had a child.<sup>241</sup> His mother is similarly obscure; we know nothing besides her name, Minervina, and it has been debated whether she was a concubine or a 'legitimate' wife—a debate that seems all too similar to the one surrounding Helena.<sup>242</sup> The debate largely concerns the scanty evidence of a reference in the Panegyric of 307, which waxes lyrical about Constantine as a devoted husband in his first marriage.<sup>243</sup> Pohlsander dismisses the evidence of the panegyric: "To me it is not surprising that a panegyrist should honor Constantine's relationship with Minervina with the word 'marriage,' when in fact it was less

<sup>240</sup> RIC VII, Trier no. 247. FL IVL CRISPVS NOB CAES / SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE. Gold (solidus).

<sup>241</sup> PLRE 1.409 s.v. Helena 1; *Cod. Theod.* 9.38.1 (Rome, AD 322); Barnes (2011) 104; Pohlsander (1984) 83.

<sup>242</sup> Potter (2013) 98 suggests that Minervina must have been a member of the imperial aristocracy; this has nothing to support it but it is not as egregiously unsubstantiated as the contention of Barnes (2011) 49 that Minervina was a niece or other close relative of Diocletian's—though he at least admits it is a "bold and speculative hypothesis".

<sup>243</sup> For a summary of the debate, see Pohlsander (1984) 80. For the ancient sources, see Ps.-Vict. 41.4; Zos. 2.20.2; Zonar. 13.2.37; *Pan. Lat.* 6.4.1.

than that.”<sup>244</sup> But it seems stranger to think that the panegyrist would go on at length about Constantine’s first marriage if it were a potential point of embarrassment, as Potter points out.<sup>245</sup> In the end, Crispus’ status as a ‘legitimate’ son of Constantine matters as little as Constantine’s own status: on coinage or in literature there are no distinctions between Crispus and the sons of Fausta as potential heirs.<sup>246</sup>

Like his brothers, Crispus could be celebrated within the context of the imperial college and the Constantinian dynasty. An inscription from Rome by Ovinus Gallicanus, the *praefectus urbi*, honours the new Caesar:

To Flavius Valerius Crispus, most noble Caesar, son of our lord  
Constantine Maximus and Invictus, forever Augustus, and grandson of  
the divine Constantius...

*Flavio Valerio Crispo / nobilissimo Caes(ari) filio d(omini) n(ostri) /  
Constantini maximi / adque Invicti semper Aug(usti) / et nepoti divi  
Constanti...*<sup>247</sup>

The inscription is possibly dated to 317, the year Crispus was elevated to Caesar.<sup>248</sup> It also shows, however, that the son could be celebrated both in his own right (i.e. the recipient of a dedication) and in a way that reflects his dynastic lineage. Crispus appears explicitly as the son and grandson of emperors (including a divine emperor), though Claudius Gothicus does not appear in this formula. It may be that the inscription was meant to flatter Constantine as much, if not more, than Crispus, and thus should not be taken as evidence of Crispus’ importance in the west, but it is notable nevertheless that the inscription is to Crispus alone. The very young Constantine II does not feature, and if there was a companion inscription to him dedicated by Ovinus, it does not appear to survive.

Given Crispus’ age compared to that of his siblings, it is not surprising that he would be honoured by mints and panegyrics in a way that Constantine II and Constantius, who were very young at their elevations to Caesar, could never compete with. The Panegyric of 321,

<sup>244</sup> Pohlsander (1984) 80.

<sup>245</sup> Cf. Potter (2013) 97-98: “Crispus, the child born of the relationship between Minervina and Constantine, was legitimate; furthermore, Constantine chose to assert Crispus’ legitimacy at the time of his second marriage in 307, at which point, if the matter had been in doubt, it would have been profoundly awkward to do so.” Though it is not quite clear, Potter seems to be relying on the Panegyric of 307 here as the assertion of Crispus’ legitimacy, or at least the ‘legitimacy’ of Constantine’s marriage with Minervina. It is also worth noting the argument of Rees (2002) 170, in which he notes that the story of an ‘engagement’ between a younger Constantine and Fausta must be false because of Constantine’s relationship with Minervina (which Rees assumes to be true).

<sup>246</sup> See the previous section for discussion on how Crispus is presented as effectively another of Fausta’s sons.

<sup>247</sup> CIL 6.1155 = ILS 716.

<sup>248</sup> Van Dam (2011) 143.



given to honour the imperial college and *quinquennalia* of Crispus and Constantine II, tells of Crispus' campaigns in Gaul and praises the boy as both a heroic youth and as a future emperor:

The reason and passion for our prayers, behold, the deeds of Crispus make plain, the oldest of the Caesars, in whom the rapidly growing valor unimpeded by youth's delay has filled his boyhood years with triumphal renown, whose already plentiful praises so abound that they could seem complete, if we did not consider that this was also how his father started out.

*Declarant ecce rationem cupiditatemque uotorum facta Crispi, Caesarum maximi, in quo uelox uirtus aetatis mora non retardata pueriles annos gloriis triumphalibus occupauit, cuius ita iam uberes scatent laudes ut plenae possent uideri nisi {sic} coepisse et patrem cogitaremus.*<sup>249</sup>

What Nixon and Rodgers have translated “oldest of the Caesars” (*Caesarum maximi*), could also be translated “greatest of the Caesars.” No one would be able to argue with that implication. Crispus' military career would only rise from this point onwards. He seems to have made a name for himself in the war against Licinius, when he would likely have been around twenty or twenty-five, particularly in the naval battle of the Hellespont and the final victory near Chrysopolis.<sup>250</sup> This military prowess is celebrated prominently on gold coins from around the empire (**fig. 5.17**).<sup>251</sup>



**Fig. 5.17: Solidus of Crispus with reverse of Victory and votive shield.**<sup>252</sup>

<sup>249</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4.36.3.

<sup>250</sup> *Origo* 5.23, 5.26; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 10.9.6; Petr. Patr. F209; *Chron. Pasch.* 524 Dindorf; Zonar. 13.2.

<sup>251</sup> Wienand (2012) 248: “Constantine’s coinage also shows that the Caesar’s spectacular success was not only celebrated abstractly, but was quite concretely credited to Crispus.” Cf. Crispus’ representation in Opt. Porf., *Carm.* 5, 9, 20a.

<sup>252</sup> Antioch, not in RIC. Boston MFA #1988.155: FL IVL CRISPVS NOB CAES / VICTORIA CRISPI CAES. Compare to RIC VII Sirmium no. 32, but this has a different bust type to the one in the RIC. Note that Constantine II has a coin with the legend VICTORIA CONSTANTINI CAES from the same issue at Sirmium (no. 34). On the motif of Victoria with the inscribed votive shield, see Hölscher (1967) 115-120.

Crispus' career was marked by accounts of heroism and bravery—and stories of his rise could be compared with his own father's. After all, similar tales circulated about Constantine's military exploits under Diocletian and Galerius in the east.<sup>253</sup>

Nor was Crispus only a military commander. The Caesar was based at Trier, apparently with a court of his own to provide an imperial presence in the west, supported by his praetorian prefect, Junius Bassus.<sup>254</sup> It may also have been at Trier that he was educated by Lactantius.<sup>255</sup> Crispus was also heavily promoted as a Caesar and an heir apart from his military skill, such as in an interesting take on the *princeps iuventutis* coinage from Rome: an aes medallion which features Crispus paired with a reverse (the Caesar with spear and trophy, similar to the *princeps iuventutis* types) that reads simply IVVENTVS.<sup>256</sup> Other coins associated Crispus with victory (e.g. VICTORIA CRISPI CAES), *virtus* (e.g. VIRTVS CAESARI N), *securitas* and *spes* alongside his brothers (see 5.i for examples), and others celebrating honorary positions (e.g. FELIX PROCESSVS COS II).<sup>257</sup> Many of these and similar medallions are from around the time of the war with Licinius, c. 324-325, when Crispus was proving his worth in the field. Although it is difficult to state definitively that Crispus was more prominent on the coinage than his younger brother and co-Caesar,<sup>258</sup> there is certainly a heightened focus on him at this time, as can be seen from the legends that include his name specifically and from a number of types upon which Constantine II does not seem to feature.<sup>259</sup>

Although much information about Crispus from the literary sources involves either his military victories or his death, the glimpses that survive reflect the evidence of the coinage that Crispus had been promoted extensively as son and heir. Optatian Porphyrius presents Crispus as a dynastic heir to an empire that stretches back to Claudius Gothicus, and praises his military victories.<sup>260</sup> Nicholas Stevenson argues that the account of Crispus in the *Origo* reflects a contemporary preoccupation with praising the Caesar, concluding, “Certainly it would have

<sup>253</sup> Cf. Barnes (1981) 25, (2011) 52-54.

<sup>254</sup> Potter (2013) 243; Barnes (2011) 104; Pohlsander (1984) 87.

<sup>255</sup> Jer. *Vir. Ill.* 80; Pohlsander (1984) 82-3.

<sup>256</sup> RIC VII, Rome no. 249. Unfortunately, I cannot find a picture of this coin, nor did Cohen (1892) 347 no. 82 include a reproduction sketch.

<sup>257</sup> All references from RIC VII, and all examples minted in gold: VICTORIA CRISPI CAES: Sirmium no. 26 (AD 322); VIRTVS CAESARI N (Thessalonica no. 136 (AD 324); FELIX PROCESSVS COS II: Antioch no. 40 (AD 324).

<sup>258</sup> Wienand (2012) 246-247 offers an intriguing analysis on Crispus' prominence in coinage and the question of his 'equal' prominence as his younger brother, Constantine II.

<sup>259</sup> Austin (1980) 134 refers briefly to the coinage as evident that Crispus was promoted up until his death.

<sup>260</sup> Van Dam (2011) 165-6; Wienand (2012) 232, 241ff; Opt. Porf., *Carm.* 10, which focuses on Crispus' military victories c. 317-321 (written before Porphyrius' exile). Crispus features prominently also in *Carm.* 5 and 9, both of which were apparently written for the *vicennalia*, c. 324-5 (after Porphyrius' return from exile), according to Wienand (2017) 151. See also Wienand (2012) 230f for a discussion of Optatian's career and place at Constantine's court.

been a fitting climax to the story with Constantine as the sole ruler of the Roman Empire with his heroic son, Crispus, at his side as his victorious successor designate.”<sup>261</sup> The parallels between Crispus and his father, whether coincidental or exaggerated by the sources of the day, are unmistakable: the imperial son with military experience and the apparent support of armies, much older than his imperial-half siblings (and even with fewer claims to legitimacy on the matrilineal front). Eusebius’ *Historia Ecclesiastica* preserves some praise of Crispus in which he is explicitly paralleled with his father (and in which he is termed βασιλευς).<sup>262</sup>

The greatest victor Constantine, excellent in all virtues of piety, with his son, Lord Crispus, most-dear-to-God and similar to his father in regards to everything, recovered their own East and created one Roman hegemony as in the days of old...

ὁ δ' ἀρετῇ πάσῃ θεοσεβείας ἐκπρέπων μέγιστος νικητῆς Κωνσταντῖνος σὺν παιδὶ Κρίσπῳ, βασιλεῖ θεοφιλεστάτῳ καὶ τὰ πάντα τοῦ πατρὸς ὁμοίῳ, τὴν οἰκείαν ἐφ' ἀνάπελάμβανον καὶ μίαν ἠνωμένην τὴν Ῥωμαίων κατὰ τὸ παλαιὸν παρεῖχον ἀρχήν...<sup>263</sup>

It is in this context that we should view the theories surrounding Crispus’ mysterious demise. By 326, Crispus was dead—executed, it seems, by Constantine.<sup>264</sup> As Aurelius Victor puts it, “When the eldest of these [Crispus] had died on the orders of his father, the reason is uncertain...”<sup>265</sup> One explanation for his death from the ancient sources is to link it with Fausta’s, which came a few months later (see 5.iii), resulting in two separate versions of the events of 326. In one, Fausta contrives to have Crispus killed (and is killed herself for her involvement); in the other they are both executed for having an affair.<sup>266</sup> Zonaras also records

<sup>261</sup> Stevenson (2014) 4-5. Stevenson’s argument, following Burgess (1995b), is that the *Origo* in its current state was a condensed, extended, and edited version of an earlier work. This work, he argues, would have ended after the final conflict with Licinius and before Crispus’ death, when the *Origo*’s narrative changes in quality and focus, and becomes more heavily reliant on extrapolations from Orosius and Jerome.

<sup>262</sup> Βασιλευς is the Greek equivalent of ‘emperor’ or *Augustus*; here it likely is an imperial honorific (thus the translation here as ‘lord’) or a generic imperial title rather than a specific indication of rank.

<sup>263</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 10.9.6. Cf. 10.9.4: Because of this, the protector of the good people, having mixed hate for evil with love for good, went forth with his son, Lord Crispus, the most benevolent, extending a saving right hand to those destroyed. Both father and son, using the god of all, with the son of God the saviour, as guide and ally, and encircling the formation of the Godhaters, they won an easy victory, because all the battle arrangements were made easy for them by God according to their mind. διὸ δὴ τῷ φιλαγάθῳ μίξας τὸ μισοπόνηρον ὁ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀρωγὸς πρόεισινάμα παιδὶ Κρίσπῳ βασιλεῖ φιλανθρωποτάτῳ σωτήριον δεξιὰν ἅπασιν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις ἐκτείνας: εἶθ’ οἷα παμβασιλεῖ θεῷ θεοῦ τε παιδὶ σωτήρι ἀπάντων ποδηγῷ καὶ συμμάχῳ χρώμενοι, πατὴρ ἅμα καὶ υἱὸς ἄμφω κύκλῳ διελόντες τὴν κατὰ τῶν θεομισῶν παράταξιν, ῥαδίαν τὴν νίκην ἀποφέρονται, τῶν κατὰ τὴν συμβολὴν πάντων ἐξευμαρισθέντων αὐτοῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ γνώμην. Translations thanks to C. Djurslev.

<sup>264</sup> *Chron. Pasch.* 525 Dindorf: “Constantine...killed his son Crispus who was Caesar and had been maligned to him.” Cf. *Consularia Constantinopolitana* s.v. 326.

<sup>265</sup> Aur. Vict. 41.11: *Quorum cum natu grandior, incertum qua causa, patris iudicio occidisset...* Jerome is similarly vague: Jer. *Vir. Ill.* 80.

<sup>266</sup> Fausta’s plot: Ps.-Vict. 41.11; the affair: Zos. 2.29.2.

a version of the story in which Fausta is obsessed with Crispus and denounces him when he denies her advances—the story’s similarities to the Phaedra-Hippolytus myth (as well as the lateness of Zonaras’ writing) make it likely that this is an elaboration, or an attempt to combine both versions into one.<sup>267</sup> Zosimus and Sozomen report that Constantine became Christian in order to obtain purification after Crispus’ murder; Sozomen then dismisses the tale by pointing out Crispus’ achievements and the fact that laws that were enacted in his name were still extant (and Sozomen, unlike Zosimus, omits mention of a potential affair with Fausta).<sup>268</sup> The end of Julian’s *Caesars* also touches upon this explanation for Constantine’s Christianity, as Constantine and his sons seek absolution from Jesus, but are still punished for the murder of their kin; for the sons this must be the dynastic murders of 337, but for Constantine, the events of 326 come first to mind.<sup>269</sup> Eutropius, Jerome, and Orosius link Crispus’ death primarily with that of Licinianus instead of Fausta’s, although Licinianus would have been only ten at the time.<sup>270</sup> Inscriptions suggest at least some evidence of *damnatio memoriae* against Crispus, though it was not comprehensive (as Sozomen notes, above); on one inscription, the names of both Crispus and Fausta are erased.<sup>271</sup>

It is clear that there is no consensus amongst the sources as to the true nature of Crispus’ crime or his death. The situation is the same in the modern scholarship; some accept the story of Crispus and Fausta wholesale while others point out the problems.<sup>272</sup> Potter is one of the latter, going so far as to call these stories “fantasies” (and perhaps with good reason); he notes that the first narrative to link Crispus and Fausta stems from as late as c. 395 (the *Epitome de*

<sup>267</sup> Zonar. 13.2.

<sup>268</sup> Zos. 2.29.2-3; Sozomen *Hist. Eccl.* 1.5.

<sup>269</sup> Jul. *Caes.* 336B: “To him [Jesus] Constantine came gladly, when he had conducted his sons forth from the assembly of the gods. But the avenging deities nonetheless punished both him and them for their impiety, and exacted the penalty for the shedding of the blood of their kindred.” σφόδρα ἄσμενος ἐνέτυχεν αὐτῷ, συνεξαγαγὼν τῆς τῶν θεῶν ἀγορᾶς τοὺς παῖδας. Ἐπέτριβον δὲ αὐτόν τε κάκεινους οὐχ ἦττον τῆς ἀθεότητος οἱ παλαμναῖοι δαίμονες, αἰμάτων συγγενῶν τιννύμενοι δίκας, ἕως ὃ Ζεὺς διὰ τὸν Κλαύδιον καὶ Κωνσταντίον ἔδωκεν ἀναπνεῦσαι. Cf. Tougher (2007) 20.

<sup>270</sup> Eutrop. 10.6: “Falling first upon his own relatives, he put to death his son, an excellent man; his sister’s son, a youth of amiable disposition; soon afterwards his wife, and subsequently many of his friends” (*Primum necessitudines persecutus egregium virum filium et sororis filium, commodae indolis iuvenem, interfecit, mox uxorem, post numerosos amicos.*); Jer. *Chron.* 231d; Orosius 7.28.26: “The emperor Constantine, without apparent cause, now turned the sword of vengeance and the punishment appointed for the impious against even his nearest and dearest. He put to death his own son Crispus and his sister’s son Licinius.” (*sed inter haec latent causae, cur uindicem gladium et destinatum in impios punitorem Constantinus imperator etiam in proprios egit affectus. nam Crispum filium suum et Licinium sororis filium interfecit.*) Austin (1980) 136 is critical of this connection.

<sup>271</sup> Pohlsander (1984) 102; Austin (1980) 135; ILS 710: *Piissimae ac venera<b=V>i/li d(ominae) n(ostrae) [[Faustae]] Aug(ustae) / [[uxori]] d(omini) n(ostri) Maximi / victoris Aug(usti) / Constantini [[n]o[vaer]c(ae)] / [[et matri]] ddd(ominorum) nnn(ostrorum) / [[Crispi]] Constantini / Constanti b{a}ea/tissimorum [Caesarum] / [re]s p(ublica) S[urrentin]or(um).* Other inscriptions on which Crispus’ name have been erased include CIL 2.4107, 3.7172, 5.8030, 9.6386a, 10.517. See also evidence for Crispus’ *damnatio* in statuary: Varner (2004) 221-222 notes that Crispus’ portraits are identifiable through his coiffure.

<sup>272</sup> Odahl (2004) 206 even entertains the notion of the Phaedra/Hippolytus story.

*Caesaribus*, Pseudo-Victor) and even later than that are the stories of an affair that follow the Phaedra/Hippolytus mould.<sup>273</sup> To go back to the evidence from Aurelius Victor, Barnes takes this account to mean that Crispus was put to death by a formal trial in Pola, Istria, possibly on his way to the *vicennalia* celebrations; the place is given in a passing remark by Ammianus Marcellinus.<sup>274</sup> Guthrie's proposed solution is based upon the idea of Crispus as somehow having lesser claims of legitimacy than his half-brothers; the evidence discussed above makes this unlikely.<sup>275</sup> In the end, it is impossible to say for sure why Crispus was executed, but Pohlsander concludes that Crispus' offense must have been "especially shocking" to warrant his execution.<sup>276</sup>

Although it is problematic to put too much emphasis on the suggested connections between Crispus' death and Fausta's, it has been proposed that Fausta "had a clear dynastic motive for getting Crispus disgraced and executed" on potential charges of high treason or conspiring against his father.<sup>277</sup> Austin disagrees that there is evidence of a conspiracy centred on Crispus, but he does support an idea proposed by Barnes that Fausta might have used accusations of 'magic' and fortune-telling against Crispus.<sup>278</sup> Setting aside this accusation (which has very little evidence to support it), I wish to explore further the idea for Crispus as a potential focus for political unrest, although not to insist that he was involved in a political coup.<sup>279</sup> After all, another Caesar and Constantinian family member, Julian, would be declared Augustus by his army in Gaul less than forty years later, in opposition to Constantius II. I propose that Constantine's regime recognized the possibility of political unrest from Crispus, his court, and his army, and took pains to establish Crispus' place as a harmonious member of Constantine's imperial college. Whether a coup, or the hint of one, actually did take place cannot be determined, though it is notable that members of Crispus' court were also purged.<sup>280</sup>

Throughout the Roman Empire, the military had provided a potential power base for acclamation to imperial power, and Crispus, as has been set out above, was prominently

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<sup>273</sup> Potter (2013) 246; Pohlsander (1984) 103-4. On this latter story, Potter says "Philostorgius is a notoriously independent witness to political events of the fourth century, and we might reasonably see in his account a reflection of the very nasty stories that were circulated about Fausta after the end of the Constantinian dynasty."

<sup>274</sup> Barnes (2011) 146f, following Kraft (1955) 128-32; cf. Amm. Marc. 14.11.20 for the detail on Pola.

<sup>275</sup> Guthrie (1966) 327-8; Austin (1980) 133 and Pohlsander (1984) 105 argue against him.

<sup>276</sup> Pohlsander (1984) 106.

<sup>277</sup> Barnes (2011) 148; Odahl (2004) 205; Grant (1993) 110-113.

<sup>278</sup> Austin (1980) 135-6. As Barnes (1975c) 48 says, "Crispus (it is clear) died as the result of a dynastic intrigue which benefited the sons of his step-mother Fausta."

<sup>279</sup> Potter (2014) 281 notes that, in the establishment of Constantinople, Crispus and Fausta, who had remained in the west, "might have been powerful in the west after the center of government shifted to the east." Cf. also Wienand (2012) 248: "The palace crisis of 326 potentially resulted from tensions between Constantine and Crispus based on divergent ideas of the Caesar's future within the imperial college."

<sup>280</sup> Wienand (2012) 249-250; Barnes (1975c) 48, (2011) 148f.

celebrated for both his military victories and his position as Constantine's eldest son and a Caesar. Constantine's regime seems to have recognized the dangers in Crispus' position and addressed them accordingly by promoting Crispus together with imperial *concordia*. There are a number of coins for Crispus with reverses of *concordia*, especially high-denomination gold and medallions with the reverse CONCORDIA AVGG, on which Crispus appears alone at Aquileia, Sirmium, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, and Antioch c. 323-325 (fig. 5.18).



Fig. 5.18: Solidus of Crispus with reverse of Concordia.<sup>281</sup>

These coins are minted for him but not for his brothers (at least as they survive in the numismatic record). On these *concordia* coins, Bruun has stated that they are better suited to the period of cooperation between Constantine and Licinius (in which this type also appears, although only at Ticinum). He has called this type the “automatic repetition of old types”, said that it was “entirely out of place in post-war Antioch”, and that it was an “anachronistic echo of collegiate rulership”.<sup>282</sup> This final dismissal is the most egregious: even after the death of Licinius, Constantine still ruled as the senior member of an imperial college, only this time composed of himself and his sons. Collegial rulership was anything but anachronistic. The legend, admittedly, is somewhat out of touch with reality, given that it shows the plural G for *Augustorum*. But, given the high visibility of Crispus in these mints as a Caesar, as a victorious leader, and as the epitome of *Virtus*, it is unlikely that the mints would choose to associate him with a type that had no meaning, especially on such high-quality pieces.

In fact, this type is perfectly suited for the time and for Crispus. If there was discontent amongst the political elite in Gaul, Crispus might have proven to be the perfect figurehead. He was a young man at this time, a teenager no longer—around the same age as Maxentius when he was proclaimed emperor in Rome. He had a string of military victories under his belt, victories remembered by more than the panegyrists of the time. What is more, he was an imperial prince—and the empire remembered far too well what happened when imperial

<sup>281</sup> RIC VII, Antioch no. 50. FL IVL CRISPVS NOB CAES / CONCORDIA AVGG NN.

<sup>282</sup> Bruun (1966) 38 n.2, 463-5, 592, 663.

princes became dissatisfied with their rank of Caesar. Maximian Daza and Constantine himself were evidence of that just over a decade before. In this light, considering Crispus as not just a figurehead of imperial power but as someone around whom dissatisfied soldiers or officials could rally, his linkage with CONCORDIA AVGG NN makes sense. Given its appearance at several mints, this coin should not be understood as a random expression of ‘anachronistic’ unity, but as a message highlighting Crispus’ importance in and loyalty to Constantine’s dynastic imperial college.

This examination does not argue that Constantine’s confidence was indeed misplaced and that Crispus was in fact involved in some sort of power struggle—whether in opposition to his father or out of a desire for a promotion to Augustus, as Constantine himself had essentially done years before. It merely points out that these concerns must have existed to some degree, and the promotion of Crispus with reverses of *concordia* fit into this idea. Ultimately, the reasons for Crispus’ death will always be shrouded in mystery, but considering Crispus’ military success and the emphasis on imperial *concordia* in the coinage just before his death, there was at least the threat of a possible conspiracy or a bid for a greater hold on imperial power.

### iii. Constantinian Women

It is also important to briefly summarize the positions and impact of other Constantinian women to show the importance that they had in the political world of the fourth century and highlight their roles in the promotion of dynastic security as “transmitters of imperial bloodline.”<sup>283</sup> About these women, little is known for certain.<sup>284</sup> What the sources tell us is often shrouded in legend or confusion, but when they appear, it is invariably as brokers of imperial alliances. As Harries notes, “In the literary sources [women] are represented almost solely in terms of their role as the daughters, wives and mothers of future emperors, their characters reshaped as a commentary on their husbands or sons.”<sup>285</sup> That is not to say that these women did not have some power, only that it is difficult for us to gauge how much influence they might have held over their husbands and children.

Dynastic marriages were one of the most important ways in which women featured in the Tetrarchic and Constantinian eras—indeed, any era of Roman imperial history. The

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<sup>283</sup> Harries (2012) xiii.

<sup>284</sup> Tougher (2012) 186-188 takes an interest in a few of these women, but generally summarizes previous hypotheses rather than offering new thoughts.

<sup>285</sup> Harries (2012) 255.

Tetrarchy, in fact, was bound together by dynastic marriages, that of Constantius to Maximian's daughter (or step-daughter) Theodora, and Galerius to Diocletian's daughter Valeria. (I.4.i). It has been shown (II.4.ii) how Galerius celebrated his marriage to Valeria by making her Augusta—admittedly, fifteen years after he married her. Valeria's dynastic importance was proved by her death at Licinius' hands; Daza had allegedly vied for her hand in marriage, and her connections to Diocletian provided kinship links that no emperor could dismiss. Licinius could not take advantage of these links himself, since he had already entered into yet another dynastic marriage, to Constantine's half-sister (and daughter of Theodora), Constantia.<sup>286</sup> Constantia seems to have had some influence over her husband, as she was able to broker some arrangement between them after the second war, even if it was only temporary.<sup>287</sup> In fact, as was discussed in IV.6, Constantine is upbraided by several sources for breaking his oath to his sister when he ordered Licinius to be killed after all.

Constantine's other sisters, Eutropia and Anastasia, were married to prominent officials, probably in an attempt to secure their husbands' loyalty to the imperial house. Of Anastasia we know very little; she appears in the narrative of the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* as the wife of the ill-fated emperor Bassianus just before the first war between Constantine and Licinius.<sup>288</sup> Clearly, this marriage had not ensured Bassianus' loyalty to Constantine, but it may have been the prominence of the marriage that had brought him to such dangerous prominence to begin with (see IV.4). Even less is known about Eutropia the Younger,<sup>289</sup> the third daughter of Constantius and Theodora, and named for her maternal grandmother—only that she was married to Virius Nepotianus, who might have been implicated in the events of 337.<sup>290</sup> For all that so little is known about them, both sisters were married to powerful men who held positions of responsibility in Constantine's court. Anastasia and Eutropia, though their husbands were not emperors (or at least not emperors for very long), were still a vital part of the political alliances that surrounded the court of their half-brother Constantine.

Fausta's marriage to Constantine is the best example of these dynastic marriages during this period.<sup>291</sup> It is unclear how old she was at her marriage; some suggest that she was very

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<sup>286</sup> PLRE 1.221 s.v. Constantia 1.

<sup>287</sup> Harries (2002) 113.

<sup>288</sup> *Origo* 1.14-15; cf. Chausson (2004) 137. Her name, Chausson points out (p. 143), is unlikely to have been her name at birth because of its Christian connotations. Cf. Bardill (2012) 89.

<sup>289</sup> PLRE 1.316 s.v. Eutropia 2. Not to be confused with the elder Eutropia who has been mentioned previously in this thesis, the wife of Maximian and the mother of Maxentius.

<sup>290</sup> PLRE 1.625 s.v. Virius Nepotianus 7; Harries (2012) 186.

<sup>291</sup> PLRE 1.325-6 s.v. Fl. Maxima Fausta; Drivers (1992b). The name 'Flavia Valeria Fausta' is also found at some points. Van Dam (2007) 100 notes that she took the name of 'Flavia' after her marriage to reflect her position



young, since it was not until 317 that she produced an heir.<sup>292</sup> Although Fausta is little mentioned in the panegyric commemorating her marriage (see **3.i.a**), she was nevertheless an integral part of this new alliance, which looked also to the future progeny that would continue the bond of the family links that had begun even before 289 between Maximian and Constantius. This was a link which relied heavily on the marriage between Constantius and Fausta's older sister, Theodora. Nor was she dismissed after the end of Constantine's alliance with Maximian; in fact, there seems to have been attempts to excuse her unfortunate family circumstances.<sup>293</sup> Fausta—as the wife of one emperor, daughter of another, sister to a third (Maxentius), and mother to three more (Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans)—is one of the most prominent examples of the role that women played in the creation, extension, and solidification of imperial dynasties in late antiquity. Indeed, her multiplicity of imperial relationships is how she would be praised by Julian thirty years after her death, as a way of praising her son Constantius II.<sup>294</sup>

Dynastic marriages would continue to prove important to Constantine's regime and to the formulation of a unified imperial college. His two daughters, Constantia and Helena the Younger, were used to bind together the two sides of Constantius I's family, those descended from Helena the Elder and those from Theodora. Constantina would be betrothed first to Hannibalianus by her father (see **V.6**) and later married to Gallus, the Caesar of her brother Constantius II, c. AD 350.<sup>295</sup> In a similar move, Helena the Younger was wed to Julian once he was made Constantius' second Caesar in 355,<sup>296</sup> though Barnes suggests tentatively that she may have previously been married or betrothed to her cousin Delmatius, Constantine's fourth

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in Constantine's 'Flavian' dynasty, as Constantius also bore the name Flavius; he also notes that Fausta's name as it stands in the record incorporates two dynasties.

<sup>292</sup> The generally accepted date of her birth is c. 289-290. Potter (2013) agrees, saying Fausta was as young as eight at the time of her marriage; Barnes (1982) 34 suggests that she was 17, but his evidence relies heavily upon the certainly-fabricated 'betrothal' story from *Pan. Lat.* 7.2.1ff. Against this argument, see Drijvers (1992b) 502.

<sup>293</sup> Lactantius credits her with revealing Maximian's plot to her husband. *Lact. Mort. Pers.* 30; cf. Harries (2012) 258; Potter (2013) 125.

<sup>294</sup> *Jul. Or.* 1. 9c: "Your mother's ancestry was so distinguished, her personal beauty and nobility of character were such that it would be hard to find her match among women... But your mother, while in accordance with our laws she kept pure and unsullied those ties of kinship, was actually the daughter of one emperor, the wife of another, the sister of a third, and the mother not of one emperor but of several." Τῇ μὲν γὰρ εὐγενείας τοσοῦτον περιῆν καὶ κάλλους σώματος καὶ τρόπων ἀρετῆς, ὅσον οὐκ ἄλλη γυναικὶ ῥαδίως ἂν τις ἐξεύροι... ἄλλ' ἦν γε αὕτη τοῦ γήμαντος ἀδελφῆ τῇ φύσει, νόμος δὲ ἐδίδου γαμεῖν ἀδελφὴν τῷ Πέρσῃ. τὴν σὴν δὲ μητέρα κατὰ τοὺς παρ' ἡμῖν νόμους ἀχράντους καὶ καθαρὰς τὰς οἰκειότητος αὐτάς φυλάττουσαν συνέβαινε τοῦ μὲν εἶναι παῖδα, γαμετὴν δὲ ἐτέρου, καὶ ἀδελφὴν ἄλλου, καὶ πολλῶν αὐτοκρατόρων, οὐχὶ δὲ ἐνὸς μητέρα. *Trans. Wright* (1913). Cf. Potter (2014) 380; Flower (2013) 90.

<sup>295</sup> Harries (2012) 186; *Origo* 6.35; *Amm. Marc.* 14.1.2.

<sup>296</sup> *Amm. Marc.* 15.8.18; *Chron. Pasch.* 542 Dindorf; Harries (2012) 224.

Caesar in 335-337.<sup>297</sup> It seems that after the dynastic purge of 337 they were kept unmarried, either in order to be used at a later date for dynastic marriages (as they were) or to reduce the risk of complicating the bloodline with extraneous relatives who might necessitate another dynastic massacre.<sup>298</sup> Helena is mostly known as Julian's beloved wife; rumours circulated that Constantius' wife Eusebia was responsible for her early death.<sup>299</sup>

These women also held power through their positions as mothers of emperors. Certainly, Helena the Elder's prestige was gained entirely through her son's power; all the sources, however much they might debate the circumstances of her marriage, agree that she was of low birth. Although it is difficult to determine the facts about her life, Drijvers has worked on separating the history of her life from the considerably dominant legend, taking a measured view that refrains from delving into pure conjecture.<sup>300</sup> Her counterpart, Theodora, was perhaps the opposite: a woman of high status, whose children also rose to greatness. Although Theodora was not linked directly to Constantine, nevertheless her influence on the political atmosphere of the fourth century became apparent in the political ascent of her sons and grandsons, as well as the political marriages of her daughters (Constantia, Anastasia, and Eutropia the Younger). Fausta's mother, Eutropia, would also play a small role in the imperial court after her repudiation of her son Maxentius, continuing even after Fausta's death. She was, after all, still a grandmother to the Caesars.<sup>301</sup>

Helena's prominence as an imperial mother is seen through her importance in the Constantinian coinage programme after c. 324 and the second war with Licinius. Fausta's position as a wife but also a mother is similarly highlighted at this point, even more prominently than Helena. Both women were raised to the position of Augusta; for Fausta this would not have been too strange, as imperial wives had been Augustae in the past, but Helena's elevation is more unusual.<sup>302</sup> Their presence in the coinage is in contrast to other imperial women of the later third century and early fourth century, who were little recognized on coinage unless they

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<sup>297</sup> Barnes (2011) 164. We have no hints from the sources whether Delmatius was married or to whom, so this suggestion is based purely upon the idea that it fits with his brother Hannibalianus' marriage to Constantina and with the general solidification of dynasty and familial links at around this time, such as Constans' attested betrothal to Olympias, the daughter of the praetorian prefect Ablabius: Barnes (2011) 165, (1981) 45; *Amm. Marc.* 20.11.3; Athanasius *Historia Arianorum* 69.1-2.

<sup>298</sup> Barnes (2011) 151.

<sup>299</sup> *Amm. Marc.* 16.10.18-19; *Zos.* 3.2.1, *Eutrop.* 10.14, *Jul. Or.* 3.123D. Cf. Van Dam (2007) 121.

<sup>300</sup> Drijvers (1992).

<sup>301</sup> Van Dam (2007) 301. Odahl (2004) 218, perhaps rather insensitively, suggests that this showed "great loyalty" to Constantine; Eutropia may have had little choice.

<sup>302</sup> The last time imperial mothers had been thus honoured on coinage was under Elagabalus and Alexander Severus, where a number of the women of the imperial family received coinage. Rowan (2012) 172-173 argues that despite the prominence of these women in the historical narrative, there is no large increase of coinage under their names; e.g. 18% of coinage struck for Julia Maesa.

were wives. Nor were they celebrated on coinage in the same way as, for example, Gallienus' wife Salonina had been, on *capita opposita* coinage or conjoined bust obverses. Fausta and Helena were promoted alongside members of the imperial family. Constantia was also briefly honoured as Constantine's sister, with a small bronze issue from Constantinople (c. 326-327) naming her *nobilissima femina* and *soror Constantini*.<sup>303</sup> This is one of the few occasions when kinship terms appear explicitly on coinage.

In contrast to these brief issues, and especially to the Tetrarchic programme which had largely excluded women until 307 and Valeria's elevation to Augusta, after 324 Helena and Fausta were celebrated widely alongside the male members of the imperial family, their sons and grandsons. "Imperial mothers were treated by observers (not always favourably) as extensions of their sons and imperial sons demonstrated their pietas by celebration of their mothers."<sup>304</sup> The two new Augustae were celebrated alongside the 'dynastic' virtues of *Spes*, *Salus*, and *Securitas*, promoting the future stability and longevity of the empire. Perhaps they may even have been seen as personifications of these virtues. Helena was celebrated as an Augusta with the reverse type *SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE*, explicitly linked to similar types for Fausta with *Spes* and *Salus*. The goddess *Securitas* may be seen as less maternal—certainly, Helena is not explicitly a mother on these coins—but it is nevertheless her role as Constantine's mother that has ensured the safety of the empire through him.<sup>305</sup> *Securitas* seems to imply a role as a "founder" of the family; Hekster calls her a "dynastic lynchpin."<sup>306</sup> Although Helena is not a *mater* explicitly on coins, she is on inscriptions (and also the more unusual *genetrix* and *procreatrix*) in relation to Constantine, and she also appears as the *avia* (grandmother) of the Caesars.<sup>307</sup>

Likewise, Fausta was honoured with the reverses *SPES REIPVBLICAE* and *SALVS REIPVBLICAE*, promoting her as a mother ensuring the future hope and safety of the dynasty and the empire. She is invariably depicted on the reverse as a mother with children. (See also **5.i** for coins and other art which feature Fausta as part of the imperial family.) As Potter notes, the coins depict "Fausta's role in guaranteeing a new generation of rulers."<sup>308</sup> The reverse type

<sup>303</sup> RIC VII, Constantinople no. 15. Obverse: *CONSTANTIA N F*; Reverse: *SOROR CONSTANTINI AVG* with wreath reading *PIETAS PVBLICA*. Cf. Bruun (1966) plate 18. Harries (2014) 210 comments on this coin: it was "an unusual honour for an imperial sister and one which conveniently erased her dead husband and former Augustus from the record." A city in Palestine was also named for Constantia; Euseb. *Vita Const.* 4.38.

<sup>304</sup> Harries (2014) 201.

<sup>305</sup> Barnes (2011) 43.

<sup>306</sup> Hekster (2015) 231.

<sup>307</sup> Hekster (2015) 231. *Mater*: CIL 9.2446, 10.1483, 10.1484; *genetrix*: CIL 6.1134, 6.1135, 6.36950; *procreatrix*: CIL 10.517; *avia*: CIL 10.517, 10.1136, 6.36950, 10.1483, 10.1484.

<sup>308</sup> Potter (2013) 242.

of mother and children is normally linked to *pietas*, a type which is also seen for Fausta.<sup>309</sup> A beautiful medallion from Trier (c. 324) is an excellent example of this type (**fig. 5.19**). The reverse depicts Fausta enthroned with a child upon her lap, nimbate and surrounded by Felicitas (with the caduceus) and Pietas, while small Genii hold wreaths at the base of her throne.



Fig. 5.19: Fausta Augusta with reverse of Pietas.<sup>310</sup>

Fausta was clearly an important part of the promotion of the Constantinian dynasty during the two years between her elevation and her death, which makes her demise and sudden absence from coinage more glaring.<sup>311</sup> Her death has been mentioned above in connection with Crispus' (see 5.ii). Zosimus states that Fausta was killed in a hot bath, which has inspired much speculation.<sup>312</sup> Harries dismisses this narrative, saying "Like the alleged affair with Crispus, the story of the body in the bath-house is embedded in an inventive historiographical tradition, aimed at discrediting Constantine."<sup>313</sup> Potter suggests that she might have been sent into internal exile before her death, based on the evidence of Jerome dating her death to 328,<sup>314</sup> but it is more likely that Jerome got the date wrong—Fausta's death is not mentioned much later than Crispus' in the *Chronicon* and their coinage disappears at around the same time.<sup>315</sup> Van Dam reads too much into Fausta's death, saying it was "yet another confirmation of [Constantine's] separation from old Tetrarchic emperors and their ideology."<sup>316</sup> By 326,

<sup>309</sup> But note Harries (2014) 201: "[Fausta] had no share in the increased ceremonial that hedged about the quasi-divinity of the ruler; her images, like those of other empresses, were identifiable as hers, differed little from those of noblewomen in general."

<sup>310</sup> RIC VII, Trier no. 444. FLAVIA MAXIMA FAVSTA AVGVSTA / PIETAS AVGVSTAE. Gold medallion (x2 solidi).

<sup>311</sup> For more on Fausta's particularly "stressful" place within the imperial college, see Harries (2014) 202-206. For evidence of a *damnatio memoriae* upon her, see Varner (2004) 222-223.

<sup>312</sup> Zos. 2.29.1-2; followed by Zonar. 13.1.38-41. The most speculative of these is Woods (1998), who argues that Fausta was pregnant with a dynastic problem—the result of an affair, possibly with Crispus, and that the 'hot bath' was intended as an abortive measure.

<sup>313</sup> Harries (2014) 206. Cf. Barnes (2007) 195 arguing against the take by Frakes (2005) 94 that Fausta's death was an "execution".

<sup>314</sup> Jer. Chron. 232a: *Constantinus uxorem suam Faustam interfecit*.

<sup>315</sup> Drivers (1992b) 504-6.

<sup>316</sup> Van Dam (2007) 301.

however, Fausta should not be considered a relic from an outdated philosophy, something to tie Constantine to the past; she had been fully introduced into the new presentations of the imperial family and was steadfastly an important part of the dynasty. Fausta's death, although we cannot know the exact reasons for it, was certainly not a result of Constantine's efforts to distance himself from the Tetrarchy, especially at this later stage in his reign.

Helena seems to have taken over some of Fausta's role after her death until her own c. 329,<sup>317</sup> and possibly alongside Fausta's mother Eutropia the Elder as well, who seemed to play a small role in Constantine's court after the deaths of her own family.<sup>318</sup> They took up the mantle of promoting the Constantinian family through a pilgrimage to the east, possibly as 'propaganda' after the deaths of Crispus and Fausta.<sup>319</sup> Certainly Christianity was an important aspect of this pilgrimage, and seems to have provided a way for women in the imperial family to hold some influence, particularly for Helena, Eutropia the Elder, Constantia, and Constantina.<sup>320</sup>

Not all women limited their influence to Christianity, however. Constantina, Constantine's daughter, is perhaps the best example of this. There is some suggestion (though it is highly unlikely) that her father had made her an Augusta before his death.<sup>321</sup> She was married to Gallus, the Caesar of her brother Constantius II, in another dynastic marriage to try to ensure Gallus' loyalty to his Augustus.<sup>322</sup> Before her marriage to Gallus, the Gallic emperor Magnentius, who had risen up against Constantius, would ask for Constantina's hand in marriage, although Constantina had also thrown her support behind a different claimant of imperial power, the general Vetranio.<sup>323</sup> Constantina clearly had influence as a political figure during this period, even if it was only as a way of accessing Constantius' imperial power.<sup>324</sup> Her influence may be the reason for Ammianus' intense dislike: he calls her "a woman beyond

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<sup>317</sup> Barnes (2011) 43.

<sup>318</sup> Potter (2013) 245; Harries (2014) 201.

<sup>319</sup> Potter (2013) 275; Harries (2014) 208-210 and especially 210-212 on Constantina. Barnes (2011) 150 suggests the 'propaganda' pilgrimage.

<sup>320</sup> Harries (2014) 206ff.

<sup>321</sup> Philostorg. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.22, 28. Cf. Harries (2014) 198; Dearn (2003) 173, 190; Bleckmann (1994). There is no coinage surviving to Constantina as Augusta, and the paucity of sources suggest this may have been a mistake or a misunderstanding by Philostorgius.

<sup>322</sup> Amm. Marc. 14.1.2.

<sup>323</sup> Philostorg. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.22; *Chron. Pasch.* 539 Dindorf; Barnes (2011) 152; Van Dam (2007) 107-8; Bleckmann (1994) 29-68; Dearn (2003) 172-3, 180, 190; Hunt (1997) 16f.

<sup>324</sup> Although Harries (2014) 197 advises caution in interpreting Constantina: "This Constantina is a mover of events, swaying the choice of armies and controlling, to a limited extent, the imperial succession. She is also, sadly, an anachronism. ... If Constantine's elder daughter was indeed involved, her role would have been more discreet, a

facilitating behind the scenes..." Harries goes on to suggest (198f) that Philostorgius' Constantina was a "forerunner" of Pulcheria, sister of Honorius, "an imperial sister who could influence events by her own efforts."

measure presumptuous because of her kinship to the emperor”,<sup>325</sup> and upbraids her for her cruelty, greed, and savagery, saying too that she incited and exacerbated these faults in her husband Gallus.<sup>326</sup> Another woman with brief political influence was Eutropia the Younger, who seems to have publicly supported her son, Nepotian, when he was hailed emperor at Rome for a short period as a counterpoint to the usurpation of Magnentius in 350. It seems that Eutropia’s presence meant that she too was killed when Magnentius took back the city.<sup>327</sup>

What is clear is that the women of and around the Constantinian dynasty were a crucial part of the political workings of the time, in forming, solidifying, and maintaining political alliances and especially in “lending support to dynastic legitimacy”.<sup>328</sup> These attempts to maintain loyalty from high-ranking officials, members of the family, and even other emperors or Caesars did not always work: Constantia’s marriage to Licinius and Anastasia’s to Bassianus are excellent examples of this. Yet this does not mean that such marriages were meaningless or futile attempts at keeping the peace. Constantia provided Licinius with an heir, further linking the two sides of the imperial college, and succeeded, at least for a short time, in keeping her husband alive despite the political odds against him. Fausta was not set aside when her father turned on her husband, even though at that point she had not yet borne Constantine a son, but she remained in the public eye as an empress and even an *Augusta* on coinage until her death in 326. In the end, she bore Constantine five children who would further his dynasty, either as emperors or as the wives of emperors.

These women also provided sources of legitimacy through purely matrilineal claims, as was the case for Nepotian’s short-lived coup in Rome. Additionally, Raymond Van Dam notes that the survival of relatives, including women, could create alternative emperors and dynasties or dynastic succession.<sup>329</sup> Some women, like Constantina, went further in their influence on political affairs and potential usurpations than merely providing children. The sources of the time, whether literary, epigraphic, or numismatic, give us only glimpses into the importance of these different women of the dynasty, but they were essential to the workings of imperial legitimation, power, and succession of Constantine’s reign. Even once widowed, these woman proved to be powerful in a different context, a Christian one.<sup>330</sup> Many of them were honoured after death as well, and Helena Augusta, Constantina, and Helena the Younger were buried in

<sup>325</sup> Amm. Marc. 14.1.2: *germanitate Augusti turgida supra modum*. Trans. Rolfe (1952). Cf. Harries (2012) 255.

<sup>326</sup> Cf. Amm. Marc. 14.1.2, 10.2, 11.22,

<sup>327</sup> Harries (2012) 186, 258; Eutrop. 10.11; Ps.-Vict. 42.3; Zos. 2.43.2. Cf. PLRE 1.316 s.v. Eutropia 2.

<sup>328</sup> Harries (2012) 257, (2014) 200.

<sup>329</sup> Van Dam (2007) 107.

<sup>330</sup> Harries (2012) 273.

Rome, perhaps indicating the continued importance of the city; they may also have lived in Rome during their lifetimes rather than in Constantinople.<sup>331</sup> Some Constantinian women also may have been depicted in art, for example on the much-debated Trier ceiling frescos.<sup>332</sup> This is not to say, however, that these women were such powerful motivators of political power and influence as some of their successors, for example in the fifth century. As Harries notes, the ability of the typical woman of the Tetrarchic and Constantinian eras “to shape public policy through the use of patronage, connections, and personal influence was restricted by her relatively low public profile.”<sup>333</sup>

## 6. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: A CONSTANTINIAN ‘TETRARCHY’?

The later years of Constantine’s reign are not as well-attested as the beginning. The relevant books of Ammianus are missing, Eusebius gives us little but empty praise, the *Origo* as it survives relies heavily on interpolations from Jerome and Orosius,<sup>334</sup> and the accounts from Aurelius Victor and Zosimus tell us practically nothing of events between the death of Crispus and Constantine’s death, indicating that there may have been gaps in Eunapius and the *Kaisergeschichte* as well. The evidence from coinage shows that there was no abrupt change in ideology after Crispus and Fausta’s deaths. The promotion of the Caesars and of Helena (until her death in c. 329) continued unabated, though now including Constantius II, who was made a Caesar c. 324 and Constans, who was added to the imperial college c. 333.<sup>335</sup> The Caesars were ubiquitous in the numismatic output of the last ten years of Constantine’s reign, both in the lower-denomination coinage and on the high-profile gold and (limited) silver coins. In the running of the empire, Constantine might have had the final say, but his sons had courts in Trier, Milan, and Antioch,<sup>336</sup> and they served as reminders of imperial presence even in the corners of the empire. The idea that Constantine was the first ‘sole’ Roman emperor since the Tetrarchy (and, arguably, since the accession of Carus) is flawed, based upon the idea that the

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<sup>331</sup> Van Dam (2007) 59-60, though Constantine had built a mausoleum in Constantinople. Cf. Amm. Marc. 21.1.5. On their living in Rome, at least Helena the Elder and Constantina, cf. Harries (2014) 206, 212f.

<sup>332</sup> Rose (2006) 99-100 summarizes the debates in identifying the individual women on the ceiling. He notes the difficulties in identification, and points out that they might not even be imperial women after all but that the ceiling should be considered in the context of the local elite. The women depicted have also been identified as personifications of virtues, e.g. Simon (1986) 15-18, 40ff; Brandenburg (1985). Because the identification of the women is so tenuous, I will not include a detailed discussion of the frescos here.

<sup>333</sup> Harries (2014) 200.

<sup>334</sup> Stevenson (2014) 5-25.

<sup>335</sup> PLRE 1.226 s.v. Fl. Iul. Constantius 8; 220 s.v. Fl. Iul. Constans 3; Barnes (1982) 44-45; Woods (2011) 189.

<sup>336</sup> Barnes (2011) 164; their cousin and co-Caesar Delmatius may have been based at Naissus in the Balkans.

Caesars did not count fully as emperors.<sup>337</sup> In fact, the context of the Caesars and the imperial college is as important to the period after the elimination of Licinius as it was before.

It is the addition of Delmatius, Constantine's nephew, to the imperial college on September 18th, 335 that signifies a distinct innovation—once again, the college was opened to one who was not a son of Constantine.<sup>338</sup> Of course, as the son of Constantine's half-brother Flavius Delmatius and thus the grandson of Constantius I and Theodora, Delmatius was part of the extended Constantinian (or, arguably, 'Constantian') family. Like the sons of Constantine, Delmatius was represented as a Caesar and an heir on coinage, including gold of the *princeps iuventutis* type and issues which paralleled those minted to the other Caesars (fig. 5.20).<sup>339</sup> The difference was that Delmatius was not technically a son, only an heir and Caesar. In this way, Delmatius' use of the *princeps iuventutis* title might be said to be more radical than that of the Tetrarchic Caesars, who had been adopted as sons by their Augusti.



Fig. 5.20: Delmatius Caesar as Princeps Iuventutis.<sup>340</sup>

About a year after Delmatius was made a Caesar, his brother Hannibalianus was also honoured, this time with the promise to be made *Rex Regum et Ponticarum Gentium* once Constantine had conquered that region from the Persians in his planned campaigns, and the *Chronicon Paschale* suggests that until that point, Hannibalianus' base was Caesarea.<sup>341</sup>

<sup>337</sup> Although this may be a quibble with the terminology, it does misrepresent the situation to declare Constantine the 'sole' emperor (though of course he could arguably be called the sole *Augustus*.) For Constantine as 'sole' emperor, see e.g. Barnes (2011) 165; Harries (2012) 106; Van Dam (2011) 3; Potter (2013) 214; Stephenson (2009) 206.

<sup>338</sup> *Chron. Pasch.* 531-532 Dindorf; PLRE 1.241 s.v. Fl. Iulius Dalmatius 7; Barnes (1982) 45-6; Woods (2011) 189. Cf. Marcos (2014) 751, 763 regarding the importance of Delmatius' date of accession; September 18<sup>th</sup> had significance in that it was the date of Licinius' defeat at Chrysopolis, and was possibly also meant to suggest links with Trajan.

<sup>339</sup> All references from RIC VII. VIRTVS CAESARVM: Constantinople no. 102; PRINCIPI IVVENTVTI: Siscia no. 247; Thessalonica no. 213; Constantinople no. 113; DELMATIVS NOB CAESAR (silver): Thessalonica no. 218; Heraclea no. 147. Issues in gold and silver for Delmatius were restricted to only some of the eastern and Balkan mints, but in bronze were minted across the empire.

<sup>340</sup> RIC VII, Constantinople no. 113: FL DELMATIVS NOB CAES / PRINCIPI IVVENTVTIS. Solidus.

<sup>341</sup> *Chron. Pasch.* 532 Dindorf; PLRE 1.407 s.v. Hannibalianus 2; Burgess (2008) 8-9; Woods (2011) 189; Harries (2012) 186 suggests that Hannibalianus was also elevated to *nobilissimus*; he is called *rex* on the coinage. Fowden (1994) 146-153 explores the campaign in more depth.



Hannibalianus was betrothed to Constantine's eldest daughter Constantina,<sup>342</sup> and it is likely that Delmatius was also betrothed to a close relative, though we know nothing about this hypothetical wife.<sup>343</sup> Constantine II, meanwhile, was married to the daughter of Julius Constantius, whose name we do not know.<sup>344</sup> Hannibalianus was not publicly promoted to the same extent that Delmatius was; there are no coins for him that survive in gold or silver and the reverse types associated with him are the common *SECVRITAS PVBLICA* and *FELICITAS PVBLICA* legends, though with a special reverse: the personification of the Euphrates River (**fig. 5.21**).<sup>345</sup>



Fig. 5.21: Hannibalianus with Euphrates reverse.<sup>346</sup>

The absence of *princeps iuventutis* types shows that this reverse and honorific was still reserved for the position of Caesar. Some argue that Delmatius was not celebrated in the mints controlled by the sons of Constantine (at least on “prestige issues” of gold and silver, as defined by Burgess).<sup>347</sup> There are, however, at least some examples of low-denomination coins for Delmatius from every mint except London that can be dated to 335-337. Burgess misrepresents the material somewhat; for example, at Rome—which Burgess says was Constans’ primary mint—the only gold known to have been minted in 336-7 was to Constantine and Constantine II.<sup>348</sup> The absence of a Caesar was therefore hardly exclusive to Delmatius alone, and if Constans himself was not celebrated (as far as we know), this does not support the idea of a purposeful slight to Delmatius.

<sup>342</sup> Harries (2012) 186; Burgess (2008) 8.

<sup>343</sup> Barnes (2011) 164 suggests that he might have married Helena, Constantine’s youngest daughter. He was, however, probably the oldest son, and may have already been married; cf. Marcos (2014) 755.

<sup>344</sup> Euseb. *Vita Const.* 4.49. PLRE 1.223 s.v. Fl. Claudius Constantinus 3; Barnes (2011) 164; Burgess (2008) 8.

<sup>345</sup> RIC VII, Constantinople nos. 100, 145-8. Hannibalianus’ coinage seems to have been minted only at Constantinople.

<sup>346</sup> RIC VII, Constantinople no. 145. FL ANNIBALIANO REGI / SECVRITAS PVBLICA. Image from the Vienna Münzkabinett.

<sup>347</sup> Barnes (2011) 17, Harries (2012) 185, Bardill (2012) 365; Woods (2011) 189, all following Burgess (2008) 21-22. Grünewald (1993) 150-153 suggests a similar picture in the epigraphic evidence.

<sup>348</sup> RIC VII Rome nos. 373-5.

Delmatius' addition to the imperial college may seem abrupt, but in fact it seems that Constantine's half-siblings had been gaining prestige in this later period of Constantine's reign. The elevation of Delmatius and Hannibalianus seems to have been only one step in a trend towards bringing the half-siblings back into the imperial fold, after long years of apparent exile.<sup>349</sup> Burgess claims that "by 332, Constantine had clearly decided that the empire and imperial power would be shared by both branches of his father's family."<sup>350</sup> Flavius Delmatius the elder was made *censor* (higher in rank than even the praetorian prefect),<sup>351</sup> was named to the consulship in 333 and was also commander of the east, during which time he defeated the short-lived usurpation of Calocaerus in 334; Julius Constantius was honoured with the rank of *patricius* (also extremely high-ranking) and made consul in 335.<sup>352</sup> Virius Nepotianus, the husband of Constantine's half-sister Eutropia, also held a consulship in 336.<sup>353</sup> Such titles were likely given to these men to emphasize that they were close to but not members of the imperial college.<sup>354</sup> Previously the brothers had not been prominent in politics, although Julius Constantius may have been an envoy to Licinius in 316.<sup>355</sup> They may have "gained Constantine's trust slowly over time."<sup>356</sup> It was not only the half-brothers who were incorporated into the wider imperial family. The ties of intermarriage were extended also to the offspring of other prominent officials—Constans, for instance, was betrothed to Olympias, the daughter of Ablabius, who was Constantius II's praetorian prefect.<sup>357</sup>

Much speculation has been made about Constantine's reasons for elevating Delmatius and Hannibalianus. The inclusion of other officials, not just the 'Theodoran' line, could indicate that Constantine was attempting to reduce the chance of insurrection after his death by

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<sup>349</sup> PLRE 1.240-1 s.v. Fl. Dalmatius 6; 226 s.v. Iulius Constantius 7; Burgess (2008) 8; Barnes (1981) 251; Marcos (2014) 752-753. Delmatius senior was exiled to Toulouse and Julius Constantius to Corinth, Aus. *Prof.* 14.11-12; Liban. *Or.* 14.29-30 = Julian *Ep.* 20.

<sup>350</sup> Burgess (2008) 7. He also says (p. 8) that this took place after Helena's death in 329; cf. Grant (1993) 216-217, who also portrays Helena as the reason the half-siblings were not honoured earlier. But Marcos (2014) 753 suggests that Julius Constantius at least seems to have been in favour at court by 326.

<sup>351</sup> Barnes (2011) 164; Wienand (2015b) 429 n.23.

<sup>352</sup> Barnes (2011) 164; Harries (2012) 186; Potter (2013) 253, 289; Burgess (2008) 8; Bagnall (1987) 200-201; Barnes (1982) 105; Marcos (2014) 760. The *Chron. Pasch.* 531-532 Dindorf gets the elder and younger Delmatii confused.

<sup>353</sup> Potter (2013) 253.

<sup>354</sup> Barnes (2011) 164 says that *patricius* had before that been an "obsolete title" and adds that it "excluded him [Julius Constantius] from the imperial college but made him superior in rank to all other holders of high office." Cf. Marcos (2014) 762; Jones (1964) 106. On the implications of the rank, see Dillon (2015) 60ff. On Constantine's changes to ranks more broadly, see also Jones (1964) 526f and Dillon (2015) 42-66.

<sup>355</sup> Van Dam (2007) 110 n. 34. He suggests that the siblings might have fallen out of favour after the birth of Constantine II in 317. Van Dam (2007) 173 also notes that the daughter of Julius Julianus, an official under Licinius, married Julius Constantius; this union would beget the future emperor Julian. Clearly the half-brothers were also used for marriages of loyalty.

<sup>356</sup> Marcos (2014) 754.

<sup>357</sup> Barnes (2011) 164; Harries (2012) 188; Burgess (2008) 18.

appeasing anyone who might have caused problems for the succession. By making them part of the succession, he might have attempted to ensure the continued loyalty of those who held positions of power in the imperial court.<sup>358</sup> Potter terms the appointment of the half-brothers to consulships “a moment of some significance for Constantine’s succession-planning.”<sup>359</sup> The reverse type associated with Hannibalianus, *SECVRITAS PVBLICA*, may be relevant here—perhaps as a way of demonstrating that the security of the empire was bolstered by the inclusion of Constantine’s relatives. Marcos suggests that “Constantine sought to strengthen his legacy by crafting a new system of shared responsibilities among the most prominent members of the imperial family.”<sup>360</sup> It has also been argued that the increasing prominence of the Theodoran line should be seen as due to the political ambitions of Flavius Delmatius and Julius Constantius—an attempt to force themselves into power rather than receiving it from Constantine by his own free will. Harries describes this a “dynastic coup” against an aging Constantine.<sup>361</sup> Van Dam also notes that the brothers could be potentially dangerous as competitors for imperial power if Constantine died before his sons were old enough to rule.<sup>362</sup> There is not enough evidence to argue definitely either for a ‘coup’ or for Constantine’s willing incorporation of his half-siblings and their sons, but Delmatius’ inclusion in the imperial college at almost all mints and on inscriptions suggests the full support of the imperial regime.<sup>363</sup> Their mere existence as sons and grandsons of an emperor which Constantine’s own regime promoted as a divine ancestor was potentially problematic.<sup>364</sup>

Henning Börm has argued that the elevation of Delmatius and the ensuing coinage demonstrates a “revival of the Tetrarchy” and that there should be an understood ranking in place, with Constantine II and Constantius II (elevated in 317 and 324) holding precedence over Constans and Delmatius (elevated much later in 333 and 335).<sup>365</sup> Marcos modifies this idea, including Constantine, to a Constantinian “pentarchy”.<sup>366</sup> The idea of a ‘Constantinian Tetrarchy’ carries too much baggage to be helpful. Instead, it should be seen as representing a

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<sup>358</sup> Burgess (2008) 8-9. Marcos (2014) 754 notes that Constantine might have recalled his half-brothers so Licinius could not use them against him, as Bassianus had been.

<sup>359</sup> Potter (2013) 252.

<sup>360</sup> Marcos (2014) 761. Cf. Hunt (1997) 3, who states with over-confidence: “Constantine had evidently envisaged that the two families would share the inheritance of his empire.”

<sup>361</sup> Harries (2012) 187.

<sup>362</sup> Van Dam (2007) 302; Odahl (2004) 264.

<sup>363</sup> Marcos (2014) 751; ILS 718, 719, 720; AE (1889) 40, (1934) 158, (1948) 50.

<sup>364</sup> Marcos (2014) 762.

<sup>365</sup> Börm (2015) 252; Burgess (2008) 8 also argues for this, calling it a “recreated tetrarchy.” Harries (2012) 187 argues against this interpretation, and Woods (2011) 190 examines the nuances of the coinage to effectively argue against it as well.

<sup>366</sup> Marcos (2014) 763.

step in the evolution of Constantine's imperial college. This formation of heirs should not be viewed as either 'systematic' or as a deliberate return to the 'Tetrarchy', merely to a college that (after Constantine's death) would have four co-emperors. There is also no indication in the sources that Constantine intended a Tetrarchy-style ranking of two Augusti and two Caesars.<sup>367</sup> Nor is Odahl's suggestion that Constantine "kept the tetrarchic system, but transformed it into a *Christian dynastic tetrarchy*"<sup>368</sup> quite right—the imperial college was clearly dynastic and was no doubt 'Christianized' by the nature of the religio-political atmosphere of the time, but the emphasis on a 'tetrarchic system' with four emperors is again misplaced. It should be understood instead as another evolution in the imperial college structure that had existed in a number of forms certainly since the Antonines of the second century.

At the same time, however, it is clear that this new imperial college was bound together in a way similar to the techniques used by Diocletian's and Galerius' Tetrarchies, whether by blood (Daza as the possible nephew of Galerius is a neat parallel to Delmatius) or by marriage (the marriages of Constantius and Galerius to Theodora and Valeria were, as has been demonstrated, an important part of their identity as Caesars; similar attempts were made to link together the cousins of the lines of Helena and Theodora).<sup>369</sup> The introduction of a fourth member of the college might have been to continue the lines of rough geographical division from the Tetrarchic period that had continued to some extent through the establishment of Caesars at various capitals.<sup>370</sup> Barnes has suggested that "the regional prefectures of the late fourth century came into permanent existence only after Constantine's sons frustrated his plans for the division and administration of the empire by a harmonious college of emperors."<sup>371</sup>

Either way, the new imperial college did not survive Constantine's death.<sup>372</sup> A dynastic massacre wiped out most of the members of the Theodoran line: Delmatius Caesar and his father, Hannibalianus, Julius Constantius, as well as some other high-ranking officials who had been previously linked to the family, like Ablabius.<sup>373</sup> It seems also that Julius Constantius at

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<sup>367</sup> Burgess (2008) 9 says that this was "almost certain". As Harries (2012) 188 notes, Constantine had time to put this 'Tetrarchy' into place before he died, but he did not: "we have no option but to note and respect his silence" on the matter.

<sup>368</sup> Odahl (2004) 227, compare to Burgess (2008) 9.

<sup>369</sup> Burgess (2008) 9.

<sup>370</sup> Burgess (2008) 9, Barnes (1981) 251-2. On the capitals, see also Millar (1977) 40-53.

<sup>371</sup> Barnes (1982) 139, cf. (1982) 138-139 for his suggested reconstruction of the praetorian prefects from 335-337: Evagrius for Constantine, Annius Tiberianus for Constantine II, Ablabius for Constantius, L. Papius Pacatianus for Constans, Valerius Maximus for Delmatius, and Felix, then Gregorius as prefects in Africa.

<sup>372</sup> For a discussion of the location and circumstances of Constantine's death, see Burgess (1999).

<sup>373</sup> Burgess (2008) 10; Hunt (1997) 3ff; Zos. 2.39.2, 40.2-3. The *Chronicon Paschale* omits mention of the dynastic murders.

least was subject to a *damnatio memoriae* to some degree.<sup>374</sup> The only male survivors of the massacre were Julius Constantius' young sons, Gallus and Julian, and possibly Eutropia's son Nepotian.<sup>375</sup> All three would later hold or claim imperial power of some kind. It has been suggested that at least one brother, Constantine II, strongly disapproved of the dynastic massacre; Theodora appears briefly and almost certainly posthumously, alongside Helena (also posthumously) on coinage from Trier, perhaps suggesting belated solidarity in the lines of Helena and of Theodora.<sup>376</sup>

There are several explanations for the massacre. One is that the army was solely responsible, and another was that Constantius II, the son closest to Constantinople and the first to reach it after his father's death, ordered the massacre.<sup>377</sup> In his account of Constantine's death, Eusebius also indirectly blames the army; he makes no direct mention to the massacre, instead saying that Constantine divided the empire amongst his three sons and that the army would only recognize Constantine's sons as emperors.<sup>378</sup> While Delmatius and Hannibalianus are ignored, the legitimacy of the sons is highly emphasized: they inherit the empire from their father (mentioned twice) but also were supported by the senate and the army.<sup>379</sup> The second version of events, that of Constantius having some role to play in it, survives in sources derived from the *Kaisergeschichte*, which describe the event in only the briefest detail but hint at Constantius' involvement.<sup>380</sup> Athanasius, who had come into conflict with Constantius multiple times over theological and ecclesiastical matters, directly accuses Constantius of murdering his own kin, including uncles and cousins, and omits any mention of the army.<sup>381</sup> Julian likewise makes this claim regarding Constantius in a letter explaining his revolt:

For by his anger on behalf of men who are not related to him at all, does  
he not rebuke and ridicule me for my folly in having served so faithfully

<sup>374</sup> Burgess (2008) 13.

<sup>375</sup> Burgess (2008) 10. Nepotian is not normally counted amongst the survivors, following Julian; Burgess explains this by Eutropia's being pregnant with Nepotian at the time of the massacre.

<sup>376</sup> RIC VIII, Trier nos. 43, 48, 58, 56, 65, 79, 91; also smaller issues from Constans in Rome (nos. 28, 54) and Constantius at Constantinople (nos. 36, 50-51). Barnes (2011) 18; Harries (2012) 189; Burgess (2008) 22ff.

<sup>377</sup> The details of the sources on the massacre are covered in great detail by Burgess (2008) 10-21, who also covers the numismatic evidence in 21-29.

<sup>378</sup> Euseb. *Vita. Const.* 51.1: τὴν σύμπασαν τῆς βασιλείας ἀρχὴν τρισὶ τοῖς αὐτοῦ διήρει παισίν, οἷά τινα πατρῶαν οὐσίαν τοῖς αὐτοῦ κληροδοτῶν φιλάτοις (sons); 68.2: τοῖς δ' αὐτοῦ παισίν ὡσπερ τινὰ πατρικὴν ὑπαρξίν τὸν τῆς βασιλείας παρεδίδου κληῖρον, πάνθ' ὅσα φίλα ἦν αὐτῷ διατυπωσάμενος (army).

<sup>379</sup> Burgess (2008) 11-12; Euseb. *Vita Const.* 51.1, 63.3, 68.2, 68.3, 69.2. Cf. Libanius *Or.* 59.48-49.

<sup>380</sup> Burgess (2008) 14-15. These sources derived from the KG are Eutrop. 10.9.1, Aur. Vict. 41.22.

<sup>381</sup> Burgess (2008) 15-16; Ath. *Hist. Ar.* 69.1: Τί δὲ θαυμαστόν, εἰ πλανηθεὶς εἰς ἀσέβειαν οὕτω κατὰ τῶν ἐπισκόπων ἐστὶν ὄμῳ, ὅπου γε οὐδὲ τῆς ἰδίας συγγενείας ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐφείσατο; τοὺς μὲν γὰρ θεοῦ κατέσφαξε καὶ τοὺς ἀνεπίους ἀνεῖλε, καὶ πενθερὸν μὲν, ἔτι τὴν θυγατέρα γαμῶν αὐτοῦ, συγγενεῖς δὲ ἀσχόντας οὐκ ἤλεησεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὄρκων ἀεὶ πρὸς πάντας παραβάτης γέγονεν.

the murderer of my father, my brothers, my cousins; the executioner as if it were of his and my whole family and kindred?

ὁ γὰρ χαλεπαίνων ὑπὲρ τῶν προσηκόντων μηδὲν ἄρ' οὐκ ὀνειδίζει μοι καὶ καταγελά τῆς μορίας, ὅτι τὸν φονέα πατρός, ἀδελφῶν, ἀνεψιῶν, ἀπάσης ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν τῆς κοινῆς ἡμῶν ἐστίας καὶ συγγενείας τὸν δῆμιον εἰς τοῦτο ἐθεράπευσα.<sup>382</sup>

An explanation given for the massacre (much later and by sources favourable to Constantius) was that Julius Constantius and others were supposed to have poisoned Constantine, thereby giving Constantius a reason to avenge his father's murder.<sup>383</sup> Related to this is a rather far-fetched explanation that ecclesiastical politics were responsible for the removal of the Theodoran line, and that Eusebius of Nicomedia was responsible for persuading Constantius to carry out the dynastic murders.<sup>384</sup> Yet Burgess offers another, more concrete, conclusion: that Constantius removed his relatives to “abandon his father's plan—a return to a tetrarchic system” and to ensure that he and his brothers alone inherited imperial power.<sup>385</sup> I suggest a slight modification; that this should be interpreted not as a “return to a tetrarchic system” but instead as a return to an imperial college that included members other than Constantine's own sons. It is also interesting from this perspective that the victims of the massacre included Constantius' erstwhile ‘guardian’, Ablabius, who also might have tried to exert control over the young emperor.<sup>386</sup>

The massacre of 337 shows that anyone with imperial connections was dangerous. Just as Licinius had killed the children of Galerius, Maximinus Daza, and Severus in 314, so too were peripheral members of the imperial family killed after the death of Constantine. The sons and grandsons of Theodora had gained too much prominence and threatened the security of the immediate successors, Constantine's three sons.

<sup>382</sup> Julian *Ep. ad Ath.* 281B. Trans. Wright (1913). A previous oration of Julian's (*Or.* 3.117D), which had excused Constantius from blame, was written before Julian's rebellion and Constantius' and, and should be considered as a panegyric rather than Julian's own thoughts on the matter. See also Burgess (2008) 15-17; Tougher (2012) 182-184; Lib. *Or.* 18.10.

<sup>383</sup> Burgess (2008) 20-21; Stephenson (2009) 289-290; Philostorg. 16-16a. Burgess dismisses the tale as “Arian propaganda.”

<sup>384</sup> Di Maio and Arnold (1992), especially 169, from Cedrenus 1.320.6ff.

<sup>385</sup> Burgess (2008) 26.

<sup>386</sup> Jer. *Chron.* 234c; Harries (2012) 188; Di Maio & Arnold (1992) 174.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The reign of Constantine is traditionally considered to be the triumphant return to the primacy of dynastic interests as a legitimation factor in late antiquity, after Diocletian's brief flirtation with a 'meritocracy'. In fact, however, there are many similarities between Constantine's reign and Diocletian's—the promotion of the junior emperors, the importance of *concordia* to the imperial college, the commemorative coinage used to honour dead and deified ancestors. Many of the techniques used to promote and solidify Constantine's imperial college—such as multiple busts on coins, the *princeps iuventutis* type, and shared consulships—have their roots in the Tetrarchy (which in turn looks back to the third century). There were innovations, while some traditions, such as the *signa*, became obsolete due to outside factors (in this case, a gradual tendency away from the promotion of traditional gods). Constantine's own elevation shows that dynastic supremacy could not reign supreme: he also had to rely on acceptance in the imperial college, alliances with other emperors, and the support of the military. This reliance on a *combination* of legitimation strategies would not change. Even at Constantine's death in 337, his sons, particularly Constantius II in the accounts of the massacre, had to rely on the military for support in a period of potential crisis.<sup>387</sup>

We see increased dynastic activity in the Constantinian period partly because there were more candidates for imperial power who had ties to Constantine (and Constantius) and also because these claimants relied less on strategies like marriage and adoption, which the Tetrarchs had used. But the incorporation of the Theodoran branch of the family into the imperial fold in 335 also relied on marriage ties. Ultimately, emperors used whatever legitimation claims were available to them—the more, the better—and Constantine was no different. Yet his reign does not display an overarching 'plan' to promote himself and his family as the true holders of imperial power based on their dynastic connections. Instead, this is displayed through a series of steps that evolved and melded into each other, influenced heavily by or in reaction to the political events of the day, from Constantine's position as a Tetrarchic Caesar through to the extended Constantinian college of 337.

Constantine's rule, seen as the triumph of dynastic interests over the 'system' of the Tetrarchy, was still a college like those that came before. It was one that benefitted from a proliferation of dynastic connections, past and future, to solidify the claims to legitimacy of Constantine and his sons. Dynastic legitimation was one of many simultaneous claims employed by Constantine's regime, but it was returned to again and again throughout his reign,

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<sup>387</sup> Burgess (2008) 9.

from his elevation as Caesar, through the period of cooperation and competition with Licinius, to the formation of an extended imperial college incorporating the wider family of Constantius.



## EPILOGUE

**Dynasty and Power in Late Antiquity**

Expressions of dynastic legitimacy did not stop with Constantine. His sons could trace their lineage to him, to their paternal grandfather Constantius, and to their maternal grandfather Maximian. The relationships between Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans were fraught with conflict,<sup>1</sup> but when Constantius stood alone after Constans' assassination by Magnentius in 350, he turned to relatives to augment his own power.<sup>2</sup> He made his cousin Gallus his Caesar in 351. A few years later, when the relationship had soured and Gallus was killed, Constantius nominated Julian, Gallus' half-brother, as his new Caesar in 355. Gallus and Julian had been two of the few survivors of the dynastic massacre in 337—an event which Julian blamed on Constantius<sup>3</sup>—yet Constantius had still sought them out to be his Caesars and heirs when he produced no sons of his own. Such was the perceived power of familial relationships in late antique Rome, with its implied links of *pietas* and *concordia*, that emperors seemed to instinctively promote those closest to the family when they needed to extend their imperial power through the proxy of a Caesar or co-Augustus.

Nor were these the only examples of the power of the Constantinian name. After the assassination of Constans, Nepotian, another young Constantinian cousin and the son of Constantine's half-sister Eutropia, rebelled in Rome. Nepotian was not as successful as the last emperor to be declared in Rome, Maxentius; his usurpation was short-lived, and he was quickly defeated and killed by Magnentius' supporters.<sup>4</sup> Presumably Eutropia, who had thrown her support behind her son, was also killed. Likewise, the accession of Procopius after the death of Julian shows that even more tenuous links to the Constantinian dynasty held influence.<sup>5</sup> Procopius was defeated by Valens, but not easily: his claims had some sway over the soldiers.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the Valentinian dynasty, which followed the deaths of Julian and his immediate successor Jovian, formed links to the Constantinian dynasty through the marriage of the young Caesar Gratian to Constantia the Younger, the daughter of Constantius II.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a narrative of this fraternal conflict and its aftermath, cf. Hunt (1997) 5-11.

<sup>2</sup> PLRE 1.624 s.v. Iul. Nepotianus 5; Hunt (1997) 17, 24-29; Ehling (2001); Aur. Vict. 42.6-8; Ps.-Vict. 42.3; Zos. 2.43.2-4; Amm. Marc. 28.1.1; Eutrop. 10.11.

<sup>3</sup> Julian *Ad Ath.* 281B.

<sup>4</sup> Hunt (1997) 15; Tougher (2012) 188.

<sup>5</sup> Tougher (2012) 190.

<sup>6</sup> Lenski (2002).

<sup>7</sup> McEvoy (2016); McEvoy (2013) 40.

It has been argued that Constantine's imperial college with his sons as Caesars created a new system of imperial power and succession—a 'more stable' system than the Tetrarchy, which had relied on loyalty to Diocletian and which had collapsed after that emperor's abdication.<sup>8</sup> But the evidence of Constantine's sons—and indeed of many imperial familial colleges in the fourth and fifth centuries—shows that dynasty was no guarantor of imperial *concordia*. Dynastic relationships were only one claim to imperial legitimacy, and emperors' regimes relied on a multiplicity of claims to suit the circumstances. Yet there is no doubt that emperors after Constantine continued to rely on familial relationships to claim legitimacy and form imperial colleges, even as east and west became even more divided.

Throughout this thesis, I have argued for continuity in expressions of dynasty and collegiality from the third century imperial families (e.g. those of Philip I, Valerian and Gallienus, and Carus) and the dynasty of Constantine. These continuities are important, and deserve to be stressed again. Most importantly, I argue that 'collegiality' and 'family' are two sides of the same coin (no pun intended). This can be seen, for example, in the numismatic techniques of the 'double obverse' (*capita opposita*) and multiple busts (facing or jugate). These techniques could even be combined, whether for third century families (e.g. the college of Valerian and Gallienus), for the Tetrarchy (e.g. the superb medallion featuring the two pairs of Augustus and Caesar), and for Constantine and his sons (e.g. the pendant from the British Museum).

Claims of dynastic legitimation are often understood as the honouring of links to the past, specifically imperial ancestors. Most often, this is done through reference to the imperial *divi*, the dead and deified. Constantius I is certainly the most well-known *divus* from this period, and references to him loom large in rhetoric from Constantine's early reign. But Constantius was hardly the only deified ancestor during this period. Constantine claimed links to Maximian and ('fictively') to Claudius Gothicus. Likewise, Maxentius' impressive array of imperial connections was displayed through his AETERNAE MEMORIAE coinage, honouring his deified son, father, father-in-law, and adopted brother. Galerius' status as a deified ancestor was also promoted explicitly by Maximinus Daza, his nephew, Caesar, and adopted son. Even

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<sup>8</sup> Williams (1985) 198 argues that although dynastic loyalties brought down the Tetrarchy, "A far more stable imperial system was eventually achieved in the fourth century, around the twin principles of dynastic succession and collegial rule."

after Constantine's death, Maximian appears as a deified grandfather on inscriptions honouring Constantine's sons.<sup>9</sup>

Yet dynastic legitimacy implied the future of empire as well as the present and the past, and this potentiality of the imperial familial college was embodied in the position of Caesar. The ways second- and third-century emperors chose to designate their successors continued through the Tetrarchic colleges into the reign of Constantine. The elevation of these imperial sons to Caesars designated them as imperial heirs, the future of the empire. This did not change with Diocletian, who also chose imperial sons as Caesars and heirs. That these sons were linked to their fathers through adoption and marriage was not novel—it had been done before by the Antonines—nor particularly unusual, as it was a strategy employed by elite Romans for centuries. Inscriptions often listed the whole imperial college, including Caesars, determining the overall hierarchy of the college. Moreover, these sons were promoted as the future of the empire in panegyric and coinage alike. The Panegyric of 321, ostensibly to Crispus and Constantine II, looks at the future potential of these Caesars as well as comparing them to Constantine. On coinage, Caesars were often celebrated with reverse types of *spes*, *salus*, and *securitas*, types which under Constantine were also linked to imperial mothers, Fausta and Helena, as the literal bearers of the future of the empire.

There is also continuity in the specific techniques used to promote these Caesars as sons and heirs beyond the simple attribution of the title on coins and inscriptions. Third-century Caesars were continually honoured as *Princeps Iuventutis*, a legend dating back to the age of Augustus. Likewise, some chose to honour Constantius and Galerius in this way, like the panegyrist of 298,<sup>10</sup> and Severus and Daza also received coins with this reverse type. Though the use of this title seems to have been limited under the Tetrarchy, it constituted a large portion of the bronze coinage of Constantine's early reign. Maxentius' *Princeps Invictus*, I have argued, engages with the *Princeps Iuventutis* legend and ties Maxentius into the tradition of dynastic heirs and Caesars. Finally, Licinius' and Constantine's sons were promoted with this title, or rather a new version of it, the legend *Principia Iuventutis*. The title does not seem to have been employed for Gallus or Julian, however, though it does survive, oddly, for Magnentius and his relative Decentius, and continues for Gratian under the Valentinian

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<sup>9</sup> E.g. CIL 3.5208: [D(omino) n(ostro)] Fl(avio) [I]u[li]o) / Constantio [nob(ilissimo)] / [C]a[es]a[ri] filio d(omini) n(ostri) / Constantini ma/ximi victoriosi/simi semper Aug(usti) / nepoti M(arci) Aur(eli) Va[l]l(eri) / Maximiani et Fl(avi) / Constanti / divorum N(orici) m(edi)t(erranei) n(umini) m(aiestati)q(ue) e(orum)

<sup>10</sup> Pan. Lat. 9.6.1-2.

dynasty.<sup>11</sup> The type's discontinuation after Gratian shows less continuity even within a discrete dynasty than within the period of AD 284-337.

This is only one example of the continuity from the third-century through the Tetrarchy to Constantine. Especially after 306, different emperors competed for power, but they did not compete alone. Maxentius enlisted the support of his father Maximian, and Constantine likewise was brought more fully into the familial college of the 'Herculii'. They stood in direct opposition to the eastern imperial college of Diocletian, Galerius, and Maximinus Daza, the 'Iovii.' Later, after he had eliminated every member of this family, Licinius would claim the 'Iovian' associations for his own dynasty. Constantine, meanwhile, promoted his own legitimacy as stemming from a multiplicity of emperors during the first war against Licinius by minting commemorative coinage to his divine imperial ancestors, links which Licinius could not claim for himself in the same way.

By the time of his death in 337, Constantine had ruled for thirty years and had established a dynasty that would continue through his sons. The proof of his legitimacy was in, if anything, his long reign, though he had employed many techniques to establish this legitimacy, including dynastic claims of ancestry and the promotion of his hereditary successors. Looking back at the establishment of the Tetrarchy more than forty years prior, it seems at first glance that there was much that had changed: 'dynasty' had conquered 'meritocracy'. Yet it is important that the Tetrarchy was not just a collection of soldier-emperors but a network of 'constructed' relationships, men bound together by marriage and adoption—but even more importantly, by the representations of them as a united 'family' of fathers and sons. Their heirs were adopted sons, sons-in-law, and 'sons' implied through the very position of Caesar that they held. Constructed relationships, especially marriage, would continue to be an important element in expressions of dynastic legitimacy long after the Tetrarchic adopted sons / sons-in-law had died, as shown by the marriage of Constantia the Younger to Gratian.

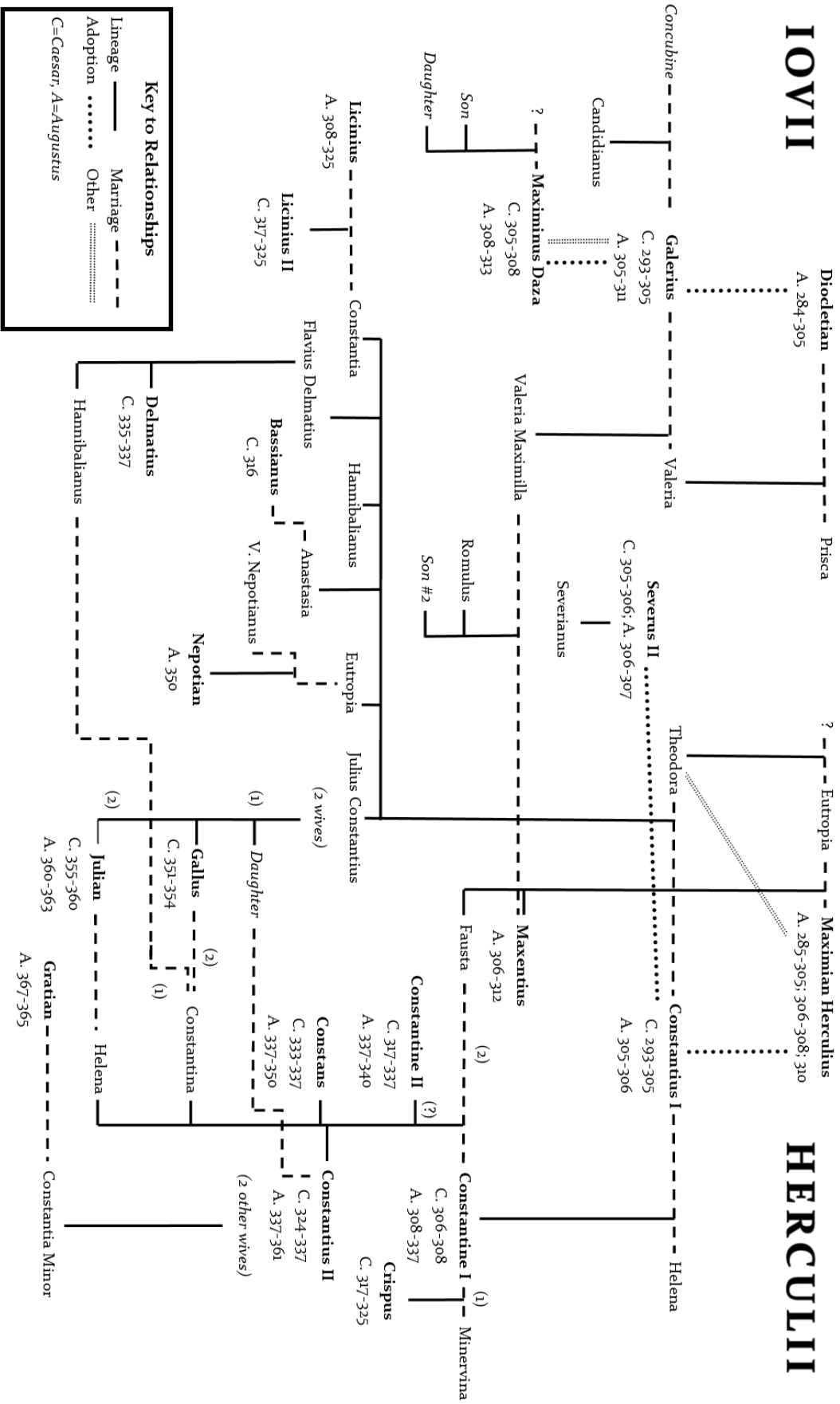
It is clear that levels of 'dynasticism', or the importance of dynastic elements to imperial legitimacy, varied over time. For example, the coinage of the Second Tetrarchy employed third-century presentation techniques (like multiple busts) less than the colleges of Diocletian or Constantine did. Likewise, the Second Tetrarchy should not be considered as synonymous with the First. The establishment of 'dynastic principles' that governed imperial politics in the fourth

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<sup>11</sup> RIC VIII, Trier nos. 302-303, cf. no. 298, a misspelled PRINCITI IVVENTVTIS for Decentius. Under Gratian, the type appears with the legend PRINCIPIVM IVVENTVTIS: RIC IX Trier nos. 13a-c; Constantinope no. 24, Nicomedia no. 14; Antioch no. 19. The legend had changed, but the iconography remained the same.

century and beyond was not a straightforward trajectory. Even in 337, Constantine's imperial college did not strictly adhere to such imagined principles; it included his nephew Delmatius, and several other extended family members were promoted on the periphery of imperial power. By drawing too firm a line between the college of the Tetrarchy and that of Constantine, it is easy to miss the nuances in the presentations of family, collegiality, and unity in the dynastic constructions of the period of 294-337. This thesis has endeavoured to redress the misrepresentation created by this separation of 'dynasty' and 'collegiality', to show the evolution of presentations and perceptions of imperial relationships in the late third and early fourth centuries AD.

APPENDIX: STEMMA



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