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I

CONSTANTINE AND THE ROMAN SENATE: CONFLICT, COOPERATION, AND CONCEALED RESISTANCE

Michele Renee Salzman

Constantine's relations to the senate and to Rome's resident senatorial aristocracy have attracted a good deal of scholarly attention, but not consensus. In the aftermath of World War II a number of scholars followed a view developed by Hungarian scholar András Alföldi, who characterized that relationship as conflict-ridden and filled with friction between an aggressively Christianizing emperor and a staunchly pagan senatorial aristocracy, the only pagan group capable of resisting.[1] In Alföldi's view, imperial laws advanced Christianity and any policies that favored senators or paganism were grudging concessions to a strong, overtly hostile pagan political party. Alföldi's model has been called into question. Since the 1980s, some scholars have argued that there was no religious or political conflict and no resistance on the part of Rome's once pagan senatorial aristocracy who, increasingly Christian themselves, simply acquiesced to a newly Christianized empire.[2] Other scholars have argued that because Constantine was either tolerant of pagans, or was not a "really" committed Christian, there was no religious or political conflict with Rome's pagan senate and senatorial aristocracy.[3] And others have argued that religion was not relevant to this relationship; as Van Dam sees it, appeals to religion were part of the language of power, not a source of conflict in and of themselves.[4]

[1] Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine*, 74–123. Among this generation of post–World War II scholars influenced by Alföldi's view on Constantine and the senatorial aristocracy are Chastagnol, *La préfecture urbaine*; Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals*; and Momigliano, *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity*.

[2] Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*; Barnes, "Statistics and the Conversion of the Roman Aristocracy," 135–47; Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*.

[3] For Constantine as a tolerant emperor, see Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops.* Others, following Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine*, question the level of his commitment to Christianity; see MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, and Brandt, *Konstantin der Grosse*.

[4] Van Dam, *Remembering Constantine at the Milvian Bridge*.

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In my view, the differing opinions in the abundant literature on Constantine's relations to Rome's senate and resident senatorial aristocracy conflate three distinct issues – the nature of the conflict, imperial interest in Christianization, and the power of the senate and senators to speak openly. Consequently, some scholars assume a strong, pagan senate confronting an aggressively Christianizing ruler led to overt political and religious conflict. Other scholars assume an acquiescent pagan senate responding to a more or less tolerant Christian emperor resulted in the lack of political or religious conflict. But each element in this narrative requires independent consideration because their conjunction has been based on a number of false assumptions. In particular, the senate, as an institution, is in need of reconsideration for it was limited, politically, in facing an emperor in the early fourth century. Consequently, this chapter aims to disentangle the evidence and reconsider relations between Constantine and Rome's senate and resident senatorial aristocracy.

In Part I, I consider the much discussed interaction of senate, resident senatorial aristocracy and emperor during Constantine's visits to Rome in 312, 315, and 326. Alföldi sees in the ancient accounts of these visits evidence of overt political and religious conflict.[5] But others read these visits as evidence for senatorial acquiescence and imperial tolerance for pagans.[6] These are not, however, the only alternatives. We should rather consider Constantine's visits to Rome as occasioning a variety of reactions, some positive, some negative, and including – as James Scott proposed long ago in analyzing unequal power relations – some resistance, albeit concealed, to a powerful victor in a civil war who also brought significant political and religious change.[7] Indeed, the senate was not a unified body, and hence there were a variety of responses to Constantine's victory of 312 and to Christian interpretations of this event. The assertion of a traditional, pagan view of that victory was also a means of resisting Christian interpretations of the victory of 312. Moreover, a pagan interpretation of these events is relevant for appreciating the iconography on the Arch of Constantine, a monument dedicated during the 315 visit of this emperor to Rome. Constantine's visit of 326 to the city presented different opportunities for interaction; popular and senatorial reactions provide evidence of support but also of tension and resistance to change. Although Constantine did not return to Rome after 326, his burial

[5] Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine*, 53–81, 91–104.
[6] Brandt, *Konstantin der Grosse*, 48–67, 108–35; Van Dam, *The Roman Revolution of Constantine*, 48–50.
[7] Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance, Hidden Transcripts*.

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and consecration in Constantinople in 337 (discussed in Part III) similarly gives rise to a complex set of reactions that evidences certain tensions and resistance occasioned by earlier imperial visits to Rome.

In Part II, I consider the evidence that scholars have adduced to argue that Constantine's aggressive efforts at converting the aristocracy through his appointment of Christians to high office led to religious and political conflict. The office that allegedly aroused such a response is that of urban prefect of Rome. Barnes, for one, has argued that Constantine appointed a number of Christians to this office early in his rule, and Alföldi and Chastagnol see these appointments as hostile acts aimed at pagans, which fueled pagan resentment.[8] A reconsideration of Constantine's urban prefects leads me to a different view; the men who held this post under Constantine were from old, established senatorial families. Most were pagan. His few Christian appointees to this position can be found only after he controlled the eastern empire in 324, but these men were of the same status as their pagan peers, that is, from old, established senatorial families. Hence, Constantine's appointments of Christians to the office of urban prefect were neither controversial nor cause for conflict on religious grounds.

But Constantine did favor some senatorial families over others. Moreover, Constantine did intervene in senatorial matters, as we shall see. Some of his interventions caused resentment and anger among some senators, as, I propose, when he granted a pardon to a senator exiled by his peers. But in order to assess these tensions, we need to take into account a third important factor, namely the avenues open for the senate and senators to express their political and religious views. Certainly, the wealthiest senators of Rome's resident aristocracy had resources and influence that they used to advance themselves, their families, and their friends; but assuming they were not merely "spinelessly self-regarding," senators and senate had limited options for expressing their views.[9] Despite rising senatorial prestige and the administrative reforms of the senatorial order undertaken by Constantine that allowed for greater autonomy that I discuss in Part III of this chapter, the senate of Rome was not likely to openly resist imperial policies in the early fourth century. Freedom of speech had long been absent from the senate. Not surprisingly, then, those senators who opposed the changes in politics and religion ushered in by Constantine concealed their views. This makes uncovering their resistance difficult to find in the historical record. However, it is important that modern

[8] Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*; Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine*, 100; *La préfecture urbaine*, 180–3.
[9] McLynn, "Pagans in a Christian Empire," 572. See too Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 12.

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historians acknowledge the existence of some degree of concealed resistance in order to better explain anomalies in the evidence and the slow pace of the conversion of Rome's resident senatorial aristocracy.

Part I: Constantine's Visits to Rome in 312, 315, and 326

Constantine was in Rome three separate times during his rule. Each visit was an opportunity for the senate and senators to interact directly with the emperor. The diversity of senatorial responses emerges from our sources.

Constantine in Rome in 312

Although Constantine defeated Maxentius on October 28, 312, he delayed his entry into Rome until the following day. It must have been a tense night for the senators and soldiers who had loyally supported the Maxentian regime. Some senators feared retribution, for they had been among the inner circle that had urged Maxentius to exit the city to engage in combat.[10] It was in everyone's interests to change sides quickly and to show enthusiasm for the new ruler; that was the official version of events expressed by the anonymous panegyrist of 313: there was "so numerous a throng of people, so numerous an entourage of senators [who] carried you along and at the same time detained you … Thereafter, crowding through all the roads, they (the people) awaited, watched for, sighed and hoped for your appearance, so that they seemed to besiege the man by whose siege they had been liberated."[11] The panegyrist expresses the view we see adopted by emperor and senate: Constantine was freeing Rome from a tyrant and his faction.[12] By turning this civil war into a liberation movement, the orator obscured their very real fear of reprisal and eliminated the suggestion that some had supported Maxentius. Constantine acted quickly to reinforce his control of the city; he disbanded the Horse Guard of Maxentius in Rome, destroyed its camp and burial grounds, and made sure there would be no further armed forces in the city.[13]

Constantine wanted good relations with the senate in 312. According to the panegyrist of 313, the emperor promised to restore the senate to its

[10] For the senators who likely urged Maxentius to face Constantine in combat outside the walls, see especially Lenski, "Evoking the Pagan Past," 204–57.

[11] *Pan. lat.* 12 (9).

[12] In language that echoed Augustus's *Res Gestae*, coins proclaimed Constantine *liberator urbis suae*; see Marlowe, "*Liberator urbis suae*. Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius," 217–18.

[13] Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* 40.25; garrisons noted by Zos. *Nova Hist.* 2.17.2. For punishment of the *equites* of Maxentius, see Speidel, "Maxentius and his *Equites Singulares* in the Battle at the Milvian Bridge."

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former authority, refrained from boasting of the "salvation" that he offered, and promised clemency.[14] The panegyrist goes so far as to make the claim that Rome was fortunate to have had this "civic victory" (*civilis victoria*).[15] Doing more than making mere promises, Constantine reappointed Maxentius's urban prefect, Anullinus, for a month-long tenure. It mattered little to Constantine that Anullinus had earlier, under the emperor Diocletian, prosecuted Christians.[16] Constantine's next two appointments to urban prefect, both of whom were respected Roman senators who had held this office under Maxentius, signaled continuity with the previous government.[17] To reassure senators of his clemency, in early January of 313 Constantine also passed an edict against informers and stated that he would not seek revenge through prosecutions.[18]

For their part, the senate and individual senators were happy to give Constantine what he needed most – legitimacy. They granted him the right of listing his name first in the imperial college, recognizing him as the senior Augustus (although this allegedly infuriated Constantine's rival in the east, the Augustus Maximin Daia).[19] But the senate went beyond this. Soon after the victory, the panegyrist of 313 tells us that the senate dedicated a statue:

> For just cause, Constantine, the senate has recently dedicated to you a statue of a god, and Italy shortly before that a shield and crown, all of gold,

[14] *Pan. lat.* 12(9). 20.1–2, and 4: *gladios ne in eorum quidem sanguine distringi passus est quos ad supplicia poscebat* and 20.4.4: *conservati usque homicidarum sanguinis gratulatio*. The panegyrist of 313 reflects imperial policy when remarking the "fame of the emperor's clemency"; Eusebius, in *VC*. 1.41.3, noted an imperial letter recalling to their homes "those subjected to the tyrant's savagery," a formula that would apply to political opponents of Maxentius as well as Christians.

[15] *Pan. lat.* 12(9). 20.2; .3. Nixon and Rodgers, eds., *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors*, 325 n. 127, remark on the novelty of the claim in Latin panegyric.

[16] For Anullinus 3, see *PLRE* 1.79; he was proconsul of Africa in 303–4, urban prefect in 306–7 under Maxentius, then urban prefect for a second time from October 27 to November 29, 312. However, the Anullinus who was proconsul of Africa in 313 is likely a different man, perhaps his son; see Anullinus 2, *PLRE* 1.78–9, and Barnes, *The New Empire*, 116–17. Anullinus was only in office for one month, however, contra to Barnes, *Constantine*, 83, who asserts he was in office for thirteen months and re-dates the subsequent consulship of Aradius Rufinus a year later.

[17] Aradius Rufinus, urban prefect for the third time according to *PLRE* 1.775 from November 29, 312 to December 8, 313; and then C. C(a)eionius Rufius Volusianus, urban prefect for the second time; see *PLRE* 1.976–7 from December 8, 313 to August 20, 315; and see my discussion of these men later in this chapter.

[18] *C. Th.* 10.10.1, January 313; *C. Th.* 10.10.2, December 319 is a reiteration. Fear of informers remained a problem for senators; see *C. Th.* 10.10.19 in 387 and The Novels of Majorian, 1.1.458. See too Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity*, 113–14. Zos. *Nova Hist.* 2.17.2 notes punishments for close Maxentian supporters, and the vindictive destruction of Maxentius's Horse Guard along with the demolition of their cemetery.

[19] Lact. *De mort. pers.* 44.11: *primi nominis titulum*.

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> to lessen in some part the debt of their conscience. There is and often will be due a likeness to divinity, a shield to his valor and a crown to dutifulness (*pietati*).[20]

The orator lets slip the tension of the moment by alluding to the senate's guilty "conscience." This was one of a number of statues that appeared in the city; the emperor himself put up many in "the most frequented places."[21] The panegyrist of 313 adds that the senate's statue made Constantine divine in some way, although we cannot say how this was done, or if Constantine's statue had the attributes of a particular deity – such as Sol or Jupiter – as some scholars have proposed.[22] But by its actions, the senate validated Constantine's divine associations and his dynastic claim as the son of a god; in this period they also approved a priesthood for the Flavian family, which flourished in Africa and Italy in the coming years.[23]

There is no hint of open conflict in the pagan writers describing the immediate aftermath of 312, although it is likely that some senators were not entirely happy with the turn of events. Senators were still concerned that they would face punishments for their support for Maxentius, a sentiment that Optatian's letter to Constantine, allegedly written soon after 312, expressed. This was a reality according to the later historian Zosimus, for

[20] It was recent because the panegyrist of 313 says it was *nuper*; see *Pan. lat.* 12(9).25.4, as noted by Nixon and, Rodgers, eds. *In Praise of Later Emperors*, 331 n. 157 with the text, 607: *Merito igitur tibi, Constantine, et nuper senatus signum dei et paulo ante Italia scutum et coronam, cuncta aurea, dedicarunt, ut conscientiae debitum aliqua ex parte relevarent. Debetur enim et saepe debebitur et divinitati simulacrum* [mss. *aureum*] *et virtuti scutum et corona pietati*. There are manuscript problems that make *dei* problematic. I translate *pietas* as dutifulness rather than as Nixon and Rodgers do, patriotism, to get at the ethical and religious element that is often associated with the Roman notion of *pietas*; see *OLD*, s.v. *pietas*, 1–3.

[21] Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* 40.28, *statuae locis quam celeberrimis, quarum plures ex auro aut argenteae*.

[22] Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine*, 69, for the identification with *Sol*. See the discussion by Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, 212–15, with bibliography. For discussion of this colossal statue and its identification as Jupiter, see Parisi Presicce, "Konstantin als Iuppiter," 117–31, and Parisi Presicce, "L'abbandono della moderazione," 138–55.

[23] Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* 40.28: *tum per Africam sacerdotium decretum Flaviae gentis*. Victor only mentions the Flavian cult in Africa, but it is clear that the imperial cult was also practiced in Italy, as evidenced by the request for a cult temple in Hispellum, dated variously to 333, 335, or 337; see *ILS* 1:158–9, no. 705, and Van Dam, *The Roman Revolution of Constantine*, 19–34, 53–7, 363–7. Constantine's last urban prefect, L. Aradius Valerius Proculus *signo* Populonius, proudly held the title of *pontifex flavialis*, imperial priest of the cult, in an inscription dedicated in Italy. Because Proculus's inscription was put up after his return from Africa, he may have held this position in Italy. Constantine had made sure to honor his father as a *divus* and had promulgated his worship; see MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, 110–13. The *natalis* of his father Constantius is noted in the *Codex-Calendar of 354* on March 31; see Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 139–42.

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a few of Maxentius's closest supporters.[24] Moreover, Constantine reinstituted Galerius's hated land tax on Italy and Rome, although his tax on senators was likely a later addition; both acts aroused some resentment.[25] From Christian writers (see later in this chapter) we learn that Constantine's first interactions with the senate also supplied the opportunity for him to assert his new faith in what would, according to some, lead to this emperor's strained relations with the senate.

In the edition of his *Church History* published before 316, Eusebius tells us that soon after Constantine entered Rome, he ordered the dedication of a statue of himself:

> And straightway he gave orders that a memorial of the Savior's Passion should be set up in the hand of his own statue; and indeed when they set him in the most public place in Rome holding the Savior's sign in his right hand, he bade them engrave this very inscription in these words in the tongue: "By this salutary sign, the true proof of bravery, I saved and delivered your city from the yoke of the tyrant; and moreover, I freed and restored to their ancient fame and splendor both the senate and the people of Rome."[26]

The inscription does not exist, but most scholars interpret the salutary sign, alluded to in the inscription, as a distinctly Christian symbol.[27] Indeed, that is

[24] Optatian, *Epistulae* 2 and 3. For dating Optatian's letter and its authenticity, see doubts raised by Van Dam, *Remembering Constantine at the Milvian Bridge*, 158–70, and Herzog, ed., *Nouvelle histoire de la littérature latine*, V.275–6. Wienand, *Der Kaiser als Sieger*, 358 and note 6, takes it as authentic but admits that the 312 dating is insecure. Barnes, *Constantine,* 84, argues for the letter's authenticity and 312 dating. Although Zosimus was hostile to Constantine, he mentions punishment of an unnamed number of close supporters of Maxentius; see Zos 2.19.2.

[25] For Galerius's tax on Italy and Rome, see Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* 39.31; Lact., *De mort. pers.* 23.1–6, 26.2. Constantine likely resumed this and added new taxes; see Zos. 2.38.4 for the *follis senatorius.* The initial date of the *follis senatorius* is not certain, although most scholars assume it was initiated to pay for the *vicennalia* in 326; according to Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, I.110, 431–2, it was not financially burdensome in this period. However, resentment over new taxes – after 312 or after 326 – could be aroused regardless of the amounts involved. Senators did complain about these taxes later in the fourth century, and they were removed in the early fifth century; see Barnish, "A Note on the *collatio glebalis*," 256.

[26] Eusebius *HE* 9.9.9–11; see too *VC* 1.39–40. For the date of the *HE*, see Van Dam, *Remembering Constantine*, 82–100.

[27] Eusebius, *VC* 1.41.2 and *HE* 9.9; and Rufinus *HE* 9.9.10–11: *in hoc singulari signo, quod est verae virtutis insigne, urbem Romam senatumque et populum Romanum iugo tyrannicae dominationis ereptam pristinae libertati nobilitatique restitui*. Most scholars see this as a Christian sign; see the discussion by Lenski, "The Sun and the Senate." For a different interpretation of this sign, see Van Dam, *Remembering Constantine*, 191–200, who favors Rufinus's text and argues that the sign did not have any Christian significance. In fact, there is no reason to trust Rufinus's text as more accurate. Rufinus had been in Rome some decades earlier, so his memory was

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the way it is explained in the earliest reference to this inscription and statue in a speech Eusebius delivered for the dedication of the new cathedral in Tyre in 314 or 315.[28] The statue Eusebius mentions has been the object of much discussion, for it has been identified with the colossal head, arm, and foot still preserved in the Museo dei Conservatori in Rome. Besides the fact that none of the Christian sources suggest a colossal statue, Presicce's convincing reconstruction of the remains as a nude, heroic male, possibly Jupiter, would rule this identification out.[29] Rather, the kind of statue with the saving sign Eusebius describes is, more appropriately, of the standing male type who holds a spear or *vexillum*, as the Constantinan emperor now in the forecourt of the Lateran Basilica.[30]

The statue, a public statement of the emperor's religiosity, followed on his open display of the symbol that Constantine had painted on the shields of this emperor's soldiers before the 312 battle, namely the Christogram or Staurogram, which was, according to Lactantius and Eusebius, a reference to the Christian God.[31] Constantine's public show of his religious affiliation did not present a problem in October 312, at least in the version of events reported in Eusebius's later *Life of Constantine*: "All the city's population together, including the senate and all the people, … seemed to be enjoying beams of purer light and to be participating in the rebirth to a fresh new life."[32] Eusebius, Lactantius, and later Christian sources depict this initial encounter of the now openly Christian emperor and senate and people of Rome in 312 as a moment of triumph and joy, devoid of conflict.

faint and any reading of the passage in its entirety makes clear that Rufinus assumed that Constantine was a Christian in 312.

[28] Eusebius *HE* 10.14.16: "now – a thing unknown heretofore – the most exalted Emperors of all, [i.e., Constantine and Licinius] conscious of the honor which they have received from Him, spit upon the faces of dead idols … and of themselves they recognize as the one and only God, and confess that Christ the Son of God is sovereign King of the universe, and style Him as Saviour on monuments, inscribing an imperishable record of His righteous acts and His victories over the impious ones, in imperial characters in the midst of the city that is Empress among the cities of the world." Translation here by Olgon with Lawlor, *Eusebius*, 2.407. For dating the oration to 315, see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 162.

[29] Parisi Presicce, "L'abbandono della moderazione," 138–55. If this great statue of Constantine was dedicated by the senate to Constantine, then the presentation of Constantine as Jupiter is much in keeping with their use of traditional imagery for this Christian emperor. On this, see my discussion of the sacrificial scenes on the Arch of Constantine.

[30] Girardet, *Der Kaiser und sein Gott*, 89–95, and see Lenski, "The Sun and the Senate."

[31] Lact. *De mort. pers.* 44.5; Eus. *VC* 1.37.1. For the Christogram as a Christian symbol, see especially Girardet, *Der Kaiser und sein Gott*, 52–62. However, not all would agree that the Christogram was only a Christian symbol; see Bardill, *Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, 159–78.

[32] Eus. *VC* 1.41.2.

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Constantine's allegiance to Christianity was openly acknowledged in Rome in the immediate aftermath of his October victory, and this may have been something of a surprise to traditionalists and pagans in the resident senatorial aristocracy. Soon after his victory, perhaps as early as November 312, work began on the first imperially sponsored Christian place of worship in Rome, dedicated to Saint Salvator, modern St. John Lateran, which was built over the destroyed barracks of Maxentius's Horse Guard.[33] In addition to the basilica and statues, the emperor openly asserted his views on Christianity in official correspondence to Roman senators. So, for example, when granting exemptions from all liturgies to Christian clergy in his letter of 313 to the Roman aristocrat Anullinus, proconsul of Africa, Constantine criticized traditional religion: "Christian priests should not be drawn away by error or sacrilegious fault from the worship which they owe to the Divinity."[34]

Constantine's overt support for bishops and priests elevated the status of a group that only recently had been the object of state prosecution. Moreover, imperial intervention in the internal disputes of Christians showed that this cult was a matter of public concern. In 313 Constantine arguably followed imperial precedent when, in response to the request of African bishops to address the Donatist controversy, he turned the matter over to the bishop of Rome; but Constantine made markedly new precedents that gave church councils a quasi-official character when in 314 he called the first council of western bishops to Arles to deal with the Donatist schism and put the public post at the bishops' disposal.[35] This followed on the heels of the joint policy of 313 that Constantine had agreed upon in Milan with Licinius, which guaranteed freedom of worship to Christians and restored church property at the expense of the imperial treasury in order to maintain divine favor.[36]

[33] See Johnson, "Architecture of Empire," 282–5. Although the evidence for the dedication of the basilica in November is later, as Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 94–5, discusses, the decision to destroy the remnants of Maxentius's Horse Guard was taken very soon after 312, freeing up this area for a Christian basilica in the early years of the reign.

[34] Eus. *HE* 10.7.2.

[35] Eus. *HE* 10.5.18 and Drake, "The Impact of Constantine on Christianity," 117–19, on the radical departure that Constantine's summoning of the Council of Arles represented in terms of imperial engagement. For an instance of internal dissension in the third century when the bishop of Rome had tried to determine a matter in the Spanish church, see Cyprian, *Ep.* LXVII.1–6 (CSEL 3.2.735–41).

[36] The joint policy agreed upon in 313 in Milan is attested not by an edict but by a 313 letter Licinius issued to eastern provincial governors; see Lact. *De mort. Pers.* 48.2–.12 for a Latin version, and Eus. *HE* 10.5.2–14 for a Greek version. See too Lenski, "The Reign of Constantine," 70–2.

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Constantine in Rome in 315

In this much changed world, Christian interpretations of the victories of Constantine circulated during the very years that the Arch of Constantine was being built; these narratives and the support of the emperor for his new cult were certainly known when the senate voted to build and later dedicated the Arch to this emperor upon his return to the city to celebrate his *decennalia* in July 315. Yet, as has been frequently noted, there are no indications on the Arch of Constantine's Christianity. There are no Christian images or symbols; the soldiers of Constantine do not carry shields with the Christogram (or Staurogram) in the reliefs carved for the Arch, as there is, for example, on Constantine's helmet in the famous silver medallion from Ticinum dated to 315.[37] And the inscription on the Arch proclaimed that Constantine's victory was owed to "divine instigation" (*instinctu divinitatis*), a phrase that, as Noel Lenski has argued, has almost exclusively positive connotations when used by pagan authors and is often associated with Apollo/Sol, the deity previously linked with Constantine but that is infrequent or negative in Christian texts.[38] Similarly, the iconography on the Arch (to be discussed later in this chapter) offers a traditional, pagan view of the divine forces that aided this emperor in achieving his victory.

We see the senatorial view most easily, perhaps, in the second-century reliefs reused for this monument. Faust has demonstrated that these reliefs consistently depict two imperial virtues, *virtus* and *pietas*.[39] *Pietas* – dutifulness – can be seen in the four Hadrianic roundels, each of which represents the emperor performing sacrifice to a pagan deity. *Pietas* also appears in the reused Antonine reliefs, one of which shows the emperor performing a *suovetaurilia*. In all these reused reliefs, the original emperor's face has been re-carved to represent Constantine, or in two of the roundels on the northern side, his colleague Licinius.[40] These show the proper role of the emperor in the state cult. Pagan deities also appear on the reliefs carved in the fourth century; on the two short sides of the arch, the sun and the moon are present

[37] For the Ticinum silver medallion of 315, see *RIC* 6 Ticinum 36. On the date, see Kraft, "Das Silbermedaillon Constantins des Grossen mit dem Christusmonogramm auf dem Helm," 151–78. The inscription (*CIL* 6. 1139 = *ILS* 694.4–5) has no Christian allusions, but speaks in generic terms, contrary to the assertion of Barnes, *Constantine*, 19, that the adjective *iustis* is a "virtual synonym for Christians" because it is used in the oracles of Apollo and in Lactantius *Div. Institutes.* Barnes ignores its usage here for "just arms (*armis iustis*)," not just men. This is certainly not a reference to a Christian military.

[38] Lenski, "Evoking the Pagan Past," 204–57.

[39] Faust, "Original und Spolie," 377–408.

[40] For an eloquent discussion of this pagan iconography, see Lenski, "The Sun and the Senate."

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