

The Religion of Constantius I

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THE RELIGION OF CONSTANTIUS, father of Constantine, has been the subject of controversy. Most scholars since the time of Burckhardt have claimed that he was a pagan monotheist or syncretist who, because of his tolerant attitude and sympathies with Christianity or Judaism, was, at worst, a reluctant persecutor;¹ and many agree that Constantius venerated the sun god in the guise of *Sol Invictus* or Apollo at least as his patron deity, if not as his sole object of worship.² These contentions are at least questionable, if not untenable. That Constantius was a monotheist of any sort lacks compelling evidence; nor can his particular devotion to the Sun God be substantiated without careful scrutiny.

The common interpretation of Constantius' religion is well represented by Helmut Castritius, who argues (25ff) that Diocletian erected a heavenly parallel to the political structure of the Tetrarchy as part of his program of basing imperial

¹ J. Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, tr. M. Hadas (London 1949) 190, 245, 282; A. Piganiol, *L'Empereur Constantin* (Paris 1932) 31–36; N. BAYNES, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church* (Oxford 1972: hereafter 'Baynes') 7f; A. Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome* (Oxford 1948) 6f, 24; A. H. M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (London 1949) 49; R. MacMullen, *Constantine* (New York 1969) 38; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford 1979) 241f; T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1981) 3f, 12, 23, 36; R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York 1986) 610–15; M. Grant, *Constantine the Great* (New York 1993) 16, 125; G. Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton 1993) 87.

² Burckhardt (*supra* n.1) 282; J. MAURICE, "La dynastie solaire des seconds Flaviens," in his *Numismatique constantinienne* (Paris 1908–12: hereafter 'Maurice') II xx–xlvi; P. Batiffol, *La paix constantinienne et le Catholicisme* (Paris 1929) 76; C. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (London 1940) 182; H. CASTRITIUS, *Studien zu Maximinus Daia* (Kallmünz 1969: 'Castritius') 25–30; D. Hoffmann, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum* (Düsseldorf 1969) 173–77; H. Dörries, *Constantine the Great*, tr. R. Bainton (New York, 1972) 20–25; Barnes (*supra* n.1) 12, 36; Liebeschuetz (*supra* n.1) 241f, 280; Baynes 7f; Fox (*supra* n.1) 615, 775.

leadership on divine legitimacy. Diocletian's first move in this direction is well-known: the claim that his patron, from whom he received his *auctoritas*, was Jupiter. When in 285 he named Maximian first Caesar, and later co-Augustus, Hercules became the latter's patron. These two gods therefore emerged as the co-emperors' *parentes*; Diocletian is *praesens Iuppiter*, and Maximian, *imperator Hercules*.³ This structure was then extended on 1 March 293, when Diocletian appointed Constantius and Galerius *Caesares* and arranged for both to be adopted by the two Augusti as *Herculius* (Constantius) and *Iovius* (Galerius) respectively.⁴ So, the *Caesares* shared in the divine patronage of the *Augusti*. In addition, according to Castritius (26), the two new Caesars added their own personal patron deities: Mars and Sol. Thus the four co-Emperors erected over the earthly Tetrarchy a "Göttertetrarchie" with Mars as the patron of Galerius and Sol the *conservator* of Constantius.

Castritius points to three inscriptions from Thamugadi in north Africa as evidence for which deity patronized which Caesar.⁵ Each of these inscriptions names one Tetrarch with his patron deity. As expected, Jupiter appears as Diocletian's *conservator*, Hercules as Maximian's. On the third Mars is Galerius' *conservator*.⁶ According to Castritius, a fourth inscription must have named Constantius and his *conservator*, though no such inscription has been discovered. By process of elimination, Sol becomes the god assigned to Constantius. For Castritius literary sources corroborate this epigraphical evidence. The Latin panegyric of 307, delivered in honor of Maximian and Constantine, declares that Sol had taken the *Divus Constantius* up in his chariot from which vantage point the father now looks down with pride on his son's marriage and imperial promotion.⁷ Such imagery, contends Castritius, assumes a particularly close relationship between Sol and Constantius. Further, Castritius cites the Arras medallion commemorating Constantius' victory over Allectus in Britannia and inscribed on the reverse,

³ *Pan. Lat.* 11.3.2, 8; 10.5; cf. Castritius 25.

⁴ Castritius 26; for the date, see T. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1982) 4.

⁵ *ILS* 631-33 (*CIL* VIII 2345ff); cf. Hoffmann (*supra* n.2) 174. The names of the three emperors have been erased.

⁶ Lactantius (*Mort. Pers.* 9) indicates that Galerius was devoted to Mars; cf. Castritius 29.

⁷ *Pan. Lat.* 7.14.3; cf. T. Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus* (Stuttgart 1990) 32f.

REDDITOR LUCIS AETERNAE ("restorer of eternal light").⁸ Julian confirms this devotion to Sol: on Castritius' interpretation of a less than lucid text, Julian claimed descent from a line of Sol worshippers reaching back three generations (Claudius Gothicus, Constantius, and his own father Julius Constantius).⁹ Castritius concludes from this evidence that Constantius, who apparently leaned toward some kind of monotheism, chose Sol as his own God, as Galerius chose Mars.¹⁰

Such assertions have led other scholars to attempt to reconcile the image of Constantius with the evidence provided by the Christian sources Lactantius and Eusebius. Baynes argues (7f; cf. Maurice xxxvi) that, along with giving honor to Hercules, Constantius also brought to the throne his own patron, his ancestral god, who was commonly worshipped in the Danubian provinces whence his family had migrated to the west. Sol therefore "stands as a symbol of the dynasty, the Claudian dynasty of the Second Flavians" (8). For Baynes, Constantius' worship of Sol somehow made him sympathetic to Christianity because, Baynes claims (8) in an attempt to combine the assertions of Lactantius' *Mort. Pers.* and Eusebius' *H.E.*, that Constantius refused in the west to execute his imperial colleagues' "bloody edicts" of persecution. J. Vogt takes this interpretation a step farther: "We have reason to believe that he [Constantius] tended towards monotheism without departing from pagan traditions. This would explain why he called his daughter Anastasia, a name which otherwise occurs only in Jewish and Christian surroundings."¹¹

In sum, the common view considers Constantius a devotee of the sun-god who joined Jupiter, Hercules, and Mars in a divine Tetrarchy. Many also suggest that Constantius leaned

⁸ Castritius 28 n.22; cf. Maurice xxxviii.

⁹ *Or.* 4.131c-d; cf. 1.6D; 2.51; *Caes.* 313D, 336B; Castritius 29f.

¹⁰ Castritius 30: "Constantius Chlorus, der anscheinend auch einer Art Monotheismus zuneigte, hatte demnach Sol zu seinem eigenen Gott gewält oder vielleicht besser zugeteilt erhalten, Galerius den Mars." Hoffmann (*supra* n.2: 173ff) applies this argument to the *Solenses* and *Martenses* in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

¹¹ "Pagans and Christians in the Family of Constantine the Great," in A. Momigliano, ed., *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford 1963) 43; cf. Fowden (*supra* n.1: 87), who claims that Constantine was probably brought up in "an abstractly monotheist rather than concretely Christian environment."

toward a form of solar monotheism and, perhaps because of his personal sympathies with Christianity, avoided the persecuting edicts of his imperial colleagues, at most razing a few church buildings. It is not a large or uncommon step from this reconstruction to the idea that Constantine's well-documented devotion to Sol was simply a continuation of his familial heritage. Further, his conversion in 312 from a solar monotheism sympathetic to Christianity to a Christianity sympathetic to Sol worship was simply a logical conclusion from his father's tolerant attitude.¹²

This reconstruction, however plausible, cannot withstand scrutiny. Rather, the simplest reconstruction that does justice to all the evidence will conclude that there was little substantive difference between the religion of Constantius and that of Maximian or Diocletian.

To elucidate this problem, we begin with a closer examination of the evidence for Constantius' *Göttertetrarchie*. The dedicatory inscriptions from Thamugadi actually reveal little about the religion of Constantius or Tetrarchic religious ideology. Did a fourth inscription mention Constantius and his divine *conservator*? Without a new discovery there is no certainty. If, as we have come to expect from Tetrarchic propaganda, monuments often touted the unity of the four co-emperors,¹³ we might expect a fourth inscription. If such an inscription ever existed, was Sol the god paired with Constantius? This is possible, perhaps even probable, but a lost inscription is a shaky foundation for the reconstruction of an emperor's religion.

Constantius' attempt to attach particular patron deities to the respective Caesars has significant problems. According to Constantius there is a parallel in a series of Tetrarchic *aurei*: an *aureus* of Diocletian is inscribed *Iupiter conservator*; one of Maximian has *Hercules conservator*; Galerius' *conservator* is Sol; but the corresponding coin for Constantius, if the series had one, is unknown. Should we not expect Mars as Constantius' *conservator* on the same principle Constantius applies (27 n.22) to the epigraphical evidence from Thamugadi? Both cases

¹² An idea that seems consistent with Eusebius' account of Constantine's 'conversion' at *Vit. Const.* 1.28.

¹³ E.g. the artistic representations like the porphyry group in the Vatican, discussed by H. P. L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire* (Princeton 1965) 46-51; cf. the discussion of *concordia* by O. Nicholson, "The Wild Man of the Tetrarchy: A Divine Companion for the Emperor Galerius," *Byzantion* 54 (1984) 253-75, esp. 253 n.3.

are arguments from silence, and neither is a more significant silence than the other. A series of *aurei* from Carthage in 303 raises similar interpretive problems.¹⁴ The obverse of two coins reads: MAXIMIANVS P F AVG; the reverse of the first reads: HERCULI COMITI AVGG ET CAESS NN; the second reverse is inscribed: MARTI CONSERVATORI AVGG ET CAESS NN. A third in the series combines the first reverse inscription with CONSTANTIVS NOB C on the obverse. These three together make a consistent statement about the patron deities of the western Tetrarchs. Within the same series the obverse of two coins features DIOCLETIANVS P F AVG. One reverse is inscribed IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG ET CAESS NN, and the second reads: SOLI INVICT CONSERVAT AVGG ET CAESS NN. Galerius appears on one additional obverse as MAXIMIANVS CAES, the reverse of which bears the same dedication to Jupiter as the first coin of Diocletian. Strauss concludes from this series that the *Jovii* in the East were linked to Jupiter and Sol, whereas the *Herculi* in the West were linked to Hercules and Mars.¹⁵ By the same logic Castritius applies to the Thamugadi inscription, in this series the patron diety of Galerius would be Sol and that of Constantius would be Mars.

As Nicholson notes, however, the particular deities attached to the Caesares are not consistent in the coinage, the literature, or in art and architecture, especially so in the case of Galerius, who "was once compared to long-haired Apollo setting off for war, and also ... to Mars, Romulus and Alexander the Great." Nicholson then spends the bulk of his study arguing that the most significant "divine companion" of Galerius was Dionysus.¹⁶ Thus the evidence for the divine patronage of the Caesars of the first Tetrarchy is not nearly so clear and consis-

¹⁴ P. Strauss, "Un aro inedito di Cartagine," *Numismatica* n.s. 2 (1961) 3ff; cf. K. Pink, "Die Goldprägung des Diocletianus und seiner Mitregenten, *NZ* 64 (1931) 22f; *RIC* VI 422f.

¹⁵ Strauss (*supra* n.14) 5: "Ma i <<gioviani>> Diocleziano e Galerio da un lato e gli <<ercoliani>> Massimiano e Costanzo Cloro dall'altro, si dividono gli stessi rovesci rappresentanti le rispettive divinità tutelari. Completata, così, l'emissione con le due nuove monete, non resta che augurare il rinvenimento dell'aureo di Galerio con *Sol invictus* e l'aureo di Costanzo Cloro con *Mars conservator*."

¹⁶ Nicholson (*supra* n.13) 253–75. Apollo: *P. Argent.* 480.1 verso 5ff (Loeb *Select Literary Papyri* III 135); Mars: Lactant. *Mort. Pers.* 9.9; *CIL* VIII 2345; Romulus: Lactant. *Mort. Pers.* 9.9; Alexander: [Aur. Vict.] *Epit. de Caes.* 40.16f.

tent as Castritius believes. Even if a fourth inscription at Thaumadi paired Sol and Constantius, we would only be justified in concluding that a particular governor erected a monument (presumably with imperial approval) with four co-emperors paired with four gods. The connection between Diocletian and Jupiter and Maximian and Hercules would accurately represent imperial policy. But which gods to join with Galerius and Constantius? Did it make any difference to either Caesar? Both would be honorific, and neither would necessarily require of the sculptors or their supervisors any knowledge of the personal faith or imperial patronage of the respective Caesars. In other words, even if Castritius is right, that would of itself only demonstrate the assumptions of one governor or one community concerning the patron deity of Constantius. In such muddy waters, significant conclusions about Constantius' religion cannot be drawn without significant corroborating evidence. Castritius thinks such corroborating evidence exists in the panegyric of 307, the Arras medallion, and the writings of Julian.

The panegyric of 307 was delivered in honor of Constantine and Maximian on the occasion of Constantine's wedding of Fausta and his elevation to Augustus. If, as most scholars agree, the major themes of an imperial panegyric reflect how the praised emperor wanted to be portrayed,¹⁷ it is important to remember that in 307 Constantine was still a young upstart, whereas Maximian was a venerable and dignified senior Augustus. Whom would the orator be most concerned to please? Whatever propaganda appears in this speech would most likely reflect the ideals of Maximian, as is quite clear from the orator's lavish flatteries of the elder statesman.¹⁸

In addition to the usual sycophancy, this speech, rife with solar imagery, culminates in that vivid metaphor of Constantine's father who, swept into the heavens on the chariot of the sun, now looks down with pride on his son's accomplishments.

¹⁷ C. E. V. NIXON and B. S. RODGERS, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors* (Berkeley 1994: hereafter 'Nixon and Rodgers') 26–35; cf. B. Warmington, "Constantinian Propaganda in the *Panegyrici Latini*," *TAPA* 104 (1974) 371–84; H. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine* (Berkeley 1976) 10f, 46f.

¹⁸ Cf. Warmington (*supra* n.17) 374. Gr̄newald (*supra* n.7: 32) argues, on the contrary, that Constantine was in the superior position, for which he was taken to task by C. E. V. Nixon, "Constantinus Oriens Imperator: Propaganda and Panegyric. On Reading Panegyric 7 (307)," *Historia* 42 (1993) 229–46; cf. Nixon and Rodgers 187.

“Divine Constantius, fortunate in your rule, and even more fortunate after your rule, for surely you hear and see these things, you whom the sun himself took up on a chariot almost visible, to carry you to heaven when, in setting, he was seeking once more his sunrise nearby.”¹⁹ An interesting metaphor, to be sure, but what does it signify? Is this the orator’s way of referring to the sun-worship of Constantius? That is a possible, but by no means a necessary inference. This may just be a picturesque way of invoking the blessed memory of *Divus Constantius* over the ceremonial proceedings of the day.²⁰ In the same oration, both Maximian and Constantine are called “forever Herculan” (7.2.5, 8.2). Constantius is heralded as “divine,” having been “transported to the councils of the gods” (7.3.3). The orator lauds Maximian because Apollo had granted him the privilege of driving the chariot of the sun, a task that the emperor, far superior to Phaethon, handled with ease.²¹ As a result, at Maximian’s nod dawn must rise again over the darkness that has shrouded the empire in gloom (7.12.8). What to conclude from the religious, and particularly the solar, imagery in this oration? Constantine is described as Herculan; Maximian, besides his well-attested attachment to Hercules, is closely associated with the sun god, even carrying out some of the god’s functions. Within such a heavily metaphorical context containing much solar and religious imagery, it should come as no surprise that the metaphor of the chariot of the sun god should be used to represent the *consecratio* of Constantius. It is quite another question, however, whether this metaphor refers to the religious convictions or policies of Constantius. Without so much solar imagery, or if the solar images were solely applied to Constantius, the argument might be more compelling. As it stands, however, sun-god metaphors are more often applied to Maximian than to Constantius, yet no one has argued that the former was a solar monotheist. Without significant corroborating evidence, we cannot be sure whether the reference to Constantius’ ascension in the chariot of the sun is anything more than a simple consecration metaphor.

¹⁹ *Pan. Lat.* 7.14.3, tr. Nixon; cf. R. Turcan, “Images solaires dans le *Panegyrique* VI [VII],” in M. Renard and R. Schilling, edd., *Hommages à Jean Bayet* (= *Latomus* 70 [1964]) 697–706.

²⁰ Constantine was already at this time minting *consecratio* issues claiming divine status for his father: e.g. *RIC* VI 261.

²¹ *Pan. Lat.* 7.12.3; cf. Turcan (*supra* n.19) 700ff.

One place to look for evidence of Constantius' solar religion is the panegyric delivered before Constantine in 310. This speech, like that of 307, contains much solar imagery and references to the sun god (in particular, Apollo), for the good reason that Constantine had recently become a devotee of *Sol invictus*, as his numerous issues of Sol coins attest (Maurice xxxix; cf. Nixon and Rodgers 230). This speech has the first reference to Constantine's vision of Apollo in his temple at Grand,²² as well as the first mention of Constantine's descent from Claudius Gothicus.²³ This oration presents the perfect opportunity to remind the audience of Constantius' devotion to Sol and to recall the language of the orator of 307 on the ascension of Constantius in the chariot of Sol—an idea that would strengthen Constantine's dynastic/religious propaganda. Remarkably, the orator missed this opportunity, but what he chose to include instead raises serious questions. He mentions Constantius' death and even makes some references to his religion, but these references have nothing to do with Sol. Rather, immediately upon Constantius' death, "the temples of the gods were opened for him, and he was received by the divine conclave, and Jupiter himself extended his right hand to him"²⁴ At the very moment we should expect to encounter Sol, we are greeted by Jupiter, who deals a grievous blow to Castritius' interpretation.

The death of an emperor requires of a panegyrist a certain delicacy. The easiest way to deal with the topic is to utilize a religious metaphor invoking the traditional idea of *consecratio*.²⁵ Which is the official version? Was Constantius taken to heaven by the hand of Jupiter or by the chariot of the sun? To ask the question is to reveal its absurdity. Neither metaphor necessarily says anything about Constantius' religion. But it is quite significant that the panegyrist of 310 chose not to invoke Sol imagery with reference to Constantius, despite the prominence of solar imagery in the speech and Constantine's known devotion to Sol.

²² *Pan. Lat.* 6.21.3–7; cf. Nixon and Rodgers 248–51; Warmington (*supra* n.17) 377ff.

²³ *Pan. Lat.* 6.2.2–5.

²⁴ *Pan. Lat.* 6.7.3, tr. Nixon. Turcan (*supra* n.19: 704f) noted this inconsistency without exploring its ramifications.

²⁵ See Nixon and Rodgers 227; cf. S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley 1981) 93ff.

Similar problems of interpretation surround the Arras medallion cited by Castritius. REDDITOR LVCIS AETERNAE is a nice metaphor, but what does it mean? Light/dark metaphors apply to many things. What is the eternal light Constantius has restored to Britannia? Castritius and others assume a reference to the restoration of Sol's protection over Britannia. What would such an interpretation signify? Was Sol, forbidden by Allectus, now to be restored by Constantius? There are two problems with this solution. First, Carausius and Allectus minted a considerable number of issues dedicated to Sol and cannot be shown to have suppressed solar religion.²⁶ Second, an analysis of the iconography of the medallion belies Castritius' interpretation, for it depicts a powerful figure (presumably Constantius), riding above a troop transport ship (presumably on the Thames) toward a kneeling female (Britannia) with outstretched hands in front of a fortified city, beneath which is inscribed LON.²⁷ Two other sources, which refer to Constantius' reconquest of Britannia from Allectus, shed further light on the meaning of the medallion. Eumenius' panegyric of 298 claims that Britannia after Constantius' victory has now "raised itself up to the vision of Roman light" (*Pan. Lat.* 9.18.3: *ad conspectum Romanae lucis emersit*, tr. Rodgers). Similarly, the anonymous panegyric of 297 narrates these events in a manner that aptly parallels the Arras medallion:

a triumphal crowd poured forth to meet Your Majesty, and Britons exultant with joy ... venerating not you alone, whom they gazed at as one who had descended from heaven, but even the sails and oars of that ship which had conveyed your divinity.... After so many years of miserable captivity ... they were free at last, at last Romans, at last restored to life by the true *light of empire*.²⁸

²⁶ Carausius' 35 Sol issues: *RIC* V.2 466, 471 (4x), 478, 484, 489 (7x), 490, 493, 496, 498 (3x), 500, 503, 507, 509, 512 (2x), 515, 529, 531 (2x), 534 (2x), 535 (2x), 545; Allectus' additional four Sol issues: 558, 560 (2x), 566. Cf. J. Casey, *The British Usurpers Carausius and Allectus* (New Haven 1994) 64f.

²⁷ Cf. J. Toynbee, *Roman Medallions* (= *Numismatic Studies* 5 [New York 1944]) 183, 66ff; cf. *RIC* VI 143f, 167; Maurice xxxviii.

²⁸ *Pan. Lat.* 8.19.1f:

obvius sese maiestati tua triumphus effudit, exultantesque gaudio Britannicum coniugibus ac liberis obtulerunt, non te ipsum modo, quem ut caelo delapsum intuebantur, sed etiam navis illius quae tuum numen advexerat vela remigiaque venerantes, paratique te ingredientem stratis sentire corporibus. Nec mirum si tanto gaudio ferebantur post tot annorum miserissimam captivitatem, post violatas coniuges, post liberorum turpe servitium tandem

Viewed as a whole, this evidence is consistent: the *lux aeterna* that Britannia had presumably lost, and which Constantius restored, should most probably be the light of legitimate Roman law and government, displacing the darkness of a usurper's tyranny.²⁹ It would be a significant stretch of the evidence to argue that this medallion reveals anything about the cult of Sol or Constantius' religion.

Does Julian provide evidence for Constantius' religion? On chronological grounds alone, using Julian's works to reconstruct Constantius' religion is problematic, especially vis-à-vis relevant evidence closer in date. Besides, Julian's two references to Constantius' hardly give a clear, coherent picture. In the exceedingly opaque *Hymn to Helios* (131c), Constantius is not mentioned by name, nor does Julian refer directly to himself:

Now far the best thing (κάλλιστον) is when anyone has the fortune to have inherited the service of the god [Helios], even before the third generation, from a long and unbroken line of ancestors.... Yet it is not a thing to be disparaged when anyone, recognising that he is by nature intended to be the servant of Helios, either alone of all men, or in company with but few, devotes himself to the service of his master.

A few sentences earlier (131b), Julian referred explicitly to his own ancestry in the first person: "nor do I despise that lot with which I was myself endowed by the god Helios, that I should be born of a house that rules and governs the world in my time." Here, when he is explicit, Julian does not claim that his ancestors worshipped Helios, or that the god made him heir to emperors. The later reference to three generations may or may not refer to Julian and his ancestors. But even if Castritius is right in this regard, it is not at all certain that the three ancestors were Claudius, Constantius, and Julius. Further, even granting that assumption, what do we learn about Constantius' religion? Only that in one obscure reference Julian referred to the idea that Constantius honored Helios; nothing appears that induces us to believe that Julian considered Helios as Constantius' patron deity, or that Constantius was a solar monotheist. In addition, it is important to remember that Julian could not escape the shadow of Constantine's propaganda, which he spent most

liberi tandemque Romani, tandem vera imperii luce recreati.

Cf. Nixon and Rodgers 140, 552; *RIC* VI 22.

²⁹ S. Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery* (New York 1985) 74.

of his reign trying to counter. Anything Julian might say about Constantius could simply be attributed to his desire to tarnish the image of Constantine.

This strategy is evident in the *Caesares*, Julian's rather heavy-handed satire on the virtue and religion of former emperors. In part, this text lampoons Constantine, who is portrayed as a scurrilous and gluttonous buffoon, pandering to his effeminate deity, Jesus. Zeus, accompanied by Apollo, Heracles, and Chronus, presides over a banquet where the gods judge the relative virtue and piety of various emperors. The only suitable reward for Constantine, who preferred the company of Jesus, Pleasure, and Incontinence to that of the Roman pantheon, is divine punishment, which Zeus only terminates for the sake of Claudius II and Constantius (*Caes.* 336C).³⁰ Julian does not explicitly refer to a particular relationship between Constantius and Sol or any other deity save Zeus. The context is entirely polytheistic. The only firm conclusion from this satire is that Julian considered Constantius a pagan and polytheist, as opposed to his misguided son.³¹

Thus far, the evidence marshaled by Castritius does not provide a firm footing for understanding the religion of Constantius. Does the evidence offered by Lactantius or Eusebius shed further light on this problem?

In short, not very much. There is no reason to think that Lactantius or Eusebius had independent information about Constantius' religion. Lactantius was in the East during most of Constantius' reign, whereas Eusebius' perspective is entirely eastern, and both were well-acquainted with Constantine.³² Eusebius explicitly claims that he got some information on Constantine's early life from the emperor's own lips (*Vit. Const.* 1.28.1), and there is no reason to think that he, or Lactantius, got their information on Constantius from any other source. This observation is crucial because Constantius was central to Constantine's political propaganda. As many scholars have noted, Constantine's reign began under inauspicious circumstances. From the point of view of the Tetrarchy, he was a usurper until

³⁰ In the next paragraph Hermes grants to Julian the "knowledge of thy father Mithras."

³¹ Fowden (*supra* n.1: 87) notes this problem, but does not pursue its implications.

³² Though perhaps not so well-acquainted as some have contended: see Barnes (*supra* n.1) 266; cf. B. Warmington, "Did Constantine Have 'Religious Advisers'?" *StudPatr* 19 (1989) 117-29.

legitimized as Caesar by Galerius. Even then, Constantine recognized that he did not fit well into the succession scheme established by Diocletian, as his primary claim to imperial leadership was based on hereditary succession. He therefore initiated a propaganda campaign that stressed the importance of his divine heritage:³³ his early coins proclaim Constantius' divine status,³⁴ and the panegyric of 310 stresses that his family line reached back to Claudius Gothicus, thus placing him squarely within a legitimate imperial dynasty.³⁵ When Constantine converted to Christianity, however, he seems to have revised his propaganda, perhaps to minimize its polytheistic overtones. Over the next few years, he began to use ambiguous language with a monotheistic flavor to refer to God, as evident in the *summa divinitas* of the so-called "Edict of Milan" (*Mort. Pers.* 48; cf. Euseb. *H.E.* 10.5.2–14) and the prayer he and Licinius jointly prepared for their soldiers, invoking *summus deus* in Lactantius' version, which Eusebius, in his introduction to the prayer, translates as ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων θεός.³⁶ Constantine's revised strategy of propaganda stressed that his father, a pious and tolerant ruler, resisted the violent madness of his imperial colleagues, setting a sound foundation for Constantine's own piety and religious policies.³⁷ This attitude Constantine himself proclaimed in his *Letter to the Eastern Provincials*: only his father, among former emperors, acted with "admirable piety and called for the blessing of God the Savior on all his actions."³⁸ It is even possible that Constantine hinted to Lactantius or Eusebius that his father had had Christian leanings.

Such propaganda surely underlies statements about Constantius' religion in Lactantius' *Mort. Pers.* and the later editions of

³³ R. Andreotti, "Costanzo Cloro," *Didaskaleion* n.s. 8 (1930) 157–201, 9 (1930) 1–50, esp. 25ff; cf. Vogt (*supra* n.11); Grünewald (*supra* n.7) 22.

³⁴ Beginning in 306: e.g. *RIC* VI 131, 217, 219, 256, 260f, 263f, 294, 325. For the continuation of this theme, see *RIC* VII 180, 252, 310, 394, 429, 502; cf. Barnes (*supra* n.1) 47; MacCormack (*supra* n.25) 93ff, 106ff, pl. 35; J. Arce, *Funus Imperatorum: Los funerales de los emperadores romanos* (Madrid 1988) 144ff, with L. Schumacher's review, *Gnomon* 61 (1989) 523–28.

³⁵ *Pan. Lat.* 6.2; cf. Warmington (*supra* n.17).

³⁶ Lactant. *Mort. Pers.* 46.6; Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 4.19; cf. Batiffol (*supra* n.2) 200; Liebeschuetz (*supra* n.1) 281. H. Grégoire, "La 'conversion' de Constantin," *RevUniBrux* 36 (1930–31) 260, notes that the prayer in Eusebius was a translation of that in Lactantius.

³⁷ For further discussion see Barnes (*supra* n.1) 268; cf. Fox (*supra* n.1) 610.

³⁸ Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 2.49. Constantine addressed the same God as θεός ὑψίστος later in the letter: 2.51.

Eusebius' *H.E.* Despite their basic agreement on Constantius' unwillingness to support his colleagues' policy of persecution, it is a significant discrepancy that Lactantius claims Constantius did destroy churches, whereas Eusebius asserts that he did not.³⁹ Either one was mistaken, or they may refer to different times. If we add Eusebius' testimony in the shorter recension of the *Mart. Pal.*, that Christians did suffer some persecution in Constantius' provinces 303–305, we might be inclined to agree with Gibbon that Lactantius' statement about the destruction of churches (as well as Eusebius' note in the *Mart. Pal.*) dates from the two years between the beginning of the persecution and the retirement of Maximian and Diocletian, *i.e.*, when Constantius was still a Caesar. Eusebius' *H.E.*, however, may refer only to the time after Constantius assumed the title of Augustus.⁴⁰

The discussion of Constantius' religion in the *Vit. Const.*, however, has under gone a transformation that I can only attribute to the mature reflection of Eusebius' own mind. Here (1.13.1, 17.2f) Eusebius claims that Constantius devoted his own life and his entire household to the "Supreme God" (ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων θεός). An exhaustive study of this phrase in Eusebius' works reveals that he only uses it to refer to the Christian God, though other authors with whom he was familiar used the same phrase for a supreme pagan deity.⁴¹ We can draw two conclusions from this evidence: first, in the *Vit. Const.* Eusebius demonstrates the apologetic method and mentality that permeates so many of his works, utilizing ambiguous terminology to make connections with his assumed audience; second, Eusebius claims, however vague his language, that Constantius was in fact a Christian.⁴² Eusebius can do this only because here,

³⁹ Andreotti (*supra* n.33: 9 [1930] 26, 33) argues that Eusebius' contention is a blatant contradiction of Lactantius, from which he concludes that neither source is trustworthy.

⁴⁰ E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London 1776) I 668.

⁴¹ M. Smith, "Eusebius and the Religion of Constantius I," *StudPatr* 29 (1997) 133–40.

⁴² The chapter heading for 1.17 is even more explicit: τοῦ αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς φιλοχρίστου προαιρέσεως ("of his Christ-loving manner of life"). Whether the *kephalaia* of the *Vit. Const.* were written by Eusebius has been the subject of scholarly contention: see T. Barnes, "The Emperor Constantine's Good Friday Sermon," *JThS* n.s. 27 (1976) 414–23; cf. R. Ridley, "Anonymity in the *Vita Constantini*," *Byzantion* 50 (1980) 241–58. For another view see T. Elliott, "Constantine's Conversion: Do We Really Need It?" *Phoenix* 41 (1987) 420–38 and "Constantine's Religious Development," *JRelHist* 15 (1989) 283–91.

as in many of his works, he assumes a very broad definition of Christianity. As Eusebius put it, "For the name signifies that the Christian, through the knowledge and teaching of Christ, excels in prudence, righteousness, self-control, courageous virtue, and in the pious confession that the God who is over all (ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων θεός) is the one and only God."⁴³ In short, Christians are pious monotheists who worship the Supreme God.⁴⁴ By this definition, it is easier to understand how Eusebius is able to claim that the Theraputae or Job or Abraham were all Christians.⁴⁵ This analysis is very useful for understanding Eusebius and the content and impact of Constantinian propaganda on his contemporaries, but it is of little value for reconstructing Constantius' religion. The evidence of Lactantius and Eusebius should, therefore, be handled with due caution.

A letter from the Donatist bishops (Optatus 1.22) appears in part to corroborate Lactantius and Eusebius: their collective memory denies any acts of persecution by Constantius as emperor (without specification of whether as Caesar or Augustus). Although Constantinian propaganda may have taken root in the western provinces by the time this letter was written, these bishops may well have had personal memories of Constantius' policies upon which to base their claim. It is important to note, however, that they say nothing about Constantius' own religious convictions. Perhaps this is enough corroboration to support Lactantius' and Eusebius' claims that Constantius did not persecute Christians, at least after he became Augustus, but it can take us no further.

Perhaps the most intriguing piece of evidence is the reference to a daughter of Constantius, Anastasia, at *Origo* 2.14. If it is true that this name is only attested among Jews and Christians, there must have been some source of Christian or Jewish influence within Constantius' household. Whether Constantius had anything to do with naming his daughter is uncertain. Perhaps we should suspect the influence of his wife, Theodora, the daughter of Maximian. Without further evidence, however, we can do no more than speculate, and the significance of the name Anastasia in Constantius' household will remain an

⁴³ *H.E.* 1.4.7; cf. *Dem. Evang.* 1.6; Barnes (*supra* n.1) 130.

⁴⁴ Liebeschuetz claims (*supra* n.1: 258, 265) that Arnobius and Lactantius held to similar definitions of Christianity.

⁴⁵ Theraputae: *H.E.* 2.16.17; Job: *Dem. Evang.* 1.5.7; Abraham: *H.E.* 1.4.7; *Dem. Evang.* 1.6.5ff; for further discussion see Smith (*supra* n.41).

enigma. The most we can safely conclude is the presence of Jewish or Christian sympathizers among some person(s) of importance in Constantius' household. Perhaps that influence may even have encouraged Constantius to be less than diligent in carrying out the persecuting edicts of his imperial colleagues, but this is little more than conjecture.

The sum of this evidence does not amount to much. There may have been a fourth inscription at Thamugadi, connecting Constantius with Sol, but we cannot be sure of its existence or its significance. The solar metaphor used by the orator of 307 may reflect Constantius' religion, but so may the image of Jupiter's hand in the panegyric of 310. The inscription on the Arras medallion may refer to Constantius' restoration of Sol's patronage over Britannia, but, based on its iconography, it probably refers to the restoration of Roman rule. Julian may have hinted that Constantius was a worshipper of Sol, but he also implies that he was a polytheist. Constantine's propaganda cast a powerful shadow over Lactantius, Eusebius, and Julian, making it improbable that any of these sources offers independent information on the religion of Constantius. When combined with the letter of the Donatist bishops, we can be fairly certain that, at least as Augustus, Constantius did little if any persecuting of Christians. The name Anastasia raises the intriguing possibility of a Jewish or Christian influence in Constantius' household.

After analyzing a considerable range of evidence, there is not much of substance that we can conclude. It is important to be clear at this point. It is not sufficient to demonstrate the possibility that Constantius worshipped Sol; any self-respecting polytheist would do that. What is necessary for the contentions of Castritius and others is that we demonstrate the probability not only that Constantius worshipped or did honor to Sol, but also that he paid *particular* honor to that god as his *conservator*. If one hopes to substantiate the suggestion that Constantius was a solar monotheist, one would require yet further evidence of the probability that he *excluded* the worship of other deities. I have little doubt that Constantius may have made statements or established some monuments in honor of Sol (so did Diocletian: Williams [*supra* n.29] 161), but there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that Sol was the *conservator* of Constantius, or that he claimed any special relationship with that god. And there is certainly insufficient evidence to support the

claim that Constantius was a solar monotheist who excluded the worship of other gods.

It is remarkable that so many scholars have for so long focused their attention on such tenuous pieces of evidence while few have paid ample attention to the one source most likely to reveal Constantius' religious assumptions with a high degree of probability—his coins.⁴⁶ To put the issue in perspective, scholars have been quick to note the emergence of Sol-worship in the third century, based largely on numismatic evidence.⁴⁷ Virtually everyone acknowledges that Aurelian worshipped *Sol Invictus*, primarily because that god appears on so many of his coins. When considering the era after the death of Constantius, scholars—at least since Burckhardt—have been rightly troubled by the prominence of Sol on Constantine's coins, continuing well after his conversion to Christianity.⁴⁸ They tacitly assume that the gods depicted on an emperor's coins are a useful measure of his religion. This commonplace idea hardly bears repeating, but this principle has been too often neglected in discussions of Constantius' religion. Yet coinage is the one type of evidence that is both contemporaneous and directly, or at least indirectly, controlled by the emperor himself.⁴⁹ In many

⁴⁶ Noteworthy exceptions: F. Kolb, *Diocletian und die erste Tetrarchie: Improvisation oder Experiment in der Organization monarchischer Herrschaft?* (Berlin 1987); cf. Pink (*supra* n.20) and Strauss (*supra* n.20).

⁴⁷ E.g. G. HALSBERGHE, *The Cult of Sol Invictus* (Leiden 1972: hereafter 'Halsberghe'); cf. J. Fears, *PRINCEPS A DIIS ELECTUS: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome* (Rome 1977) 285.

⁴⁸ Sutherland (*RIC* VI 108, 111) rightly notes the significance of the flood of Sol coinage under Constantine, beginning in 310.

⁴⁹ Imperial control of the mints is problematic on several levels, especially during the Tetrarchy. For example, do the western Tetrarchs have any control over eastern mints, or vice versa? Do the Caesars have control over any mints, or even over the coin types that bear their names or portraits? What happens at a local mint in the absence of any imperial directive to change types? In addition, there are problems associated with the regional distribution of the mints and the different economic classes likely to utilize gold, silver, or bronze coinage. It soon becomes evident that such questions are significant but extend well beyond the scope of the present study. I hope soon to analyze them in a separate paper. For the present, I am looking only at large-scale trends and operating on two assumptions: (1) if coin types change throughout the Empire, the directive to make the change probably came from the emperors and presents their ideals and policies: how they wanted to be perceived; (2) as the Augusti outranked the Caesars, it is more probable that they exercised more influence over numismatic policy than their junior colleagues. For further discussion, see *RIC* VI 88–93.

ways, the best available evidence for evaluating Constantius' religion is his coins.

It is important to view Constantius' religious coins in their numismatic and historical context. Sol appears with great frequency in the issues of the later third century (Halsberghe 45ff). The image of Sol appears on seven issues of Valerian,⁵⁰ thirty-four of Gallienus, thirteen of Claudius Gothicus, two of Quintillus, ninety-nine of Aurelian, seven of Florian, six of Tacitus, 107 of Probus, three of Carus, and three and seven issues respectively of Carus' sons, Carinus and Numerianus. Even the British usurpers, Carausius and Allectus, produced between them thirty-nine issues honoring Sol.⁵¹ In sum, coinage featuring Sol was abundant and popular among several emperors in the troubled later third century. It has been argued with good reason that Aurelian was particularly devoted to Sol, as evident from both the quantity and the character of his coinage, for Sol, named as his *comes* (*RIC* V.1 *passim*) and *conservator* (*RIC* V.1 272, 305; *cf.* Halsberghe 131–35), is depicted handing a globe to Hercules, Mars, and Jupiter—a significant measure of how Aurelian viewed the relative authority of these deities.⁵² At the other end of the chronological spectrum, shortly after Constantius' death, Maximin Daia, Licinius, and

⁵⁰ *RIC* V.1 38, 39 (4x), 47 (2x); Apollo appears on another thirteen: 41, 44 (3x), 45 (6x), 50 (2x), 53.

⁵¹ Gallienus: *RIC* V.1 81, 86 (2x), 132, 135, 139, 140 (3x), 144, 153, 156, 160, 161 (2x), 170 (2x), 171 (3x), 174 (6x), 180, 185, 186, 187 (4x), 189, and 24 featuring Apollo (69, 80 [4x], 85, 87, 88 [3x], 98, 100, 101, 145 [2x], 160, 164, 166, 167, 172 [2x], 180, 185, 187); Claudius Gothicus: 213 (2x), 217 (3x), 220 (2x), 223 (3x), 228, 230, 234, and Apollo: 211, 213 (4x), 218, 229, 235; *cf.* Maurice xxxviii; Quintillus: 240, 243, and Apollo: 240 (2x), 243; Aurelian: 267 (2x), 268 (2x), 270, 271 (2x), 272 (5x), 273, 274 (5x), 280 (4x), 281 (4x), 285, 286 (3x), 290, 292 (2x), 293 (8x), 294 (2x), 296 (8x), 297 (4x), 299 (2x), 300 (10x), 301 (4x), 305 (5x), 306 (6x), 307 (5x), 308 (3x), 309 (2x), 310, 311, 312 (5x), and five featuring Apollo (268 [2x], 283 [3x]; *cf.* Maurice xxxix; Florian: 351, 359, 360 (5x); Tacitus: 331 (2x), 345 (2x), 346 (2x); Probus: V.2 20, 22 (2x), 24 (2x), 32 (3x), 36, 38, 39 (9x), 40, 45, 47 (2x), 49 (3x), 50, 51 (2x), 54 (2x), 55 (6x), 60, 61 (2x), 62 (3x), 63 (6x), 67, 74 (3x), 79 (2x), 80, 89 (4x), 90, 92, 100 (6x), 101 (6x), 102 (7x), 108, 109, 110 (7x), 112 (8x), 113 (6x), 115, 118, 119; *cf.* Halsberghe 155; Carus: 139 (2x), 146; Carinus: 167, 171, 176; Numerianus: 187, 190, 192, 195 (2x), 197, 200; Carausius and Allectus: see *supra* n.26; *cf.* W. Seston, *Dioclétien et la Tétrarchie* (Paris 1926) 221f.

⁵² Hercules: *RIC* V.1 300; Mars: 305 (3x); Jupiter: 296; *cf.* Fears (*supra* n.47) 285f, who believes that these types "can only be taken as a numismatic statement of solar monotheism"—an overstatement to be sure, but a recognition of Sol's pre-eminence for Aurelian; *cf.* Halsberghe 139ff; Seston (*supra* n.51) 213, 224.

Constantine began to mint an abundance of Sol coins. Both before and after the reign of Constantius, therefore, Sol coins were produced in considerable quantities. In this sea of Sol coinage such issues might be assumed to have become so common that they would continue to be minted as a matter of numismatic momentum, but such was not the case during the first and second Tetrarchies.

Between 284 and 306 the plentiful religious coinage of the Tetrarchs featured four primary deities: Jupiter, Hercules, Mars, and Sol. The following chart illustrates the relative frequency with which coin types inscribed with the name or bust of the respective Tetrarchs (usually on the obverse), include the name or features of each of the four primary deities (usually on the reverse).

Emperor	Jupiter	Hercules	Mars	Sol
Diocletian	184 (76%)	37 (15%)	11 (4.5%)	11 (4.5%)
Maximian	74 (31%)	149 (62%)	11 (5%)	5 (2%)
Galerius	39 (53%)	11 (15%)	9 (12%)	15 (20%)
Constantius ⁵³	12 (21%)	34 (60%)	6 (10%)	5 (9%)
Severus	4	10	7	2
Maxim. Daia	36	11	25	58
Maxentius	0	10	25	0
Licinius	42	1	9	23
Constantine	33	13	120	89 ⁵⁴
Total	424	276	223	208

Once we have seen the entire scope of the religious coinage of the Tetrarchy, several themes emerge. Each of the original Tetrarchs produced coins depicting all four of these deities but with considerable differences in emphasis. The ideology of divine legitimacy with which Diocletian vested his political settlement required that he emphasize the source of his power, Jupiter. Maximian did the same with Hercules, when he was elevated to the purple. The few coin types that these two Augusti issued in honor of Sol and Mars can only be viewed as sup-

⁵³Jupiter: *RIC* V.2 297, 302 (2x); VI 165, 169, 170, 318, 364, 365, 476, 493; Hercules: V.2 298, 301 (2x), 302 (2x); VI 169 (2x), 170, 173 (2x), 174, 203, 280, 287, 311, 317, 366, 422, 455, 474 (4x), 476, 493, 554, 557, 613 (2x), 614, 615 (2x), 666, 669; Mars: VI 167, 171 (2x), 457, 458 (2x); Sol: V.2 297, 299 (2x); VI 458 (2x); cf. Maurice xxxiv; Fears (*supra* n.47) 284ff.

⁵⁴The number of issues indicated for Licinius and Constantine does not include coinage issued after 313.

plementary and subordinate to the official tetrarchic ideology.⁵⁵

The situation with the Caesars is more complicated, for we cannot be sure to what extent they had any influence over the minting of coins. What is clear from the distribution of coinage associated with their names is that each Caesar 'supported' the religious/political ideology of his respective Augustus. In addition, Galerius, Maximin Daia, and Licinius were by far the most prolific minters of Sol coinage before Constantine. More to the point, Constantius was not. Indeed, though five issues of Constantius depict the sun god, the name Sol never appears on his coins. *Never is Sol named conservator on Constantius' coins.* That honor is reserved for Hercules and Jupiter, both of whom he does call *conservator*. But, can we be sure that the coin types represented in this chart were chosen by Constantius, especially during the time when he was Caesar? The same problem holds for Galerius. The only way we can evaluate this problem is to analyze what coin-types these two Caesars produced after they became Augusti.

The coinage of Galerius and Constantius after 305 is telling.⁵⁶ As Augustus, Galerius minted three Sol issues, seven dedicated to Hercules, and five to Mars.⁵⁷ But—most noticeable—Galerius Augustus strengthened his emphasis on Jupiter, producing twenty issues 305–311, all inscribed with some variation of IOVI CONSERVATORI.⁵⁸ There can be little doubt that Galerius as Augustus sought to make it clear that his patron was Jupiter.

A similar pattern holds for Constantius. To date not a single coin of Constantius Augustus depicts Constantius with either Mars or Sol. He did, however, produce eleven issues with Hercules and five featuring Jupiter.⁵⁹ On the reverses Hercules

⁵⁵ Seston (*supra* n.51) 215–20; cf. Williams (*supra* n.29) 58f, 161; Kolb (*supra* n.46) 168.

⁵⁶ It is important to consider that both Galerius and Constantius were Caesars far longer than they were Augusti.

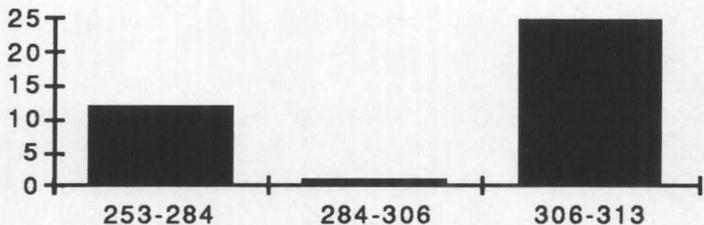
⁵⁷ Sol: *RIC* VI 638 (2x), 640; all three are *aes* from the Antioch mint 310–311; Hercules: 317, 474 (2x), 476 (2x), 493, 496; Mars: 585, 587 (2x), 588, 590.

⁵⁸ *RIC* VI 203, 204 (2x), 318, 363, 476 (2x), 478, 493, 496, 498 (3x), 499, 558, 560, 640, 668, 669 (2x); on the significance of *conservator*, see Maurice xviii.

⁵⁹ Hercules: *RIC* VI 203, 317, 474 (4x), 476, 493, 557, 669, 336; Jupiter: 318, 364, 365, 476, 493. Liebeschuetz (*supra* n.1: 279f) is correct that Sol coins emerged once again after 305, but they are rare before Constantius' death, and none has Constantius on the obverse; rather in this period the four known Sol issues feature Severus and Maximin Daia. The only way these coins may

is once styled *conservator*, and Jupiter is always heralded *conservator* on Constantius Augustus' coins. It seems fairly clear that both Galerius and Constantius, once Augusti, sought to capitalize on the political/religious settlement of their imperial mentors. As the whole Dominate was based upon the supreme authority of Jupiter, it is little wonder that the two new Augusti, who received their positions according to the Diocletianic scheme of succession, would try to emphasize the legitimacy that comes to the highest of political leaders from the highest of gods. Constantius had the additional privilege of claiming that he was the legitimate heir to the Herculean authority of the western Augustus. When viewed in its historical and numismatic context, the coinage of the new Augusti after 305 should not surprise.

Rather, what is most noticeable about the religious coinage of the first and second Tetrarchies is the remarkable dearth of Sol issues. The following chart compares the average yearly production of Sol issues for the thirty-one years before the accession of Diocletian, the twenty-two years from Diocletian until the death of Constantius, and the seven years immediately following Constantius.⁶⁰



reflect upon Constantius is if he were the emperor who ordered this type to be issued in the name of the Caesars. That he may have concurred in the decision to issue Sol types for the Caesars should occasion no surprise. We should not, however, allow that possibility to blind us to the importance of the divine *conservatores* with whom Constantius chose to associate his own name and portrait as Augustus; cf. *RIC* VI 204, 39.

⁶⁰ Coinage of Carausius and Allectus has not been included, as it does not reflect tetrarchic policies.

During the twenty-two years from the accession of Diocletian until 306, the Tetrarchs produced, on average, 1.6 Sol issues per year. Of these, Constantius mined only five—all as Caesar, none as Augustus. The discrepancy is striking. One might even posit an intentional policy among the Tetrarchs to minimize the minting of Sol coinage, though the existence of such a policy and the reasoning behind it can only be surmised.⁶¹

In conclusion, all the evidence purported to demonstrate that Constantius was a particular devotee of Sol breaks down upon close examination. No doubt Constantius worshipped the sun god like any good pagan in Late Antiquity, but the evidence does not support the contention that he regarded Sol as his *conservator*, much less that he was a solar monotheist. Rather, as the numismatic evidence suggests, Constantius seems to have been quite conservative. Even as Augustus, Constantius continued to prefer the two divine progenitors of the Tetrarchy, Hercules and Jupiter, both claimed as his *conservatores*.

The religious iconography of Constantius' coins resembles that of Diocletian, and even more that of Maximian. Both Constantius and Maximian primarily emphasized Jupiter and Hercules; both also minted a few coins featuring Mars and Sol. Both were pagans; both were polytheists—of that there can be little doubt, at least as far as their publicly advertised religion is concerned.

It is possible, however, that on a personal level Constantius and his imperial mentor differed. Maximian persecuted Christians; Constantius, at least as Augustus, probably did not. Constantius permitted his daughter to bear the name Anastasia, which has Jewish/Christian overtones. Constantine claimed that there was something peculiar about his father's piety that set him apart from his imperial colleagues. Perhaps these are hints of something deeper, smoke that betrays the fire of a unique personal faith burning just beneath the surface of the extant evidence. Unfortunately, without new evidence the reasons for these anomalies are not likely to be recovered. Recognizing, however, that paganism was not inherently intolerant, perhaps it is safest to conclude that, on the present evidence, Constantius the traditional pagan, who based his authority and presumably focused his worship on Jupiter and

⁶¹ As Kolb concludes (*supra* n.46: 168 n.498): "Nur Jupiter und Herkules sind die 'wahren' tetrarchischen Götter"; cf. L'Orange (*supra* n.13) 62; Seston (*supra* n.51) 220, 225.

Hercules, was open to the influence and veneration of other deities. Perhaps he saw no reason why Christians in his domains or even, perhaps, in his own household, should be persecuted, when he could just as well benefit by co-opting the aid of their deity. Perhaps Constantius shared something of the syncretistic spirit of Severus Alexander, who supposedly made room in his cult for shrines to Abraham, Orpheus, Apollonius of Tyana, and Christ (*HA, Sev. Al.* 29.2), but we have no way of substantiating such speculation. Whatever his thinking or personal reasons for pursuing what may have been a more tolerant course than his fellow Tetrarchs' policy of persecution, Constantius—much like his imperial colleagues—was a pagan and a polytheist.⁶² If that is true, Constantine's 'conversion' to solar religion in 310 looms as a significant change and a reversal of earlier tetrarchic tendencies. Further, his later adoption of Christianity emerges as a more radical innovation than commonly assumed.⁶³

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⁶² Andreotti (*supra* n.33: 39ff), whose provocative work is too often ignored, came to a similar conclusion.

⁶³ Special thanks to Professors Hal Drake and Chuck Odahl for their collegial support and incisive criticism.