

# ARCTOS

ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

VOL. IX

HELSINKI 1975 HELSINGFORS

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# CONSTANTINE'S CHANGE OF DIES IMPERII

Patrick Bruun

One of the vital points in the early history of Constantine the Great is the date of his quinquennial celebrations, i.e. when did his fifth year of rule by *imperium* commence? It is important to establish this date because one of the main narrative sources of the history of the preceding years, and particularly of Constantine's path to uncontested rule in the western part of the Roman empire, is the panegyric pronounced on the occasion of these celebrations.<sup>1</sup>

The fifth year starts, naturally, on the fourth recurrence of the *natalis* or *dies imperii* of the ruler, the day when he was originally invested with *imperium*, imperial power, i.e. when he was acclaimed emperor by the soldiers. Now, Constantine's *dies imperii* has been a matter of some scholarly dispute inasmuch as he was acclaimed emperor for the first time in Eboracum immediately after the death of his father Constantius, on July 25, 306, nevertheless it has been shown that he subsequently made another, later occasion the point of departure of the computation of his regnal years. William Seston in 1937 proposed March 1, 307 as the date of this later occasion,<sup>2</sup> but this did not meet with common approval.<sup>3</sup> Recently M. Jean Lafaurie,<sup>4</sup> successfully it seems, has shown that Constantine was elevated to the rank of augustus on December 25, 307 when he married Fausta, daughter of the senior augustus Maximian.

## 1. Undecided chronological problems

With the dispute concerning Constantine's second elevation to imperial rank settled,<sup>5</sup> there remain two important questions, namely

(1) when, if ever, did Constantine revert to the original computation of regnal years with July 25, 306 as the starting point, and

(2) were the *quinquennalia* celebrated on the original date (starting July 25, 306) or according to the adjusted chronology (starting December 25, 307)?

The first question, whether Constantine reverted to his original *dies imperii* is easily answered in the affirmative in a round-about way, but documented evidence is more difficult to come by. The gold coinage shows that the *decennalia* were celebrated when Constantine held his fourth consulship,<sup>6</sup> the *terminus post* being January 1, 315. Tradition holds that the *decennalia* proper were celebrated

in Rome when his tenth year of rule began, on July 25, 315.<sup>7</sup> The triumphal arch with the inscription recording VOT X MVL XX together with a record of Constantine's consulships (III), tribunician powers (X) and imperial salutations (VIII)<sup>8</sup> has been regarded as conclusive proof of this, although a closer scrutiny of the emperor's movements and actions indicate that he was still in Trier on August 3, 315,<sup>9</sup> and therefore cannot have been in the eternal city on July 25. Only on August 25 can we prove that he was present in Rome.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, if the *decennalia* were celebrated in 315, they would have taken place in Trier.<sup>11</sup>

Now, prolific issues of vota coins in gold cannot be considered definite proof of the presence of the emperor or the court in the mint city.<sup>12</sup> In the years A.D. 315–316, when Trier and Ticinum were the centres of gold coining, the emperor and his train spent part of the time in Gaul, part of it in Italy. Coining in these mints in these parts of the empire is thus consistent with decennial celebrations in 315–316. Had Constantine adhered to the regnal reckoning parting from a *natalis imperii* on December 25, 307, the *decennalia* would have been celebrated within the year December 25, 316 – December 24, 317, and this time the emperor spent in the Balkan area.<sup>13</sup> In this case there would have been little motivation for issuing the festal coins at Trier and Ticinum in 315–316.

From this it can safely be concluded that Constantine, in the early part of A.D. 315 at the latest had decided to change his *dies imperii* once more, from December 25 to a date which, with reasonable certainty, can be identified with his original *natalis imperii*, July 25, 306.<sup>14</sup> Below, I propose first to establish when the second change took place, and second to clarify the circumstances which made him make this decision.

The second problem concerns the exact date of the quinquennial celebrations. Regardless of the general agreement that Constantine did at one time adopt a *dies imperii* other than July 25, 306, no one has discussed any other quinquennial dates except July 25, 310 to July 24, 311. In a recent paper I believe I succeeded in showing that the evidence of the coins struck at Trier indicated the quinquennial year to have been December 25, 311 to December 24, 312.<sup>15</sup> Particularly with the aid of the epigraphic material I hope to support my earlier numismatic deductions regarding this date. I also propose to cite other sources in order to draw a picture of the historical development in more detail than previously.

## 2. The first change of *dies imperii*

The change of a *dies imperii* is no light matter. It implies the negation of that authority which has conferred it. Before considering the motives behind the

„switch back”, the circumstances compelling Constantine to accept Maximinian instead of Galerius as a new *auctor imperii*<sup>16</sup> should be outlined.

Clearly Constantine must have been dissatisfied with Galerius' decision to accept him as a member of the imperial college with the rank of caesar, so that he was to be the most junior in rank instead of second,<sup>17</sup> as would have been the case had Galerius accepted him as augustus. What did this in reality mean to Constantine and to his position in the empire?

The tetrarchic caesars had, at least originally, been elected members of the imperial college largely because of their military competence. They were experienced commanders, used to acting independently, and they had, of course, the powers necessary for conducting their campaigns. They were necessarily *imperatores*,<sup>18</sup> in the sense that they commanded their armies, conducted their campaigns and took their *auspicia*,<sup>19</sup> but as long as the Empire was formally undivided it remained in reality a monarchy and the maximus augustus was the ultimate source of power.<sup>20</sup> No matter how proficient a conductor of military campaigns a Caesar was, as compared with the augusti, and particularly with Diocletian, the father and patron of the first tetrarchy, he was *adiumento*,<sup>21</sup> though scarcely to the degree of an errand-boy as Ammianus drastically maintains.<sup>22</sup> Caesar was, within the framework of the tetrarchic system, equivalent to „son”,<sup>23</sup> and Galerius is reported to have refused to have Licinius nominated caesar at Carnuntum for this very reason.<sup>24</sup> In general terms this could explain why Constantine was dissatisfied with the position of a caesar.

Constitutionally, however, it may be necessary to consider an additional aspect of the position of a junior ruler, namely the character of his *imperium*. Straub<sup>25</sup> notes that Diocletian, in defining the powers of his caesars, followed the example of Carus, who had bestowed upon his son Carinus *Caesareanum imperium* „sed ea lege, ut omnia faceret, quae augusti faciunt.”<sup>26</sup>

The definition „ut omnia faceret, quae augusti faciunt” cannot in every respect hold true of the caesars of the first tetrarchy, Constantius and Galerius. Formal powers – not *auctoritas* – are expressed in offices held by the ruler. The Diocletianic edict *de pretiis rerum venalium*, issued between November 20 – December 9, A.D. 301,<sup>27</sup> records for Diocletian CONS VII IMP XVIII TR P XVIII, for Maximian CONS VI IMP XVII TR P XVII, but for the Caesars CONS III TR P IX<sup>28</sup> without reference to the *Caesareanum imperium*.<sup>29</sup> It is in fact very remarkable that the Caesars should be recorded as rulers without their *imperium* having been mentioned in an official document such as the edict, although they were supposed to hold the same powers as the augusti. Constantius' official records as augustus indicate the inferiority of his *imperium* as a caesar, his titulature then

being TR P XIV IMP II COS VI.<sup>30</sup> Had the salutations on the occasion of the recurring anniversary day of the *Caesareanum imperium* been counted, the number of his imperial salutations would have been XIV (or XIII).<sup>31</sup> It is hard to interpret the figure IMP II otherwise than as positive evidence that the salutations as caesar were of no consequence, or disregarded, when Constantius was acclaimed augustus. *Caesareanum imperium* and the *imperium proconsulare maius* were not equal powers, and the case of Galerius seems to support this contention.<sup>32</sup> In the computation of the imperial salutations of Constantius the first was according to tetrarchic practice on the first acclamation as augustus, as is shown by the inscription recording Constantius' computation. He receives TR P XIV on December 10, 305; prior to this, on May 1 on the abdication of the *seniores augusti*, he became *maximus augustus*; the date of his IMP I must therefore be this very day.

The inscription does not tell whether he subsequently regarded his *natalis caesaris*, March 1, or the day of his elevation to the rank of augustus, as his *dies imperii*. In the light of the inscription both interpretations are equally possible. The fact that March 1 played an important part in Constantine's dynastic thinking – the official nomination of the three Caesars Crispus, Licinius junior and Constantine junior on this very day in A.D. 317 after Civil War I, is a clear indication of this,<sup>33</sup> and similarly Constantine's decision to revert to his own original *natalis imperii* when conditions made it possible. He would then have acted in the same way as his father.

This discussion of the constitutional and factual position of a Caesar in the first tetrarchy seems to explain in a satisfactory way why Constantine in the long run refused to accept degradation from the rank of augustus to that of caesar. Initially, however, he acquiesced and was content with the caesarian rank, as is amply illustrated by his coinage.<sup>34</sup> Severus' difficulties in quelling the usurpation of Maxentius may well have given him the heart to aspire to something more, to the rank of augustus. In Maximian he found a willing *auctor imperii*.

### 3. Constantine's resumption of his original *dies imperii*

The next phase of our investigation concerns Constantine's reasons for reverting from December 25, 307 to his original *dies imperii*, and before discussing these reasons, to establish when this happened.

The way to ascertain when the "switch back" occurred is to study the chronologically significant data included in Constantine's official records of consulships, tribunician powers and imperial salutations very much along the same lines as Seston and Lafaurie have done previously. Inscriptions most generously

offer the necessary material.

The terminal dates of the repeated annual offices were  
the consulship from January 1,  
the tribunate from December 10,<sup>35</sup>  
the office of *imperator* from the *dies imperii*.

I propose to calculate the official titulature of Constantine with regard to the administrative powers just mentioned for different hypothetical computations with different points of departure, assuming that the number of imperial salutations was augmented by one only in conjunction with the *dies imperii*, when the *imperium proconsulare* was conferred upon the ruler.<sup>36</sup> It is to be hoped that this will enable the establishment with a certain amount of precision of the moment or the circumstances in which Constantine thought it advantageous to sever his ties to the senior augustus Maximian, his father-in-law, as his *auctor imperii*.<sup>37</sup> My intention is to see whether this happened at about the turn of the year A.D. 309/310, or, when Maximian would have died according to prevailing views,<sup>38</sup> at about the turn of the year A.D. 310/311,<sup>39</sup> or towards the end of A.D. 312, when the Roman senate had conferred the *titulus primi ordinis* upon Constantine,<sup>40</sup> or about the turn of the year A.D. 314/315, before his *decennalia*. A definite answer to this question may tell us something about Constantine's policies in general.

When establishing the date of Constantine's secondary *dies imperii* Lafaurie<sup>41</sup> made an inventory of the inscriptions containing an assemblage of chronological dates, listing sixteen in all. Five of these proved particularly useful from the chronological point of view<sup>42</sup> because they belonged to a narrowly restricted period of time, which happened to be of crucial importance to the career of Constantine. I record them here giving the chronologically significant dates in a normalized form:

- (1) TR P VII IMP VI COS, Table of Brigetio, AE 1937, no.232
- (2) TR P IX IMP VII COS III, CIL VIII 18905; 23897=ILS 8941
- (3) TR P IX CONSVL VIII (*sic*) COS III DES IIII, CIL VIII 10064; 22017  
(CONSVL must be a slip for IMP)
- (4) IMP IX COS III, CIL IX 6038; 6060=ILS 693; CIL X 6965; CIL IX 6065=  
X 6970; X 6932; 6935
- (5) TR P X IMP IX COS IV – VOT X MVL XX, CIL VIII 8477=ILS 695.

For further control I add the following, also recorded by Lafaurie:

- (6) TR P XIV IMP XIII COS IV, CIL VIII 8412=ILS 696
- (7) TR P XXIII IMP XXII COS VII, CIL V 8004; 8011=ILS 697; 8041; 8065;  
8069; CIL XI 6657; AE 1950, no.81.

The method used here to ascertain which of the four suggested dates of the "switch back" from the secondary *dies imperii*, tallies with the data of the in-

scriptions is a diagram. As the year A.D. 309 was suggested as the earliest possible time for the switch back, the diagram begins with the imperial offices of December 10, 309, when the fifth tribuneship was conferred on Constantine. The diagram ends with the year A.D. 317, well beyond the decennial year. In the diagram I assume that Constantine, having received the imperial salutation on December 25 in a certain year, decided to revert to his original *dies imperii*, and accordingly was acclaimed emperor, on the next July 25.<sup>43</sup> The check aims at establishing whether this year was A.D. 310, 311, 313, or 315.

The point of departure is December 10, 309 when we record for Constantine TR P V IMP III COS:<sup>44</sup> on December 25 the record is TR P V IMP IV COS. The question is, was the next acclamation on July 25, 310? With reference to this possibility, and subsequently for three other hypothetical possibilities, the official record for Constantine is worked out (diagram 1) in accordance with the principles stated above. The diagram shows the result of these hypothetical calculations. The broken line running diagonally across the diagram indicates the computation before (to the left) and after (to the right) the switch back.

By 315 the record is identical in all four cases; it coincides with the inscription on the arch of Constantine (no. 5 above with the decennial vota). In order to find out whether any of these four possible explanations fits into the known record of Constantine's career, we should now compare the official records of Constantine's titulature with the dates of the diagram. The inscription no. 2 with TR P IX IMP VII COS III does not allow of any other solution than (D), the date of the inscription being December 10 – 24, 313. Similarly no. 3, TR P IX CONSVL (*sic*, should be IMP) VIII COS III DES IIII positively suggests (D). Although all the four possibilities permit the combination TR P IX and IMP VIII, the terminus would be July 25, 314 according to the solutions A, B, and C. On that day Constantine's record would be TR P IX IMP IX. On the other hand, it is very unlikely that Constantine would be (mentioned as) *consul designatus* as early as that. The solution (D) with December 10, 314 as *terminus ante* is, by contrast, quite plausible. Consequently, eliminating the hypothetical solutions A, B, and C, (D) remains, and is in agreement with the dates known.<sup>45</sup> It would seem then that Constantine, having received his ninth imperial salutation on December 25, 314, reverted to his primary *dies imperii* on July 25, in A.D. 315, and receiving his tenth acclamation on this day initiated the decennial celebrations.<sup>46</sup>

The record of Constantine's honours and offices is thus established up to the *decennalia* with one minor exception. Lafaurie's records place the second imperial acclamation on Constantine's secondary *dies imperii*;<sup>47</sup> the question when the first was received is left open.<sup>48</sup> This is not consistent with the principles adopted



for the computation of Licinius' powers;<sup>49</sup> in that case the first acclamation is recorded as being on the day of the emperor's ascent to the throne.

The difference between the two men is that although both were acclaimed *augusti*, Constantine's rank was not recognized by the senior *augustus*. Therefore he does not appear as *augustus* on official documents or coins until his secondary *dies imperii*.

Now, Lafaurie offers no reason for ignoring the acclamation of Eboracum in 306, and the possibility of a repetition on the first anniversary of this, on July 25, 307. Logic would seem to require either a fresh start with IMP I on December 25, 307 with Constantine as *augustus*, or an acceptance of both the, theoretically at least, preceding imperial salutations in July 306 and 307. It seems therefore appropriate to check whether Lafaurie's computation is correct.

In order to do so the four possibilities of a switch back of the *dies imperii* should be tested against the dates of the five inscriptions employed above, assuming that Constantine's third imperial acclamation was on his secondary *dies imperii* (IMP III on December 25, 307). The diagram composed for this purpose (diagram 2) is compiled under the further assumption that the decision to revert to the original *dies imperii*, and to sever the ties to Maximian, *auctor imperii Constantini*, was taken in the autumn before December 25. Otherwise the number of imperial acclamations in the records would have risen by one unit.<sup>50</sup> As in the previous case hypothetical sequences of the official records have been constructed, and the aim is to ascertain whether or not the titulatures of the inscriptions correspond to them.

Of the first five inscriptions nos. 1, 4, and 5 offer physically possible combinations of dates, whereas no. 2 is absolutely impossible regardless of which of the solutions E, F, G, or H are chosen. The figures TR P IX IMP VII COS III do not fit in anywhere in the diagram. The ninth tribunate would have started well after the expiry of the seventh imperial year. No. 3 is extremely hard to accept. According to the possibilities E, F, and G the date would be between December 10, 313 and July 25, 314, and according to H it would be between December 10, and 24, 313. In both cases the reference to the consulship in A.D. 315 (DES III) is hard to accept.

The conclusion is that Lafaurie has been justified in excluding one of the theoretically possible imperial salutations before December 25, 307. In refusing to accept Lafaurie's suggestion of an anticipated imperial salutation on December 25, 306,<sup>51</sup> we have to choose between the acclamation of Eboracum in 306 and

the one of the following summer. Although no certainty can be reached on this point, it seems logical to include the first one with the computation, the one hailing Constantine as augustus and his father's successor in the hope of gaining Galerius' acceptance both of nomination and of rank. Having been rebuked by Galerius, with the usurper Maxentius and his father as sole support, Constantine can be thought to have behaved more circumspectively in the Summer of A.D. 307 –without claiming the *imperium proconsulare maius*. In fact, if he had not felt the weakness of his position, the secondary *dies imperii* would have been superfluous.

Summing up the results of these lengthy and somewhat tedious arguments it can be seen that

(1) Constantine, up to the Spring 315, or rather, to the celebrations of his *decennalia* in 315, had his secondary *dies imperii*, December 25, 307, as the point of departure for the computation of his regnal years and imperial offices,

(2) Constantine in accordance with this computation must have celebrated his *quinquennalia* in the year starting on December 25, 311 and ending December 24, 312. Consequently the inscriptions confirm the results of the independently made analysis of the coin material.<sup>52</sup>

There are several corollaries to this, which may be mentioned in passing, namely,

- a. The panegyric pronounced on the occasion of the *quinquennalia* should be dated in accordance with the adjusted date of the celebrations,
- b. The death of Maximian should be placed at the end of A.D. 310,
- c. The campaign against the Franks mentioned by the panegyrist<sup>53</sup> took place in the Spring and Summer of 310, and is in fact confirmed by the commemorative inscription<sup>54</sup> mentioning a victory on June 27, 310.

(3) Constantine at the beginning of his reign, dropping his original claim for the *imperium proconsulare maius* was temporarily satisfied (probably in A.D. 307) with the *Caesareanum imperium* until, with Maximian as *auctor imperii*, he was elevated to the rank of augustus.

(4) The fact that several years after the death of Maximian Constantine still accepted the old Hercules as his *auctor imperii*, is proved by the fact that the computation of his regnal years remained unaltered until A.D. 315. Consequently, it is quite clear that Maximian was not subjected to a *damnatio memoriae*<sup>55</sup>, which would have implied a *rescissio actorum* including the elevation of Constantine to the rank of augustus. A *damnatio* of a later date is equally unacceptable. Theoretically it could have taken place after Constantine's conquest of Italy with the

co-operation of the Senate. To repeal the acts of Maximian would, normally, have been within the competence of the Senate, but the fact that, even after the capture of Rome, Constantine maintained his secondary *dies imperii* indicates that no revenge affected the memory of Constantine's late father-in-law. The dynastic consecration coins later struck to commemorate Maximian corroborate this conclusion.

#### 4. Some general conclusions

The death of Maximian in besieged Massilia, either through suicide or by murder instigated by Constantine, implied a definite break with the tetrarchies and tetrarchic ideology, despite the fact that Constantine did not go so far as to condemn the memory of his father-in-law. In a tell-tale way the break is illustrated by Lactantius<sup>56</sup> recording that "senis Maximiani statuæ Constantini iussu revellabantur et imagines ubicumque pictus esset detrahebantur." These measures, however, affected Diocletian as well "et quia senes ambo simul plerumque picti erant, et imagines simul deponebantur amborum."<sup>57</sup> According to Lactantius, Diocletian, when he heard of this, became very agitated, wounded at heart, fell ill and languished away.

In this position, at odds with the tetrarchy and an open enemy of Maxentius, son of Maximian, Constantine had to find new support for his policies, physical as well as spiritual. Constantine's Gallic coinages reveal two consecutive phases of his political reorientation. The first is apparent in the new silver coinage pointing to a political alliance between Licinius, Maximinus Daza and Constantine.<sup>58</sup> The fellow-rulers are each coupled with their tutelary god, Iupiter and Sol, respectively, and Constantine himself neutrally with Victory. This is a clear indication of the fact that the issue of the silver coinage precedes the introduction of Sol invictus on the coins of Constantine. It is inconceivable that Constantine, once having created Sol as his personal patron, would have struck a series of coins showing Sol exclusively as the tutelary god of Daza.<sup>59</sup>

The creation of the Sol coinage would consequently follow the issue of the billon series of the Spring 311. In fact, a series of important monetary innovations coincided with the second phase of Constantine's political reorientation: the new gold coin, the solidus, was issued at 1/72 of a pound of gold, and the follis weight was reduced correspondingly to 1/72. For the date of these reforms we have been referred to the death of Maximian as a *terminus post quem*.<sup>60</sup> This time limit has now been adjusted and postponed by, roughly, one year. The numismatic chrono-

logy should be corrected accordingly. The "1/72 reduction", which can be shown to precede the *quinquennalia*, would then have taken place about the summer of 311,<sup>61</sup> prior to the *quinquennalia* of December the same year.

This corrected chronology has some interesting repercussions, which can only briefly be mentioned in this context. In Constantine's realm the *quinquennalia* were celebrated in the sign of Constantine's new patron god Sol, preparatory to the invasion of Italy. Constantine's prolific bronze issues in London at this juncture are partly due to a co-ordination of the activities of the mints of Trier, where *solidi* were issued, and London, where *folles* were produced, partly also to a visit to the island,<sup>62</sup> as the festal coinage with its *Adventus* types prove, probably in order to gather the army for the campaign of A.D. 312.

The quinquennial celebrations had repercussions elsewhere in the empire as well. The *vota* type issued at Trier, VOTIS V MVLTVS X/VICTORIA AVG,<sup>63</sup> appears in Daza's part of the empire<sup>64</sup> with exactly the same design and with the new Constantinian portrait<sup>65</sup> created for the *quinquennalia*, a striking illustration of how cordial the relations between East and West at this time were. Licinius, in contrast, did not employ this reverse.

This simple explanation of the appearance of the Constantinian reverse type in the realm of his eastern fellow-ruler – certainly a unique occurrence at this time of tetrarchical strife – emerge out of our evaluation of the circumstances connected with Constantine's changes of his *dies imperii*. Similar readjustments are due for the coinages of most Roman mints in the period A.D. 309-313, and consequently also for our interpretation of the sources of the history of this period. These complex questions should, however, be dealt with separately in a different context.

<sup>1</sup> Panegyrici Latini VII(VI).

<sup>2</sup> Recherches sur la chronologie du règne de Constantin le Grand, *Revue des études anciennes* 1937, 197–218. Other scholars had earlier held the same view, but Seston was the first to subject the epigraphic evidence to a close scrutiny.

<sup>3</sup> See particularly Pierre Strauss, *Les monnaies divisionnaires de Trèves*, *Revue numismatique* 1954, 33 ff. suggesting a date later in A.D. 307, and J.P.C. Kent's discussion of the date in an Appendix (pp. 74–77) "The date at which Constantine I became augustus" to his paper *The Pattern of Bronze Coinage under Constantine I*, *Numismatic Chronicle* 1957, 16–83. In *Roman Imperial Coinage (=RIC) VI*, London 1967, 12 ff. Dr C.H.V. Sutherland "although certain proof is lacking . . . accepts a date after July 25 307 as fitting Constantine's elevation."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Remarques sur les dates de quelques inscriptions du début du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle, CRAI 1965, 192–210 and Dies imperii Constantini augusti: 25 decembre 307 (Essai sur quelques problèmes de chronologie constantinienne), Mélanges André Piganiol, Paris 1966, 795–806.

<sup>5</sup> J.P.C. Kent in a Survey of Numismatic Research 1966–1971, I, New York 1973, 343.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bruun, RIC VII, 65 and coin lists, Trier 1–38, comprising coins celebrating the *processus consularis* of his fourth consulship followed by vota coins mentioning the *vot(a) x (soluta) xx(suscepta)*.

<sup>7</sup> Otto Seeck, Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste, Stuttgart 1919, 163.

<sup>8</sup> CIL VIII 23116 = ILS 8942.

<sup>9</sup> Bruun, Studies in Constantinian Chronology (Numismatic Notes and Monographs 146), New York 1961, 43.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Seeck, loc.cit., refers to Philocalus' Calendar (CIL I<sup>2</sup>, 268), with the date of an *Adventus Constantini*, but, of course, there is no indication of which *Adventus* the text refers to. I have suggested the one in A.D.326, Bruun, Studies, 45.

<sup>12</sup> Bruun, Studies, 76.

<sup>13</sup> Op.cit., 43 f.

<sup>14</sup> Seston, op.cit., 204 f., 210 stresses that Constantine in the later part of A.D. 314 decided to revert to the old computation of regnal years. However, because he dates Constantine's second elevation as March 31,307, his calculations and his interpretations of the relevant inscriptions turn out differently from the one presented below. Again, Lafaurie, op.cit.,206 suggests that Constantine changed back his original *dies imperii* as late as in A.D. 325, after his victory over Licinius.

<sup>15</sup> Constantine's *Dies imperii* and *quinquennalia* in the Light of the Early Solidi of Trier, NC 1969, 177–205.

<sup>16</sup> The sources recording the acclamation of Constantine in Eboracum also comprise an account of how the newly acclaimed sent his *laureata imago* to Galerius, then senior augustus, asking for his recognition (cf. Lactantius, de mortibus persecutorum 25,1). Elsewhere I have shown that the transmission of the *imago* to the senior ruler was part of the court ceremonial (Notes on the Transmission of Imperial Images in Late Antiquity, Festschrift Per Krarup, Copenhagen 1976, in proof). There is a reference to this request in Paneg. VII(VI) 8,2 with the difference that the request is made to the *seniores principes* and that no transmission of

any image is mentioned in the text. The *seniores* should in this case be interpreted as the two retired augusti, Diocletian and Maximian, who after their retirement appeared as *auctores imperii*, Diocletian at Carnuntum, and Maximian in Gaul in conjunction with Constantine's marriage to Fausta. In addition Galerius as maximus augustus was included among the *seniores*, but scarcely other rulers (as suggested by J. Straub, *Vom Herrscherideal in der Spätantike*<sup>2</sup>, Stuttgart 1964, 47–50. As to junior rulers concluding alliances, cf. Bruun, *Transmission*).

<sup>17</sup> Lactantius 25,5 "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>18</sup> Straub, 46 points out that the panegyrist VI(VII) addresses Maximian as augustus but Constantine as *imperator*. On the other hand, Lactantius remarks that Galerius "non suscept (sc. Constantinum) imperatorem" (de mortibus persecutorum 25,5). Consequently, when Constantine is addressed as *imperator* by the panegyrist, he has been nominated augustus by Maximian, but he is a junior augustus.

<sup>19</sup> Paneg. VI (VIII),5. Note that the Empire at least formally and during the first tetrarchy was undivided, and that the Caesars despite their military independence had no civil administrative powers (Seston, *Diocletien*, 243 f.).

<sup>20</sup> Seston, *Diocletien*, 245 f.

<sup>21</sup> Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 18,5 "ut duo sint in re publica maiores, qui summam rerum teneant, item duo minores, qui sint adiumento." Cf. also Straub, *op.cit.*, 37 ff., 44.

<sup>22</sup> 14, 11,10 ". . .vetus exemplum, quod Diocletiano et eius collegae, ut apparitores Caesares non resides sed ultro citroque discurrentes, obtemperabant, et in Syria Augusti vehiculum irascentis, per spatium mille passuum fere pedes antegressus est Galerius purpuratus." Although the Caesars were dispatched by their seniors to cope with all kinds of emergencies the passage quoted obviously is tendentious. Seston, *Diocletien*, 169, n.2 refers the anecdote regarding the irascible Diocletian's treatment of Galerius to "une invention de l'époque de Julien, où le protocole impérial fixait la place des Césars non pas dans le voiture, mais à côté de la voiture de l'Auguste régnant, le *concessus vehiculi* étant une faveur exceptionnelle pour les Césars alors comparés à des *apparitores*."

<sup>23</sup> Seston, *Diocletien*, 236, n.l.

<sup>24</sup> Lactantius, *de mortibus persecutorum* 20,3 "ne filium nominaret."

<sup>25</sup> Cf. p. 44 with reference to O.Th.Schultz, *Vom Prinzipat zum Dominat*, 214.

<sup>26</sup> HA, *Vita Carini* 16,2, cf. Schultz, *op.cit.*, 214–219.

<sup>27</sup> Lafaurie, CRAI 1965, 198.

<sup>28</sup> H.Blümer, *Der Maximaltarif des Diocletian*<sup>2</sup>, Berlin 1958, 6.

<sup>29</sup> The only documentation of the imperial salutations regarding the *Caesareanum imperium* is constituted by two medallions struck at Trier (RIC VI, Trier 35); one is of the rev. TEMPORVM FELICITAS. The obv. legend is FL VAL CONSTANTIVS NOBIL CAES, the exergue is inscribed CAESS XIII COSS V, corresponding to the time March 1 – April 30, A.D. 305, in addition to the mint-mark PTR. Lafaurie, op.cit., 198 n.1 in addition refers to a 7 aurei piece, so far unpublished, from the Arras hoard with the same exergual inscription.

<sup>30</sup> CIL VIII 5526 = 18860, cf. Lafaurie, loc.cit. We may add that the *praenomen imperatoris* is the privilege of the augusti as a glance at the index of obv. legends of the tetrarchic coinage shows, cf. RIC VI, Index I, 689–697. Straub, op.cit., 44 disagrees on this point with reference to E.Kornemann, *Doppelprinzipat und Reichsteilung im Imperium Romanum*, Berlin and Leipzig 1930, 114 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Lafaurie, op.cit., 199. The number XIV or XIII would have depended on the time of the year, when the text was conceived.

<sup>32</sup> The records of Galerius are scanty, although the so called Edict of Tolerance, recorded by Lactantius (*de mortibus* 34–35) and Eusebius (HE 8,17,3) gives the computation TR P XX IMP XIX COS VIII. Lafaurie, CRAI 1965, 199f. points out that Eusebius must be in error. On the other hand, the scribal error in Eusebius' text cannot be exactly determined; it may be limited to the number of tribunician powers, and the number of imperial salutations may be recorded in accordance with the text of the edict. If so, Galerius contrary to Constantius and most likely as *maximus augustus* after Constantius' death, adjusted the computation of imperial acclamations so that he included the times when he had been invested with the *Caesareanum imperium*. He would then have created the fiction that the number of acclamations would always have been augmented by one each March 1, whereas Constantius would have received his first imperial acclamation on May 1, 305, and his second on March 1, 306. The number of Galerius' acclamations recorded by the edict shows that there can have been no increase on May 1.

<sup>33</sup> The importance of this day, preserved in the Calendar of Philocalus, CIL I, p. 260, as *natalis Martis*, is enhanced by the fact that Constantine in reality appointed his sons Caesars in the course of the war. Another dynastic *dies imperii* was chosen when Constans was nominated Caesar in A.D. 333, on the same day as Constantine was elevated to the rank of augustus by Maximian.

<sup>34</sup> RIC VI, cf. the early Constantinian issues of the mints of London, Trier, and Lyons.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. André Piganiol's comments to Jean Lafaurie's paper, referred to above, CRAI 1965, 210.

<sup>36</sup> "Die alte republikanische Sitte, den siegreichen Feldherrn zum Imperator auszurufen" (Ernst Meier, *Römischer Staat und Staatsgedanke*<sup>2</sup>, Zurich and Stuttgart 1948, 374) was continued as a privilege of the ruler, but it had not the same constitutional significance of the conferring of the *imperium proconsulare maius*.

<sup>37</sup> Paneg.VI(VII) 14,4, to this also Straub, *op.cit.*, 46.

<sup>38</sup> See for instance C.H.V.Sutherland, *RIC VI*, 31 f.

<sup>39</sup> I intend to show below that Maximian's death should be referred to the end of A.D. 310.

<sup>40</sup> The Roman senate would then in addition to the army appear as Constantine's *auctor imperii*.

<sup>41</sup> *Mélanges*, 797 f.

<sup>42</sup> *Op.cit.*, 799, cf. also CRAI 1965, 201.

<sup>43</sup> Had the decision been taken in the later part of a certain year the salutation in December would have fallen away, whereas the number of tribuneships would have been increased in the normal way by one in December. We would then in most inscriptions have a difference of two units between TR P and IMP; the inscription on the arch of Constantine (cf. no.5 above) would have been TR P X IMP VIII COS IV. This solution is therefore excluded.

<sup>44</sup> This computation assumes that Constantine received his first imperial salutation on July 25, 306, his second on his secondary *dies imperii*, December 25, 307 and his third a year later. Seston, *REA* 1937, table, p. 217 records IMP I on March 31, 307 and subsequently always on this day until July 25, 314, when Constantine reverted to the anniversary day of the acclamation in Eboracum. Lafaurie, *CRAI* 1965, 209 and *Mélanges*, 804 leaves the date of IMP I open.

<sup>45</sup> Inscriptions with detailed records of Constantine's career are not abundant or varied from the later part of his reign, cf. Lafaurie, *op.cit.* One inscription, however, with TR P XXXIII IMP XXXII COS VIII remains inexplicable according to the known principles of computation. The date of TR P XXXIII would be December 10, 337, of IMP XXXII July 25, 337 – but Constantine died on May 22, 337. As we have seen, records can be adjusted and principles of computation changed. If such a change is behind the record from Trajan's Forum just mentioned (cf. *AE* 1934, no.158), we have no clue as to the reason for it nor for the time when it took place. The most surprising feature would be the adjustment of the records of the tribunate. For comments on the inscription, cf. Lafaurie, *CRAI* 1965, 206 and *Mélanges*, 798, 805.

<sup>46</sup> Lafaurie does not seriously discuss when Constantine took this step, but in a roundabout way assumes that it happened after the defeat of Licinius, *CRAI* 1965, 206.

<sup>47</sup> *Mélanges*, 804.



- <sup>48</sup> Hesitatingly December 25, 306 is proposed as a possibility. Seston solved the problem by attributing the first acclamation to the first secondary *dies imperii* on March 31, 306, REA 1937, 217. Consequently Seston must have thought that Constantine until then had ruled by *Caesareanum imperium*, which was not considered in the computation of the imperial salutations of the augustus.
- <sup>49</sup> Mélanges, 806.
- <sup>50</sup> The inscriptions nos. 6 and 7 show this to be impossible; in the former case IMP XIII and TR P XIV would be an impossible combination, in the latter similarly IMP XXII and TR P XXIII.
- <sup>51</sup> Although the new *dies imperii* appears to have been carefully chosen, it is hard to believe that it would have been selected a year in advance. Political circumstances forced the issues unexpectedly and largely contributed to the solution of elevating Constantine to the rank of augustus on the day he married Fausta.
- <sup>52</sup> Bruun, Constantine's *Dies imperii*, NC 1969, 177–205. It is well to remember that regnal jubilees were celebrated twice, at the beginning and at the conclusion of the year as Paneg. VIII(V) 13,2 remarks: "Quinquennalia tua nobis etiam perfecta celebranda sunt. Illa enim quinto incipiente suscepta omnibus populis iure communia, nobis haec propria quae plena sunt." Galletier in his edition of the panegyrist (vol. II,78) follows Seston's chronology and dates the oration to some time shortly after the expiry of the quinquennial year, after March 31, 312. To me the text "etiam perfecta celebranda sunt" points to the future — and the time would thus still be Spring 312, regardless of the adjusted date of the *quinquennalia*. Note that Galletier has restored the text and rejected Baehrens' ingenious conjecture "set iam perfecta".
- <sup>53</sup> Paneg. VII(VI) 18, but see also Eutr. 10,2 and Lact. 29,3–8.
- <sup>54</sup> CIL III 5565 from Bedaium in Noricum.
- <sup>55</sup> There is much disagreement on this point, see ultimately Torben Christensen, C. Galerius Valerius Maximinus. Studier over politik og religion i Romerriget 305–313, Københavns universitets festskrift, april 1974, 129, and further, for instance, Sutherland, RIC VI, 37. We may note that the panegyrist VII(VI) 14,1 does not quite know what to say about Maximian: "De quo ego quemadmodum dicam adhuc ferme dubito et de nutu numinis tui exspecto consilium." It is further illuminating that in the coinage of Arles, where Maximian's rebellion broke out, uniquely we have a reference to the Herculean dynasty on solidi of the type VIRTVS AVGVSTI depicting a lion and a club on the reverse (RIC VII, Arles 4–6). A rare Ostian follis struck by Constantine after the conquest of Italy has the reverse HERCVLI VICTORI (RIC VI, Ostia 79). These coins are certainly not compatible with a *damnatio memoriae* of Maximian.
- <sup>56</sup> 42,1.

<sup>57</sup> Lactantius, *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> The wellknown much discussed billon coinage connecting Licinius with the type IOVI CONSERVATORI AVG, Maximinus with SOLI INVICTO COMITI and Constantine with VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP, cf. RIC VI, Trier 825–826, and VII, Trier 210–212. Neither author did grasp the real significance of this issue, which, chronologically on the borderline between the two volumes, unfortunately was split up in two different ways. This coinage, and particularly the coins of the type VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP will be discussed in detail in a forthcoming contribution to the Festschrift Vogt, Aufstieg und Niedergang Roms.

<sup>59</sup> The billon coins with their religious implications correspond to some exceptional series of folles issued by Daza in the East. Deviating from the normal pattern of GENIO types, predominant under Galerius, he struck HERCVLI VICTORI (e.g. RIC VI, Ant. 152) and IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG (*ibid.*, 153 a-c, to name one issue).

<sup>60</sup> NC 1969, 195, cf. also Bastien, La cinquième réduction du follis en 313, Gazette numismatique suisse 17 (1967) cahier 67, 103 ff.

<sup>61</sup> When discussing the chronology in NC 1969, 197, I had some difficulties in explaining how Licinius and Daza appeared on the folles as late as a year after the initiation of the Sol coinage. This difficulty is now eliminated.

<sup>62</sup> J.Lafaurie, Observations sur un trésor monétaire découvert à Boursies (Nord), Bull.Soc.-Nat.Ant. de France 1963, 30 f.

<sup>63</sup> RIC VI, Trier 821.

<sup>64</sup> The significance of this type has been misinterpreted by the authors of RIC. Simply because the type is unconnected with observes of Daza it was considered to have been issued after the death of Daza, by Licinius. However, this would not explain the use of a Constantinian reverse, which because of its exceptional design must have been brought to the East from elsewhere; after the death of Daza it would definitely have been outdated. As a gesture of courtesy by Daza the type can be explained logically. The fact that *imagines* were sent to the East is proved by the appearance of the Constantinian portrait in the East in the life time of Daza. The dispatch of a reverse design from Gaul to the East is not so revolutionary in this light.

The reverse VOTIS V MVLTVS X / VICTORIA AVG was issued at Antioch, Nicomedia, and Heraclea. It did not commemorate Licinius' *quinquennalia* in A.D. 313 as suggested in RIC VII,662, cf. also 591, but Constantine's *quinquennalia plena* and Licinius' *quinquennalia incipientia* (to use the terminology of the panegyrist quoted above, n. 52). Lafaurie's frequently mentioned paper *Dies imperii Constantini augusti* (Mélanges Piganiol, 795–806) also discussed the *dies imperii* of Licinius and concludes that his official *dies imperii* was later than the conference of Carnuntum, i.e. not on November 11 or 18, 308 but on a day in the period December 11–31, 308, cf. 801 f. Therefore, the quinquennial celebrations of the two augusti coincided in 312. The puzzling serial mark Q/II on some of the Antiochene solidi (RIC VII, Ant. 1–4 and 4–6) among which also a vota coin, can thus be read *quinquennalia bis celebran-*

*da* or *duorum augustorum* (for earlier interpretations, cf. RIC VII, 662, n.2).

In passing we may note that the double *quinquennalia* were celebrated at Rome also with the solidus type VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP / VOT X explicitly excluded by Dr. Sutherland in RIC VI, cf. Addenda 688 and 297, n.1, and referred to Constantine's *decennalia*. It was issued with obverses of both Constantine (coins for instance in the collections of British Museum, Florence, Dumbarton Oaks, Berlin, Hunter, Oxford, Vienna) and Licinius (coins in the British Museum, and Naples). The VOT X on the shield on the altar remind us of Suet. Aug. 27: "vota quae in proximum lustrum suscipi mos est."

The reverse VOTIS V MVLTIS X was except for Antioch struck at Nicomedia (RIC VII, Nic.1–2; 5–6) with the interesting addition of a slightly revised reverse. Whereas the Constantinian design was preserved, the elements of the rev. legend were switched so that the vota inscription was placed on the shield (the normal procedure) and the reference to Victory was given in the legend encircling the imagery in an adjusted version: VICTORIA AVGG NN instead of the original VICTORIA AVG of Constantinian origin. The continuation of this type (RIC VII, Nic.9–10) VICTORIAE AVGG NN / VOT X MVL XX could possibly be referred to the same time. After Constantine's switch back of his *dies imperii*, his and Licinius' jubilees did not naturally coincide any more (they may, however, artificially have been made to coincide).

Finally the rev. type was issued at Heraclea (RIC VII, Her.3–4). Together with the folles RIC VI, Her.68–78, and VII, Her. 5–6 they form an organic entity tied together by the mint signum S(*acra*)M(*oneta*)H(*eracleae*)T(*hracicae*). I rather suspect that all these Heracleian coins were issued on Daza's authority (and not only RIC VI, Her.76–78), but propose to return to this problem in another context.

<sup>65</sup> In Notes on the Transmission of Imperial Images in Late Antiquity in the studies to be presented to Per Krarup in January 1976 and to be published in Copenhagen.

Theoretical Computation of official Records for Diverse Dates of the Switch back  
 Diagram 1. Change effected after Dec. 25 (assuming IMP II on Dec. 25, 307)

	309	310	311	312	313
Year/time	10, 12, 25, 12	1.1, 25, 7, 10, 12, 25, 12	1.1, 25, 7, 10, 12, 25, 12	1.1, 25, 7, 10, 12, 25, 12	1.1,
(A) 309 COS	I			II	III
TR P	V	VI	VII	VIII	
IMP	III IV	V	VI	VII	
(B) 310 COS	I			II	III
TR P	V	VI	VII	VIII	
IMP	III IV	V	VI	VII	
(C) 312 COS	I			II	III
TR P	V	VI	VII	VIII	
IMP	III IV	V	VI	VII	
(D) 314 COS	I			II	III
TR P	V	VI	VII	VIII	
IMP	III IV	V	VI	VII	

Diagram 2. Change effected before Dec. 25 (assuming IMP III on Dec. 25, 307)

(E) 309 COS	I			II	III
TR P	V	VI	VII	VIII	
IMP	IV	V	VI	VII	
(F) 310 COS	I			II	III
TR P	V	VI	VII	VIII	
IMP	IV V		VI	VII	
(G) 312 COS	I			II	III
TR P	V	VI	VII	VIII	
IMP	IV V	VI	VII		
(H) 314 COS	I			II	III
TR P	V	VI	VII	VIII	
IMP	IV V	VI	VII	VIII	

of the dies imperii (Dec. 10, 309 - end of 317)

	314	315	316	317
25. 7. 10. 12. 25. 12.	1. 1. 25. 7. 10. 12. 25. 12.	1. 1. 25. 7. 10. 12. 25. 12.	1. 1. 25. 7. 10. 12. 25. 12.	1. 1. 25. 7. 10. 12. 25. 12.
		IV		
IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
		IV		
IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
		IV		
IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
		IV		
IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
VIII	IX	X	XI	XII

		IV		
IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
		IV		
IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
		IV		
IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
		IV		
IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
VIII	IX	X	XI	XII