

Diocletian, Hereditary Succession and the Tetrarchic Dynasty

Byron Lloyd Waldron

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Summary

At the turn of the fourth century, four soldiers ruled the Roman Empire: Diocletian, Maximian, Constantius and Galerius. This Tetrarchy, as modern scholars call it, was the brainchild of Diocletian, and under this emperor's leadership, the regime brought stability to an empire shaken after a half-century of political and military convulsions. These Tetrarchs defeated the resurgent enemies of the empire, they ended an epidemic of military rebellion that had lasted decades, and they attempted numerous reforms in an effort to better the empire both economically and spiritually.

This dissertation examines the Tetrarchy as an imperial dynasty, and it uses the concept of dynasty to highlight how the Tetrarchic regime was often at odds with imperial precedents. Like other Roman dynasts, the Tetrarchs employed adoption, marriage and shared nomenclature in the expression of their rule, but they also ignored certain dynastic norms. Diocletian and Maximian presented themselves as brothers despite being unrelated, and they used the names Jovius and Herculus to imply a close connection to Jupiter and Hercules. Diocletian and Galerius repeatedly excluded the sons of the Tetrarchs from the succession, and the sons themselves were variously hostages, symbols of imperial unity and targets of assassination. Moreover, for most of the Tetrarchic period, imperial women were neither empresses nor deified.

This study investigates these issues through the lens of the Roman army, and it presents the Tetrarchic dynasty as a military experiment, created by and tailored to soldiers. At the beginning of Tetrarchic rule, Rome's armies exerted an unprecedented influence over imperial politics, and the Tetrarchs themselves were products of these armies. This thesis shows that the Tetrarchs gave their sons and the imperial women important but subdued roles within their regime. It proposes that these approaches to dynasty and the decision to create the Tetrarchy came about because of military experience and responded to the pressing need to forestall army rebellion. Furthermore, the study argues that the regime represented the Augusti and their Caesars as pairs of brothers, and that it did so to appeal to the army. It is concluded that friendship, namely the camaraderie of Diocletian and Maximian, was central to dynastic cohesion and imperial unity during the Tetrarchic period. Whatever the intentions of the Tetrarchs, their dynastic junta could only be temporary, since the friendship of the Augusti could not be replicated.

Research Statement

This statement certifies that:

- i. the following dissertation comprises only original research undertaken towards the award of a PhD;
- ii. acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other materials used;
- iii. ethics approval was not required for this research;
- iv. the main body of the dissertation does not exceed 80,000 words, as required by the University of Sydney Higher Degree by Research Administration Centre.

Byron Lloyd Waldron

24th February 2018

Preface and Acknowledgements

As an undergraduate studying history, my interests had often tended towards the relationship between armies and politics. When it came to modern history, military dictatorships in Africa and Latin America were a source of fascination, and as a fledgling ancient historian, I was drawn to the Barcids and the Diadokhoi; generals who had achieved political supremacy over the states they served on the battlefield. As I came to the end of my Honours year at the University of Sydney, I assumed that the third century BC would continue to be the temporal realm of my research. However, when my new supervisor Professor Richard Miles suggested that I study the Tetrarchs, my trajectory suddenly changed direction towards the other third century; a change for the better. For someone with a fascination in military politics, the third century AD is replete with topics of interest, and it is thanks to Professor Miles's prescience that I have found such intellectual stimulation and enjoyment in the study of the Tetrarchs and in the regimes that came before and after their rule. I can only hope that readers will find similar stimulation and enjoyment in reading the work that I have produced.

Many have helped me along the way, and at the outset I would like to thank Professor Miles. Not only did he provide me with much assistance, but he has played a major role in my evolution as a scholar. Despite my penchant for detail, Professor Miles has forced me to keep my eyes on the bigger questions, and he has also been a good friend. I would like to thank my assistant supervisor Associate Professor Kathryn Welch for the assistance that she too has provided, and of course, I would like to thank family and friends. My parents Michelle and Sam, my partner Thea, my sister Cassie and my closest friend Scott have all been there for me over the course of my candidature, and their support made the process of researching and writing a dissertation much easier than it could have been. I offer deeply felt thanks to the following scholars who, through their suggestions, criticisms and/or proof-reading, greatly helped to shape this study: Dr Peter Brennan, Sheira Cohen, Dr Simon Corcoran, Professor Eric Csapo, Dr Caillan Davenport, Emeritus Professor John Drinkwater, Christopher Haddad, Dr Michael Hanaghan, Dr Mark Hebblewhite, Dr Daniel Irwin, Professor Noel Lenski, Dr Carlos Machado, Dr Charles Nixon, Dr Umberto Roberto, Dr Paul Roche and Dr Anne Rogerson.

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Dramatis Personae

Candidianus – Son of Galerius, born to a mistress, but later adopted by Galerius’ wife Galeria Valeria.

Constantine – Eldest son of Constantius, probably of illegitimate birth, Caesar 306-307, Augustus 307-337.

Constantius – First-Ranking Caesar 293-305, First-Ranking Augustus 305-306.

Crispus – Son of Constantine and Minervina.

Dalmatius – Son of Constantius and Theodora.

Diocletian – First-Ranking Augustus 284-305, Senior (Retired) Augustus 305-313.

Eutropia – Wife of Maximian.

Fausta – Daughter of Maximian, second wife of Constantine.

Galeria Valeria – Daughter of Diocletian, wife of Galerius.

Galerius – Second-Ranking Caesar 293-305, Second-Ranking Augustus 305-306, First-Ranking Augustus 306-311.

Hannibalianus – Son of Constantius and Theodora.

Helena – Mother of Constantine.

Julius Constantius – Son of Constantius and Theodora.

Licinius – Augustus 308-324.

Maxentius – Son of Maximian, Augustus 306-312.

Maximian – Caesar 285-285/6, Second-Ranking Augustus 285/6-305, Senior (Retired) Augustus 305-306, Augustus 306-308, Senior Augustus 308-310, Augustus 310.

Maximinus – Second-Ranking Caesar 305-306, First-Ranking Caesar 306-310, Augustus 310-313.

Minervina – First wife of Constantine.

Prisca – Wife of Diocletian.

Romula – Mother of Galerius.

Romulus – Son of Maxentius and Valeria Maximilla.

Severus – First-Ranking Caesar 305-306, Second-Ranking Augustus 306-307.

Theodora – Step-Daughter of Maximian, wife of Constantius.

Valeria Maximilla – Daughter of Galerius, wife of Maxentius.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations of journal titles follow those listed in *L'Année Philologique*, <http://www.annee-philologique.com/>.

AE – *L'Année Épigraphique* (1888-).

Agathangelos.

Hist. Arm. – *History of Armenia*.

Amb. – Ambrose.

De Ob. Theod. – *De Obitu Theodosii*.

Amm. – Ammianus Marcellinus.

Anon. Cont. – The Anonymous Continuator of Dio Cassius.

Aur. Vict. – Aurelius Victor.

Caes. – *Liber de Caesaribus*.

BGU – *Berliner Griechische Urkunden (Ägyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin)*.

Budé – Collection des Univ. de France, publiée sous le patronage de l'Assoc. Guillaume Budé.

CAH – *Cambridge Ancient History* (1st ed. 1923-1939; 2nd ed. 1970-2005).

Ced. – Cedrenus.

Chron. Min. 1-2 – *Chronica Minora Saec. IV.V.VI.VII*, ed. T. Mommsen, 1-2. *MGH. Auctores Antiquissimi* 9 (Berlin 1892); 11 (Berlin 1894).

Barb. Scalig. – Barbarus Scaligeri.

Cassiod. – Cassiodorus.

Chron. 354 – Chronography of 354.

Chron. Gall. – Chronica Gallica of 452.

Des. Cons. – Descriptio Consulorum.

Polem. Silv. – Polemius Silvius.

Prosp. Ep. Chron. – Prosper's Epitoma Chronicon.

Chron. Pasch. – Paschal Chronicle.

CIG – Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum (1825-1860).

CIL – Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (1863-).

CJ – Codex Iustinianus.

CMH – Cambridge Medieval History (1st ed. 1911-1936).

Coll. – Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio.

Const. – Constantine.

Oratio - Oratio Ad Coetum Sanctorum.

Const. Porphy. – Constantine Porphyrogenitus.

De Adm. Imp. – De Administrando Imperio.

De Them. – De Thematibus.

CSEL – Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (1866-).

CSHB – Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (1828-1897).

CTh – Codex Theodosianus.

Dig. – Digesta Iustiniani.

Epit. – *Epitome de Caesaribus.*

Eunap. – Eunapius.

Hist. – *Historiae.*

Eus. – Eusebius.

Chron. – *Chronicon.*

HE – *Historia Ecclesiastica.*

MP – *De Martyribus Palaestinae.*

VC – *Vita Constantini.*

Eutr. – Eutropius.

Festus.

Brev. – *Breuiarium.*

FGrH – *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby (1923-).

FHG – *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller (1841-1870).

*FIRA*² – *Fontes Iuris Romani Anteiustiniani*, 2nd ed., 3 Vols, ed. S. Riccobono et. al. (Florence 1940-1943).

Firm. Mat. – Firmicus Maternus.

Math. – *Matheseos Libri VIII.*

Fronto.

Ad Antoninum Imp. – *Ad Antoninum Imperatorem et Inuicem.*

FV – *Fragmenta Quae Dicuntur Vaticana.*

Gaius.

I – Institutiones.

GCS – *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* (1897-).

HA – *Historia Augusta.*

Alex. – Seuerus Alexander.

Aur. – Diuus Aurelianus.

Car. – Carus et Carinus et Numerianus.

Carac. – Antoninus Caracalla.

Claud. – Diuus Claudius.

Firm. – Firmus Saturninus Proculus et Bonosus.

Gall. – Gallieni Duo.

Gord. – Gordiani Tres.

Marc. – Marcus Aurelius.

Max. et Balb. – Maximus et Balbinus.

Maxim. – Maximini Duo.

Prob. – Probus.

Tac. – Tacitus.

Tyr. Trig. – Tyranni Triginta.

Val. – Valeriani Duo.

Hdn. – Herodian.

IG – Inscriptiones Graecae (1873-).

IGRR – Inscriptiones Graecae Ad Res Romanas Pertinentes (1906-).

IK – Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien (1972-).

ILS – Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, ed. H. Dessau (1892-1916).

IRT – Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania, eds. J. M. Reynolds & J. B. Ward-Perkins (Rome 1952).

Jer. – Jerome.

Chron. – Chronicon.

De. Vir. – De Viris Illustribus.

JI – Institutiones Iustiniani.

Joh. Ant. – John of Antioch.

Jord. – Jordanes.

Rom. – Romana.

jT – *Jerusalem Talmud.*

Jul. – Julian.

Caes. – The Caesars.

Mis. – Misopogon.

Or. – Orationes.

Juv. – Juvenal.

Sat. – Satires.

Lact. – Lactantius.

DI – Diuinae Institutiones.

DMP – De Mortibus Persecutorum.

Lat. Ver. – Laterculus Veronensis.

LCL – Loeb Classical Library.

Lewis & Short – *A Latin Dictionary*, ed. C. T. Lewis & C. Short (New York 1879).

Lib. – Libanius.

Ep. – Epistulae.

Or. – Orationes.

LSA – Last Statues of Antiquity, <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/>.

Malal. – John Malalas.

MGH – Monumenta Germaniae Historica.

Moses Khorenats’I.

Hist. Arm. – History of Armenia.

*OCD*⁴ – *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed., eds. S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (Oxford 2012).

OECT – Oxford Early Christian Texts.

*OLD*² – *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 2nd ed., ed. P. G. W. Glare (Oxford 2012).

Origo – Origo Constantini Imperatoris.

Oros. – Orosius.

Paneg. – *Panegyrici Latini XII.*

P.Cair.Isid. – *The Archive of Aurelius Isidorus in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, and the University of Michigan*, eds. A. E. R. Boak & H. C. Youtie (Ann Arbor 1960).

P.Catt. – *Papyrus Cattaoui*: B. S. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt & P. M. Meyer 1906: ‘Papyrus Cattaoui’, *APF* 3, 55-105.

P.Col. – *Columbia Papyri* (1929-1998).

P.Corn. – *Greek Papyri in the Library of Cornell University*, eds. W. L. Westermann & C. J. Kraemer, Jr. (New York 1926).

Petr. Patr. – Peter Patricius.

P.Grenf. 2 – *New Classical Fragments and Other Greek and Latin Papyri*, eds. B. P. Grenfell & A. S. Hunt (Oxford 1897).

Philost. – Philostorgius.

HE – *Historia Ecclesiastica.*

Phot. – Photius.

Bibl. – *Bibliotheca.*

Pin. – Pindar.

Nem. – Nemean Odes.

PIR² – *Prosopographia Imperii Romani Saeculi I, II, III, 2nd ed.*, eds. E. Groag, A. Stein et. al. (1933-2015).

Plin. – Pliny the Younger.

Ep. – *Epistulae.*

Paneg. – *Panegyricus.*

P.Lond. – *Greek Papyri in the British Museum* (London 1893-).

PLRE 1 – *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire 1: A.D. 260-395*, eds. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale & J. Morris (Cambridge 1971).

P.Oslo – *Papyri Osloenses*, eds. S. Eitrem & L. Amundsen (Oslo 1925-1936).

P.Oxy. – *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Published by the Egyptian Exploration Society in Graeco-Roman Memoirs (London 1898-).

P.Prince.Roll – *A Papyrus Roll in the Princeton Collection*, ed. E. H. Kase, Jr. (Baltimore 1933); ‘The Fourth Century Tax Roll in the Princeton Collection’, eds. R. S. Bagnall & K. A. Worp, *Archiv* 30, 53-82 (1984).

Procop. – Procopius

Bell. – *De Bellis*.

P.Sakaon – *The Archive of Aurelius Sakaon: Papers of an Egyptian Farmer in the Last Century of Theadelphia*. Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 23, ed. G. M. Parássoglou (Bonn 1978).

RE – *Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* (1893-1980).

RGDS – *Res Gestae Diui Saporis*: A. Maricq, 1958: ‘Res Gestae Divi Saporis’, *Syria* 35, 295-360.

RIC – *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, eds. H. Mattingly, E. A. Sydenham et. al. (London 1923-1967).

SB – *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten* (1913-).

SC – Sources Chrétiennes.

Scut. – Scutariotes.

SEG – *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (1923-).

Soc. – Socrates Scholasticus.

HE – Historia Ecclesiastica

Soz. – Sozomen.

HE – Historia Ecclesiastica.

Suet. – Suetonius.

Aug. – Vita Diui Augusti.

Claud. – Vita Diui Claudii.

Ner. – Vita Neronis.

Sync. – Syncellus.

Tac. – Tacitus.

Ann. – Annales.

Hist. – Historiae.

Theoph. – Theophanes.

Tit. Ulp. – Domitii Ulpiani Fragmenta.

TTH – Translated Texts for Historians.

Zon. – Zonaras.

Zos. – Zosimus.

Introduction

On 1 May 305, a procession of soldiers, officers and officials departed the city of Nicomedia in Bithynia, led by the emperor Diocletian (C. Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus) and his junior emperor Galerius (C. Galerius Valerius Maximianus). These two men ruled the eastern half of the Roman Empire, whereas one Maximian (M. Aurelius Valerius Maximianus) and his junior emperor Constantius (M. Flavius Valerius Constantius) ruled the west. The procession was headed for a hill, three miles distant, atop which was a statue of Jupiter, the supreme god of the Roman pantheon and Diocletian's tutelary deity. Upon arriving at the hill, Diocletian convened an assembly of the troops present and the chief soldiers of the empire's other legions, and he proceeded to do the unprecedented. According to the contemporary Christian author Lactantius, Diocletian stood upon a podium, and with tears declared that he had become infirm and needed repose from his hardships. He announced that he and Maximian would abdicate and resign the empire into the hands of Constantius and Galerius, and he proclaimed that two new junior emperors would be appointed to serve as their replacements. The soldiers solemnly awaited the nomination of the junior emperors, expecting Constantius' son Constantine and Maximian's son Maxentius to occupy the role. Both men were adults and the eldest among the emperors' sons. To the surprise of the assembled men, Diocletian declared that Severus and Maximinus would be the new junior emperors. The men saw Constantine, later to become the first Christian emperor, standing near the emperors in public view, and they questioned among themselves whether his name had been changed. But Galerius removed the doubt from their minds when, in the sight of all, he drew his hand back, pushed Constantine aside and drew Maximinus forward. Galerius removed the private garb from Maximinus' shoulders and led him to the most conspicuous place on the tribunal. All the men wondered who it might be, but in their amazement, they did not object. Diocletian removed his purple robe and placed it on the hitherto unknown man. He then descended from the tribunal into a coach, which would take the old emperor to his native land, to live out the rest of his life in retirement. Such are the events as recorded by Lactantius (*DMP* 19).

Lactantius conveys to the reader an extraordinary event; an event set within an extraordinary time. Between the years 293 and 305, the Roman Empire was ruled by a college of two Augusti (emperors) and two Caesars (junior emperors), and Diocletian, as the first-ranking

Augustus, enjoyed seniority over his colleagues.¹ This is what modern scholars call the ‘First Tetrarchy’, the rule of four. At the end of this period, the composition of the imperial college then changed, producing what can be referred to as the Second Tetrarchy. In 305, in ceremonies held near Nicomedia and in Milan respectively, Diocletian and Maximian abdicated and promoted their Caesars into Augusti. Constantius became the new first-ranking Augustus by virtue of having been the senior-ranking Caesar, and these new Augusti received new Caesars, Severus, a friend of Galerius, and Maximinus, Galerius’ nephew.² In co-opting these men, the Tetrarchs overlooked the imperial sons Constantine and Maxentius, as well as Constantius’ younger sons and Galerius’ nine-year old Candidianus. To overlook these princes was to break with the norm of succession by which monarchs prioritized their natural-born sons. Most Roman emperors abided by this norm, but the Tetrarchs did not.

The succession event in 305 was not the only occasion on which the Tetrarchs ignored hereditary norms. In 293, when Diocletian and his co-Augustus Maximian created the Tetrarchy, the latter appointed his son-in-law Constantius as Caesar and adopted him as his son. In doing so, he overlooked the hereditary claims of his natural-born son Maxentius. Maxentius was a child, but child emperors had ruled before, and since the Flavian period, emperors only adopted if they lacked a natural-born male heir.³ In the case of the later 305 event, Lactantius claims that Galerius adopted Maximinus (*DMP* 39.4), and Constantius perhaps adopted Severus, since the latter took Flavius from the nomenclature of the former.⁴ However, this was again at the expense of existing blood descendants. Constantine and Maxentius soon asserted their right to *imperium*. On 25 July 306, Constantius died in York, and Constantine, who was at his father’s deathbed, was acclaimed Augustus by his father’s troops. Some sources claim that Constantius had shortly

¹ On the seniority of Diocletian and its representation, see e.g. Seston (1946) 252; Sutherland (1956) 187-188; Bastien (1972) 87; Laubscher (1975) 69, 72; Pond Rothman (1975) 22, 27; Kolb (1987) 79, 98, 115; Rees (1993) 183-187; Srejšović (1994c) 145; Leadbetter (1998a); Corcoran (2000a) 266-274; Kuhoff (2001) 151; Rees (2002) 33 n. 36; Leadbetter (2004) 257-258, 262; Stefan (2005) 334-335; Van Dam (2007) 239-247; Leadbetter (2009) *passim*; Neri (2013) 662, 664-665.

² The seniority of Constantius is evidenced, for instance, in the fact that Constantius is listed before Galerius in imperial pronouncements (Barnes (1982) 17-20). See also Lact. *DMP* 18.6, 20.1; Eus. *HE* 8.5.1, Append. 3-4; *VC* 1.14, 18.1, 19.1, 2.51.1. The sequences of description in *Paneg.* 8(5).21.1 and *Paneg.* 9(4).21.2 may also reflect this hierarchy. Severus as friend: Lact. *DMP* 18.12; *Origo* 4.9. Maximinus as nephew: *Epit.* 40.1, 18; Zos. 2.8.1; cf. Lact. *DMP* 18.14.

³ Kolb (1987) 87, 142-143. Child: *Paneg.* 10.14.1-2.

⁴ The adoption of Severus: Leadbetter (2009) 141.

before presented Constantine to his troops as his successor.⁵ Galerius, now the senior-ranking Augustus, recognized Constantine as a member of the imperial college but demoted him to Caesar, since Constantius' Caesar Severus was now to be the new Augustus in the west.⁶ On 28 October, Maxentius seized power in Rome, and after he persuaded his father to come out of retirement, together they overthrew Severus. In 307 Severus was executed, but on 11 November 308, Galerius convened with Maximian and the retired Diocletian at Carnuntum and appointed his old comrade Licinius as the new Augustus in the west. This was again at the expense of the aforementioned sons as well as Severus' son Severianus and Maximinus' son Maximus. Finally, in 311 Galerius died, and his colleagues did not co-opt his son Candidianus in his place, nor anyone else, preferring to end the college of four. Evidently, during Tetrarchic rule, the natural-born princes counted for much less than they had during previous imperial regimes.⁷

The topic of this study is the network of blood-, marriage-, adoption- and metaphor-based familial relationships that surrounded the Tetrarchs and, in some cases, bound them to one another; what we might call the Tetrarchic dynasty. Specifically, this study investigates the forging of these relationships, the roles of family members within the Tetrarchic regime, and the contemporary representation of dynastic links. The absence of biological sons from the succession events is not the only aspect of the Tetrarchic dynasty that should strike one as curious. The imperial women of this period are largely invisible to the modern scholar, since until the accession of Constantine they appear to have been largely excluded from public representations of the regime that were disseminated by the imperial governments. The public roles of the natural-born princes also reveal a unique situation, in which the princes were variously hostages, symbols of imperial unity and targets of assassination. Diocletian and Maximian presented themselves as brothers despite being unrelated, and they adopted the *signa* Jovius and Herculius respectively, which implied a close link to Jupiter and Hercules and which their Caesars adopted in turn. In examining these features of dynasty in the Tetrarchic period, the words that surely underpin this consideration are 'what?' and 'why?'. What does the evidence reveal about the nature of the Tetrarchic dynasty? Are we to discuss a peculiar vision of succession and the imperial family as determined by the first-ranking Augustus Diocletian, a

⁵ *Paneg.* 7(6).5.3; *Paneg.* 6(7).4.1-2, 7.3-8.6; Lact. *DMP* 24.8; Eus. *HE* 8.13.12-14, Append. 4-5; *VC* 1.18.2, 1.21-22; Oros. 7.25.16-26.1; Zon. 12.33.622-623; cf. Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40.4; *Origo* 2.4; *Epit.* 41.3; Zos. 2.9.1.

⁶ Lact. *DMP* 24-25.

⁷ On changes to the imperial college during the Tetrarchic period, see Barnes (1982) 3-7.

competition of dynastic plans held by the individual Tetrarchs, or the manipulation of the succession by Galerius, as Lactantius relates?⁸ If one or more of these interpretations is correct, what are the possible reasons for what happened? This leads us onto further questions. For instance, why do the Tetrarchs appear to have valued blood connections less than their predecessors, but maintained the use of marriage and adoption? Why was Galerius' mother Romula deified? Why was Constantine kept at the side of Diocletian and Galerius? Why was Maxentius located near Rome in 306? In discussing such questions, this study seeks to improve not only our understanding of dynasty during the Tetrarchic period, but also to consider how Diocletian's Tetrarchy functioned. Did the regime adopt long-term dynastic plans or was there a large degree of improvisation? And to what extent did the imperial college function as a united whole?

The unusual aspects of the Tetrarchic dynasty have of course not gone unnoticed. William Seston and Wolfgang Kuhoff have written major works on Diocletian and the Tetrarchy as a whole, which naturally discuss the topic. Kuhoff's *Diokletian und die Epoche der Tetrarchie. Das römische Reich zwischen Krisenbewältigung und Neuaufbau (284-313 n. Chr.)* (2001), which details the Roman Empire during the Tetrarchic period, is very comprehensive and heavily referenced, while Seston's *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie 1: Guerres et réformes (284-300)* (1946), the first and ultimately sole volume of his study on Diocletian and the First Tetrarchy, is in some respects out-dated but is still insightful. Seston notably devotes attention to discussing the divine *signa*, and he argues that the Tetrarchy was an improvised solution to counter enemies of the empire.⁹ Frank Kolb concerns himself with the Tetrarchic dynasty in his 1987 study on the political innovations and self-representation of Diocletian's Tetrarchy (*Diocletian und die Erste Tetrarchie. Improvisation oder Experiment in der Organisation monarchischer Herrschaft?*), and Olivier Hekster's 2015 book on Roman emperors and ancestry (*Emperors and Ancestors: Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition*) dedicates a chapter to the issue. Both studies offer interesting and important insights. As the title suggests, Hekster partly discusses the ways in which the Tetrarchs could not escape the constraints of tradition, and Kolb, who has a strong

⁸ *DMP* 18-20.

⁹ Seston (1946); Kuhoff (2001).

command of detail, argues that political developments during the Tetrarchy were the result of planning rather than improvisation or a coup by Galerius.¹⁰

Certain studies on individual emperors are of relevance. In 1985 Stephen Williams (*Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*) and in 2014 Umberto Roberto (*Diocleziano*) wrote biographies of Diocletian, and the latter's book is especially well-considered in its approach.¹¹ In 2009 Bill Leadbetter produced a thought-provoking study on Galerius and his relationship with Diocletian (*Galerius and the Will of Diocletian*). He argues that the Tetrarchy was at its core a dynastic arrangement, and he presents Galerius as a loyal follower of Diocletian's will, contrary to Lactantius' version of events.¹² In 1994 Mats Cullhed (*Conservator Urbis Suae: Studies in the Politics and Propaganda of the Emperor Maxentius*) and in 2012 Ramiro Donciu (*L'Empereur Maxence*) produced monographs on Maxentius. Cullhed's study of the emperor's politics and propaganda includes a chapter on the Tetrarchy which argues in favour of Lactantius' version of events. Donciu's biography presents the events of Maxentius' life as largely determined by his Christianity, but one must be convinced that Maxentius was a Christian, for which the evidence is far from conclusive.¹³ Timothy Barnes has written several books on Constantine and his age that are of great scholarly depth. Barnes's 1982 *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* is an essential reference book that seeks to establish many of the facts regarding dates, titlature, prosopography, etc. His 1981 book on Constantine and Eusebius (*Constantine and Eusebius*) includes a lucid narrative of the Tetrarchic period, and his 2011 book on Constantine (*Constantine: Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire*) argues specific points of contention relating to Constantius, Constantine and the period. Both books support the Lactantian version of events.¹⁴ David Potter's 2013 biography of Constantine (*Constantine the Emperor*) contrasts with the interpretations of Barnes. For instance, whereas Barnes views Constantine as an heir apparent during Diocletian's reign, Potter does not.¹⁵

Roger Rees's 2002 monograph on the representation of the Tetrarchy within panegyrics (*Layers of Loyalty in Latin Panegyric AD 289-307*), and Boschung's and Eck's 2006 multi-

¹⁰ Kolb (1987); Hekster (2015) 277-314.

¹¹ Williams (1985); Roberto (2014).

¹² Leadbetter (2009).

¹³ Cullhed (1994) 14-31; Donciu (2012). On Donciu's monograph, Corcoran (2015) 465-466 makes the same point.

¹⁴ Barnes (1981) 3-43; (1982); (2011).

¹⁵ Potter (2013), with 98-100, 122, for Constantine's status during the First Tetrarchy.

author study on its representation within media as a whole (*Die Tetrarchie. Ein neues Regierungssystem und seine mediale Präsentation*) provide insights into how media approached Tetrarchic ideology.¹⁶ Also of great relevance is Simon Corcoran's *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government AD 284-324*, originally published in 1996, which provides the most comprehensive exploration into how the imperial college and its administrations functioned as a government.¹⁷ A 2014 study by Klaus Altmayer on the imperial college of Carus and his sons Carinus and Numerian (282-285), whose rule immediately preceded that of Diocletian and Maximian, is of relevance. Altmayer devotes part of *Die Herrschaft des Carus, Carinus und Numerianus als Vorläufer der Tetrarchie* to comparing the Caran regime to the Tetrarchy, and to discussing the Caran regime's status as a precursor concerning various polices.¹⁸ Certain articles are also of special note. In 1973 G. S. R. Thomas argued that Galerius orchestrated a coup in 305. In 1974 Ingemar König argued that Maximian appointed Constantius his Caesar to assert his independence from Diocletian. Leadbetter and Rees have written several important articles relating to the Tetrarchic dynasty; the former on the divine *signa*, the dynastic marriages and the fraternal relationship of Diocletian and Maximian, the latter on the *signa* and Tetrarchic iconography.¹⁹

The following study will approach the arguments contained within these works when it is most relevant to do so, but it is the author's view that previous scholarship in general does not take enough account of certain political developments during the later third century. The underlying contention of this study is that many aspects of the Tetrarchic dynasty and indeed the Tetrarchy itself were the result of changes to the role of the military in the later third century, namely its increased involvement in imperial politics. When Diocletian seized power in 284, the armies and their officers enjoyed the greatest influence over the allocation and preservation of imperial power, and Diocletian and his future co-rulers were themselves products of this development.

These points will not be left unsupported, but allow me first to outline the specific topics with which this study is principally concerned, and the structure that this study adopts. Chapter 1

¹⁶ Rees (2002); Boschung & Eck (2006).

¹⁷ Corcoran (2000a).

¹⁸ Altmayer (2014) 185-317.

¹⁹ Thomas (1973); König (1974); Rees (1993); Leadbetter (1998a); (1998b); (2004); Rees (2005).

provides a discussion of the Tetrarchy itself, investigating its creation in 293, the reasons for this development and how this college of four functioned as a ruling body. The chapter will provide a necessary foundation for the discussion of subsequent topics. Chapter 2 investigates the rejection of hereditary norms, and it argues that Diocletian used his influence as the first-ranking Augustus to exclude natural-born sons from the succession, replacing the convention of appointing biological heirs with a dynasty based upon military legitimacy and bound through ties of marriage and adoption. It is proposed that Diocletian was reacting to the failure of hereditary succession during the later third century, and that his approach, although initially successful, quickly became out-dated. Chapter 3 rejects the existing idea that the soldiers were culturally predisposed towards hereditary succession, and it suggests rather that many of them were socially inclined towards rejecting dynasty. Chapter 4 discusses the role of natural-born sons during the Tetrarchic period. This chapter illuminates various curiosities and contradictions, and it discusses what these findings reveal about Tetrarchic conceptions of dynasty and the ways in which the Tetrarchic imperial college functioned. Chapter 5 discusses the representation of imperial women in the media of this period. The chapter surveys the evidence for their representation, and it discusses how these findings link to the rejection of hereditary succession, to the revival of conventional dynastic representations and to conventions before and after the Tetrarchic period. Chapter 6 surveys the fraternal representation of the relationship of Diocletian and Maximian, and it argues that the regime promoted this image to appeal to the military. The chapter also discusses how such imagery co-existed and interacted with other presentations of their relationship, such as the divine *signa*, and what this says about Tetrarchic self-representation. Finally, the conclusion serves as an all-embracing response to the Tetrarchic dynasty. It will assess why it worked when it did and why it came to be a short-lived experiment. The recurring theme of this study is the ways in which the political dominance of the military governed aspects of the Tetrarchic dynasty as well as other political developments. The study suggests that Diocletian and his co-rulers tailored their rule to please the officers and soldiers of the empire, who were all too ready to violently intervene in politics, and it posits that the soldierly backgrounds of the Tetrarchs allowed them to closely identify with military concerns.

a. *The Ancient Sources*

The source material for the later third century and the Tetrarchic period is uneven and problematic in its coverage, and it is necessary to provide a survey of the evidence used, with some analysis of the most important sources.

Epitomes from the late fourth century are the only sources to provide a continuous narrative. These are the *Liber de Caesaribus* of Aurelius Victor, written c. 361, Eutropius' *Breuiarium ab urbe condita*, written c. 369-370, the *Breuiarium* of Festus, written c. 370, Jerome's *Chronicon*, produced 380/1, and the *Epitome de Caesaribus*, which was written after the death of Theodosius in 395 and whose author is unknown. Epitomes appear to have been popular among those in government because they synthesized political, military, biographical, administrative and economical history into concise and thus useful accounts. Indeed, Victor and Eutropius enjoyed careers in imperial administration at the time of writing. The works of Victor, Eutropius and the Anonymous Epitomator are most relevant to this study.²⁰

Victor and Eutropius appear to largely rely on a common source, which limits the degree to which they can be considered independent testimonies. These authors generally recount the same events in the same order, they make the same mistakes, and they often use similar wording and phraseology and extended verbal parallels and echoes. But Victor's opinions, tone, style and vocabulary are not reflected in the later account of Eutropius, and Eutropius' narrative is often fuller than Victor's. Thus, Eutropius did not copy Victor, but rather the two authors seem to have drawn upon a common source, which scholars call the *Kaisergeschichte* (henceforth *KG*). Furthermore, the nature and extent of the similarities suggest that the *KG* was the main source for both epitomes. This is not to say that they did not use other sources. Victor says that he has read and listened to multiple sources.²¹ But to a large degree, these authors seem to have relied on the *KG*, and it has been argued that the other epitomes as well as Ammianus Marcellinus and the *Historia Augusta* (to be discussed) directly or indirectly used the same source among other sources. Burgess posits that the *KG* had at least three recensions: one concluding in 358, used by

²⁰ Aurelius Victor: Bird (1984); (1994); Christ (2005). Eutropius: Bird (1987); (1988a); (1988b); (1993). *Epitome de Caesaribus*: Schlumberger (1974); Barnes (1976c); Festy (1999). On the date, see also Cameron (2001). Jerome's *Chronicon*: Donalson (1996); Burgess (1995a); (1999) 21-109; Ratti (1999). Festus: Kelly (2010).

²¹ *Caes.* 11.13; see also 5.8-9, 14.8, 20.10, 20.34, 29.5, 39.48.

Victor, another in 364, used by Eutropius and Festus, and another in 378, used by Jerome, Ammianus, the *Historia Augusta* and the *Epitome*. Since Eutropius' epitome lacks Victor's digressions, it is generally believed that Eutropius most closely mirrors the contents of the *KG*, in which case the source was a collection of short imperial biographies beginning with Augustus and was written by an author relatively unconcerned with moralizations.²²

The surviving epitomes differ in their interests and style. Victor wished to use biographies to write history; that is, to pass judgement on rulers and regimes, discuss change over time and suggest solutions to the state's problems. Like Sallust, he connected the decline of the state with moral degradation, but he blamed this on the diminished importance of education and culture, the increased power of the Roman army and the harmful influence of *agentes in rebus*.²³ Victor occasionally omits facts that undermine his interpretations, such as the role of his countryman Severus in the militarization of the empire. He and Eutropius also repeat historical clichés, such as the supposed lethargy of Gallienus.²⁴ Nevertheless, Victor's digressions supply the reader with an imperial official's perspective on recent history.²⁵

Eutropius was content to chronicle events in a relatively unaffected manner, but there are still clear biases. The emperor Valens had commissioned Eutropius to write a history that could be used by uneducated provincials within the army and administration, but as Bird argues, Valens also appears to have intended the epitome to encourage an aggressive policy towards the Persians. Eutropius is thus very positive when he recounts Rome's campaigns. The author was also concerned with the competence and moral qualities of emperors, and his work subtly encourages Valens towards respectful relations with the senate. This agenda influences his unfavourable representation of Maximian, who had executed senators.²⁶

The *Epitome de Caesaribus* emphasizes biographical details and records facts and anecdotes not found elsewhere. For instance, it relates that Maximian built a palace where his parents had worked wage-earning jobs, that Galerius named his place of birth after his mother

²² The *KG*: Barnes (1970); Bird (1973); Barnes (1978) 90-97; Burgess (1995a); (1995b); (2005).

²³ Bird (1994) xxi.

²⁴ Gallienus: Aur. Vict. Caes. 33; Eutr. 9.7-8, 11.

²⁵ Bird (1984); (1994); Christ (2005).

²⁶ Bird (1987); (1988a); (1988b); (1993). The representation of Maximian: Eutr. 9.27, 10.3. The execution of senators: Lact. *DMP* 8.4; Barnes (1982) 115 on L. Aelius Helvius Dionysius.

Romula, and that Diocletian refused to leave retirement when asked by his former colleagues, telling them that he preferred to tend to the cabbages he had grown. It is thus a useful source on the personalities of the emperors.²⁷

Jerome's *Chronicon* is a Latin translation and continuation of a chronicle by the Christian author Eusebius, and the translation, which ends at 325, contains additions by Jerome on political and military matters. These additions where relevant are mostly derivative. Festus' *Breviarium* is mostly concerned with military matters, and on the Tetrarchs it is solely concerned with their war against the Persians.²⁸

In their concern for brevity, the epitomes chronologically telescope historical events, as the following passage from Victor demonstrates (*Caes.* 39.21-24):

Hoc elatior, cum barbarum multos opprimeret neque praedae omnia in aerarium referret, Herculli metu, a quo se caedi iussum compererat, Britanniam hausto imperio capessiuit. Eodem tempore Orientem Persae, Africam Iulianus ac nationes Quinquegentanae grauitur quatiebant. Adhuc apud Aegypti Alexandriam Achilleus nomine dominationis insignia induerat. His de causis Iulium Constantium, Galerium Maximianum, cui cognomen Armentario erat, creatos Caesares in affinitatem uocant.

Because of this appointment (against German pirates), he (the usurper Carausius) became quite arrogant, and when he overcame many of the barbarians but did not return all of the booty to the public treasury, in fear of Hercules (Maximian), by whom, he had learned, his execution had been ordered, he took the imperial power and seized Britain. At the same time, the Persians were causing serious trouble in the east, and Julianus and the Quinquegentian peoples in Africa. Moreover, at Alexandria in Egypt someone named Achilleus had assumed the insignia of rule. For these reasons, they (Diocletian and Maximian) summoned Julius Constantius and Galerius Maximian, whose *cognomen* was Armentarius, into a marriage alliance, they having been made their Caesars.

This list of problems for the empire reappears in the accounts of Eutropius (9.22) and Jerome (225). The authors provide a concise summary of challenges to the regime, but they and the *KG* did not necessarily intend an exact chronology. Indeed, whereas the Tetrarchy was created in

²⁷ Schlumberger (1974). Cabbages: 39.6. Palace: 40.10. Romula: 40.16.

²⁸ On these texts, see n. 20.

293, Carausius seized power in 286, the Persians invaded in c. 296 and Egypt revolted in 297.²⁹ This study will take account of the epitomes' chronological unreliability, although specific issues will be dealt with where most relevant.

Other narrative histories from the fourth century are available. The *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* is a brief account of the rise of Constantine, whose focus on political and military history may suggest that its anonymous author was a pagan. The account covers the post-Diocletianic years of the Tetrarchy, and it contains unique material on the events of Constantine's early reign. It was possibly written early in the fourth century, since its information is precise, and it includes the detail that Constantine, after departing the court of Galerius, joined his father on a campaign against the Picts (2.4). A panegyric delivered before Constantine in 310 includes this story (*Paneg.* 6(7).7-8), whereas later works relay the fiction that Constantine reunited with Constantius when the latter lay dying.³⁰ Also notable is Praxagoras, a prominent Athenian pagan who gave political support to Constantine and who wrote a biography of the emperor that only survives in summary within the *Bibliotheca* of the ninth-century Patriarch Photius (62). Written c. 330, during the emperor's lifetime, his biography appears to have been rather panegyric in content, as one would expect.³¹ The historian Ammianus provides occasional references to the Tetrarchic period in what survives of his histories, but his actual coverage of the period is now lost.³²

In c. 500 the Byzantine pagan author Zosimus wrote the *Historia Noua*, a universal history more detailed than those of the epitomators. Zosimus announces that his purpose is to describe how the Romans lost their empire in a short space of time. Unfortunately, most of his account of the Tetrarchic period does not survive. For the years 270-404, Zosimus' main and perhaps only source is the now mostly-lost history of Eunapius, a Greek sophist and historian writing in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Photius states the following (*Bibl.* 98): 'One might say that he (Zosimus) did not write a history, but rather copied out that of Eunapius...'

²⁹ Barnes (1978) 92-93. On the date of Carausius' usurpation, see Barnes (1982) 11 (286); Casey (1994) 39-43, 83. On dating the Persian war and the revolt of Egypt, see Barnes (1976a) 180-186; Thomas (1976); Zuckerman (1994) 65-66, 68-70; Barnes (1996) 543-544; cf. Kolb (1988); (1995) 23-27.

³⁰ Later works: Lact. *DMP* 24.8; Eus. *VC* 1.21.1; Aur. *Vict. Caes.* 40.3; *Epit.* 41.2; Zos. 2.9.1. On the *Origo*, see König (1987), who dates the text to Theodosius' reign; Barnes (1989a); Lieu & Montserrat (1996) 39-62.

³¹ Barnes (2011) 195-197.

³² On Ammianus, see Matthews (1989).

(Εἶποι δ' ἄν τις οὐ γράψαι αὐτὸν ἱστορίαν, ἀλλὰ μεταγράψαι τὴν Εὐναπίου...). Zosimus also appears to copy Eunapius' opinions, since his negative portrayal of the general Stilicho abruptly becomes positive when his history ceases to use Eunapius and changes to a different source.³³ Therefore, Zosimus' history provides the reader with a shortened version of that of Eunapius.³⁴

Eunapius wrote two editions of his history. In the first edition he viciously criticized Christianity and praised pagan religion, whereas in the second he was less violent in his criticisms (Phot. *Bibl.* 77). Barnes postulates that Eunapius wrote the first edition in c. 380, influenced by Rome's defeat by the Goths in 378, which he blamed on Christianity. He wrote the second edition in the early fifth century.³⁵ Barnes shows that Ammianus, the *Historia Augusta* and the *Epitome de Caesaribus* probably used Eunapius' history, which suggests that it was accorded some authority as a source.³⁶ However, for Eunapius, the reign of the first Christian emperor Constantine initiated a decisive decline in Rome's fortunes, which he blamed on the emperor's character. Within his history, Eunapius thus produced polemic against Constantine, and he made claims about the emperor that are demonstrably fictitious. For example, he appears to have asserted that Constantine's sons were all born out of wedlock (Zos. 2.20.2, 39.1). Therefore, while Eunapius, and by extension Zosimus, are indispensable to studying the Tetrarchic period, the bias against Constantine must be taken into account.³⁷

Other Byzantine texts are valuable. The history of the sixth-century diplomat and official Peter Patricius survives in fragments and provides unique accounts of some events. His position in government may have given him access to government documents.³⁸ Also useful is the twelfth-century historian Zonaras, who wrote a digest of Roman and Byzantine history from Rome's foundation down to his own time. Zonaras explains events from an explicitly Christian perspective, which colours his approach to the Tetrarchs and Constantine. The Tetrarchs persecuted the Christians, whereas Constantine championed their liberty and became a Christian himself. For Zonaras, the Tetrarchy collapsed because its emperors had targeted the Christians,

³³ Barnes (1978) 121.

³⁴ On Zosimus, see Ridley (1972); Barnes (1978) 121-123; Blockley (1980); Cichocka (1990); Lieu & Montserrat (1996) 9-23.

³⁵ Barnes (1976c) 266; (1978) 114-117, 120-121.

³⁶ Barnes (1976c) 265-267; (1978) 112-120.

³⁷ On Eunapius, see also Blockley (1983).

³⁸ Banchich (2015).

and it was God's plan that Constantine eventually became sole emperor (12.32-13.1). Moreover, his treatment of the life of Constantine is influenced by hagiography, and thus stresses the miraculous (12.33, 13.1-3). Nevertheless, Zonaras' use and synthesis of various earlier Byzantine sources, and possibly fourth-century sources, renders his account valuable. His history is detailed and is often shown to be accurate. Perhaps most strikingly, MacDonald has made a strong case that Zonaras and other Byzantine writers preserve a more accurate version of the death of Gordian III than third-century Persian and fourth-century Roman accounts, which, if this is so, is a testament to their importance.³⁹

The Christian convert Lactantius provides a controversial but important account of the Tetrarchic period within his *De Mortibus Persecutorum* (*On the Deaths of the Persecutors*; henceforth *DMP*); a polemical pro-Christian pamphlet written in c. 314/5.⁴⁰ Lactantius was a rhetorician who had been summoned by Diocletian to teach Latin rhetoric in Nicomedia (Jer. *De. Vir.* 3.80). He was still teaching there in 303 when the Tetrarchic persecution of the Christians began (Lact. *DI* 5.2.2), and he was spurred by anti-Christian writings to write in defence of Christianity (*DI* 5.2-4). He remained in Nicomedia for at least two years (*DI* 5.11.15), but he appears to have left Nicomedia while the persecution was still underway, and eventually became the tutor of Constantine's son Crispus (Jer. *Chron.* 230; *De. Vir.* 3.80).⁴¹ A subdued hostility towards Licinius suggests that *DMP* was written in the west.⁴²

Lactantius addresses *DMP* to Donatus, a confessor imprisoned in Nicomedia from 305 to 311. The text's purpose is to describe the fates of the emperors who persecuted the Christians so that all may know how God showed his *uirtus* (virtue) and *maiestas* (majesty) in destroying the enemies of His name (1.7).⁴³ Lactantius is especially interested in the fates of the Tetrarchs, whose persecution of the Christians had surpassed in scale previous efforts and was recent history for the author. As a result, his text is primarily concerned with vituperating the characters of these emperors, and with narrating the decline of their power and their deaths. *DMP* provides

³⁹ MacDonald (1981). On Zonaras, see also Lieu & Montserrat (1996) 25-32; Banchich & Lane (2009).

⁴⁰ Date: Barnes (1973) 31-39; Creed (1984) xxxiii-xxxv. Lactantius' authorship: Barnes 39-40; Creed xxix-xxxiii.

⁴¹ On Lactantius' life and career: Barnes (1973) 40; Creed (1984) xxv-xxix. Rougé (1992) 78 supposes that Lactantius did not lose his post until after Galerius became Augustus, since 22.4 reports that Galerius Augustus purged intellectuals.

⁴² Creed (1984) xxxiv-xxxv.

⁴³ Creed (1984) xxxv-xli.

the fullest surviving account of political events from the beginning of the persecution in 303 until its end with the death of Maximinus in 313. Lactantius narrates events not found in other literary sources, such as Diocletian's prices edict, otherwise known through epigraphy, and Constantine's supposed restoration of the Christian religion immediately after coming to power. He also offers the account of Diocletian's abdication narrated at the beginning of this introduction.⁴⁴ Lactantius seems to have written *DMP* for fellow Christians who can rejoice at the discomfiture of God's enemies, since he uses specifically Christian terminology, in contrast with his apologetical writings.⁴⁵

Lactantius is largely reliable as a reporter of historical events. His chronology appears to be generally accurate, the detail with which he describes events in Nicomedia from 303-305 suggests eyewitness testimony, and he appears to accurately quote Galerius' toleration edict and Licinius' letter on the Christians.⁴⁶ Lactantius was influenced by the representation of history promulgated by the court of Constantine. He includes the falsehood that Constantine reunited with his father when the latter was on his deathbed, and the invention that Maximian twice plotted against Constantine's life.⁴⁷ He omits inconvenient facts such as Maxentius' pro-Christian policies, Maximian's investiture of Constantine as Augustus and Constantine's refusal to abide by the decisions made at the conference at Carnuntum.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, he does not entirely follow Constantine's version of history. At the time of writing, Constantine's greatest victory was his supposed liberation of Rome from the emperor Maxentius, and yet Lactantius' vilification of Maxentius appears incidental compared with his treatment of the Tetrarchs. Lactantius' Maxentius has an evil disposition (18.9), but in contrast with other writers, the author avoids invective.⁴⁹ Maxentius, after all, did not persecute the Christians. In fact, although the *DMP* does include an account of Constantine's victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge (44), it is not a part of the main narrative, but rather provides context for the fall of Maximinus (see 43.1, 43.3, 44.10-12). Similarly, Constantine's arch in Rome, erected in 315, represents an

⁴⁴ Prices Edict: 7.6-8. Constantine: 24.9. Barnes (1973) 43-46, (1981) 14 and Corcoran (2000a) 185 argue for the historicity of Constantine's action, but cf. e.g., Cameron (1993) 49; (2005) 91.

⁴⁵ Barnes (1973) 40-41; Creed (1984) xxxix-xl.

⁴⁶ Creed (1984) xlii-xliii; Rougé (1992) 82.

⁴⁷ Constantine and his father: 24.2-8; but cf. Cullhed (1994) 22. Two plots: 29.3-30.6.

⁴⁸ Maxentius and the Christians: De Decker (1968); Barnes (1973) 44 with nn. 168-169. Investiture by Maximian: *Paneg.* 7; Barnes (1982) 5-6 n. 16. Rejection of the Carnuntum decisions: Barnes (1973) 42 with n. 149.

⁴⁹ Barnes (1973) 42-43.

image of Constantine in the Forum Romanum, with the forum statues of the Tetrarchs in the background. The composition appears to mark the Tetrarchs as distinguished predecessors, but in the *DMP*, published around the same time, Lactantius strives to give highly unflattering character portraits of the Tetrarchs and revels in their deaths. God and not Constantine is the hero of Lactantius' narrative.⁵⁰

Despite his partial independence from Constantine, Lactantius' interpretations for why things happened must be approached with caution, as his contempt for the Tetrarchs and his thesis of divine judgement pervades his work. Lactantius' account of the Tetrarchic period emphasizes disharmony between the rulers, and one suspects that he deliberately sought to undermine Tetrarchic self-representation, which made collegial *concordia* (harmony) into a virtue.⁵¹ However, his emphasis on political discord was also integral to his thesis and his characterization of the emperors. For Lactantius, Diocletian's abdication and the subsequent collapse of the Tetrarchy was this emperor's main punishment. Lactantius emphasizes that, within Diocletian's own lifetime and because of God (e.g. 42, 52.3), the ruler saw his power dissipate and his system of government disassemble around himself. Diocletian's fellow Tetrarchs brought about the collapse of his regime, whether through the ambition and discordant behaviour of the persecutors, or Constantius' righteous desire to make Constantine his successor.⁵² Increasingly impotent, by the time of his death, Diocletian was unable to protect his daughter from being sent into exile by Maximinus (41) and helpless as Constantine had his images destroyed (42). Lactantius thus depicts Diocletian as a timid old man incapable of salvaging his regime and destined for obscurity. Diocletian appoints his colleagues because he is avaricious and timid (7.2), he refuses to give battle against the Persians (9.6), fear motivates him to divine the future (10.1), and he is afraid of his Caesar Galerius (9.4, 9.7, 11.3-4, 18).⁵³ Moreover, Lactantius makes Galerius and Maximinus into the main villains of his work. Lactantius thinks that Galerius influenced Diocletian into undertaking the persecution and was its true architect, perhaps because of his lengthy involvement, his slow death from bowel cancer and

⁵⁰ The views just expressed are those of Barnes (1973). See also Cullhed (1994) 20-23. Cf. Heim (1978).

⁵¹ On *concordia*, see e.g. Kolb (1987) 88-127, 159-176; Rees (1993); Boschung (2006).

⁵² Regarding the persecutors, note e.g. Galerius' behaviour in 18-23, Maximian's in 26-30, and Maximinus' in 32, 36. On Constantius' ambitions for Constantine, see 24.3, 8.

⁵³ Kolb (1987) 136 similarly notes that Diocletian is characterized as a coward. On Lactantius' weak understanding of imperial policy, see Creed (1984) xliv.

the poetic impression that he ended the persecution because of his agony.⁵⁴ Exploiting the fact that Galerius' mother was born north of the Danube, he depicts Galerius as a savage barbarian beast with delusions of grandeur and a disdain for the Roman people.⁵⁵ Since Maximinus was the last and most zealous persecutor, Lactantius portrays him as a low-born, perfidious and illegitimate tyrant who defiles the aristocracies with his rapacity.⁵⁶ *DMP* relays a perspective on events held soon after said events occurred, but the historian must treat this perspective with caution.⁵⁷

Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea during the reign of Constantine, wrote works that are mostly concerned with church matters. One relevant text is his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Church History), of which he wrote multiple editions before, during and after the persecution. The work naturally displays a strong bias against the Tetrarchs but provides much information on the persecutions. Following Constantine's death in 337, Eusebius also wrote the *Vita Constantini*, which celebrates Constantine and the services he rendered for the church. The *Vita* uses contemporary panegyric discourse and is full of rich praise for Constantine, who is treated as god-sent. It also omits controversial topics, such as the death of Crispus, or treats contentious issues in a misleading way. For example, he avoids specifying that the Council of Nicaea decided the relationship between the Father and Son (3.5-14). Both works are limited in their treatment of political and dynastic matters. Despite having conversed with Constantine on multiple occasions, Eusebius appears to have been rather ignorant of politics, and he is not always accurate when he records imperial policy. For example, he claims that Constantius took no part in the persecution (*HE* 8.13.13; *VC* 1.13.3), and even actively supported Christians true to their God (*VC* 1.16), but Lactantius reports that Constantius had churches torn down (*DMP* 15.7). Eusebius interprets the actions of emperors in a Christian manner. For example, Constantine goes to war against Licinius to protect the Christians of the east (*HE* 10.9.2; *VC* 2.3). Nevertheless, Eusebius' claims about political history are still of interest, since they reveal a perception of events that existed relatively soon after the events concerned happened. Also, some

⁵⁴ Kolb (1987) 136-137; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 189; Leadbetter (2009) 116-118. The idea that Galerius was the originator of the persecution also appears in Eus. *HE* 8.16.2-3, Append. 1, 4.

⁵⁵ E.g. 9.1-10, 11.1-2, 20.1-2, 21-23, 24.3-7, 27.5-8. This depiction is detailed by Leadbetter (2009) 118.

⁵⁶ 18-19, 32, 36-41. Illegitimate: Icks (2012) 465-467. Like most Roman historians, Lactantius displays an aristocratic bias: Loi (1965); Corsaro (1978); Creed (1984) xl-xli.

⁵⁷ On Lactantius' problems as a historian, see especially Kolb (1987) 131-139 and Rougé (1992). On *DMP* as a whole, see Moreau (1954) Vol. 2; Creed (1984); with caution, Christensen (1980).

of his claims probably reflect the Constantinian representation of history, and in both works he quotes imperial edicts and letters. He is thus used where relevant.⁵⁸

This study occasionally uses the controversial *Historia Augusta*, a collection of imperial biographies stretching from Hadrian to Carus and his sons (282-285). The collection purports to be the work of six individual biographers writing during the reigns of Diocletian, Constantius and Constantine, but it is now generally accepted that the work was written by a single author in the second half of the fourth century. The collection is thus not what it purports to be. It is fitting then that much of its testimony is invention. While the corpus does include valuable pieces of historical information, Rohrbacher has recently argued that the *Historia Augusta* is a playful fiction for a ‘knowing and appreciative audience.’⁵⁹ The *Nebenuitae*, the lives that cover the later third century, are deemed the most unreliable for historical research. Barnes has argued that the *Nebenuitae* use the following sources: the *KG*, Victor, Eutropius, the lost history of the third-century Athenian historian Dexippus, and probably the first edition of Eunapius’ history.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, these lives fabricate anecdotes, documents and names, and the *Vita Tyrannorum Triginta* even invents some of its thirty usurpers. The corpus is relevant to this study for its coverage of the later third century and its infrequent references to the Tetrarchs. The author displays in detail a fourth-century pro-senatorial perspective on the third century, one that reveals a distaste for hereditary rule.⁶¹ However, its testimony concerning what happened in the later third century must be treated with great circumspection. When using the testimony of the *Historia Augusta* in this way, I will usually reference it when it accords with that of other sources, or where it is rendered plausible by other sources. In the latter case, these instances will be discussed.⁶²

This study employs inscriptions, papyri, coinage and legal documents. For inscriptions, it uses modern epigraphic collections that have already collated the relevant inscriptions, and it employs statistical studies by scholars in the field of Roman epigraphy, as will be highlighted

⁵⁸ On Eusebius: Wallace-Hadrill (1960); Stead (1973); Barnes (1981) 81-188; Attridge & Hata (1992); Grafton & Williams (2006); Inowlocki & Zamagni (2011). On the *Historia Ecclesiastica*: Oulton (1932). On the *Vita Constantini*: Barnes (1989b); Hall (1993); Cameron & Hall (1999).

⁵⁹ Rohrbacher (2016), with quotation from 4.

⁶⁰ Barnes (1978) 90-97, 108-123.

⁶¹ These biases are best displayed in *Vita Taciti*.

⁶² Prominent studies on the *Historia Augusta*: Alföldi, Straub & Rosen (1964-1991); Syme (1968); (1971); Barnes (1978); Syme (1983a); Rohrbacher (2016).

later. The study uses coins on the notion that coinage was used by the emperor to convey messages to his subjects. One must take care when investing coins with political meaning, since Roman coins were first and foremost objects of economic exchange. Indeed, Jones challenged the modern view of coins as inherently political objects, urging that one must be very cautious when using images and legends as explicit imperial ‘messages’. For Jones, even if coinage did convey messages, its intended audience would have been unable to decipher them.⁶³ Similarly, Crawford is of the view that the emperor paid little attention to coin types and that the public noticed little about their coins other than the issuing authority.⁶⁴ On the other hand, Levick suggests that mint officials chose specific types to flatter the emperor.⁶⁵ In 1987 Hölischer and Zanker demonstrated the importance of art as a medium for ideological statements, and using these works, recent scholarship has favoured the view that coins were ‘mediums of message’.⁶⁶ These studies present coins as portable, accessible and flexible in their ability to convey messages.⁶⁷ Coins combine portraiture on the obverse, further images on the reverse and the use of legends on obverse and reverse to communicate an array of messages. Images are also laden with symbolic details. It would appear then that coins were indeed ‘mediums of message’, in which case one must consider whose message was being communicated. There is considerable literary evidence that coinage reflected the imperial will, regardless of whether the emperor himself or his functionaries determined the types being produced, and that the public paid attention to coin legends and images. For example, Suetonius claims that Augustus struck coins with the image of Capricorn because he was pleased with his horoscope (*Aug.* 94.12), and Julian notes that the Antiochenes mock the motifs on his coins (*Mis.* 355d).⁶⁸ Indeed, it makes much sense that an emperor sought to secure and preserve his legitimacy through communicating with his subjects, and that he utilized coins as the most portable and accessible medium available, most likely relying on trusted functionaries to determine types.⁶⁹ Furthermore, Hebblewhite persuasively argues that the emperor used coinage to encourage fidelity from the army, by which

⁶³ Jones (1956) 13-34. See also the rebuttal by Sutherland (1959) 73-82.

⁶⁴ Crawford (1983) 47-64.

⁶⁵ Levick (1982).

⁶⁶ Hölischer (1987); Zanker (1987). Hedlund (2008) 25-27 notes some geographical and chronological limitations to their approach.

⁶⁷ Cheung (1998); Hedlund (2008); Manders (2012).

⁶⁸ Ando (2000) 216-228 provides a summary of the evidence.

⁶⁹ Ando (2000) 221. Levick (1982) rightly questions whether the emperors themselves had the time and inclination to determine coin types.

he sought to convince the troops of his military qualities and thus right to rule.⁷⁰ This study thus uses coins on the theoretical basis that they were mediums of message and considers ways in which they may have reflected the will of the emperors.

For legislation, this study uses the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, that is, the Justinian Code (henceforth *CJ*), the Digest and the Institutes; juristic works compiled on the orders of the emperor Justinian with the purpose of codifying Roman law. The Digest compiles juristic opinions from the late Republic to the third century. The Institutes is a legal textbook largely based on the Institutes of Gaius, a jurist writing in the second century. The *CJ*, of which the second of two editions survives, is a collection of imperial *constitutiones*, imperial pronouncements with the force of law, and it was designed to assist administrators in the pronouncement of legal judgements, since the constitutions were to be used as legal precedent. Justinian commissioned the *CJ* so that the constitutions from the three earlier codes, the Gregorian, Hermogenian and Theodosian codes, as well as those of the post-Theodosian novels and Justinian himself could be compiled within a single volume. Justinian wished the editors to harmonize the law through the selection of constitutions and elimination of conflicting texts. The now-lost Gregorian and Hermogenian codes, which had likewise been designed as reference works of legal precedent, had been compiled by the lawyers Gregorius and Hermogenianus, who at the time had served within Diocletian's palatine bureaucracy. As a result, the *CJ* contains about 1200 constitutions of Diocletian, mostly private rescripts.⁷¹

The *CJ* thus provides evidence on Tetrarchic law, but it is not without problems. Justinian gave the *CJ* and *Digest* editors permission to alter texts as they saw fit, and comparison between versions of the same constitutions within the *CJ* and other collections reveals the ways in which they were altered. The editors truncated many constitutions to be bare statements of law, which means that the historian often does not know the original context and type of constitution. The editors amalgamated texts, and made emendations and interpolations, with the result that texts sometimes appear quite different from the originals.⁷² The editors made or reproduced mistakes.

⁷⁰ Hebblewhite (2017) 33-50, 197-205. This study will follow Wallace-Hadrill (1986) 67 in avoiding the emotive and modern term 'propaganda', lest the study become distracted with semantics.

⁷¹ On the Gregorian and Hermogenian codes: Corcoran (2000a) 25-42. The Tetrarchic palatine secretaries: Corcoran 75-94.

⁷² Corcoran (2000a) 16-19 offers *CJ* 8.54.2 and 3.29.4/8.53.6 as cautionary tales.

They confuse sole and joint reigns; emperors are given the wrong number of consulships; the days before kalends, nones and ides drop out; months are mixed up; and editors supply gaps in the consular dating of constitutions from their own list of consuls. While these texts should thus be used with caution, we should not deem them epitomes of the original, since the texts needed to remain sufficiently close to the original to prove to a judge that they represented an emperor's will. The editors would have sought to preserve the operative words, those which set out the principle of law, as far as possible, since the texts were sacred and the compilers, as lawyers, respected authority. Scholars detect stylistically coherent chronological periods, which suggests the fundamental integrity of most texts.⁷³

Two other compilations of constitutions are useful: *Fragmenta Vaticana* and *Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio*. The *Fragmenta* appear to have been compiled before 324, and they provide most of the constitutions attributable to Maximian. The *Collatio* includes constitutions from the Gregorian and Hermogenian codes. The constitutions in these collections can be compared with the *CJ* versions.⁷⁴

The imperial governments were of course responsible for legislation, and the state also authorised inscriptions and, through imperial mints, coins. We can consider these sources to be 'official' media, that is, media produced either by the emperors, those immediately surrounding them, or officials anticipating the imperial will.⁷⁵ However, the empire's subjects also produced media that honoured the emperors, thereby interpreting and shaping political ideology through their own inscriptions, coins, etc.⁷⁶ This bilateral shaping of imperial ideology leads us onto panegyrics, speeches that gave praise to the emperor(s), of which this study makes extensive use. This study specifically employs the *Panegyrici Latini*, a collection of panegyrics of which one is Pliny's *Panegyricus* and the other 11 were delivered by men of letters between 289 and 389. Of these 11, seven date to the period between Diocletian's accession in 284 and Galerius' death in 311: Panegyric 10(2), delivered before Maximian in 289; Panegyric 11(3), delivered before Maximian in 291; Panegyric 8(5), delivered before Constantius in 296/7; Panegyric 9(4),

⁷³ Honoré (1994) 48-56; Corcoran (2000a) 9-19.

⁷⁴ Corcoran (2000a) 10-11.

⁷⁵ Hekster (2015) 30-34, who uses the term 'central media', although this seems less appropriate for an imperial college.

⁷⁶ See e.g. Davenport (2014a) on imperial ideology and commemorative culture in the eastern Roman Empire.

delivered by one Eumenius before a governor in Gaul in the late 290s; Panegyric 7(6), delivered before Constantine and his guest Maximian in 307; Panegyric 6(7), delivered before Constantine in 310; and Panegyric 5(8), delivered before Constantine in 311.⁷⁷ Most of the speeches in this collection, and all of those that date to the Tetrarchic period, were delivered in Gaul. It is unknown when the collection was compiled, although it is possible that the Gallic orator Pacatus, who delivered the panegyric in 389, was responsible, since his speech borrowed ideas and phraseology from the earlier speeches.⁷⁸ The speeches were not compiled for their political messages, since these change with each speech, sometimes dramatically (cf. 7(6) and 6(7)). Rather, since the collection begins with Pliny's panegyric, which probably stood as a model for the genre, and appears to collect speeches delivered by Gauls, the corpus was probably compiled for literary study or as an expression of literary taste with an element of provincial pride.⁷⁹

Scholars have persuasively argued that the speeches are authentic and were delivered on the occasions that they purport to have been delivered.⁸⁰ There is literary testimony for the performance of specific panegyrics (e.g. Fronto, *Ad Antoninum Imp.* 2.2), and Menander Rhetor's handbook on delivering panegyric, *Basilikos Logos*, presupposes the practice.⁸¹ Furthermore, the circumstances of delivery can be reconstructed from incidental details within the speeches themselves.⁸² Nixon and Rodgers argue that the speeches were not 'polished up or amplified after delivery'. They note that the speeches are relatively short, and they question why a speaker should have delivered a rough version of their speech before the emperor, since the political potency of panegyrics came from the ceremonial act of giving praise.⁸³ It is impossible to know if these speeches were polished after delivery, but the context of delivery must not be overlooked. Orators gave panegyrics on various occasions, including the emperor's birthday, imperial anniversaries, victory celebrations and anniversaries of the foundation of imperial capitals. However, an emperor did not need to be physically present for an orator to dedicate a panegyric. The emperors are absent in 9(4) and 4(10), and Rees demonstrates that multiple

⁷⁷ Debate exists over whether the speakers in 289 and 291 are the same person. See e.g. Rees (2002) 193-204, who concludes that, if they were not the same author, the speaker in 291 must have been familiar with the earlier speech.

⁷⁸ Pichon (1906) 285-291; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 6-7.

⁷⁹ Nixon (1993) 232-233 n. 16; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 7; Rees (2002) 22-23.

⁸⁰ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 27-28; Rees (2002) 21.

⁸¹ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 27.

⁸² Rees (2002) 21.

⁸³ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 27-28. The role of panegyrics within ceremonial: MacCormack (1981) 1-14; Rees (2002) 6-19.

panegyrics refer to an imperial *praesentia* (presence) that transcends the physical location of the emperor to extol the emperors' omnipresence. It is thus likely that panegyrics were delivered throughout the empire on special occasions, and that copies of some were then sent to the emperor(s).⁸⁴

The Gallic panegyrics are not examples of centrally-produced imperial self-promotion. The orators of the Tetrarchic period, with the probable exception of the panegyrist in 291, were not in imperial service at the time of their speeches, and thus cannot be considered press secretaries. Rather, they were professional teachers, who could write appropriate speeches without direction from above.⁸⁵ They display personal preferences concerning content. For example, Rodgers discusses how the Gallic panegyrists differently approach the insinuation of imperial divinity.⁸⁶ Moreover, Hekster shows that provincial interpretations of emperorship did not always originate from official media, but often drew upon parallel ideas and motifs, which may reflect tradition and may stem from local context or audience.⁸⁷ Certainly, officials could brief orators on content, and the panegyric in 310 appears to be one such example, since the speaker proclaims to his audience that Constantine is a descendant of Claudius II, and states that most are unaware of this (6(7).2.1-2).⁸⁸ Libanius wrote to the emperor and officials asking for information to include in his speeches.⁸⁹ But it is doubtful that officials usually deeply concerned themselves with the contents of a single speech, since numerous panegyrics were delivered on numerous occasions (*Paneg.* 12(9).1.1).⁹⁰ The panegyrist's purpose was to display loyalty and gratitude through praise, sometimes on behalf of a community, and in some cases to ask a favour. The panegyrist in 310 asks for imperial investment in a rebuilding program in Autun (6(7).22), and the speaker in 311 thanks the emperor for granting Autun tax relief (5(8).*passim*). The orator himself might seek ongoing patronage for his school, further renown and imperial preferment (6(7).23.3).⁹¹ Orators did not wish to cause offence, since the consequences could have been dire, and to achieve their aims they needed to tailor their speeches to accord with how

⁸⁴ Rees (2002) 12-19.

⁸⁵ Nixon (1993) 231; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 29-30.

⁸⁶ Rodgers (1986); see also Rees (2005) 226-235 on their different approaches to the *signa* Jovius and Herculius.

⁸⁷ Hekster (2015) 318-319. Davenport (2016) uses the panegyrics of 289 and 291 as case studies for this point.

⁸⁸ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 29, 219 n. 5. For other examples where orators sought a briefing or were briefed, see Davenport (2016) 382-383.

⁸⁹ Ando (2000) 127-128.

⁹⁰ Nixon (1993) 232-233; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 31. See also *Paneg.* 6(7).1.1.

⁹¹ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 31; Rees (2002) 7-8.

the emperors wished to be represented. Therefore, the Gallic panegyrics were at the same time independent works of literature and indicators of imperial self-representation.⁹²

The genre was one of effusive praise. Panegyrics embellished and exaggerated to present the emperor and empire in the best possible light, and they ignored or minimized things that reflected negatively on the emperor. Nevertheless, much can be gleaned from how an orator describes an issue and what he chooses to include or ignore. The panegyric delivered before Maximian and Constantine provides good examples. The speaker fails to mention Maxentius, who was Maximian's son and co-emperor in Italy. This is surprising in a speech that extols hereditary succession (e.g. 7(6).2.2), and it suggests that tensions existed between father and son.⁹³ The speaker asks what might justify Diocletian's abdication other than that Maximian would succeed in place of both (9.6), which shows that Maximian was still willing to draw legitimacy from the retired emperor and suggests that Diocletian had done little to publicly oppose Maximian and Constantine. The speaker states that 'a residual dashing of waves murmurs' (*residuus undarum pulsus immurmurat*) (12.8), referencing the opposition of Galerius, which suggests that Maximian and/or Constantine were unwilling to take an openly hostile stance towards the eastern emperor.⁹⁴ The panegyrics are also useful for the events that they describe, since their testimony is contemporary, unique in the inclusion of certain events, and sometimes quite detailed.⁹⁵

b. The Army and Political Power

Having discussed the sources and how this study uses said sources, I can now argue the study's premise; namely, that by the time Diocletian took power in 284, the military had come to dominate imperial politics, and that the rise of Diocletian and his co-rulers had depended upon the increased political power of the military. The Roman army had always been an essential

⁹² Nixon (1983); Sabbah (1984) 371-372; Nixon (1993); Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 28-33; Whitby (1998); Rees (2002), esp. 23-25.

⁹³ Rees (2002) 181-182; cf. Barnes (2004) 120.

⁹⁴ Grünwald (1990) 33; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 207-208 n. 44. Cf. Nixon (1993) 244-245, who suggests that eastern rulers were of little interest to Gallic panegyrists. Leadbetter (2009) 192 suggests that any mention of Galerius would raise questions about Maximian's legitimacy.

⁹⁵ See e.g. *Paneg.* 8(5) on the war with Allectus. The historical value of the *Panegyrici Latini*: Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 33-35.

pillar of support for emperors, and in accordance with this, emperors had extolled their military virtues. But during the later third century, the empire witnessed a major increase in the political activity of its army and officers. Earlier in the century, Septimius Severus (193-211) and Caracalla (211-217) had used the Roman army as their primary source of legitimacy and support. They placed special emphasis on their own military credentials and increased the soldiers' pay, and Severus made it easier for soldiers to live with their wives, gave permission for serving *principales* to form *collegia*, and granted permission to soldiers to wear the *anulus aureus*, which conferred on them the rank of *honestior*.⁹⁶ Thus, Severus and Caracalla had increased the army's importance as a force of political legitimation, and this in combination with the benefits that they had conferred encouraged soldiers and officers to be more politically assertive. The many occasions of military discord demonstrate as much, from the refusal of Legio II Parthica to admit Caracalla into their camp in 211 to the murder of Pupienus and Balbinus in 238.⁹⁷ As the century progressed, the problem worsened. Approaching the middle of the century, pressure from foreign enemies intensified, and this encouraged frequent provincial military rebellion in support of proximate generals who as emperors could attend to the needs of the legions that gave them *imperium*. Aurelius Victor bemoans that the senate lost to the army the power to elect emperors (*Caes.* 37.5-7).⁹⁸ Although Victor relates the senate's earlier power with nostalgic exaggeration, the later third century attests to an increase in army-based acclamations. Between 235 and 284, perhaps more than sixty men claimed the *imperium*. Almost all these emperors were acclaimed by the army, and these army acclamations usually constituted a rebellion against an existing emperor.⁹⁹ It was also not uncommon for emperors to be assassinated by the military, especially when soldiers decided to side with a rival emperor. Examples include Severus Alexander, Maximinus Thrax, Philip, Trebonianus Gallus, Aemilian, Quintillus, Florian, Probus and Carinus.¹⁰⁰ The Gallic emperor Tetricus (271-274) supposedly so feared his soldiers that he

⁹⁶ Severus' privileges: Hdn. 3.8.5; Mann (1983) 66; Cowan (2003) 21; Eck (2011); Davenport (2012) 115-118. Note the apocryphal last words of Severus to his sons: 'Rule together as brothers, enrich the soldiers, and forget about everybody else' (Dio 77.15). Note also Herodian's claim, with the advantage of hindsight, that the privileges granted by Severus made him the first emperor to overturn the obedience, discipline and modesty of the soldiers towards their generals, teaching them to hunt for money and diverting them towards luxury (3.8.4-5).

⁹⁷ Hekster (2008) 36-37; Potter (2014) 136-137, 170.

⁹⁸ See also Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 36.1.

⁹⁹ For a survey, see Kienast (2011) 177-263.

¹⁰⁰ Alexander: Hdn. 6.7.10-8.8; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 24.3-4; Eutr. 9.1; HA, *Alex.* 61.1-7, 63.5-6, *Maxim.* 7.3-6; Zos. 1.11.3-13.2; Zon. 12.15. Maximinus: Hdn. 8.5.2-6.1; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 27.4; Eutr. 9.1; HA, *Maxim.* 23-24; *Epit.* 25.2; Zos. 1.15; Zon. 12.16; cf. Oros. 7.19.2-3. Philip: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 28.10-11; Eutr. 9.3; *Epit.* 28.2-3; Oros. 7.20.4-

surrendered himself to his civil war rival Aurelian rather than remain with them.¹⁰¹ In contrast, there was a decline in the importance of senatorial approval. Carus (282-283) at the latest acted without senatorial recognition, and regional emperors successfully ruled in Gaul (260-274) and the Near East (267-273) without being viewed as legitimate elsewhere in the empire.¹⁰² The attainment of military approval was not merely a matter of winning over power-brokers among the officers. Diocletian's accession and the creation of the Second Tetrarchy are known to have been legitimized at military assemblies at which the soldiers present expressed their approval through acclamation. On the other hand, when officers assassinated Gallienus, the upset soldiers needed to be won over with a generous donative, and when Aurelian was assassinated, the assassins fled the camp rather than attempt a coup, and the decision of succession was deferred to the authority of the senate. Thus, the soldiery was no mere instrument that could be easily employed in the pursuit of power. They required constant attention and monetary appeasement.¹⁰³

During the third century, the command of the empire's military units also underwent change. Although equestrians had long held important military commands, from the reign of Septimius Severus onwards, progressively fewer senators were appointed as military commanders and as governors of provinces with legions. Instead, equestrians whose career had been predominantly military gradually took the place of senators in the military sphere.¹⁰⁴ This study calls such men military professionals, although the term is somewhat anachronistic, since patronage rather than merit was the principal means of advancement in an equestrian career, and many equestrians held both military and administrative positions.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, career

21.2; cf. Zos. 1.22.2; Zon. 12.19. Gallus: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 31.2; Eutr. 9.5; *Epit.* 31.1; Zos. 1.28.3; Zon. 12.21. Aemilian: Zos. 1.29.1; Zon. 12.22; cf. Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 31.3. Quintillus: HA, *Claud.* 12.5, *Aur.* 37.6; cf. Zon. 12.26. Florian: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 37.1; HA, *Tac.* 14.2, *Prob.* 10.8; Zos. 1.64.3; cf. *Epit.* 36.2; Zon. 12.29. Probus: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 37.3-4; Eutr. 9.17; HA, *Prob.* 21.2-3, *Car.* 1.3, 6.1-2; Oros. 7.23.6; Malal. 302 (*CSHB* 32); Zon. 12.29. Carinus: Eus. *Chron.* 227 Karst; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.11-12, 14; Eutr. 9.20; Jer. *Chron.* 223; Eunap. *Hist.* fragm. 5 (Blockley); HA, *Car.* 10, 18.2; *Epit.* 38.8; Oros. 7.25.1; Petr. Patr. fragm. 199 (Banchich) = *Anon. Cont.* fragm. 13.1 (*FHG* 4, p. 198); Zon. 12.30.

¹⁰¹ Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 35.3-4; Eutr. 9.13; HA, *Tyr. Trig.* 24.2-3, *Aur.* 32.3; Oros. 7.23.5; see also Eutr. 9.10; Oros. 7.22.12. Drinkwater (1987) 42-43 and Watson (1999) 93-94 doubt the story's historicity.

¹⁰² Johne (2008) 624-626; Mennen (2011) 45.

¹⁰³ Hedlund (2008) 117. Diocletian's accession: Intr. c. Second Tetrarchy: Lact. *DMP* 19. Gallienus: HA, *Gall.* 15.1; Zos. 1.41. Aurelian: Watson (1999) 104-116. Cf. Birley (2007), who argues that the army, prior to the fifth century, was a tool for the attainment of power, and not an independently proactive body in the acclamation of emperors. His assessment does not appear to hold true for the third century, which at times bears some resemblance to the critical times of the fifth century.

¹⁰⁴ Strobel (2007) 271-273; Mennen (2011) 137-149, 156-159, 193-246.

¹⁰⁵ Davenport (2012) 96, 120-121.

specialization was on the rise in the third century. There were equestrians who enjoyed largely or entirely military careers, and by the time of the Tetrarchy, the military and civilian *cursus* had become divided.¹⁰⁶ Merit also did matter, as suggested by the content of letters that recommend the promotion of equestrian officers, and as the empire descended into military crises, one can expect merit to have mattered further still.¹⁰⁷ These military professionals, by virtue of their non-senatorial background and more militarized career path, thus differed from the senatorial aristocrats who enjoyed the occasional senior command.

There is good evidence for the rise of these military professionals. To begin with the early third century, temporary army units, such as vexillations, became the chief tactical units of the empire due to their flexibility. Severus assigned most of these units to senators, albeit often *homines noui*, but Caracalla and Severus Alexander (222-235) included far fewer senatorial commanders in their expeditionary forces.¹⁰⁸ In the case of gubernatorial offices, equestrians usually held the title of *agens u(ice) p(raesidis)* (acting governor), and thus officially held a temporary post. This was not new, since in the first and second centuries, equestrians had replaced senators as governors when the senator had died or been dismissed, holding the post as an interim measure. But from the reign of Severus Alexander, some provinces, such as Dacia, were so frequently governed by *agentes uice praesidis* that the practice had probably lost its improvised nature.¹⁰⁹ After 240, senators are rarely attested as governors of provinces in which legions were stationed.¹¹⁰

Several factors explain these trends. In the first and second centuries, the *ordo equester* had grown in size, had become more diverse geographically and had become more professionalized, since a family's entry into the lower reaches of the order, via census qualification and individual patronage, could be attained at a greater social and physical distance from the emperor than entry into the *ordo senatorius*. As a result, emperors increasingly relied on this body of administrators, and to an extent the increased use of equestrian military professionals as commanders and governors in the third century was thus a natural

¹⁰⁶ Kulikowski (2014) 144.

¹⁰⁷ On the commissioning of equestrian officers, see Birley (2003) 1-18, with 5 on merit. Letters: Plin. *Ep.* 10.87; Fronto, *Ad Amicos* 1.5.

¹⁰⁸ Mennen (2011) 142.

¹⁰⁹ Mennen (2011) 137-139.

¹¹⁰ Mennen (2011) 68-70.

progression.¹¹¹ By the third century, there was also perhaps a mistrust of senators, whose wealth and connections could render them a threat. In a prosopographical survey of Severus' high-ranking military officers, Mennen shows that Severus over the course of his reign transferred his early senatorial allies (Marius Maximus, Cornelius Anullinus, etc) from military to administrative positions.¹¹² In any case, the increased threat from foreign enemies and usurpers meant that military professionals were also more needed than before, and military pressures ensured that emperors also spent less time in Rome and more time on campaign. Their contact with the senate thus lessened while for military men in the emperor's entourage, the opportunities to gain influence increased, as they did for military men whom the emperor met in the field and in the provinces. The fact that most emperors came to power in the militarized border regions also meant that new emperors relied on their military staff and provincial elite to form an imperial staff. These high-ranking officers would have in turn aided the promotion of the centurions, *primipili*, tribunes and *praefecti* who helped them. It was also in the interests of the imperial administration to promote such men since they could influence the soldiery.¹¹³ The career of L. Petronius Taurus Volusianus provides an example of this process, for whom an inscription erected during the sole reign of Gallienus (260-268) documents his climb from *centurio deputatus* to consul (*ILS* 1332). Having initially served with the *iudices ex V decuriis* but having then entered upon a military career, Volusianus served as a *centurio deputatus* in Rome and a *primuspilus* in Germania Inferior. He then served as *praepositus equitum singulariorum Augg. NN.*, i.e. commander of the horse guard 'of our Augusti', which should refer to the current regime, and thus the joint rule of Gallienus and his father Valerian (253-260). Volusianus was subsequently appointed as a commander of three legionary detachments, and then tribune of the third cohort of the *uigiles*, tribune of the eleventh urban cohort, tribune of the fourth praetorian cohort, tribune of the first praetorian cohort and *protector*, *praefectus uigilum*, praetorian prefect, and *consul ordinarius*, an office he held alongside Gallienus in 261. Volusianus had thus experienced rapid promotion between 253 and 261.¹¹⁴ Promotions of this kind could stem from a humbler position. In the late second and third centuries, emperors

¹¹¹ Kulikowski (2014) 138-140.

¹¹² Mennen (2011) 194-215; see also Le Bohec (2004). The idea that mistrust was a reason for the change has been doubted: E.g. Lo Cascio (2005) 159; Hekster (2008) 41.

¹¹³ Mennen (2011) 156.

¹¹⁴ *PLRE* 1 Volusianus 6; Mennen (2011) 227-229. Year of consulship: *Chron. Min.* 1.59 (*Chron.* 354), 228 (*Des. Cons.*).

seeking to court the army promoted soldiers to posts in the *militiae equestres*, posts originally limited to the *ordo equester*, and sometimes granted equestrian status to the sons of soldiers.¹¹⁵ In the third century, civilians increasingly mobilised military cadre personnel to relay messages to the emperor and his entourage, which reflects the fact that military professionals now had the most access to the emperor.¹¹⁶ Therefore, the opportunities for soldiers and their families to ascend the ranks and gain higher status had increased. An inscription from the late third or early fourth century documents the rise of Valerius Thumpus from soldier to *lanziarius* to *protector* to prefect of II Herculia (*ILS* 2781).¹¹⁷ In a study of equestrian officers known from the third century, Devijver found that their social background tended to be humbler than in previous times and that they increasingly tended to originate in the frontier provinces.¹¹⁸

By the sole reign of Gallienus, senatorial *tribuni militum* cease to be attested, and the practice of replacing senatorial *legati legionis* with equestrian *praefecti legionis* had become widespread. High commands in regions continuously struck by military crises seem to have been reserved for equestrians with considerable military and logistical experience.¹¹⁹ There were also relatively more *agentes uice praesidis* than in the late Severan period, and eventually they became so common that they were referred to simply as *praesides*.¹²⁰ Likewise, the *praefecti legionis*, who had originally been called *praefecti legionis agentes uice praesidis*, received the shortened title and were thus no longer presented as deputies to the senatorial commanders.¹²¹ Aurelius Victor claims that Gallienus issued an edict forbidding senators from taking military commands (*Caes.* 33.33-34, 37.5-6). Scholars have doubted the edict's historicity, since senatorial involvement in military affairs was already in decline.¹²² But in any case, Gallienus' reign reveals a changed situation, and perhaps the emperor had formalized existing trends.¹²³ When Gallienus had ruled jointly with his father Valerian, the regime's upper echelons were still filled with senators, mostly from the wealthy areas of Italy, North Africa and the Aegean rim. Prosopography shows that by the 260s, the role of senators in military events had become

¹¹⁵ Davenport (2012).

¹¹⁶ Hekster (2008) 40-41; Mennen (2011) 149.

¹¹⁷ Date: *PLRE* 1 Thumpus.

¹¹⁸ Devijver (1992) 316-338; see also Pflaum (1976) 114-117.

¹¹⁹ Mennen (2011) 143-144.

¹²⁰ Mennen (2011) 139-140.

¹²¹ Mennen (2011) 143.

¹²² E.g. De Blois (1976) 57-83; Christol (1982) 143-166; Le Bohec (2004).

¹²³ Mennen (2011) 144.

marginal. The high-ranking generals of Gallienus appear to have gained experience and made connections as middle cadre officers, and some like the praetorian prefect Heraclianus have the *nomina* M. Aurelius, and thus came from families enfranchised during the reign of Caracalla by the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212, which granted citizenship to most of the empire's free men.¹²⁴ Indeed, Pflaum has shown that about half of known equestrian officers from the 260s to 290s have these *nomina*.¹²⁵ Gallienus also established a new cavalry-heavy expeditionary force that was likewise under the command of equestrians.¹²⁶ The last consular *legatus propraetore* to be recorded appears on an inscription from 270, in Moesia Inferior (*CIL* 3.14460).

The increased importance of military professionals is evidenced in other respects. In accordance with their increased power, equestrian military men rose in status. During the mid-third century, an increasing number of such men received the title *uir perfectissimus*, which under the Severi had been reserved for the high equestrian prefects (the *praefecti annonae*, *uigilum* and *Aegypti*) and imperial secretaries. In contrast, senatorial status may have become less prestigious. From the 250s onward, high-ranking equestrians were promoted to senatorial rank less often than before. Powerful figures like Gordian III's father-in-law and praetorian prefect Timesitheus, and Philip's brother and plenipotentiary in the east Priscus, do not seem to have been elevated to senatorial rank. In an inscription, one Gnaeus Licinius Rufus records his equestrian status before his consular rank.¹²⁷ Since the power of equestrian professionals was increasing, this should mean that they now found self-importance without needing to join the *ordo senatorius*.¹²⁸ The prestigious title *protector* may also attest the increased importance of the emperor's professional staff of high-ranking and subaltern officers. In the mid-third century, a corps of *protectores* came into being and may have replaced the senatorial *comites* who had acted as advisors in the emperor's entourage. By the end of the century, this corps acted as a staff academy of sorts, opening middle- and upper-level military careers to centurions, non-commissioned officers and the sons of veterans.¹²⁹ Just as army rebellion was the great threat to third-century emperors, so were the officers who led them. Romans believed that Gordian III

¹²⁴ Mennen (2011) 193-246; Potter (2013) 17-19; (2014) 260-261.

¹²⁵ Pflaum (1976) 115-116.

¹²⁶ Mennen (2011) 144-145.

¹²⁷ Mennen (2011) 153.

¹²⁸ On the change in status, see Pflaum (1970); Mennen (2011) 156-159, 190-191. For a list of *perfectissimi uiri* in the third century, see Pflaum (1960/61) 2.624 n. 10.

¹²⁹ Strobel (2007) 273; Mennen (2011) 227-231, 239-240.

(238-244) had died on campaign as a result of the machinations of his praetorian prefect Philip the Arab (244-249).¹³⁰ Philip was overthrown by Decius (249-251), the *dux* of Pannonia and Moesia.¹³¹ Gallienus faced usurpations by his general on the Rhine Postumus, the *procurator arcae et praepositus annonae* Macrianus, and Aureolus, who was either *dux equitum* or *dux uexillationum* in Raetia and/or Germania. Gallienus was eventually assassinated by officers in his entourage.¹³²

The increasing importance of military professionals eventually impacted upon the emperorship. In the early empire, emperors came from the *ordo senatorius*, relied on a network of friends and clients in Rome and preferably had some military experience. However, increasing military pressures in the third century contributed to a changed situation. The emperor, as the *imperator*, was responsible for the safety of the empire. Faced with multiple external threats and running an empire not accustomed to dealing with such a situation, emperors were forced to frequently campaign in person while also making considerable use of their senior officers. Such a situation also encouraged local proactivity, since local men of power sometimes took the initiative against an enemy and thus became viewed as saviours, such as Uranius Antoninus and Odaenathus in the east. This placed the emperor under greater scrutiny in an environment where disasters were more likely to happen than in previous times. It also meant that the emperor was continuously competing with his senior officers and local saviours. If the emperor was seen to be incompetent or too geographically distant, a commander could become a usurper.¹³³ As a result, from the 240s until the 260s, the emperorship mostly went to senators who were in a military station at the time of their acclamation. Decius, for instance, at the time of his usurpation in 249,

¹³⁰ Gordian III's death: *Oracula Sibyllina* 13.13-19; Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 3; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 27.8; Festus, *Brev.* 22; Eutr. 9.2; Jer. *Chron.* 217; *Chron. Min.* 1.147 (*Chron.* 354); Amm. 23.5.7-8, 17; HA, *Gord.* 29.1-31.3; *Epit.* 27.2; Oros. 7.19.5; Zos. 1.18.2-19.1 (cf. 3.32.4); Zon. 12.18. Note however that Persian (*RGDS* 1.3; triumphal relief at Bishapur in Dignas & Winter (2007) 78) and Byzantine sources (e.g. Zon. 12.17) provide conflicting traditions, which has prompted debate on the nature of his death: E.g. Honigmann & Maricq (1953) 118-122; Oost (1958); MacDonald (1981); Dignas & Winter 78-80.

¹³¹ Zos. 1.21.

¹³² Gallienus' rebellious officers: Mennen (2011) 147-148 (Macrianus), 220-221 (Postumus), 234-236 (Aureolus), 236-237 (the assassins). See also Mennen 159-187 on the praetorian prefecture. Postumus: See also Eck (1985) 222-224; Drinkwater (1987) 25-26; Johne, Hartmann & Gerhardt (2008) 1125-1126.

¹³³ See also Drinkwater (2005) 59; Potter (2014) 245-247, 272. Uranius Antoninus: *PIR*² I 195; Kienast (2011) 211. Odaenathus: *PLRE* 1 Odaenathus; Hartmann (2001) 129-161; Kienast (2011) 239-240.

enjoyed a supra-regional command over Pannonia and Moesia, and had held governorships in the frontier provinces of Moesia Inferior and Germania Inferior.¹³⁴

From the 260s, the growing monopoly of military professionals over military commands brought about a further change. The men who acquired the emperorship were now themselves mostly equestrian military officers. Equestrian officers with military responsibilities had acquired the emperorship earlier in the century, namely Macrinus (217-218), Maximinus Thrax (235-238) and Philip (244-249). As Eutropius recognized (9.1), Maximinus was also the first to have gained his position as a military professional, who had attained his equestrian status by ascending the ranks of the military.¹³⁵ After Gallienus' assassination in 268, the example of Maximinus became the norm. The emperors from Augustus to the Severans had all been either of Italic origin or had originated from the Latin-speaking aristocracies of the Western provinces. The emperors from 268 were mostly equestrian military professionals with origins in the frontier provinces of Illyricum. Tacitus (275-276) was a senator, but Claudius (268-270), Aurelian (270-275) and Probus (276-282) were equestrian military officers when they became emperors. When Carus (282-283) became emperor, he was praetorian prefect and the commander of forces in Raetia and Noricum, and the former position shows that he too was not born into a senatorial family. Aurelian and Probus as well as the Gallic emperors Postumus (260-269) and Marius (269) were, like Maximinus, said to have ascended the ranks from humble origins.¹³⁶ Unless they intended their nomenclature to evoke the memory of Marcus Aurelius, the fact that Claudius, Probus, Carus and Marius were named M. Aurelius may also mean that their families were enfranchised in the time of Caracalla.¹³⁷ Of course, men with military careers had become emperor before, such as Septimius Severus. But the background and career of a senatorial aristocrat who became emperor with the help of his military tribunes and legateships is

¹³⁴ Mennen (2011) 25-26. Decius: Zos. 1.21.2; *PIR*² M 520; Huttner (2008) 201-202; Johne, Hartmann & Gerhardt 1162; Mennen 25, 142-143.

¹³⁵ Hdn. 6.8.1; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 24.11-25.1; Eutr. 9.1; HA, *Maxim.* 3; Zos. 1.13.2; Zon. 12.15. On the significance of Maximinus' accession, see Mennen (2011) 23-24; Hebblewhite (2017) 9.

¹³⁶ Tacitus: Davenport (2014b); cf. Syme (1971) 245-247; Estiot (2004) 29-34. Claudius: Potter (2014) 261. Aurelian: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 35.7, 39.28; HA, *Aur.* 3-4.2, 15.2; *Epit.* 35.1. Probus: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.28; HA, *Prob.* 3; *Epit.* 37.1. Carus: *PLRE* 1 Carus. Carus' command: Zos. 1.71.4-5 = Joh. Ant., fragm. 160 (*FHG* 4, p. 600). Postumus: Eutr. 9.9. Postumus may have been awarded *ornamenta consularia* by the time of his usurpation: Mennen 220 n. 106. Marius: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33.9-11; Eutr. 9.9; HA, *Tyr. Trig.* 8.

¹³⁷ Potter (2014) 261. Intended to evoke Marcus: Kolb (1987) 16.

distinctly different from that of a man without the benefits of aristocratic family and education, who had reached the emperorship through a soldier's career.¹³⁸

The claims of humble origin are of course somewhat problematic. Contemporary source material is scarce, and ancient senatorial authors like Lactantius and Aurelius Victor had contempt for emperors who had not been members of the *ordo senatorius*, viewing humble origins as evidence for a lack of culture and sophistication. For example, Lactantius disparages the Tetrarch Maximinus as a shepherd who rapidly and undeservedly had ascended to the Caesariate (*DMP* 19.6). It is likely then that authors exaggerated the non-aristocratic backgrounds of certain emperors. But the fact that these authors claimed humble background for some equestrian emperors and not for others shows that they did not consider them to be equally humble and suggests a basis of truth. Moreover, sources generally give minimal detail on the ancestries and careers of humble emperors, which suggests that emperors did little to publicize these topics because they considered them taboo. Menander recommends that panegyrists praise family if distinguished (370.9-371.2), but in the case of the Tetrarchs themselves, apparently of humble ancestry, no panegyric praises their parents, and official media and lavish court ceremonial emphasized, among other things, their quasi-divinity, not their origins. Admittedly, two of the panegyrists praise the emperors' provinces of birth as places of military valour, but conspicuously they avoid saying anything specific about who the emperors used to be (10(2).2.2; 11(3).3.9-4.1).¹³⁹ This again suggests that there is a basis of truth to the idea that emperors of this period were of relatively humble origins. That such men could attain the emperorship need not surprise. The previously described examples of Volusianus and Thimumpus demonstrate that it was possible to climb far up the ranks.

Emperors in this period were mostly chosen for their military capability. Indeed, some emperors are explicitly attested as having been chosen because they were militarily superior to the existing emperor. For example, when Herodian narrates how Maximinus ousted Severus Alexander, he explains that Alexander was considered unwarlike and under the destructive influence of his mother (6.8.3), an emperor who would rather negotiate with barbarians than

¹³⁸ Pflaum (1976) 115-117; Hedlund (2008) 115-116; Johne (2008) 601-603, who defends the notion that the years from 235-284 constituted *Die Zeit der Soldaten-Kaiser*; Mennen (2011) 22-28.

¹³⁹ Syme (1971) 194-195; Davenport (2016) 384-388.

fight and whose inaction had recently led to failure against the Persians (6.7.9-10, 8.2-3). In contrast, Maximinus was dedicated to the life of a soldier (6.9.5), ‘not only taught them (the soldiers) what to do but also took the lead in all tasks’ (οὐ μόνον διδάσκων αὐτοὺς τὰ ποιητέα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις πάντων προηγούμενος) (6.8.2), and was considered a συστρατιώτης (‘fellow-soldier’) and σύσκηνος (‘messmate’) (6.8.4). Similarly, Zosimus claims that the Pannonian and Moesian legions acclaimed Decius emperor partly to avoid being punished by the general for an earlier rebellion, and partly because he was superior to the emperor Philip in political skill and military experience (1.21.3).¹⁴⁰ Emperors were also more personally involved in campaigns than before, directly assuming the role of *imperator* (commander) rather than delegating all responsibility.¹⁴¹ The increased importance of military credentials for assuming and maintaining power was also reflected in the media of the period. For instance, on coinage military themes became more expressive and frequent than in the early empire.¹⁴² The emperorship had thus become more militarized.

c. *The Tetrarchs as Military Emperors*

As previously noted, we know very little that is specific about the origins or careers of the Tetrarchs, which, considering how long they were in power, suggests that they considered aspects of their backgrounds to be unworthy of publicity. This points to the non-aristocratic

¹⁴⁰ Lee (2007) 22-30; Hebblewhite (2017) 8-15. Zos. 1.21.3: Οἱ δὲ ταύτη στρατιῶται τὸν Δέκιον ὀρῶντες τοῖς ἡμαρτηκόσιν ἐπεξιόντα, κάλλιον εἶναι σφίσις ἡγήσαντο καὶ τὸν παρὰ πόδας ἀποσείσασθαι κίνδυνον καὶ ἅμα προστήσασθαι μόναρχον, ὃς καὶ τῶν κοινῶν ἂν ἐπιμεληθεῖη κρεῖσσον καὶ οὐ σὺν πόνῳ περιέσται Φιλίππου, πολιτικῇ τε ἀρετῇ καὶ πολεμικῇ πείρᾳ προήκων.

¹⁴¹ Hebblewhite (2017) 22-27. It is noteworthy that Maximinus personally fought in battles. Herodian emphasizes the emperor’s battlefield heroism, and yet despises him (7.2.6-8; see also 6.8.2, 4). Campbell (1984) 55-56, 68-69, (1994) 234 and (2005) 27 argues that Maximinus began a trend of personal combat, although the evidence for this is inconclusive and unreliable, and Hebblewhite 22-27 argues that emperors who fought as *commilitones* (fellow soldiers) were exceptional. It is noteworthy that Dio 78.13.1 claims that Caracalla challenged an enemy chieftain to one-on-one combat, and that Petr. Patr. fragm. 182 (Banchich = *Anon. Cont. fragm. 6 (FHG 4, pp. 194-195)*) claims that Gallienus did the same to Postumus. Drinkwater (1987) 84 argues that the latter story may have merit, since Gallienus was an admirer of Caracalla.

¹⁴² Media as a whole: Hebblewhite (2017) 33-70. Coins: Manders (2007) 285, 289-290; Hedlund (2008) 50-123; Manders (2012) 11-222; Hebblewhite 33-50, 197-202. Titulature: Hebblewhite 50-60. On the visual depiction of emperors, King (1999) 133 with n. 21 and Hedlund 54, 93 discuss the armoured/cuirassed look, and Hedlund 67-68 discusses the post-Severan popularity of showing the emperor holding a *uictoriola*. See Kleiner (1992) 361-376 and Hekster (2008) 59-61 on the military hairstyle. On the depiction of military vigour through realistic physiognomies and overtly expressive features, see Smith (1997) 179; Hedlund 94-96. Hedlund 93-96, 106-113 and Hebblewhite 22-23, 42-43 discuss how the roles of *imperator* and *commilito* became more conflated than in previous times.

nature of their origins. Indeed, what little we know of their backgrounds indicates that they would not have attained power if not for the militarization of the emperorship. Like their predecessors, Diocletian and his colleagues were equestrian military professionals from Illyricum who had ascended the ranks, supposedly from humble beginnings, to become important political players. For instance, Aurelius Victor discusses the following (*Caes.* 39.26, 28):

His sane omnibus Illyricum patria fuit: qui, quamquam humanitatis parum, ruris tamen ac militiae miseris imbuti satis optimi reipublicae fuere. ... Sed horum concordia maxime edocuit uirtuti ingenium usumque bonae militiae, quanta his Aureliani Probique instituto fuit, paene sat esse.

Illyricum was actually the native land of all of them: so, although they were deficient in culture, they had nevertheless been sufficiently schooled by the hardships of the countryside and of military service to be the best men for the state. ... But the harmony of these (rulers) has definitely demonstrated that natural ability and the experience of a successful military career, such as had been set as a precedent for them by Aurelian and Probus, are nearly sufficient to ensure merit.¹⁴³

For Victor, the Tetrarchs were soldiers and not aristocrats. Diocletian's relatively humble origins are confirmed by Eutropius, who notes that Diocletian was (9.19):

... Dalmatia oriundum, uirum obscurissime natum, adeo ut a plerisque scribae filius, a nonnullis Anullini senatoris libertinus fuisse credatur.

... a man originating from such an obscure birth in Dalmatia that most people think he was the son of a scribe, and some the freedman of the senator Anullinus.¹⁴⁴

The claim that Diocletian had been the freedman of one Anullinus reappears in the *Epitome de Caesaribus* (39.1).

In the case of Maximian, his panegyrists and the *Epitome* agree that he originated in rural Pannonia. The *Epitome* is most specific (40.10):

¹⁴³ Trans. Bird (1994) 43-44 with alterations. On this passage, see also Barnes (1982) 37-38 n. 43; cf. *PLRE* 1 Maximianus 9. Victor also notes the humble origins of the Caesars at 40.12-13.

¹⁴⁴ Trans. Rees (2004) 98. For Diocletian's birth in Dalmatia, see also Lact. *DMP* 19.6; *Epit.* 39.1; Const. Porphyr. *De Them.* 57-58 (*CSHB* 18); Zon. 12.31; cf. *Paneg.* 11(3).3.9-4.1, which implies a frontier province.

Aurelius Maximianus, cognomento Herculus, ferus natura, ardens libidine, consiliis stolidus, ortu agresti Pannonioque. Nam etiam nunc haud longe Sirmio eminent locus palatio ibidem constructo, ubi parentes eius exercebant opera mercenaria.

Aurelius Maximianus, with the *cognomen* Herculus, was fierce by nature, burning with lust, stolid in his counsels, and of rustic and Pannonian stock. For even now, not far from Sirmium, there is a place prominent because of a palace constructed there, where his parents once worked wage-earning jobs.¹⁴⁵

Maximian's life and career somewhat corresponded with that of Diocletian. The panegyrist in 291 asserts that camps, battles and equal victories had made Diocletian and Maximian brothers, perhaps implying that the emperors had interacted as career soldiers (11(3).7.5). The panegyrist in 307 states that Maximian had had Diocletian as a *socius* (partner) for the whole of his life (7(6).9.2). In narrating Diocletian's appointment of Maximian, Aurelius Victor describes Maximian as 'loyal in friendship' (*fidum amicitia*) and a talented if semi-civilized (*semiagrestem*) soldier (*Caes.* 39.17). The *Historia Augusta* claims a long-time friendship when it erroneously reports that Maximian and the author's grandfather knew that Diocletian had wished to reign, Diocletian having told his grandfather of a prophecy that predicted his rule (*Carus* 15.1). While claims of a long-time friendship would have been useful for imperial self-promotion, Maximian's later abdication at the same time as that of Diocletian attests to the strong loyalty that the Augusti had for one another.

As for Constantius, the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* reports that (1.1):

Constantius, diui Claudii optimi principis nepos ex fratre, protector primum, inde tribunus, postea praeses Dalmatiarum fuit.

Constantius, grandson of the brother of divine Claudius, the best prince, was first *protector*, then tribune, and afterwards governor of the Dalmatias.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Trans. T. M. Banchich with minor alterations, <http://www.roman-emperors.org/epitome.htm>, accessed 21/5/17. See also *Paneg.* 10(2).2.2, 2.4-5; *Paneg.* 11(3).3.9-4.1; *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.17.

¹⁴⁶ See also Barnes (1982) 36-37 on *Paneg.* 6(7).4.2.

The claim that Constantius was an ancestor of Claudius II is a Constantinian fiction first announced in 310 to bolster Constantine's dynastic credentials against rival emperors.¹⁴⁷ But his career as a military professional need not be doubted, and like Victor, Constantius' descendant the emperor Julian implies humble origins. In his satirical essay *Misopogon*, Julian calls the Mysians on the Danube his ancestors and describes them as austere, boorish, awkward and stubborn (348d).

Several sources provide testimony for Galerius' background. He was born in Dacia Ripensis (*Epit.* 40.16) near Serdica (*Eutr.* 9.22), and the *Epitome de Caesaribus* claims the following (40.15):

Galerius autem fuit (licet inculta agrestique iustitia) satis laudabilis, pulcher corpore, eximius et felix bellator, ortus parentibus agrariis, pastor armentorum, unde ei cognomen Armentarius fuit.

Galerius, moreover, despite possessing an uncultivated and rustic justice, was praiseworthy enough, physically attractive, a skilled and fortunate warrior, and sprung from country parents, a keeper of cattle, whence for him was the *cognomen* Armentarius (Herdsman).¹⁴⁸

Lactantius confirms Galerius' Dacian background in his efforts to portray Galerius as a barbarian, and he adds the detail that Galerius' mother Romula was born on the other side of the Danube and had crossed to the Roman side to escape the Carpi (*DMP* 9.2).¹⁴⁹ In describing Galerius' relationship with the future Tetrarch Severus, Lactantius also notes that Severus had been an intimate since the beginning of Galerius' military career, thus confirming his military background (20.3).

Diocletian and his colleagues are thus examples of the military professionals who had risen to the emperorship. However, Diocletian's seizure of power is also an example of the military rebellions that had characterized the previous half-century. In November 284, the

¹⁴⁷ Descent from Claudius: *Paneg.* 6(7).2; *Paneg.* 5(8).2.5; *ILS* 699, 702, 723, 725, 730, 732; *Origo* 1.1; *Jul. Or.* 1.6d-7a; *Or.* 2.51C; *Caes.* 313D; *Eutr.* 9.22; *Jer. Chron.* 225.23-24; *HA, Gall.* 7.1, 14.3, *Claud.* 1.1, 1.3, 3.1, 9.9, 10.7, 13.1-4, *Aur.* 44.3-5; *Zon.* 12.26, 31. A Constantinian fiction: Syme (1983b); Hekster (2015) 225-237.

¹⁴⁸ Trans. T. M. Banchich with alterations, <http://www.roman-emperors.org/epitome.htm>, accessed 21/5/17. Armentarius also appears in *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.24, 40.1, 6; *Epit.* 39.2. Enßlin (1930b) 2517 and Kuhoff (2001) 121 suggest that it was a military nickname, and Cambi (2004) 41 views it as a pejorative. Kienast (2011) 283 notes its unofficial character.

¹⁴⁹ See also 27.8. At 27.2, Lactantius claims that Galerius had not seen Rome before he marched against it in 307. Similarly, the poet Palladas refers to Galerius as ὁ Σαρρομάτης (the Sarmatian), which appears to both reference a victory title and be a jibe against his background (*P.CtYBR inv.* 4000, p. 11.29 with Wilkinson (2012b) 46).

imperial army in the east was returning west from campaigning against the Persians, and discovered the emperor Numerian decaying in his litter. On account of an eye infection, the emperor had not been seen in public for some time. Diocletian, at the time named Diocles, was the commander of Numerian's *domestici* (household troops), and those around him decided to proclaim him Augustus. Diocles had possibly had a hand in the emperor's death, since his command meant he had proximity to the emperor, and the 'discovery' of Numerian's body had been suspiciously delayed. Thanks to Diocletianic apologetics, the sources attribute the murder and delay solely to the emperor's praetorian prefect and father-in-law Aper, and because of his proximity, it is certainly plausible that this man was also involved. Indeed, it is possible that Aper had spent the interim between Numerian's death and the body's discovery trying to secure his own bid for the throne. On 20 November at a military assembly not far outside Nicomedia, the army proclaimed Diocles emperor. With Aper standing at his side, Diocles looked to the sun and swore that he had known nothing of the plot against Numerian's life and did not desire power. He then suddenly and publicly killed the culprit Aper with his sword, perhaps removing a co-conspirator and rival.¹⁵⁰ In his seizure of the emperorship, Diocles may have been helped by Maximian, since a panegyrist claims that the latter had served on the Euphrates, which most likely implies the Persian campaign that preceded these events.¹⁵¹ For Zonaras, Diocles' performance in this campaign had played a key role in his accession (12.30):

ἡ γὰρ στρατιὰ τὸν Διοκλητιανὸν αὐτοκράτορα εἴλετο, ἐκεῖ τότε παρόντα καὶ ἀνδρείας ἔργα πολλὰ ἐν τῷ κατὰ Περσῶν πολέμῳ ἐπιδειζάμενον.

For the army chose Diocletian sovereign, since he was there at the time and had exhibited many acts of courage against the Persians.¹⁵²

Diocles may have also won renown as a commander in the Balkans. Zonaras relates that he was *dux* of Moesia when he seized power, having been promoted to that office 'from the ranks of the

¹⁵⁰ The deaths of Numerian and Aper: Eus. *Chron.* 227 Karst; Aur. *Vict. Caes.* 38.6-39.1, 13; Eutr. 9.18, 20; Jer. *Chron.* 223; HA, *Car.* 12-14.6, 18.1; *Epit.* 38.4-5; Oros. 7.24.4-25.1; Zon. 12.30-31. Commander of the *domestici*: Aur. *Vict. Caes.* 39.1; HA, *Car.* 13.1; Zon. 12.31; see also Bird (1976); Kolb (1987) 10-21; Kuhoff (2001) 17-23; Leadbetter (2009) 49; Altmayer (2014) 132-142. It is plausible that Diocles was nominated by his fellow officers because they hoped they could control him. Hedlund (2008) 115-118 suggests that, during this period, imperial courts of military officers served as the kingmakers, and Ando (2012) 223 notes that Diocles would have been junior among his fellow officers.

¹⁵¹ Barnes (1982) 33; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 56-57 n. 13.

¹⁵² Trans. Banchich & Lane (2009) 63. See also Sync. 724-725 (*CSHB* 22).

enlisted men' (ἐξ εὐτελῶν στρατιωτῶν), although he then acknowledges that some thought he commanded the *domestici* (12.31).¹⁵³

After becoming emperor, Diocles changed his name to the Romanized Diocletianus, and in the following year he marched west into the Balkans to confront the western emperor, Numerian's older brother Carinus.¹⁵⁴ Near the River Margus near Viminacium, Carinus fought a winning battle with Diocletian, but during or after this confrontation was betrayed and killed by his own soldiers, or, per the *Epitome de Caesaribus*, a tribune, with whose wife Carinus had slept (38.8). In this way Diocletian became sole emperor.¹⁵⁵ But in the same year, a band of peasants known to later authors as the Bagaudae roused a rebellion in Gaul, and Diocletian, having defeated Carinus, responded by appointing Maximian Caesar to deal with this problem while he himself oversaw affairs in the east. After Maximian had crushed the rebellion and then defeated an invasion of Gaul by various German peoples, Diocletian promoted Maximian to Augustus at some point between 10 December 285 and spring 286.¹⁵⁶ The emperors proceeded to govern the east and west respectively, an arrangement that scholars refer to as the 'Dyarchy', and in 293, with the co-optation of Constantius and Galerius as Caesars, this Dyarchy became the Tetrarchy.

¹⁵³ See also Ced. 464 (*CSHB* 8).

¹⁵⁴ Diocles: *P.Oxy.* 42.3055; Lact. *DMP* 9.11, 19.5, 29.2, 37.3, 52.3; jT, *Terumot* 8.10, 46c; Lib. *Or.* 19.45-46; *Epit.* 39.1; cf. Cambi (2004) 38-40, who speculates that Diocletian's original name or that of his father was Docletius or Diocletius, since Diocletius is the radical of Diocletianus. For Cambi, Diocletian then changed his name to Diocles to hide his supposedly servile origin. I find no reason why Diocles could not have adopted Diocletianus regardless of the name's radical. The date of the Margus campaign is a matter of contention: *Chron. min.* 1.148 (*Chron.* 354); Kolb (1987) 38 n. 95; Barnes (1996) 536-537; Altmayer (2014) 173-174.

¹⁵⁵ Carinus' fall: Eus. *Chron.* 227 Karst; Aur. *Vict. Caes.* 39.11-12, 14; Eutr. 9.20; Jer. *Chron.* 223; HA, *Car.* 10, 18.2; *Epit.* 38.8; Oros. 7.25.1; Petr. *Patr.* fragm. 199 (Banchich) = *Anon. Cont.* fragm. 13.1 (*FHG* 4, p. 198); Zon. 12.30. *Paneg.* 11(3).3.4 refers to Jupiter expelling the titans, a possible reference to Carinus (Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 84 n. 15). Note also the probable betrayal of Carinus' praetorian prefect: Aur. *Vict. Caes.* 39.14; *PLRE* 1 Aristobulus; Barnes (1976b) 248; (1982) 97; Johne, Hartmann & Gerhardt (2008) 1074. See also Bird (1976) 130-132; Kuhoff (2001) 23-27; Leadbetter (2009) 50-51; Altmayer (2014) 171-179.

¹⁵⁶ The Bagaudae as the reason for the appointment: *Paneg.* 10(2).4.3; Aur. *Vict. Caes.* 39.17; Eutr. 9.20; Jer. *Chron.* 225; Oros. 7.25.2; *Chron. Min.* 1.445 (*Prosp. Ep. Chron.*); Burckhardt (1949) 45; Mattingly (1939) 327; Seston (1946) 56-60; Chastagnol (1985) 94-95; Williams (1985) 42-43; Kolb (1987) 38-40; Casey (1994) 50-51; Leadbetter (1998a) 221, 226; Rees (2002) 29; Bowman (2005) 69-70; Leadbetter (2009) 53-54; Neri (2013) 660. Maximian's initial title of Caesar: *CIL* 8.10285; Eutr. 9.22; Amm. 27.6.16; Kolb (1987) 23, 41, 44-47; Leadbetter (1998a) 216-219. Campaigns and journeys 285-286: Barnes (1976a) 176-178; (1982) 50, 57, 254-255; Syv anne (2015) 182-183, 185-186, 188-189; cf. Kolb (1987) 37-38, 40-41; (1995) 22. The dates on which Maximian became Caesar and Augustus are matters of contention: E.g. Seston (1946) 64-67; Chastagnol (1967) 54-56, with 56 n. 2; Smith (1972) 1063-1067; Rousselle (1976) 445-452, 454; Pasqualini (1979) 21-29, 32-35; Barnes (1982) 4 n. 5-6, 26, 178 n. 6; Worp (1985) 99 n. 2; Kolb (1987) 22-67; (1995) 22-23; Barnes (1996) 537-539; Leadbetter (1998a) 218-220, 225-226; Kuhoff (2001) 31-35; Kienast (2011) 272; see also the list of scholarly positions in Kolb (1987) 24-25.

Diocletian had thus come to power because of the military's dominance over political affairs. He and his colleagues were military professionals who had climbed the ranks to become important political players. Diocletian came to power because Numerian had been assassinated by his officers and Diocletian's bid to power received the support of officers and soldiers. Diocletian had demonstrated his credentials to lead through his military activities against the Persians. Diocletian then defeated Carinus in a civil war that also involved the latter's assassination by his officers. It can be assumed that Diocletian and his colleagues had considerable respect for the political power of the armies and their officers. It would have been of the greatest concern that they maintain the loyalty of these military elements, lest their college become just another short-lived regime in a cycle of military rebellion.

In discussing dynasty and hereditary succession during the Tetrarchy, this study considers how the militarization of the emperorship effected Tetrarchic policy and self-representation; that is, the study uses Tetrarchic conceptions of dynasty as a case study through which one might assess the possible impact that military rebellion and the soldierly backgrounds of the Tetrarchs themselves had on policy and self-representation. It is the contention of this study that militarization and Tetrarchic conceptions of dynasty were largely intertwined. This is not to say that militarization alone determined the nature of Tetrarchic emperorship. Indeed, the following chapters suggest that numerous political, military, social and religious issues influenced the regime and its decisions. But in examining how the Tetrarchs engaged with dynastic concepts, the most influential factor appears to have been this military element. That is, the political and military turmoil of the later third century impinged on the Tetrarchs in a way that governed their approach to power-sharing and their self-representation.

1. The 'Tetrarchy': The Creation of a College of Four

Imperial colleges were not unusual when in 293 Diocletian co-opted Galerius as his Caesar and Maximian did the same for Constantius. Many Augusti had made their sons into Caesars, and Diocletian's regime was not the first to consist of two Augusti. There had also been brief anomalies. Between 166 and 169, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus headed their own college of four, with Commodus and Annius Verus as Caesars. Between 209 and 211, Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta ruled as three Augusti. But what made Diocletian's Tetrarchy unique was the fact that the new Caesars were active rulers like their Augusti. Previously, Caesars had mostly been children with nominal power, but Constantius and Galerius were adults who actively ruled in their parts of the empire.¹ This chapter provides a foundation for subsequent chapters through a discussion of why it was that the Augusti expanded the imperial college in such a manner. In providing an analysis of the appointments that created the Tetrarchy and the purpose of this development, this chapter establishes the basic framework and context of the Tetrarchic government and the dynastic relations integral to its composition. The chapter begins with a discussion on the date of the appointments, which is followed by a survey of ancient and modern arguments on why the Tetrarchy was created. Afterwards follows an examination of the political, dynastic and military context of the appointments, and then a discussion of the issue of regional rebellion, and what role this issue played in the history of the later third century. The chapter then discusses how the imperial college functioned as a ruling body, and it is argued that the problem of regional interests and identity, especially those within the military, was a major influencing factor in the decision to expand the imperial college and on the way that it functioned. Lastly, it is postulated that a mixture of trust and mistrust had governed the dynastic ascendancy of Constantius and Galerius.

1.1. Dating the Appointments

The date(s) on which Constantius and Galerius were appointed Caesar is a matter of debate, and one that has a bearing on whether the Tetrarchy was planned or improvised. Coins, papyri and

¹ This distinction is noted by, e.g., Kolb (1987) 86; Kuhoff (2001) 128; Corcoran (2008) 235.

inscriptions show that there were only two emperors before 293, and Constantius' panegyrist in 296/7 claims that the Augusti co-opted both Caesars on 1 March, employing the symbolism of the beginning of spring (8(5).2.2-3.1).² Lactantius likewise asserts that Galerius' *uicennalia* was to be celebrated on this day (*DMP* 35.4), and earlier claims that Galerius' accession took place at a ceremony outside Nicomedia, on the same spot where Maximinus would be acclaimed Caesar in 305 (19.2).³ The *Descriptio Consulum*, a multi-authored list of consuls whose relevant entry was written in the fourth century, also gives 1 March as the date, despite recording the event under the year 291 (*Chron. Min.* 1.230).⁴

In contrast, the seventh-century Paschal Chronicle records that Constantius and Galerius were made Caesars at Nicomedia on 21 May 293, with the sentence structure appearing to indicate that Constantius' name is a later addition (512):

Τούτω τῷ ἔτει Μαξιμίνοσ Ἰώβιοσ ἐπιφανέστατοσ Καῖσαρ εἰσ τὴν ἀρχὴν εἰσεποιήθη καὶ
Κωνσταντίοσ ἐν Νικομηδίᾳ πρὸ ἰβ' καλανδῶν ἰουνίων.

In this year, Maximinus (Maximianus = Galerius) Jovius, most noble Caesar, was adopted into rule, and Constantius, in Nicomedia, 12 Kalends of June.

This entry has led some scholars to accept 21 May as the correct date for Galerius, but to retain 1 March for Constantius, since an earlier proclamation for the latter would explain a curious matter of hierarchy.⁵ Constantius was Galerius' senior. Imperial pronouncements listed Constantius before Galerius, and ancient authors acknowledge that Constantius became the first-ranking Augustus upon the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian.⁶ And yet Constantius adopted Maximian's *signum* Herculis, whereas Galerius took Diocletian's *signum* Jovius, names that initially would have signalled Diocletian's seniority over his colleague.⁷ Therefore, the Herculean Caesar attained seniority because he received his position earlier than his Jovian counterpart. On

² Not before 293: Seston (1946) 90.

³ Barnes (1982) 62 n. 73, followed by Rougé (1992) 85, argues that 'Maximianus' (Galerius) is a gloss, and that the passage refers to Diocletian's acclamation. Creed (1984) 100 n. 4 rightly objects that this is not a more natural reading.

⁴ *Descriptio consulum*: Burgess (1993).

⁵ Seston (1946) 88-94; *RIC* 6 pp. 9-10 with n. 6; König (1974) 567-569; Kolb (1987) 72-73 (tentatively); Kuhoff (2001) 107-124; Altmayer (2014) 206; Potter (2014) 638 n. 138.

⁶ Pronouncements: Barnes (1982) 17-20. Ancient authors: Lact. *DMP* 18.6, 20.1; Eus. *HE* 8.5.1, Append. 3-4; *VC* 1.14, 18.1, 19.1, 2.51.1.

⁷ On the *signa*, see Ch. 6.

this model, the attribution of 1 March to Galerius within the panegyric, Lactantius and the *Descriptio Consulum* is the result of a subsequent rewriting of history designed to establish greater parity between the Caesars.

However, although the Tetrarchs did adjust their iterated honours to fabricate synchronicity, the succession in 305 shows that they were capable of genuine synchronicity.⁸ Constantius' higher rank can be explained by age, years served in the army and the achievements of his career, qualifications respected by the military. Indeed, such were probably the qualifications that governed Severus' seniority over Maximinus when they were simultaneously appointed in 305. The adoption of the *signa* by the Caesars is perfectly understandable if by 293 they were more dynastic than hierarchical in meaning. Both Lactantius and the Paschal Chronicle place Galerius' appointment at Nicomedia, and it is admittedly impossible for Galerius' *auctor imperii* to have been present in Nicomedia on 1 March, while the possibility is there for 21 May.⁹ But Diocletian and Maximinus had both been appointed at Nicomedia, and authors could have made an understandable mistake in reporting the same for Galerius. From 1 January-26 February, Diocletian is attested in Sirmium, an imperial residence like Nicomedia, and so the ceremony probably happened there.¹⁰ There is ultimately insufficient reason to attach great value to the testimony of the Paschal Chronicle, which is not authoritative for events in this period outside Egypt. For example, it dates Diocletian's accession to 17 September. The chronicle perhaps confuses Galerius' *dies imperii* with the day his laureled portrait arrived in Alexandria, and without more reliable evidence to the contrary, we should accept the historicity of simultaneous ceremonies on 1 March, which would indicate a planned event.¹¹

⁸ On contrived Tetrarchic synchronicity, see Chastagnol (1967); Thomas (1971); Smith (1972) 1061-1071; Rousselle (1976) 452-454; Pasqualini (1979) 24-27; Barnes (1982) 25-28; Kolb (1987) 26-27, 115-127; Leadbetter (1998a) 218-219; Kuhoff (2001) 151-152.

⁹ Kolb (1987) 73-76; cf. Kuhoff (2001) 111-112, who favours 21 May, but considers Nicomedia an impossibility since he accepts possibly incorrect emendations by Mommsen to the dates of imperial rescripts. He thus proposes that the ceremony took place in a Thracian city. Impossibility of 1 March: Barnes (1982) 52.

¹⁰ Barnes (1982) 52; Kulikowski (2016) 195. 26 February: *CJ* 3.32.11.

¹¹ 1 March: Jones (1964) 3.3 n. 4; Barnes (1982) 1 n. 1, 62 n. 73; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 112 n. 8; Leadbetter (2009) 64; Neri (2013) 664. Diocletian's accession in the Paschal Chronicle: 510. On the sources of the Paschal Chronicle and its reliability on the reign of Diocletian, see Barnes 62 n. 73; Whitby & Whitby (1989) xv-xviii, xx-xxi, 1 n. 1. The *signa* ceased to have a hierarchical function: Nixon & Rodgers 50-51. Sutherland (*RIC* 6 pp. 9-10 n. 6, 163 n. 1) and König (1974) 568 argue that the gold coinage at Trier attests to a time when Constantius was Caesar and Galerius was not, since Galerius does not appear on the first coins following Constantius' accession, which have the mintmark PT (For the coins, see Pink (1931) 30-32; *RIC* 6 Trier 1-26). But Kolb (1987) 76-77 counters that Trier minted these coins at the end of 293/beginning of 294, since coins issued in Rome with the same reverse

1.2. *The Reasons for the Tetrarchy: The Sources*

The ancient sources give various reasons for why the Tetrarchy was established. The panegyric delivered before Constantius in 296/7 provides the earliest explanation (8(5).3.2-3):

Quanta enim, inuictissimi principes, et uobis et rei publicae saecula propagatis orbis uestri participando tutelam? Cuius licet esset omni hoste perdomito certa securitas, nimios tamen in diuersa discursus uel reuisenda poscebat. Partho quippe ultra Tigrim redacto, Dacia restituta, porrectis usque ad Danubii caput Germaniae Raetiaque limitibus, destinata Batauae Britanniaeque uindicta, gubernacula maiora quaerebat aucta atque augenda res publica et, qui Romanae potentiae terminos uirtute protulerant, imperium filio pietate debebant.

For how many ages, most invincible princes, do you propagate for yourselves and for the state in sharing the guardianship of the world? Although its security was certain, since every enemy was overcome, it nevertheless demanded excessive to-ing and fro-ing in different directions or to places needing to be revisited. For indeed, with the Parthian beyond the Tigris reduced to subjection, Dacia restored, the frontiers of Germania and Raetia extended all the way to the headwaters of the Danube, and the liberation of Batavia and Britain resolved upon, the state, enlarged and about to be further augmented, was seeking greater guidance, and those who through their vigour had extended the boundaries of Roman power were bound by piety to give *imperium* to a son.

Essentially, the Empire was too large for two emperors to rule and was getting larger. The speaker also claims that, in addition to their concerns for the state, the Augusti required a similarity between the world and heavenly affairs, for all important things depend upon the number four. The speaker cites as examples the elements, seasons, continents, *lustra*, Helios' horses and the lights of the sky (4.1-2). The panegyrist was of course required by the genre to give a pleasing explanation. His rhetoric accords with the Tetrarchic self-representation of imperial *concordia*, and there is no evidence for an enlarged empire.¹²

honour Constantius as consul, and he became consul in 294 (cf. Pink 29). Kolb also notes that Constantius is absent from the first Tetrarchic issues of gold coins issued in Nicomedia, and that the mints in Antioch, Siscia and Lyons display no chronological differentiation when they first mint for the Caesars. Thus Galerius' absence from the Trier coins is not compelling. Kolb suggests that the Herculian Caesar was made senior to Galerius to highlight Jovian-Herculian harmony in a chiasmic manner (109).

¹² On the 'four' passage and its symbolism, see Flasar (1995); Rees (2002) 110-114.

As discussed in the introduction (Intr. a), the accounts that probably draw upon the *KG* consider the appointment of the Caesars to be an emergency response to various internal and external threats. Aurelius Victor recounts that the emperors faced Carausius' usurpation in Britain, Persian aggression in the east, trouble in Africa caused by one Julianus and the Quinquegentiani, and the revolt of Egypt under Achilleus (*Caes.* 39.21-24). He asserts that the solution to these crises was the expansion of the imperial college, and he later reinforces this narrative (39.30):

Et quoniam bellorum moles, de qua supra memorauimus, acrius urgebat, quadripartito imperio cuncta, quae trans Alpes Galliae sunt, Constantio commissa, Africa Italiaque Herculio, Illyrici ora adusque Ponti fretum Galerio; cetera Valerius retentauit.

And because the burden of wars, which we have mentioned above, was pressing more severely, the empire was divided into four parts, and all those regions of Gaul beyond the Alps were assigned to Constantius, Africa and Italy to Herculius, and the coast of Illyricum right across to the Strait of Pontus to Galerius; the rest Valerius retained.

Eutropius likewise states that Diocletian promoted Maximian to Augustus and co-opted the Caesars 'when the whole world was thrown into disarray' (*cum per omnem orbem terrarum res turbatae essent*), and he and Jerome provide the same list of troubles as those listed in Victor's history (*Eutr.* 9.22; *Jer. Chron.* 225).¹³ The *Epitome de Caesaribus* reports that Diocletian appointed Maximian as Augustus and Constantius and Galerius as Caesars, and he then recounts that at this time Carausius was made emperor in Britain, Achilleus in Egypt and Julianus in Italy (39.2-3). As established in the introduction (Intr. a), these accounts are problematic since they telescope events that occurred over a span of many years.¹⁴

The Christian author Lactantius provides invective as an explanation, claiming that Diocletian, because of his greed and anxiety, appointed three other men as co-emperors, divided the world into four parts and multiplied the armies (*DMP* 7.2). Peter Patricius may have viewed the appointments as a means of avoiding excessive action, since a fragment from his history that

¹³ Followed by Oros. 7.25.4-5.

¹⁴ Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.33-43 and *Eutr.* 9.22-24 narrate the campaigns that overcame these crises, which might suggest retrospective supposition. Cf. Enßlin (1948) 2435, who attempts to give these accounts more credibility by treating the Persian war as a mistake for a campaign against the Saracens in 290, and Achilleus' revolt as a mistake for the earlier revolt of Upper Egypt; Kolb (1995) 23.

probably belongs to his account of Diocletian's reign states that excessive action leads to perils and risks (fragm. 200 (Banchich)).¹⁵

1.3. The Reasons for the Tetrarchy: The Scholarship

Numerous scholars view the Tetrarchy as a response to the threats posed by foreign enemies and the British usurper Carausius, an interpretation that has the epitomes as its forebears. Seston thinks that Galerius was co-opted later than Constantius, and he views the Tetrarchy as a rapidly improvised solution to acute threats posed by Carausius and the Persians. The Augusti elevated Constantius to combat Carausius, since another effort by Maximian against the usurper could result in a more devastating defeat. For Seston, Galerius was later added to the imperial college to deal with the Persian threat rather than for symmetry, since he considers the latter too devoid of *realpolitik* for the pragmatic Diocletian.¹⁶ Other scholars have provided similar interpretations. Enßlin sees the Tetrarchy as influenced by Carausius in the west and the rebellions of Busiris and Coptos in the Thebaid.¹⁷ For Barnes, the ongoing survival of Carausius threatened the regime and perhaps diminished confidence in Maximian, whereas the itinerant Diocletian found it increasingly difficult to tackle every emergency himself.¹⁸ Rees suggests that the emperors wished to better police regions under threat, noting that in subsequent years the Tetrarchs campaigned against Carausius and the Persians, as well as on the northern frontier, in Spain and in Africa.¹⁹ Altmayer cites the threats of Carausius and Persia, and notes that such issues could lead to usurpations if an emperor was not present to provide security, prosperity and victory.²⁰ Kuhoff trusts the epitomes in their assertions of empire-wide crisis, while acknowledging that there are chronological issues with their testimony and that the measure would have the side-effect of hindering possible usurpations. He then concludes that Carausius and Persia were the driving factors, but he does not rule out the possibility that Galerius was

¹⁵ Banchich (2015) 133. Fragm. 200 (Banchich) = *Anon. Cont. fragm. 13.2 (FHG 4, p. 198)*.

¹⁶ Seston (1946) 88-100.

¹⁷ Enßlin (1948) 2434-2438.

¹⁸ Barnes (1981) 7-8.

¹⁹ Rees (2002) 97-98.

²⁰ Altmayer (2014) 185-186.

appointed for the sake of symmetry and the succession as well, subscribing to the idea that Galerius was co-opted after Constantius.²¹

In contrast, Seeck judges the Tetrarchy to be an attempt to ensure stable succession. The imperial college established capable and adult successors who could easily take control if the Augusti were to die.²² Chastagnol considers the ongoing survival of Carausius' regime to be the main reason for the Tetrarchy, since it revealed the difficulties in defending and administering a vast empire.²³ Jones and other scholars view the Tetrarchy as a response to a combination of challenges, including external threats, army rebellion, the issue of succession, the desire for a stronger and more efficient administration, and the need to create bonds of loyalty between the Augusti and their generals.²⁴ Costa suggests that Diocletian wished Constantius to help Maximian since Constantius was more judicious, calmer and more experienced in maritime affairs; a character summary influenced by pro-Constantinian sources. Meanwhile, Diocletian wished to dedicate himself to administration, leaving the major campaigns in the east to someone else. Accordingly, the Augusti created Caesars and allocated to them the more troublesome military missions.²⁵ For Kolb, the Tetrarchy was both a succession scheme and a long-term military program. Constantius was to reconquer Britain, and Galerius was to make war on the Persians, since a victory over the Persians would strengthen Diocletian's legitimacy and allow him to outshine Carus, who had invaded the Persian empire with some success.²⁶

²¹ Kuhoff (2001) 107-127. A reaction to threats in the east and west: See also Pasqualini (1979) 53-55; Demandt (1989) 48; Rémy (1998) 29; John (2008) 603; Donciu (2012) 42-43 (a response to the threat of Carausius, Sarmatian aggression, Egyptian revolts and the succession problem); cf. Costa (1912) 1804; Mattingly (1939) 327.

²² Seeck (1897) 28-29; see also Santosuosso (2001) 180; Marotta (2010) 178; cf. Seston (1946) 98-99. On a related note, Hekster (1999) 718 points out that a crucial consequence of the system was that it placed the power to acclaim emperors strictly in the hands of the emperors, at the expense of the senate and army

²³ Chastagnol (1985) 98-99; see also (1994) 26, where he proposes the threat of Persia and the desire for a stronger administration as further reasons. Relatedly, Casey (1994) 110 considers Constantius' appointment to be a measure against Carausius, but he does not comment on Galerius' co-option.

²⁴ Jones (1964) 39, 41, 41-42; Williams (1985) 61-64; Cullhed (1994) 27; Barceló (1997) 262-263; Marcone (2000) 7; Elton (2006) 194-196; John & Hartmann (2008) 1051-1052; Odahl (2010) 46, 48; Neri (2013) 663, 666; Börm (2014) 244. Watson (1999) 5-6 describes a later third-century cycle in which, as military pressures increased, the tyranny of distance gave a general greater autonomy, and if successful in repelling an invader, his soldiers might acclaim him emperor. Upon marching elsewhere to assert his emperorship, he would leave a section of frontier unmanned, which would prompt foreign invasions, which would in turn encourage local saviours who may then be acclaimed emperor by their troops. Imperial omnipresence was needed to defeat this cycle.

²⁵ Costa (1912) 1804-1807. On a related note, Potter (2013) 40-41 suggests that the Tetrarchy was based on the recognition that, if the Augusti were kept out of the line of fire and did not suffer defeats, this was good for the regime's stability.

²⁶ Kolb (1987) 69-87; see also Corcoran (2006a) 40-41, 43, 53; (2008) 231-232, 234-236; (2012) 3, 5; Roberto (2014) 89-92. Kolb 81-84 argues that Galerius' date of accession was possibly auspiciously linked to victory against

At the other end of the spectrum, certain scholars consider the appointments to have resulted from tensions or sedition among the other Augusti and their future Caesars. The *concordia* of the emperors was a common theme within Tetrarchic self-promotion. It was a new imperial virtue and served as a fitting reflection on the importance of a peaceful and cooperative imperial college. The theme was pervasive, appearing in coins, panegyrics, inscriptions, monuments, statue groups and even the Christian history of Orosius (7.26.5).²⁷ A harmonious regime was cause for celebration when it followed a half-century of instability, but one might wonder whether the theme hides tensions.²⁸ Indeed, some scholars question the veracity of this representation when interpreting political developments.²⁹

König, for instance, adopts Seston's hypothesis that Galerius was co-opted later than Constantius, and creates the following scenario: Maximian made Constantius Caesar as an act of political independence from his superior, and Diocletian, rather than fight a civil war over the issue, created his own Caesar to restore the balance of power. In support of this, he argues that Diocletian was not present for Galerius' appointment at Nicomedia while the reverse was true for Maximian and Constantius. By being personally present at Constantius' acclamation, Maximian stressed his authority, and by appointing Constantius before Galerius and naming him Herculus, he permanently undermined the imperial hierarchy, according to which Diocletian was the first-ranking Augustus with the *signum* Jovius, whereas Maximian was his junior with the *signum* Herculus. Constantius now enjoyed seniority over any future Jovian counterpart, destroying the inherent superiority of Jovius.³⁰ Against these arguments, the sources do not explicitly report that Maximian was present at Constantius' acclamation, and we have seen that Galerius was probably appointed at the same time as Constantius, perhaps in Sirmium. We have also seen that, by this time, the emperors probably intended the *signa* to be more dynastic than hierarchical in meaning.

the Persians. If it was 1 March, it might have been chosen because the ram was linked to Persia in astrological geography, although I think this a stretch. If it was 21 May, the day was linked in some way to Septimius Severus, who had defeated the Parthians, and was possibly linked to his first campaign against them. Kolb (1995) 29 considers the succession sufficient reason for the appointments.

²⁷ See e.g. Kolb (1987) 88-127, 159-176; Rees (1993); Thiel (2002); Boschung (2006); Eck (2006); Weiß (2006); but cf. Sporn (2006), who argues that the Tetrarchic self-presentation had limited resonance when it came to private art, in comparison with the Augustan period.

²⁸ See e.g. Stephenson (2009) 89-90; cf. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 43-44; Leadbetter (1998a) 225.

²⁹ E.g. Seeck (1897) 25-26 on Maximian's promotion to Augustus; countered by Enßlin (1930a) 2492; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 43-44; Leadbetter (1998a) 222; (2009) 54-55.

³⁰ König (1974); cf. Kolb (1987) 73-76, 78.

As we will see below, Tetrarchic media in the east and west alike continued to recognize Diocletian as the first-ranking Augustus.³¹ Moreover, König's hypothesis is rendered unbelievable by the impression that Diocletian later persuaded Maximian to abdicate alongside himself and to co-opt Severus, a partisan of Galerius, as Caesar instead of his own son Maxentius (Ch. 2). In praising the harmony of the Tetrarchy, Aurelius Victor claims that the other rulers viewed Diocletian like a *parens* (*Caes.* 39.29), and while this reflects their self-representation of collegial *concordia*, there is perhaps some truth to this. The hostile contemporary Lactantius describes the unanimity of the Augusti (*DMP* 8.1-2), and while this was a theme of the Dyarchic panegyrics, Lactantius is elsewhere willing to subvert similar imagery, since he undermines Tetrarchic *concordia* in recounting tensions between Diocletian and Galerius.³² In Julian's satire *The Caesars*, which levels many criticisms against the author's predecessors, Diocletian enters the hall of the gods while his colleagues form a chorus around him with held hands, and the gods marvel at their ὁμονομία (harmony). Diocletian then abdicates, after which Maximian and Galerius bring discord into the imperial college, for which they are expelled from the hall (315). Julian appears to reference the civil wars that followed the abdications. Again, the Tetrarchic message of *concordia* probably colours Julian's presentation, but it is notable that he does not subvert this image until after he recounts Diocletian's abdication. Ultimately, König's argument is to be rejected.

Similarly, Harries suggests that Constantius became Caesar because he pressured the Augusti into the decision. Maximian's failure against Carausius, Constantius' success against the Alemanni and his marriage to Maximian's step-daughter (see below) made his claim to Caesar hard to resist.³³ But his later acceptance of Severus, a partisan of Galerius, as his Caesar demonstrates a certain submissiveness that does not accord with this scenario, and to believe this

³¹ Ch. 1.6.

³² Kolb (1987) 78-80; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 43-44; Leadbetter (1998a) 222; Corcoran (2000a) 267; Kuhoff (2001) 125-126; cf. Rees (2002) 98. Lactantius and tensions between Diocletian and Galerius: *DMP* 9.4-10, 10.6-11.8, 14, 18-19. *Concordia* and the panegyrists: *Paneg.* 10(2).9, 11, 13.1-3; *Paneg.* 11(3).11-12.

³³ Harries (2012) 30-32. See also Stephenson (2009) 89-90, who posits that, after Maximian's failure to defeat Carausius, Constantius was poised to take over in the west. He and Maximian were linked by marriage, and so Diocletian feared that the two might conspire against him, or that Constantius might revolt against Maximian and would probably win. It was thus decided to make Constantius Caesar and Galerius his eastern counterpart. Syvänne (2015) 196 suggests that Diocletian made Maximian appoint Constantius to weaken his colleague's power due to dissatisfaction with his leadership, and that Maximian then made Diocletian do the same.

hypothesis we would need to believe that Constantius had sufficiently cowed both Augusti into overlooking the hereditary claims of Maximian's son Maxentius (see below).

In contrast, Leadbetter argues that the Tetrarchy was a private dynastic arrangement that followed the pre-existing patterns of collegial dynasties and adoptive dynasties. Diocletian 'kept power in the family by enlarging the family.' Diocletian had appointed Maximian as his colleague, and as we will see, he and Maximian then made marriage alliances with the generals Constantius and Galerius. Upon co-opting their sons-in-law into the imperial college, Diocletian will have used ties of family and *imperium* to surround himself with loyal men who could otherwise be threats.³⁴

A final position of note is that of Kulikowski, who discusses multi-emperor rule during the fourth century. Kulikowski considers how these fourth-century regimes had their roots in previous centuries, since provincial elites had been gradually integrated into the central imperial government, after having been within a 'local sphere loosely tied to the central administration'. The emperorship and the senatorial aristocracy had incorporated municipal, then colonial and finally provincial elites, and the *ordo equester* had changed along similar lines. As discussed in the introduction (Intr. b), during the early empire, the equestrian order grew in size and became more diverse geographically and more professionalized, since a family's entry into the lower reaches of this order, via census qualification and individual patronage, could be attained at a greater social and physical distance from the emperor than entry into the *ordo senatorius*. Naturally, emperors increasingly relied on this large, diverse and qualified body of administrators.³⁵ Methods of administration based on Roman civil law also spread partly because of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212, which granted citizenship to most of the empire's free men, bringing Roman law to nearly every inhabitant. This meant that legal and administrative norms needed to be able to operate everywhere in the empire, which required a multiplication of experts in imperial administration in the provinces.³⁶ During the later third century, the experience of imperial division further promoted the participation of regional elites in imperial

³⁴ Leadbetter (2009) 6 (quotation), 61-62. Corcoran (2008) 231-232 similarly suggests that the co-option of the Caesars naturally followed their marriages, stating that the marriages were a means of bringing future Caesars into the imperial family. Lenski (2008) 256 notes that the empire had proved too unwieldy to govern, and that cementing a dynasty in place reduced the chances of usurpation.

³⁵ Kulikowski (2014) 137-139, with quotation from 137.

³⁶ Kulikowski (2014) 141.

government. It is especially notable that, from 260-274, the empire was divided between a central empire, a Gallic empire and an eastern empire centred on Palmyra. This multiplication of imperial governments meant a need for more service elites, and necessarily these were drawn from a smaller geographical base. Emperors and their retinues were also closer to more people than before. There was thus a deeper penetration of imperial service in the provinces.³⁷ It can therefore be theorized that the regional aristocracies of the later third century developed the expectation of an important role in imperial government. Kulikowski views the Tetrarchy and subsequent multi-emperor governments as recreations of the experience of multiple empires; what German scholars call *Mehrkaiserherrschaft*. By sharing rule between two or more emperors, regimes aimed to provide regional aristocracies with a greater role in government, while attempting to avoid a breakdown in imperial unity. Diocletian and later emperors could ill afford to ignore the expectations of the regional aristocracies, as to do so would have incurred the risk of repeating the regional breakdown of the third century. Kulikowski also suggests that Diocletian understood that ‘late third-century campaign armies themselves expected to be led by an emperor, and would indeed make their own general emperor if this expectation was not met.’ The Tetrarchic arrangement thus met these expectations.³⁸

1.4. Political, Dynastic and Military Context

Before one discusses the reasons for the Tetrarchy’s creation, it is necessary to establish the political, dynastic and military context behind the development. One of the most important events in the years leading up to the Tetrarchy was the aforementioned seizure of power by the officer Marcus Aurelius Maus[aeus?] Carausius, who in mid-286 claimed emperorship and took possession of Britain.³⁹ Aurelius Victor reports that Carausius was a citizen of Menapia who had

³⁷ Kulikowski (2014) 140-142. The Gallic empire: König (1981); Drinkwater (1987). Palmyra’s empire: Stoneman (1992); Nakamura (1993); Hartmann (2001). Carausius’ British empire: Casey (1994).

³⁸ Kulikowski (2014) 142-144, with quotation from 143.

³⁹ Name: *ILS* 8928. Date: Barnes (1982) 11 (286); Casey (1994) 39-43, 83 (mid-286), who speculates that Carausius did not occupy Britain until 287, partly because *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.40; *Eutr.* 9.22 and *Jer. Chron.* 225 can be read as support for 287 as the year of usurpation. See also *Chron. Min.* 1.445 (*Prosp. Ep. Chron.*) (286). *Oros.* 7.25.5 follows Eutropius. Cf. Seston (1946) 74-77; Williams (1985) 48; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 130-131 nn. 46-47. Investigations on when Carausius rebelled must take account of when he died, which appears to have happened in 293: Carson (1959) 37; Barnes 11; Burnett (1984) 21-22; Casey 43, 113-114, 129; Lyne (2003) 165; cf. Nixon & Rodgers 130-131 nn. 46-47, who argues that Carausius was killed in late 293 or more likely 294.

distinguished himself in the war against the Bagaudae. For this reason and his expertise as a pilot, having been a pilot as a young man, he was charged with fitting out a fleet to combat German piracy (*Caes.* 39.20). Eutropius likewise reports his reputation and his charge, adding that he was of very mean birth and was stationed in Boulogne against Frankish and Saxon marauders (9.21).⁴⁰ The sources claim that he became arrogant with success and withheld recaptured booty from the provinces and the emperors, and Eutropius adds that there was suspicion that he was deliberately allowing Germans to plunder the provinces so that he could seize the booty for himself (21). Maximian thus ordered his execution, and upon learning this, Carausius had himself declared Augustus, retained control of the fleet and sailed to Britain, which he occupied.⁴¹ That he could promote his successes as an admiral was presumably of help in his claiming the purple. After all, an inscription from 285 includes the victory title Britannicus Maximus within the titulature of Diocletian (*ILS* 615), which, one suspects, celebrates a victory won by Carausius when he was still serving that emperor.⁴²

Early in the revolt, Carausius took control of part of northern Gaul. He had a mint at Rouen, and metrology, message, and hoard termini and composition indicate that it began production in 286/7.⁴³ The panegyrist in 296/7 narrates that he captured a legion and intercepted some *peregrini* (foreign troops), and that he trained these along with levied Gallic merchants and barbarians for naval service (*Paneg.* 8(5).12.1). The speaker probably describes successes on the mainland, since Carausius had more than one loyal legion in Britain.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the panegyrists in 291 and 310 imply and claim respectively that he had the Franks as allies (*Paneg.* 11(3).7.2; *Paneg.* 6(7).5.3).⁴⁵

Maximian sought to rectify this embarrassment, and his forces soon toppled Carausius' position on the continent. The virtual absence in Gaul of Carausius' early Unmarked series of coins from London and the fact that, before 289/90, the Rouen mint had ceased production

⁴⁰ For the nature of Carausius' appointment, see Casey (1994) 50, 52, 103.

⁴¹ *Paneg.* 8(5).12.1; *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.21; *Eutr.* 9.21. On the motives behind the revolt, see also Casey (1994) 52, 103; Lyne (2003) 148.

⁴² Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 107; cf. Casey (1994) 50, 102-103.

⁴³ Burnett & Casey (1984); Casey (1994) 74-76, 89-91; Lyne (2003) 148-149, 157; Williams (2004) 34-37. See also Lyne 159-160, who discusses the possible geographic extent of Carausius' continental possessions using pottery.

⁴⁴ Casey (1994) 93-99; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 128-129 nn. 41-43; see also Lyne (2003) 157-158.

⁴⁵ See also *Paneg.* 8(5).16.4, 17.1. Cf. Shiel (1977) 4.

shows that Carausius' presence on the continent was brief.⁴⁶ The panegyrist in 289 celebrates that Maximian's soldiers have reached the Ocean in victory, the waves swallowing up the blood of the enemy killed on the shore (10(2).11.7). Loyal officers had evidently retaken territory in Gaul from Carausius and perhaps the Franks, but were unable to immediately move against Britain without a present fleet.⁴⁷ The speaker reports that Maximian is on the verge of penetrating the channel with his fleet, which is the only thing to have delayed Carausius' death (12.1), and that he is building fleets on every river that could transport troops to the coast (3-7). He then predicts victory (8).⁴⁸

Maximian's panegyrist in 291 is effectively silent on the matter, merely stating that the stars promise naval trophies (11(3).19.4). This implies that the campaign was not a success.⁴⁹ From 289-290 Carausian coins honoured specific legionary vexillations which had also received the epithet *Augusta*, no doubt because of their loyalty during the war.⁵⁰ In 290 Maximian toured the cities of Gaul, perhaps seeking to restore confidence in his rule following the disaster.⁵¹ It may also be relevant that, in the same year, Diocletian travelled from the east to Pannonia with striking speed. He was in Emesa on 10 May 290 (*CJ* 9.41.9) and in Laodicea on 25 May (*CJ* 6.15.2), but he was in Sirmium by 1 July (*CJ* 6.30.6), where he remained until December.⁵² Perhaps Maximian's defeat had prompted Diocletian to secure the loyalty of the Balkan legions and re-situate himself closer to the west as he waited on events.⁵³ In winter 290/1, the Augusti then convened in Milan, and the panegyrist in 291 claims that the purpose of their meeting was for the emperors to be seen by the public and to hold court together, to attend festivities and to share 'pleasantries and serious matters' (11(3).8-12, with 12.3 for *ioca seriaque*). The fact that Diocletian travelled from Sirmium to Milan in the winter may suggest that there were indeed serious matters governing the event, and one suspects that the conference was yet another

⁴⁶ Casey (1994) 89-91. The dating of Rouen's mint: Casey 71-76; Lyne (2003) 158-159.

⁴⁷ Barnes (1981) 7; Casey (1994) 42-43, 91-92; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 71 n. 39, 72 n. 41; De Trizio (2009) 114.

⁴⁸ See also 13.5, which implies Maximian's duty to defeat pirates, i.e. Carausius (Rees (2005) 229-230). That Maximian should have built his ships inland might suggest that the channel or parts of the Gallic coast were still controlled by Carausius or the Franks: Johnson (1976) 106; Shiel (1977) 4.

⁴⁹ Casey (1994) 105; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 102-103 n. 90. *Paneg.* 8(5).12.2 claims that stormy weather delayed the fall of the British regime, which might be a reference to this defeat (e.g. Seston (1946) 78-79, 101; Barnes (1981) 288 n. 42), but Shiel (1977) 9-10 and Nixon & Rodgers 130 n. 46 note that this may better reference

⁵⁰ Lyne (2000) 290-291; (2001); (2003) 160-162.

⁵¹ Barnes (1981) 7.

⁵² Diocletian's movements: Barnes (1982) 51-52.

⁵³ See also Potter (2014) 280.

response to Maximian's defeat, being in part a display of Diocletian's ongoing support.⁵⁴ As for Carausius, he probably followed up his victory by returning with his army to Gaul. A pro-Carausian presence in Boulogne is attested only after this time, and the distribution of Carausius' coins suggests his dominion included Boulogne, Rouen and Amiens. Carausius' coins improved in quality, which may reflect the importation of Gallic die-sinkers. In February 291 Maximian is attested in Reims, which may suggest that the war required his personal presence.⁵⁵

Eutropius recounts that the war against the militarily skilled Carausius was fought in vain, and that the rival emperors arranged a peace (*pax conuenit*) (9.22).⁵⁶ In 292/3 Carausius presented himself as a member of the imperial college by having his mints coin for Diocletian and Maximian and by presenting himself on coins as their equal colleague.⁵⁷ Most famously, his mints issued a type with obverse *Carausius et Fratres Sui* along with the jugate portraits of all three emperors, and reverse *Pax Auggg*.⁵⁸ The silence of Diocletian's and Maximian's media shows that Diocletian and Maximian did not admit the claim, and it is thus unlikely that they had ever made a formal treaty.⁵⁹ Victor however states that Carausius was allowed to remain in control of Britain, since the other emperors judged him militarily competent and able to defend the inhabitants of Britain against barbarians (*Caes.* 39.39). It may be relevant that in 292/3 Carausius' mints produced reverse legends that allude not only to the joint rule of three Augusti (*Auggg*), but less often to the rule of two (*Augg/Auugg*).⁶⁰ The presence of the legends *Prouidentia Augg*, *Victoria Augg* and *Virtus Augg*, the use of military imagery on some of these types, and Carausius' contemporary celebration on coins of a victory over German barbarians may all refer to a joint campaign by Carausius and Maximian. If so, a common enemy may have helped bring about a temporary peace between the rival imperial claimants.⁶¹ The accession and

⁵⁴ Casey (1994) 109; Potter (2014) 280; Roberto (2014) 84. It is plausible that the future co-option of the Caesars was a topic of discussion, although Bowman (2005) 74 suggests caution since imperial movements from 291-292 are very badly attested (cf. Pasqualini (1979) 53-55; Potter 280-281).

⁵⁵ Casey (1994) 52-53, 106-109, who suggests that the sequence and mintmarks of Carausius' non-Rouen coins in Gaul date the counter-invasion to late 290 or early 291. Reims: *FV* 315; Barnes (1982) 58.

⁵⁶ Cf. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 131 n. 47.

⁵⁷ *RIC* 5.2 Carausius, Diocletian and Maximian 1-49.

⁵⁸ *RIC* 5.2 Carausius, Diocletian and Maximian 1; Carson (1959) 36; (1971) 61-62; (1987); Casey (1994) 67, 110-111; Lyne (2003) 162-165.

⁵⁹ Seston (1946) 84-88; Barnes (1981) 7; Casey (1994) 111; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 107-108.

⁶⁰ Lyne (2003) 163, who includes examples.

⁶¹ Lyne (2003) 163-164.

ongoing survival of Carausius must have been an important political issue when the Tetrarchy was created.

To understand the historical context of the Tetrarchy, it is also necessary to consider the political and dynastic positions of Constantius and Galerius prior to their co-option. As Caesars, Constantius was married to Maximian's step-daughter or daughter Theodora, and Galerius to Diocletian's daughter Valeria.⁶² The epitomes claim that they divorced existing wives to marry their new wives after they had been made Caesars, but Maximian's panegyrist in 289 praises the following (10(2).11.4):⁶³

Tu quidem certe, imperator, tantum esse in concordia bonum statuis, ut etiam eos qui circa te potissimo funguntur officio necessitudine tibi et adfinitate deuinxeris, id pulcherrimum arbitratus adhaerere lateri tuo non timoris obsequia sed uota pietatis.

You in truth, Emperor, consider there to be so much good in harmony that you have also bound to yourself through friendship and marriage even those who perform the highest office in your entourage, thinking it a very fine thing to have them held to your side not through the obsequiousness inspired by fear, but through pledges inspired by dutiful affection.⁶⁴

Despite his use of the plural, the speaker appears to allude to a single, prominent individual, since 'highest office' (*potissimo ... officio*) is in the singular, and, as we will see, he then narrates that these dutiful subordinates won a campaign against the Franks (11(3).4-7), which was presumably commanded by an individual in the highest office. In a panegyric meant for the emperor, the orator understandably does not name the individual and makes safe use of the plural, not wishing to draw attention to someone else in an explicit manner.⁶⁵ Likely, the marriage alliance being referenced is Constantius' union with Theodora. It has been suggested that the passage alludes to the praetorian prefect Hannibalianus, who seems to have been linked to the imperial family and may have been the former husband of Maximian's wife Eutropia.⁶⁶

⁶² Marriages: *Paneg.* 10(2).11.4; *Origo* 1.1; *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.24-25; *Eutr.* 9.22; *Jer. Chron.* 225-226; *Epit.* 39.2, 40.12; *Philost. HE* 2.16a; *Chron. Min.* 1.445 (*Prosp. Ep. Chron.*); *Chron. Pasch.* 516.

⁶³ Epitomes: *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.24-25; *Eutr.* 9.22; *Jer. Chron.* 225-226; *Epit.* 39.2. For the question of Theodora's relationship with Maximian, see e.g. Barnes (1982) 33; Kuhoff (2001) 118-119.

⁶⁴ *Trans. Nixon & Rodgers* (1994) 69-71 with alterations.

⁶⁵ Cf. Seston (1946) 89, who interprets the passage literally, per which there are multiple sons-in-law and nephews who are rivals to Constantius.

⁶⁶ Seeck (1900) 1041; *PLRE* 1 Hannibalianus 3; see also *Theodora* in the Appendix.

But the celebration of marriage and dutiful affection relates much more naturally to a son-in-law than a wife's former husband, and Hannibalianus appears to have been Diocletian's prefect anyway.⁶⁷

The fifth-century chronicler Prosper lends support to this, since he records the appointment of Constantius and Galerius as Caesars, their marriages and the repudiation of their previous wives under the year 288 (*Chron. Min.* 1.445). In his coverage of the Tetrarchic period, 288 is the only date that seems radically incorrect. While Prosper is clearly wrong on the co-option of the Caesars, the mistake would be understandable if 288 were the year of Constantius' marriage, for which the panegyric provides support.

The Paschal Chronicle provides further support (516):

καὶ ἅμα Διοκλητιανῶ ἐποίησαν οἱ δύο Καίσαρας δύο, ὁ μὲν Διοκλητιανὸς τὸν ἴδιον γαμβρὸν Γαλέριον Μαξιμιανόν. εἶχεν γὰρ τὴν Διοκλητιανοῦ παῖδα Βαλερίαν εἰς γάμον. ὁ δὲ Ἑρκούλιος Μαξιμιανὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐποίησεν Καίσαρα τὸν ἴδιον γαμβρὸν. ὁ γὰρ Κωνστάντιος ἔγημε Θεοδώραν τὴν πρόγονον Μαξιμιανοῦ Ἑρκουλίου...

And together with Diocletian they created two Caesars, Diocletian his own son-in-law Galerius Maximian. For he had in marriage a certain Valeria, Diocletian's daughter. And Herculius Maximian himself also made his own son-in-law Caesar. For Constantius married Theodora, the step-daughter of Maximian Herculius ...

The Paschal Chronicle makes mistakes on the Tetrarchic period, but in its agreement with the other evidence, the entry provides further support that Constantius married into Maximian's family prior to his co-option, and it gives reason to think the same for Galerius.

Furthermore, the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris*, which possibly predates the epitomes and appears to be more reliable, recounts the following (1.1):

⁶⁷ A reference to Constantius: e.g. Barnes (1982) 33, 125-126; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 70-71 n. 38; Leadbetter (1998b) 74-78; Kuhoff (2001) 119; De Trizio (2009) 111-112 (tentatively); Leadbetter (2009) 60-61, 178. Hannibalianus was probably Diocletian's prefect since an inscription lists him before his colleague in the prefecture, Asclepiodotus (*ILS* 8929; Barnes (1982) 124; note also his precedence during their joint consulship: *Chron. Min.* 1.60, 66 (*Chron.* 354); 1.230 (*Des. cons.*)), and Asclepiodotus took part in the 295/6 reconquest of Britain (*Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.42; *Eutr.* 9.22; *Jer. Chron* 227), and thus campaigned in the west.

Iste cum Galerio a Diocletiano Caesar factus est. Relicta enim Helena priore uxore, filiam Maximiani Theodoram duxit uxorem ...

That man (Constantius) along with Galerius was made Caesar by Diocletian. For, having left his former wife Helena, he took as his wife Theodora, the daughter of Maximian ...

This accords with an earlier marriage, since *enim* is causal and suggests that Constantius' elevation was a result of his marriage alliance. It is also notable that Galerius had a daughter, Valeria Maximilla, who had borne a son by 306 (*ILS* 666-667), which makes it improbable that she was born as late as 293, although there is uncertainty concerning her mother's identity (see Appendix). Nevertheless, there is no reason to put faith in the testimony of the epitomes on this issue, and it is even possible that these texts transmit a deliberate Constantinian fiction, since by claiming his father had to divorce his mother because of imperial advancement, Constantine could counter the accusations that he was a bastard.⁶⁸ Therefore, Constantius married Theodora well before he became Caesar, and Galerius may have done similarly.⁶⁹ Indeed, the Augusti are known to have met with one another in c. 288, on which occasion they may have decided upon these marriage alliances.⁷⁰

We know almost nothing about Galerius' career before he became Caesar, but Lactantius has Galerius in 305 complain to Diocletian about the following (*DMP* 18.6):

Iam fluxisse annos quindecim <quibus> in Illyricum id est ad ripam Danuuii relegatus cum gentibus barbaris luctaretur, cum alii intra laxiores et quietiores terras delicate imperarent.

Fifteen years had now elapsed since he had been sent off to Illyricum, in effect to the banks of the Danube, to struggle against the barbarian peoples, while his colleagues reigned in luxury in more relaxed and peaceful lands.⁷¹

If *quindecim* is a round figure that references the beginning of Galerius' Caesariate, it would not make much sense, since Galerius' earliest known military activities as Caesar were in Egypt from 293-294, and he did not campaign on the Danube until 299 or 300. The passage suggests

⁶⁸ Leadbetter (1998b).

⁶⁹ Barnes (1982) 33, 125-126; Leadbetter (1998b) 74-78; (2009) 60-61, 178; cf. Rees (2004) 6.

⁷⁰ *Paneg.* 10(2).9; see also *Paneg.* 11(3).5.4, 7.1. 288; Barnes (1982) 51. Connection to marriage alliances: Kuhoff (2001) 120; Leadbetter (2009) 61-62.

⁷¹ Trans. Creed (1984) 29.

that Galerius had been despatched to the Danube as a general in c. 290, for if there was no such historical basis, it would be clumsy rhetoric from a professor on the very subject of rhetoric.⁷² Indeed, Galerius' arrival on the Danube would link well with Diocletian's second campaign against the Sarmatians (289/90).⁷³

Constantinian bias and the Gallic panegyrics allow greater insight into the career of Constantius. The *Origo* notes that Constantius was at one point the *praeses* 'of the Dalmatias' (1.1), and the *Historia Augusta* claims that Constantius was *praeses* of Dalmatia during the reign of Carus (*Carus* 17.6); i.e. by 283.⁷⁴ The testimony of the *Origo* lends legitimacy to the latter, and it appears correct that Constantius was *praeses* during the reign of Carus, as it allows one to infer that Constantius had earned Diocletian's favour through a change of allegiance in 285, when Diocletian was fighting Carinus in the Balkans.⁷⁵ The use of the plural (*Dalmatiarum*) by the much preferable *Origo* perhaps suggests that Constantius held a prestigious governorship covering multiple Balkan provinces. The governorship of Dalmatia should have been a civil office, but a governorship covering multiple provinces would have probably been military in nature. Barnes thus suggests a command that embraced the Dalmatian coast and extended into the interior of the Balkans.⁷⁶ If one is less strict with the date given in the *Historia Augusta*, Carinus may have awarded Constantius the command to counter the Pannonia-based usurpation of M. Aurelius Julianus, who apparently had revolted following Carus' death in 283, and then kept him in the office to supervise affairs.⁷⁷ Additionally or alternatively, Constantius was awarded the command in order to counter Sarmatian aggression, since Diocletian's first

⁷² See also Moreau (1954) 310; Leadbetter (2009) 78 n. 126; cf. Creed (1984) 97-98 n. 5. Galerius' movements: Barnes (1982) 61-64. Seeck (1897) 438 emends *quindecim* to *duodecim* on entirely historical grounds; see also Barnes 196 n. 5.

⁷³ Evidence for the second Sarmatian campaign: *Paneg.* 11(3).5.4, 7.1; *Paneg.* 8(5).3.3; *Prices Edict* pr. 1-4. Dating the second Sarmatian campaign: Barnes (1976a) 177-178; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 42.

⁷⁴ The relevant passage of the *Origo* is quoted in *Intr.* c.

⁷⁵ Barnes (1978) 76; Kuhoff (2001) 114-115; Barnes (2011) 27-28; cf. Leadbetter (1998b) 84 n. 21, who finds the date doubtful, since it comes from the *Historia Augusta*.

⁷⁶ Barnes (2011) 27-28. Kuhoff (2001) 114 considers the post to be a civilian governorship, and argues that Constantius gained the office because he had been a tribune of the praetorians and then a *homo nouus*. Altmayer (2014) 177 suggests that Constantius was one of the officers who plotted against Carinus' life. *CIL* 3.9860, which makes Constantius *praeses* of Dalmatia, is a forgery (Barnes 28-30).

⁷⁷ M. Aurelius Julianus: *RIC* 5.2 nos. 1-5; *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.9-10; *Chron. Min.* 1.522 (Pol. Silv.). Aurelius appears distinct from Sabinus Julianus, another usurper against Carinus: *Epit.* 38.6; *Zos.* 1.73.1-2 = *Joh. Ant. fragm.* 163 (*FHG* 4, p. 601); cf. *Epit.* 39.3-4. The Juliani as two different usurpers: *PLRE* 1 Julianus 24; Julianus 38 (tentatively); Kienast (2011) 263; cf. Stein (1918); *PIR*² A 1538; Bird (1976) 130; Barnes (1982) 143; Leadbetter (1994); Kreucher (2008) 422; Altmayer (2014) 166-171. Johne, Hartmann & Gerhardt (2008) 1074 are agnostic.

campaign after his defeat of Carinus was against this enemy.⁷⁸ As the governor of Dalmatia, Constantius' change of allegiance would have been very valuable to Diocletian, since Dalmatia was proximate to Moesia, where Diocletian fought Carinus. The importance of this office to Constantius' career and his relationship with Diocletian may explain why he named a son Dalmatius.⁷⁹ However, if Constantius was in possession of an extraordinary command and its attendant men and resources, his allegiance would have been especially consequential.

According to the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Constantius, whom the author calls an *exarchos*, commanded against an invasion of Asia Minor by Bosporian Sarmatians when he was not yet Caesar (*De Adm. Imp.* 244-250 (*CSHB* 18)). The establishment of new legions I Pontica by 288 and I Iovia Scythica during the Dyarchy supports the historicity of this war.⁸⁰ Constantius eventually served as a general under Maximian. As we have seen, the panegyrist in 289 seemingly alludes to him when he celebrates that the emperor has bound to himself those who hold *potissimum officium* (10(2).11.4). The panegyrist then celebrates that Maximian's glory is increased by the successes of such subordinates, who have crushed 'that slippery and deceitful race of barbarians' (*lubrica illa fallaxque gens barbarorum*) through their own leadership and the favourable auspices of the emperor (4). The orator presumably means the Franks, who had this reputation.⁸¹ The speaker then explains that, although these victories were carried out by others, they originated with the emperor (5). The orator reinforces the point by describing how all good things performed by the gods ultimately stem from the supreme creators, Jupiter and Hercules (6). The speaker then notes that Maximian's soldiers have reached the Ocean through his good fortune and felicity (7), which, as previously noted, references the recovery of northern Gaul from Carausius. Carausius supposedly had Frankish allies, and it is beside the point whether this is true or an anti-Carausian fiction.⁸² The implicit reference to a victory over the Franks and the reference to the war against Carausius are thus probably one and the same victory. Constantius held an independent command, since Maximian could claim no personal responsibility for this victory.⁸³ He therefore commanded the campaign that retook the

⁷⁸ The Sarmatian campaign: Barnes (1976a) 178; (1982) 50, 254-255; Syväne (2015) 185-186, 188-189.

⁷⁹ *PLRE* 1 Dalmatius 6. Significance of name: Kuhoff (2001) 119 n. 336.

⁸⁰ Syväne (2015) 188-189.

⁸¹ Barnes (1982) 126; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 71 n. 39; De Trizio (2009) 112; with *Paneg.* 7(6).4.2; HA, *Firm.* 13.4.

⁸² Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 71 n. 39, 224 n. 21. Shiel (1977) 4 questions the alliance's historicity.

⁸³ That Constantius waged a campaign against Carausius' Frankish allies is inferred by Barnes (1981) 7; (1982) 126.

Gallic coast and made it possible for the expedition against Britain to be launched. Indeed, the achievement was important enough to warrant the lengthy treatment that it received despite Maximian's non-involvement. It is unlikely that Constantius was responsible for the subsequent failure to retake Britain, since this should have ruined his chances at later promotion in the eyes of a soldiery concerned with fortunate generalship.⁸⁴

As for the exact nature of Constantius' command, scholars have interpreted *potissimum officium* as the praetorian prefecture.⁸⁵ However, our knowledge of those who held this office renders this improbable. A dedication to Diocletian by the praetorian prefects (*ILS* 8929) shows that before 292 Hannibalianus and Asclepiodotus jointly held the office as equestrians, and Hannibalianus is listed first, which suggests that he operated under Diocletian.⁸⁶ In 292 they then held a joint consulship with Hannibalianus again ranked first, and they thus attained senatorial status.⁸⁷ An inscription dated to 293-296 (*CIL* 6.1125) refers to a college of two senatorial praetorian prefects, probably the same two.⁸⁸ In 295/6 Asclepiodotus campaigned in Britain as praetorian prefect, and during the First Tetrarchy, he and an equestrian praetorian prefect, Hermogenianus, dedicated an inscription to Constantius (*AE* 1987.456).⁸⁹ Therefore, to be Maximian's prefect, Constantius would have to have been Asclepiodotus' predecessor, and thus would have been demoted from this powerful office of no set tenure before being made Caesar. This seems an unlikely sequence of events, and so I will translate *potissimum officium* as 'very powerful office' and surmise a generalship.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ This last point is made by Casey (1994) 53.

⁸⁵ E.g. Seeck (1897) 451-452; Barnes (1982) 125-126; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 70-71 n. 38; Leadbetter (1998b) 75-77; (2009) 60-61.

⁸⁶ Barnes (1982) 124. Date: Barnes 124 n. 4; see also Chastagnol (1962) 28 n. 13; *PLRE* 1 Hannibalianus 3; Leadbetter (1998b) 83 n. 19.

⁸⁷ *Chron. Min.* 1.60, 66 (*Chron.* 354); 1.230 (*Des. Cons.*).

⁸⁸ *CIL* 6.1125 = *ILS* 619. Identification of prefects: Chastagnol (1989) 167. Hannibalianus was urban prefect in 297-298: Barnes (1982) 113.

⁸⁹ *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.42; *Eutr.* 9.22; *Jer. Chron* 227. On the prefecture of Asclepiodotus, see Chastagnol (1989) 165-167; Barnes (1996) 546-547; Corcoran (2000a) 88-89. On Hermogenianus' career, see Chastagnol; Honoré (1994) 177-181; Corcoran 85-90.

⁹⁰ See also Barnes (1996) 547 with n. 87; Potter (2013) 33. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 70 n. 38 note that *Origo* 1.1 does not mention the praetorian prefecture when relating the offices held by Constantius. Kuhoff (2001) 116-117 suggests that Constantius was Asclepiodotus' predecessor, and Leadbetter (2009) 65 argues that both Caesars had been praetorian prefects before being replaced by Hannibalianus and Asclepiodotus (see also Barnes (1982) 125-126, 136, 138).

Constantius' panegyrist in 296/7 also describes the general's military successes prior to becoming Caesar (8(5).2.1). Wishing to recount Constantius' achievements since his accession (2.2), he first lists things that happened earlier in his career, particularly those events at which the speaker was present, who was holding an office at the time (2.1). He recounts that a king of a most savage nation was captured while preparing an ambush, and that Alemannia suffered a complete burning and devastation from the Rhine bridge to the crossing of the Danube at Guntia. The capture of the king appears to be an event distinct from the Frankish king Gennobaudes' surrender to Maximian prior to the panegyric in 289, since the latter appears to have done so voluntarily.⁹¹ This should thus be an achievement specific to Constantius, since Maximian's panegyrists ignore it. The reference to an invasion of Alemannia might mean that Constantius played a major role in Maximian's invasion of Germania in 287 (*Paneg.* 10(2).7-8). It was presumably thanks to this campaign that by 291 the Burgundians had occupied the territory of the Alemanni (*Paneg.* 11(3).17.3).⁹² Constantius' panegyrist also recounts that the Caesar had given him access to Maximian long ago and prior to these events, and that he will not bring up the things he spoke of then (1.5-6), which shows that Constantius had been an influential figure in Maximian's court long before his accession.⁹³ This strengthens the inference that Constantius had earned Diocletian's favour as an important player during the war with Carinus.

Upon or after their co-option, Diocletian and Maximian adopted Galerius and Constantius respectively as their sons. This is evidenced by the panegyrics, Lactantius and the Paschal Chronicle. For example, the panegyrist in 296/7 refers to Maximian and Diocletian as Constantius' *pater* (father) and *patruus* (uncle) respectively (8(5).1.3), and Lactantius notes that Galerius visited his *pater*, Diocletian, upon his recovery from illness (*DMP* 18.1).⁹⁴ There is also some epigraphic suggestion of filiation. The inscription of the Baths of Diocletian, which dates to the Second Tetrarchy (305-306) and on which the emperors dedicate the new complex, refers to the now retired Diocletian and Maximian as *patres imp. et Caess.* (Fathers of the emperors and Caesars) (*CIL* 6.1130 (= 31242)). The same title and, for Diocletian, *pater Augustorum*

⁹¹ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) pp. 110-111 n. 6; cf. Barnes (1981) 7. Gennobaudes: *Paneg.* 10(2).10.3-5; *Paneg.* 11(3).5.4.

⁹² Nixon & Rodgers (1994) pp. 110-111 n. 6.

⁹³ Influential long before he was appointed as Caesar: Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 110 n. 5.

⁹⁴ The Caesars as sons: *Paneg.* 8(5).1.3, 1.5, 3.3, 13.2; *Paneg.* 9(4).6.2, 8.1; *Paneg.* 7(6).3.3; Lact. *DMP* 18.1, 20.3, 39.1; *Chron. Pasch.* 512.

(Father of the Augusti) appear in other inscriptions and papyri dated to 306-308.⁹⁵ Admittedly, after the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian in 305, the Tetrarchic regime and its subjects employed metaphorical paternity and filiation to describe the relationships of the emperors to one another. Diocletian was not literally *pater Augustorum*, since he was not the father of two Augusti, and in 308 Galerius gave Maximinus and Constantine the title *filius Augustorum* (Son of the Augusti), even though neither could claim to have two Augusti as parents. These metaphors were enabled by the fact that Caesars were usually the sons of Augusti.⁹⁶

Nevertheless, the panegyrist in 307 says the following (7(6).3.3):

O diuinum tuum, Maximiane, iudicium, qui hunc tibi iure adoptionis nepotem, maiestatis ordine filium etiam generum esse uoluisti, ...

O that divine judgement of yours, Maximian, who wished that man (Constantine) who was your grandson by right of adoption, your son by ranking in majesty, to be your son-in-law as well; ...⁹⁷

For the speaker, Maximian adopted Constantius, making Constantine an adopted grandson, and he distinguishes between this and the *maiestatis ordo* that renders Constantine a metaphorical ‘son’.⁹⁸

Carlà argues that the father-son bonds were fictitious, noting that the Augusti had already established a fictional fraternal bond and that the Caesars, if adopted, would have been married to their sisters, for which there were legal complications (*D* 23.2.55 (Gaius); *Jl* 1.10.2, 1.19.2).⁹⁹ However, if the Augusti emancipated their daughters, adoption would have been legally permissible (*D* 23.2.17.1 (Gaius); *Jl* 1.10.2). Claudius emancipated his daughter Octavia so that she could marry his adopted son Nero (*Dio* 60.33.2²). Marcus Aurelius likewise married Faustina Minor, the daughter of his adoptive father Antoninus Pius, although the union’s legality is not

⁹⁵ *RMD* 2, 100-101, no. 78 (7 January 306) (*patres impp. et Caess.*); *CIL* 3.12049 (Diocletian as *pater Augustorum*); *P. Lond.* 3.712 (13 February 308), 715 (6 January 308) (πατήρ Αύγουστῶν). See also *CTh* 13.10.2, a constitution of Maximinus that refers to Diocletian as *dominus et parens*, and *Eus. HE* 9.9a.1, a quoted letter of Maximinus that refers to Diocletian and Maximian as οἱ δεσπότες and οἱ ἡμέτεροι πατέρες.

⁹⁶ Seston (1946) 216-217; Kolb (1987) 94-95; Stefan (2005). *Filius Augustorum*: *RIC* 6 Thessalonica 28, 32, 39, Antioch 105, 111; *AE* 1979.602; *P.Cair.Isid* 47, 91; *P.Oslo* 3.86; *P.Sakaon* 1.5, 16.3; *Lact. DMP* 32.5. Note also *Filius Augusti*: *RIC* 6 Nicomedia 56, 61; Antioch 104-105, 111; Alexandria 99b, 100b, 113, 117; *P.Cair.Isid.* 90.

⁹⁷ *Trans. Nixon & Rodgers* (1994) 194.

⁹⁸ Kolb (1987) 47; (1995) 29. On this panegyric’s references to filiation, see also 13.4, 14.4. For Constantine as Maximian’s *nepos*, see also *AE* 1981.520.

⁹⁹ Carlà (2012) 65-67; see also *Coll.* 6.4 (Diocletian’s incest edict).

commented upon.¹⁰⁰ Admittedly, the jurist Gaius considers it questionable whether an adopter could be younger than an adoptee (*I* 1.106), and the *Institutes* of Justinian states that an adopter should be at least eighteen years older than an adoptee (1.11.4).¹⁰¹ The latter certainly could not have been so in the case of Maximian and Constantius, who were both born c. 250.¹⁰² But through the privilege of *princeps legibus solutus*, the emperors could have overlooked this stipulation because they considered the bonds of adoption to be more important.¹⁰³ Ultimately, I see no convincing reason why the Augusti would have presented their relationship with the Caesars as one of filiation and yet not have set it in law through adoption, especially when Maximian already had a son in Maxentius who might be expected to eventually challenge Constantius. I thus find the arguments against the use of adoption to be unconvincing. After all, what use was a paternal-filial presentation without legal adoption? By adopting their Caesars, the Augusti clarified the eventual succession of their juniors and promoted an image of collegial unity through dynastic bonds.

The Tetrarchs appear to have used nomenclature in a similar manner.¹⁰⁴ The Tetrarchic emperors, from Maximian to Licinius, adopted Diocletian's *nomen* Valerius, and by natural extension so too did their sons. Admittedly, Diocletian's emperorship made Valerius into a *nomen* of status, and so Constantius, Galerius and others may have adopted the name upon being appointed to a command before they were co-opted. Nevertheless, one presumes that the unified use of Valerius was partly because of imperial self-representation.¹⁰⁵ Other names were shared as well. As previously noted, inscriptions show that the Caesars inherited the divine *signa* of their Augusti, Galerius taking Jovius, and Constantius Herculus.¹⁰⁶ Galerius changed his *cognomen* Maximinus into Maximianus, and one suspects that he received his *praenomen* Gaius from Diocletian.¹⁰⁷ In 285/6 Diocletian and Maximian shared the *nomina* M. Aurelius, and it may be

¹⁰⁰ Kolb (1987) 68-69; Corcoran (2012) 5; Hekster (2015) 278 n. 4. Marriage between adopted and natural offspring appears to have been widespread in the Greek east (Hübner (2007) 31-33).

¹⁰¹ I thank N. Lenski for bringing this issue to my attention.

¹⁰² Ages: Barnes (1982) 32, 35.

¹⁰³ *Princeps legibus solutus*: *Dig.* 1.3.31.

¹⁰⁴ Tetrarchic nomenclature: *PLRE* 1 Constantinus 4; Constantius 12; Diocletianus 2; Licinius 3; Maxentius 5; Maximianus 8; 9; Maximinus 12; Severus 30; Barnes (1982) 4-6; Cambi (2004).

¹⁰⁵ Status *nomina*: Hekster (2015) 234.

¹⁰⁶ Constantius Herculus: *ILS* 634. Galerius Jovius: *ILS* 634, 8931.

¹⁰⁷ Maximianus: Lact. *DMP* 18.13.

related that Constantius' *praenomen* appears to have been Marcus.¹⁰⁸ It is however unclear whether Diocletian originally adopted the name to evoke the memory of Marcus Aurelius, or whether he took the name from Maximian's nomenclature, who later passed Marcus on to his Caesar just as Diocletian bestowed Gaius on Galerius.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, Constantius' eventual Caesar Severus adopted the *nomen* Flavius from his superior. As Cambi notes, Tetrarchic nomenclature did not reflect the 'juridical manner of Roman adoption', but it undoubtedly conveyed a message of dynastic unity, in this case through the sharing of multiple names along both filial and non-filial lines.¹¹⁰

In summary, Constantius had been an important office-holder since the reign of Carus or Carinus, and had switched allegiance to Diocletian during the civil war of 285. He became an influential presence in Maximian's court, achieved major and decisive victories as a general under Maximian, married Theodora in c. 288 and eventually in 293 became the Caesar and son of Maximian, and a member of the *domus* Valerius. Galerius had likewise been a general on the Danube and had possibly also married into the imperial family around the same time, before likewise entering the Valerian dynasty as the Caesar and son of Diocletian. Constantius and Galerius clearly enjoyed favour, but four observations make it likely that there was also some mistrust: 1) Carus or Carinus had awarded Constantius either the governorship of Dalmatia or an extraordinary command, and he subsequently betrayed the dynasty that was his benefactor; 2) Constantius had won military success against Carausius whereas Maximian had not; 3) Constantius' military achievements were major enough to contend with the achievements of Maximian in a panegyric spoken before that very emperor; 4) Prior to their promotion to Caesar, Constantius and Galerius did not enjoy the consulship, the urban prefecture, nor, at least in Constantius' case, the praetorian prefecture.¹¹¹ As we will see, Diocletian and Maximian had good reason to be suspicious of their generals, and one suspects that, in the 280s, Constantius and Galerius had not been entirely exempt from this suspicion.

¹⁰⁸ Constantius' *praenomen*: Barnes (1982) 4 n. 7.

¹⁰⁹ Adopted from Marcus Aurelius: Seston (1946) 39-40; Kolb (1987) 16-17 with nn. 35-36; Kuhoff (2001) 19, 29-31; Cambi (2004) 40-41. Adopted from Maximian: Rea (1984) 190; Worp (1985) 98-99; Barnes (1996) 535-536; Corcoran (2008) 230.

¹¹⁰ Cambi (2004) 45.

¹¹¹ Lists of Dyarchic consuls and urban prefects: Barnes (1982) 91-93, 110.

An aspect of military context, the threat from external enemies, must now be considered. We have seen that numerous scholars consider the Tetrarchy to have been wholly or partially a response to the threat posed by external enemies and rebels. I have discussed how this popular idea derives from the epitomes, which telescope historical events and whose presentation of empire-wide crisis seems like supposition based on campaigns of the later 290s. Undoubtedly, the expansion of the imperial college was of benefit to the protection of the empire against its various enemies, and was surely a consideration, but it is unlikely to have been a major consideration, since in 293 the empire's borders had been relatively secure for some time.¹¹² In the case of the Persians, their military dominance had ended in the 260s. Roman and Palmyrene invasions and internal power struggles had weakened their empire, and in c. 287 Diocletian reorganised and strengthened the eastern frontier, installed the Roman puppet Trdat on the Armenian throne and secured a favourable treaty with the Persian king Bahram II on the latter's initiative.¹¹³ As late as 291, Bahram fought his brother in a major civil war (*Paneg.* 11(3).17.2), and in 293 one Narseh overthrew Bahram III.¹¹⁴ It is thus unlikely that the Romans viewed Persia as a serious threat. Indeed, when Narseh invaded in c. 296, the Romans appear to have been taken by surprise, since Galerius faced them with only a small army.¹¹⁵

¹¹² See also Costa (1912) 1804; Leadbetter (2009) 64-65.

¹¹³ Changes to the Persian empire: Christensen (1939) 113; Frye (1984) 303-308; Dignas & Winter (2007) 27; Potter (2014) 285-286. Roman campaigns against Persia: (Ballista) Sync. 716 (*CSHB* 22); Zon. 12.23, 24; (Carus) *Chron. min.* 1.148 (*Chron.* 354); Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 38.2-4; Festus, *Brev.* 24; Eutr. 9.18; Jer. *Chron.* 224-225; Amm. 24.5.3; HA, *Car.* 7.1, 8.1-9.1; *Epit.* 38.1; Zon. 12.30. Palmyrene campaigns: *Oracula Sibyllina* 13.155-171; Festus, *Brev.* 23; Eutr. 9.10; Jer. *Chron.* 221; HA, *Val.* 4.2-4, *Gall.* 10.1-8, 12, *Tyr. Trig.* 15.1-5; Lib. *Ep.* 1006.2; Oros. 7.22.12; Zos. 1.39.1-2; *Anon. Cont.* fragm. 8.2 (*FHG* 4, p. 195); Sync. 716 (*CSHB* 22). Treaty: *Paneg.* 10(2).7.5-6, 9.1-3, 10.6-7; Felix (1985) 105-107; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 64-65 n. 30, 68-69 n. 36; Dignas & Winter (2007) 26-27; Potter (2014) 286-287; see also *ILS* 618 (Persicus Maximus, 290); cf. Blockley (1992) 171 n. 4. Armenia: Agathangelos, *Hist. Arm.* 46-47 (trans. Dodgeon & Lieu (1991) 313-314); Moses Khorenats'i, *Hist. Arm.* 82 (trans. Dodgeon & Lieu 319); see also *P.Sakaon* 59.2-4, which places *Armeniacci Maximi* before *Persici Maximi*. Strengthening/reorganisation: Amm. 23.5.2; Dodgeon & Lieu 136-138; Leadbetter (2002). See also *Paneg.* 11(3).6.6 (the Tigris is Roman); *Paneg.* 8(5).3.3 (the Persians are subjugated), 21.1 with Nixon & Rodgers 141-142 n. 75 (inhabitants of Asia were resettled in Thrace). Diocletian's movements and the possible dating of these events: Barnes (1982) 50-51 with n. 27; Felix 105-107; Nixon & Rodgers 68-69 n. 36. On Diocletian's aims concerning Persia, see also Dignas & Winter 29-32, 125-130.

¹¹⁴ Frye (1984) 304-307.

¹¹⁵ Jul. *Or.* 1.18a-b; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.34; Festus, *Brev.* 25; Eutr. 9.24-25; cf. Zon. 12.31. That Persia could not have been viewed as a threat also appears in Costa (1912) 1804 (briefly); Kolb (1987) 71-72, who nonetheless views Persia as a target. Titulature and the funerary inscription of the veteran Aurelius Gaius (*AE* 1981.777) suggest that Galerius also fought the Persians in 294 or more likely 295, but the silence of the literary sources suggests that no major action occurred. On this campaign, see Eus. *HE* 8.17.3; Barnes (1976a) 175-176, 186-187; (1982) 17-22, 27, 254-257 (who rightly rejects the Persicus Maximus in *ILS* 640 as proof that the campaign was fought in 294, since in that instance it could be an unofficial title); Wilkinson (2012a) 55-56; cf. Kolb (1995) 24.

Likewise, unrest in Egypt was not responsible for the Tetrarchy. Imperial titulature and the early fourth-century poet Palladas indicate that Galerius undertook two campaigns in Egypt early in his Caesariate, and both *equi promoti* of the emperors and an *adiutor memoriae* in Galerius' *comitatus* were in Egypt in December 293.¹¹⁶ Literary sources claim that the cities of Coptos and 'Busiris', likely Boreasis, rebelled in an incident prior to the more famous Egypt-wide revolt of Domitianus and Achilleus between late 297 and early 298.¹¹⁷ Moreover, the panegyrist of 296/7 (8(5).5.2) and the funerary inscription of the veteran Aurelius Gaius (*AE* 1981.777) indicate that in the early or mid-290s an emperor had defeated 'Indians' (Nubians) on the Nile.¹¹⁸ Galerius, however, did not adopt the relevant victory titles, Aegyptiacus and Thebaicus, until after Diocletian's abdication. Such titles were usually adopted for victories over external enemies, which indicates that Diocletian did not consider Galerius' efforts against the Nubians worthy of titulature.¹¹⁹ As for the revolts of Coptos and Boreasis, while they would have hindered access to Egyptian mines and the Red Sea trade, the defensive capacity of these two cities was surely relatively minor, and not enough to warrant the expansion of the imperial college.¹²⁰ Furthermore, the ordering of *cognomina deuictarum gentium* was based upon chronology, and the fact that Galerius listed his Egyptian titles after Germanicus shows that the first campaign did not happen soon after his co-option, but after a Frankish campaign of Constantius that post-dated that Caesar's siege and capture of Carausian Boulogne.¹²¹ One thus wonders whether Diocletian viewed Egypt as an opportunity for his Caesar to win a comparable success and for the Tetrarchy to display their omnipresence.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Titulature (Aegyptiacus and Thebaicus): Eus. *HE* 8.17.3; note also the lacunae in *CIL* 3.12133 (Barnes (1982) 22-23). On reading Tetrarchic military titulature, see Barnes (1976a) 175-176; Barnes (1982) 27; Corcoran (2006b) 233-239; Wilkinson (2012b); see also Hebblewhite (2017) 52-60. Palladas: P.CtYBR inv. 4000, p. 11.27-35 with Wilkinson 39-47. *Equi*: *P.Grenf.* 2.110. *Adiutor*: *SB* 18.13851.

¹¹⁷ Eus. *Chron.* 227 (Karst); Jer. *Chron.* 226; Zon. 12.31. Boreasis: Bowman (1984) 33-36.

¹¹⁸ Wilkinson ((2012a) 53-54; (2012b) 44) uses Gaius' career and Palladas' epigram to argue that the second campaign occurred in 294/5, which is supported by the fact that vexillations of Moesian legions are attested in Egypt in February 295 (*P.Oxy.* 43.*recto*) (cf. Bowman (1978) 27, 34).

¹¹⁹ Barnes (1976a) 182. See also *Paneg.* 11(3).17.4, which in 291 claims that the Nubian Blemmyes are distracted by war with the Ethiopians.

¹²⁰ The economic factor: Leadbetter (2000); (2002).

¹²¹ Barnes (1976a) 182. Frankish campaign: *Paneg.* 8(5).8.1-9.4; *Paneg.* 7(6).4.2; *Paneg.* 6(7).5.3.

¹²² Kolb (1987) 71 also dismisses Egypt as a reason for the Tetrarchy, stating that it was not until 294 that Galerius was involved in fighting. On these campaigns, see Barnes (1976a) 180-182; Bowman (1978) 26-27, 34; Barnes (1982) 62 with nn. 74-75; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 115-116 n. 16; Barnes (1996) 542; Corcoran (2000a) 131-132 n. 32; Leadbetter (2000); (2002); Corcoran (2006b) 234-235; Wilkinson (2012b) 39-47. Procopius reports that Diocletian redrew the southern frontier (*Bell.* 1.19.27-37; see also *IGRR* 1.1291 with Brennan (1989)), although

Except for Carausius, in 293 the empire's enemies posed no serious threat. Maximian did not personally campaign against Moorish unrest until c. 296, which suggests that the Quinquegentiani and their possible leader Julianus were not a pressing issue in 293.¹²³ The emperors do not appear to have fought any campaigns against Germans or Sarmatians between 290 and March 293, and the campaigns that pre-date this time seem to have been successes.¹²⁴ The idea that the empire was under siege is thus incorrect. The biggest threat to the empire was Carausius, who had indeed defeated Maximian, but the latter had otherwise been a successful military leader, and it was not necessary for him to make his son-in-law Caesar to use his skills as a general. Rather, as the coordinated appointments suggest, the Tetrarchy was part of a grander plan.

1.5. Imperial Presence and Regional Military Rebellion

Like Kulikowski, it is the author's contention that regional interests were a driving factor behind the creation of the Tetrarchy. As the third century progressed, the provincial elites and especially the armies became increasingly willing to raise emperors in the hope that they would better serve themselves and their parts of the empire. Certainly, as we have seen, many scholars have pointed to army rebellion as a reason why the Tetrarchy would have been useful, but I would argue that this was a principal reason for the Tetrarchic college, and I would locate it within this wider context of regional interests. The region-specific concerns that governed the acclamation of many emperors in the later third century had developed slowly over the course of the first three centuries AD before being exacerbated by political and military emergencies in the later third century.

Diocletian's personal presence dates this settlement to the late 290s/early 300s (Thomas (1976) 276-277; Bowman 28-30; Barnes (1982) 55; Brennan 198-200).

¹²³ See also Costa (1912) 1804. Maximian's African campaign: *Paneg.* 8(5).5.2; *FV* 41; Barnes (1976a) 179-180; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 117 n. 18, 174-175 n. 83; Zuckerman (1994) 67-68. On the Moors before 293, see *CIL* 8.8924; *AE* 1912.24; *ILS* 627-628; *Paneg.* 11(3).17.1. Julianus: *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.22; *Epit.* 39.3-4; Stein (1918); *PLRE* 1 Julianus 2; Kienast (2011) 277.

¹²⁴ German campaigns 285-288: Barnes (1976a) 178; (1982) 51, 57, 254-255. Sarmatian campaigns 285-289: Barnes (1976a) 177-178. See also *Paneg.* 11(3).17.1, 3 with Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 110-111 n. 6, which celebrates that in 291 the Germans are distracted fighting among themselves; cf. Costa (1912) 1803.

Before I argue these points, I will acknowledge the issue of succession as another reason for the appointments in 293. Diocletian and Maximian were born during the middle of the century, and so there was the risk that the Augusti might die in close succession.¹²⁵ This might cause a succession crisis if one of the Augusti did not have a successor groomed to take his place. It would have been understood that the Caesars were heirs apparent. This was generally the case concerning Caesars, and in accordance with hereditary custom, the Augusti adopted them as their sons. Coins, unofficial inscriptions and a panegyrist accordingly honoured them as *Principes Iuuentutis*, a title that evoked dynastic succession and had been applied to heirs apparent since the reign of Augustus and to junior-ranking emperors since the third century.¹²⁶ But evidently the appointments entailed more than the succession. Constantius does not appear to have been much younger than Maximian (Galerius' age is unknown), which does not accord well with an appointment purely concerned with the succession, even if he was to succeed Diocletian, who was somewhat older.¹²⁷ Moreover, we will see that the Augusti gave the Caesars the power to command armies and administer parts of the empire distant from their Augusti, which shows that they were not mere rulers-in-waiting.

As previously discussed, the imperial government had gradually integrated the provincial elite into central administration, and Caracalla's *Constitutio Antoniniana* and the experience of imperial division had given further impetus to this process. It is thus fitting that the Gallic and Palmyrene regimes maintained Roman law, administration and religion, and engaged in the same Roman language of power, calling their emperors Augusti and extolling Roman virtues. Provincial elites thus became more widely trained in Roman law and administration.¹²⁸ By the

¹²⁵ Barnes (1982) 30-32.

¹²⁶ Neri (2013) 663-664. *Principes Iuuentutis*: E.g. *ILS* 654, 6184; *RIC* 5.2 Constantius 658-668a, Galerius 704-712; 6 Rome 50-61A, Siscia 8-10; *Paneg.* 9(4).6.1; see also Kuhoff (2001) 129; Rees (2002) 146-147; Stephenson (2009) 117.

¹²⁷ The ages of the Tetrarchs: *Paneg.* 11(3).7.6-7; *Epit.* 39.7, 40.11; Enßlin (1948) 2421; *PLRE* 1 Diocletianus 2; Barnes (1982) 30-31, 32, 35, 37; cf. Malal. 311.1-2, 312.5-6, 313.3, 21 (*CSHB* 32); Seeck (1898) 436-437.

¹²⁸ Lambrechts (1936); (1937); Talbert (1984); Syme (1986); Demougin (1988); Chastagnol (1992); Demougin, Devijver & Raepsaet-Charlier (1999); Eck & Heil (2005); Kulikowski (2014) 137-138; Potter (2014) 66-74. On the entry of provincial elite into the *ordo equester*: Heil (2008); Kulikowski (2014) 140-142. These changes happened within the context of 'acculturation', a process of cultural change resulting from the meeting of cultures. On acculturation/'Romanization' in the west, see Woolf (1998) for Gaul, and Fear (1996) and Keay (2003) for Spain. On the east, see Alcock (1997). For critiques of 'acculturation', see Gotter (2000); Versluys (2014). The Gallic empire: König (1981); Drinkwater (1987). Palmyra's empire: Stoneman (1992); Nakamura (1993); Hartmann (2001). Note also Carausius' British empire: Casey (1994).

time of the Tetrarchy, it made sense to establish a multi-emperor government, since such an arrangement would satisfy an elite increasingly used to participating in imperial administration.

Nevertheless, there was an arguably greater issue governing the creation of the Tetrarchy. Just as the provincial elite desired imperial presence, so did the legions. In the third century, army rebellion appears to have often been linked to a lack of imperial presence. To use the events of the 260s as an example, Valerian and Gallienus jointly ruled the empire from 253-260, with the former in the east and the latter the west. In 260 the Persians captured Valerian, and this loss triggered a crisis in army loyalties. Fulvius Macrianus, who organized supplies and money for the army in the east, had his sons Quietus and Macrianus Minor proclaimed Augusti with the support of the general Ballista.¹²⁹ The military units in the east either supported the Macriani or maintained nominal support for Gallienus through Odaenathus, at that time the *exarchos* of Palmyra.¹³⁰ Meanwhile, the Pannonian and Moesian legions, also without an emperor present, supported their *dux* Ingenuus in his bid for the throne. When Gallienus' general Aureolus defeated Ingenuus, some of his surviving supporters switched their allegiance to Regalianus, another general-turned-emperor based on the Danube.¹³¹ Around this time, Gallienus himself departed the Rhine to counter an Alemannic incursion into Italy, leaving behind his young son and Caesar Saloninus. Not long afterwards, Postumus, a general based in Gaul or the Rhineland, was proclaimed emperor by his troops and overthrew Saloninus.¹³² Saloninus had made the mistake of trying to reclaim booty that Postumus had distributed among his troops, but it is notable that Postumus successfully secured the wider support of the legions in the Rhineland, Gaul and Britain. Although Gallienus ultimately defeated the Macriani and the Danubian usurpers, he failed to retake the empire's northwest from Postumus and accepted Odaenathus' de-facto dominion in the near east, as did the troops under the latter's command. Afterwards, from 266-268, Gallienus confronted Gothic and Herulian marauders in the Balkans and Asia Minor, and while he was absent from Italy, Aureolus revolted for nearby Postumus with the support of units in northern Italy and Raetia, before possibly claiming imperial power himself.¹³³

¹²⁹ Ballista's office in 260: Mennen (2011) 223 n. 117.

¹³⁰ Odaenathus' position and status: Mennen (2011) 224-225.

¹³¹ The year of Ingenuus' revolt is admittedly controversial, and Fitz (1966) argues for 258. Cf. Drinkwater (1987) 100-104; Peachin (1990) 40.

¹³² Postumus' office: Mennen (2011) 220 n. 106.

¹³³ On the question of whether Aureolus claimed *imperium*, see Mabbott (1956); Barnes (1972) 149; Bastien (1984) 133-134, 140; Drinkwater (1987) 146 n. 82.

When Gallienus departed the threatened Balkan regions to fight Aureolus, and besieged him in Milan, his own officers assassinated him. Ando wonders whether the assassins were angered that Gallienus had left their lands of origin in the hands of marauders, since at least two of those involved, Claudius and Aurelianus, were born in Illyricum.¹³⁴ Ultimately, a correlation between imperial absence and rebellion is clearly visible. Indeed, Diocletian's own acclamation by the eastern field army and the support he presumably received from the eastern legions appears to be another example of this trend. Upon Numerian's death, the soldiers and officers of the east supported Diocletian's bid rather than accept the sole rule of the late emperor's brother Carinus.

This correlation is also found in the fourth century. For example, when Magnentius usurped in Gaul and overthrew Constantine's son Constans, Vetranio, the *magister peditum* in Pannonia, appears to have usurped on the encouragement of Constantine's daughter Constantina, lest his troops switch allegiance from the Constantinian regime to Magnentius, who was geographically closer than the remaining legitimate emperor Constantius II. Constantius and Vetranio soon held a conference, at which Vetranio abdicated and received a seat at the emperor's table. He subsequently enjoyed an imperially-funded retirement, presumably as a reward.¹³⁵ In contrast, Constans appears to have alienated the Gallic army by giving special attention to the Danube frontier. From c. 345 until his death in 350, Constans concentrated on this frontier, and the Gallic army appears to have accepted Magnentius' coup without difficulty. Ammianus writes that in 355, Gaul had long suffered neglect (*incuria*) (15.5.2). Indeed Constantius, in addressing Vetranio's soldiers, successfully encouraged loyalty to the Constantinian dynasty by reminding them that Constans had led them in many battles and had generously rewarded them, while a similar speech to Magnentius' Gallic army instead emphasized Constantine.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ For overviews of the crises following the capture of Valerian, see Ando (2012) 159-160, 168-171, 174; Potter (2014) 252-261. Chronology: Peachin (1990) 37-42; John, Hartmann & Gerhardt (2008) 1058-1059. The officers behind the conspiracy: Banchich & Lane (2009) 114-116 nn. 81-82; Mennen 236-237; Potter 260-261. For the suggested motivation behind Gallienus' assassination, see Ando (2012) 174; but cf. Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33.16-21 with Potter 260.

¹³⁵ A strategic usurpation: Kolb (1987) 144; Barnes (1993) 101; Dearn (2003); Potter (2014) 462; Crawford (2016) 76; Harrell (2016) 103; cf. Harries (2014) 197-198. The importance of imperial presence under Constantius II: Potter 462.

¹³⁶ Harries (2012) 194, 221-222 with n. 52. Speech to Vetranio's soldiers: Zos. 2.44.3. Speech to Magnentius' soldiers: Zos. 2.46.2-47.1.

These events show that an emperor's absence from a region could lead the military units present to switch their allegiance. This appears to have become an issue in the third century, since in contrast the second century emperors Antoninus Pius and Commodus could spend little to no time with the legions, the former having never campaigned during his 23-year reign.¹³⁷ During the later third century, when there was political and military instability, a rebellious response to imperial absence would have been an especial risk. Indeed, we have seen that these decades were littered with army-supported usurpations, and while we are restricted by the limited detail of the evidence, it is plausible that many of these rebellions happened in the absence of a proximate emperor. Many rebellions appear to have been confined to specific militarized regions and theatres of war. This applies to the Gallic, Palmyrene and Carausian regimes, and during Probus' reign, for example, the commander of the eastern frontier, Saturninus, usurped in Syria, Proculus and Bonosus revolted in the Rhineland, and an unnamed usurper took power in Britain.¹³⁸ The limited duration of most of these revolts partly explains their limited geography, but one suspects that they served regional interests as well, like imperial presence. The military support for the Gallic empire, albeit interspersed with coups against specific emperors, as well as that for the Palmyrene and Carausian empires shows after all that regional regimes could attain lasting martial loyalty, despite opposition from the rest of the empire.¹³⁹

The danger being faced by soldiers and their families partly explains the greater need for a present emperor. In the mid-third century, the Roman Empire suffered repeated raids and invasions by a variety of external enemies, and the Roman army endured its greatest challenge since Republican times. In 224, the Persian Ardashir overthrew the Parthian Arsacid dynasty and established the empire of the Sassanians, which proved a more determined and capable foe than its predecessor.¹⁴⁰ Meanwhile, peoples beyond the Rhine and Danube established new and powerful confederations, such as that of the Alemanni, and others, including the Goths, migrated towards the Roman frontier, upsetting the balance of power.¹⁴¹ Enemy forces could spend long periods of time campaigning in and raiding the provinces, often unchecked before Roman

¹³⁷ Antoninus and Commodus: Kienast (2011) 134-136, 147-151.

¹³⁸ On Probus' reign and regional military rebellion, see also Potter (2014) 272.

¹³⁹ On legionary loyalty to Palmyra, cf. White (2015) 102-103.

¹⁴⁰ Dodgeon & Lieu (1991) 9-139; Dignas & Winter (2007) 18-32; Potter (2014) 165-166, 213-234, 244-252, 285-290.

¹⁴¹ Watson (1999) 7-9; Potter (2014) 240-243.

reinforcements could arrive. The Goths and Heruli, for example, made incursions into the Balkans and Asia Minor from 267-271.¹⁴² The battle tactics of the legions had also remained largely unchanged since Marius, and they were not well suited to any enemy that avoided a frontal charge, as could be expected from raiders or a cavalry-based army like that of the Persians.¹⁴³ Roman armies thus suffered major defeats to the Goths in 251 and to the Persians in 231, 244, 253 and 260.¹⁴⁴ Under such conditions, an imperial presence was desirable, since the attentions of a present emperor entailed material benefits such as reinforcements and, one presumes, had a positive psychological impact.

The need to please the soldiers and ensure their safety meant that power was gradually transferred from the centre to the periphery. Since the 230s, emperors spent longer periods of time in or near the border regions, or in cities situated along the traditional routes from east to west. During the period 193-235 (42 years), emperors were present in Rome for 22 of the years (52%). In 235-285 (50 years), it was 23 years (46%), and in 284-337 (53 years), about 15 (37%). During the early third century, imperial visits to Rome lasted for shorter durations than in previous times, and during the late third century, imperial visits were usually fleeting stays between campaigns. The increased imperial presence in the provinces is all the more striking when one considers that there were multiple emperors ruling at the same time from the beginning of Gallienus' reign to the fall of the Gallic empire (253-274), and from the beginning of Carinus' reign to the overthrow of Licinius (283-324).¹⁴⁵ In over twenty years of rule, Diocletian had only visited Rome in 303 and possibly in 285, and Galerius had never seen Rome until he besieged it fourteen years after becoming Caesar.¹⁴⁶

If we consider this trend and the link between presence and loyalty, it appears that the increased imperial presence in the provinces enhanced the desire for this presence to continue. Safety was not the only concern of the troops. After all, the usurpations of Diocletian and Vetrician do not seem influenced by external threats. Imperial presence was an opportunity for reward in the form of donatives and distinctions from the emperor, and loot through campaign,

¹⁴² Watson (1999) 39-40, 43-46, 54-55.

¹⁴³ Potter (2014) 125-130.

¹⁴⁴ Potter (2014) 165-166, 228-234, 240-246, 251-252.

¹⁴⁵ Halfmann (1986) 216-244; Lee (2007) 25, 26; Hekster (2008) 14-16; Hekster & Manders (2011) 156.

¹⁴⁶ Lee (2007) 25; Mennen (2011) 38-40. Diocletian's movements: Barnes (1982) 49-56. Galerius: Lact. *DMP* 27.2.

as we saw regarding loyalty to Constans. Likewise, the opportunities for an officer's professional, political, financial or societal advancement were greatly approved by the presence of an emperor and his entourage, who could be impressed by the officer's performance or be persuaded to patronise him. Beyond practical benefits, an emperor's presence would have demonstrated interest in the affairs of the soldiery and probably encouraged their self-importance.¹⁴⁷ It appears that the increased access to emperors, combined with the greater willingness to rebel or riot seen during this period and, thanks to this, the absence of long-ruling emperors with which to establish stability in leadership, led to a sense of entitlement concerning imperial presence and a willingness to assert that entitlement. The impossibility of being in every theatre at once meant that armies nonetheless rebelled, and the more armies rebelled, the more this response became normalized and the more difficult it became for emperors to rule long enough to make their authority felt.¹⁴⁸

This issue most likely did not originate in the later third century. Before this time, regional military communities appear to have developed, which probably inspired prejudices and better allowed corporate action.¹⁴⁹ Scholarship has established that the military populations of the empire had a corporate identity that separated them from civilians, and that individual military units had their own identities.¹⁵⁰ Unit identity hints at the possibility for broader regional identities. Indeed, soldiers married within the local military community, and veterans often settled near the places they served.¹⁵¹ The geographical stability of many units would have encouraged such developments. During the early empire, garrisoned regions became self-sustaining through recruitment from local and regional sources.¹⁵² Furthermore, from the late second century small detachments from legions called vexillations became the chief tactical unit

¹⁴⁷ On the link between imperial presence and practical benefits/demonstration of imperial interest, see also Hekster (2007) 352-354. See also Hekster & Manders (2011), who argue that the emperor was still the empire's ideological focus.

¹⁴⁸ See also Hedlund (2008) 113, who suggests that the Gallienic development of an imperial cavalry army and thus the increased mobility of the emperor would have increased demands that the emperor be present.

¹⁴⁹ See also Harries (2012) xii.

¹⁵⁰ Corporate identity: Wesch-Klein (2007) 447-449; Potter (2014) 131-134. Individual units: Potter 133-134. See also McCarty (2010) 38-39 on Legio III Augusta, and Devijver (1989) 439-444, Kaizer (2009) 241-242 and Heyn (2011) on Cohors XX Palmyrenorum.

¹⁵¹ Marriage: Phang (2001) 224-228; Wesch-Klein (2007) 447; see also Scheidel (2007) 423-424. Veteran settlement: Tac. *Ann.* 1.17, 4.46, 14.27.2-3; Mann (1983) 56-68.

¹⁵² Mann (1983) 49-56, 63-64; Cowan (2015) 9-10; cf. Saller & Shaw (1984) 142-145, who show that military epitaphs in Britain and on the Rhine during the early empire evidence low levels of commemoration by kin, and argue that this was because soldiers were not recruited locally (on this issue, see Ch. 3).

for field armies. The legions thus became static reserves, and although some vexillations became permanently detached from their mother legions, others would often return after the completion of campaigns or garrison duty.¹⁵³ Indeed, in 69 Licinius Mucianus provoked the Syrian legions into supporting Vespasian by claiming Vitellius wished them to exchange their stations with the German legions. Tacitus notes that many of the Syrian legionaries were connected to the locals as family members and friends, and because of their length of service loved their camps like homes (*Hist.* 2.80).¹⁵⁴ Similarly, in 360, when Constantius II asked for reinforcements from the Gallo-Rhine army for a campaign against the Persians, the soldiers complained that they were departing the lands of their birth and were leaving behind their Caesar (Julian) and their families, who were threatened by Alemannic aggression. They ultimately defied the order and elevated Julian to Augustus (*Amm.* 20.4.1-17).¹⁵⁵

Prejudices seemingly existed between the different regional military populations. In 69 Syria was perceived to be an ‘opulent and peaceful’ (*opulentam quietamque*) station (*Tac. Hist.* 2.80), and Lactantius has Galerius dismiss the lands of the other emperors as ‘easier and calmer’ (*laxiores et quietiores*) than the Danube, where he was stationed (*DMP* 18.6). Soldiers from Illyricum and Thrace were exported to imperial field armies for their supposed superiority, which surely encouraged a superiority complex.¹⁵⁶ Maximian’s panegyrist in 289 asserts that, whereas Italy is the *domina* of nations for the antiquity (*uetustas*) of her *gloria*, Pannonia is *domina* in *uirtus* (valour) (10(2).2.2), and he praises the units on that frontier as ‘the bravest of legions’ (*fortissimarum ... legionum*; 2.4). Likewise, the speaker in 291 praises that the emperors’ provinces of birth produce women stronger than the men of other provinces, being exposed to the enemy and where ‘all life is military service’ (*omnis uita militia est*) (11(3).3.9-4.1).¹⁵⁷ The orators praise the Balkans because their emperors originate from its provinces, but they probably draw on a pre-existing idea. In discussing the background of the Tetrarchs, Aurelius Victor says that they, although unrefined, were well-versed in military service and the miseries of the

¹⁵³ Cowan (2003) 17-20.

¹⁵⁴ *Tac. Hist.* 2.80: ...quippe et provinciales sueto militum contubernio gaudebant, plerique necessitudinibus et propinquitatibus mixti, et militibus vetustate stipendiorum nota et familiaria castra in modum penatium diligebantur.

¹⁵⁵ See also *Hdn.* 6.7.2-3, 8.5.8-9; *Lib. Or.* 18.95.

¹⁵⁶ Exportation of troops: Mann (1983) 66; see also Gračanin (2009) 597-598. Superiority complex: See also Syme (1971) 194.

¹⁵⁷ On these passages, see Davenport (2016).

countryside, and they were thus the best men for the state (*Caes.* 39.26).¹⁵⁸ In contrast, the usurper Procopius won over two eastern legions with a speech in which he condemned the emperor Valens as a ‘degenerate Pannonian’ (*Pannonius degener*) (*Amm.* 26.7.16). One notes a similar stereotype in Victor’s previous reference to the Tetrarchs as ‘unrefined’ (*humanitatis parum*), and in Julian’s description of the Mysians on the Danube as austere, boorish, awkward and stubborn (*Mis.* 348d).

The usurpations and fragmentation of the later third century probably encouraged rivalries, and emperors played a role in this. Maximinus Thrax gave the units on the Rhine and Danube, which were under his immediate command, the honorific title *Maximiniana*. This favour might partly explain why several eastern legions supported the revolution of 238.¹⁵⁹ Likewise, emperors sometimes used coins to demonstrate their favour for specific regions and units. For example, the emperor Decius had been born in Illyricum and had taken power using Danubian units. Fittingly, his coins honoured Dacia, the two provinces of Pannonia, Illyricum and the *Exercitus Illuricus* (Illyrian army).¹⁶⁰ Prejudices probably exacerbated dissatisfaction with imperial absence.

The task of the post-Severan emperors was thus not to placate a single volatile army, but several volatile regional military communities, who wanted a present and accessible emperor to attend to their needs. Some emperors bestowed special commands that oversaw large stretches of territory and concentrated power into the hands of a trusted general, which may have been a solution to the problem described as well as a means of dealing with external enemies. Philip appointed his brother Priscus to the position of *corrector totius Orientis*, a military-administrative position over the eastern provinces, probably meaning the Syrian provinces,

¹⁵⁸ The passage is quoted in Intr. c. But cf. Syme (1971) 194-195 and Davenport (2016) 384-388 on the taboo attached to emperors of humble background.

¹⁵⁹ *Maximiniana* and the effect: Potter (2014) 168.

¹⁶⁰ *RIC* 4.3 nos. 2-5, 9, 12-18, 20-26, 35-41, 101-105, 112-114, 116-119, 124, 158, 163, 195. Decius’ origins: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 29.1; Eutr. 9.4; *Epit.* 29.1. On these coins: Hedlund (2008) 101-103; Manders (2012) 256-259. Other emperors did similar: Quintillus: *RIC* 5.1 nos. 60-61. Aurelian: *RIC* 5.1 nos. 108, 110-111, 172-173, 204-205, 222-224, 378-380, 388. M. Aurelius Julianus: *RIC* 5.2 no. 4. Postumus: *RIC* 5.2 nos. 20-22, 64-66, 68, 82, 98-99, 130-134, 137, 139, 157-159, 200-202, 223-225, 247, 343; Drinkwater (1987) 162-163, 166-167. Victorinus: *RIC* 5.2 nos. 11-12, 21-25, 52, 91; Drinkwater 180-181. Carausius: *RIC* 5.2 nos. 12, 55-86, 187, 216-219, 240, 268-276, 533, 554-558, 568, 605, 741-742, 771-776; Casey (1994) 58, 65, 92-93; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 128 n. 41; Lyne (2000) 290-291; (2001); (2003) 148-151, 160-162; Williams (2004) 68-71; cf. *RIC* 5.2 pp. 440-442; Seston (1946) 87-88; Williams 66-68.

Oshroene, Palestine and Arabia. He also gave his brother-in-law Severianus a military-administrative position over Moesia and Macedonia, and eventually made Decius commander of the Pannonian and Moesian legions. In the 250s, Cornelius Octavianus was *dux per Africam Numidiam Mauretianamque*. In 260 Ingenuus seems to have been commander over the Pannonian legions, and Postumus the Gallic and/or Rhenish legions. Under Gallienus, Odaenathus held a military-administrative position in the east like that of Priscus. Even the exceptionally itinerant Aurelian and Probus resorted to such appointments. Following Aurelian's defeat of Zenobia, the emperor made one Marcellinus *praefectus Mesopotamiae rectorque Orientis*, and Virius Lupus *iudex sacrarum cognitionum per Orientum*, thus establishing military and administrative deputies in the reconquered east. Under Probus, Saturninus held a major command in the east, since the sources refer to him as *magister exercitus*, *magister militum* and στρατοπεδάρχης, and Carus, as Probus' praetorian prefect, commanded the forces in Raetia and Noricum. The fact that both Saturninus and, per the Greek sources, Carus usurped against Probus shows the risks in assigning such powerful commands.¹⁶¹

1.6. The Tetrarchic Solution

As previously discussed, by 293 Diocletian and Maximian had long been troubled by the problem of regional rebellion. Specifically, Carausius had survived Maximian's attempt to

¹⁶¹ Division of power through special commands: See also Altmayer (2014) 187-189, with 189 on Probus' failures. Priscus: *ILS* 9005; *PEuphr.* 1; *Zos.* 1.19.2, 20.2; *PIR*² I 488; Johne, Hartmann & Gerhardt (2008) 1178-1179; Ando (2012) 115-116; Potter (2014) 235; see also *IGRom.* 3.1201-2. Severianus: *CJ* 2.26.3; *Zos.* 1.19.2; Ando 117-118; Potter 235. Decius: *Zos.* 1.21.2; *PIR*² M 520; Huttner (2008) 201-202; Johne, Hartmann & Gerhardt 1162; Mennen (2011) 25, 142-143. Octavianus: *ILS* 2774 = *CIL* 8.12296; *PIR*² C 1408; Johne, Hartmann & Gerhardt 1139. Ingenuus: *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 33.2; *HA, Tyr. Trig.* 9.1; Mennen (2011) 216-217. Postumus: *Zos.* 1.38.2; *Zon.* 12.24; *HA, Tyr. Trig.* 3.9; Mennen 220 n. 106. Odaenathus: Mennen 224-226 with n. 135. Marcellinus: *Zos.* 1.60.1-61.1; *PLRE* 1 Marcellinus 1; 2; 17; Watson (1999) 79, 167; Hartmann (2001) 393; Altmayer 92, 187-188. Lupus: *ILS* 1210; *PLRE* 1 Lupus 5; Christol (1986) 115-116, 133, 263-270; Hartmann 192 n. 109, 393; Kreucher (2003) 199-200; Johne, Hartmann & Gerhardt 1180; Altmayer 187-188; cf. Watson 164-165; Potter 266. Saturninus: *Jer. Chron.* 222 (*magister exercitus*); *Jord. Rom.* 293 (*magister militum*); *Sync.* 723 (*CSHB* 22) (στρατοπεδάρχης); Altmayer 188-189; see also *HA, Firm.* 7.2; *Malal.* 302 (*CSHB* 32); cf. *Zos.* 1.66.1; *PLRE* 1 Saturninus 12; Barnes (1972) 171-172; Christol 203; Kreucher (2003) 173-174; (2008) 412-413; Kienast (2011) 256. Carus' command: *Zos.* 1.71.4-5 = *Joh. Ant. fragm.* 160 (*FHG* 4, p. 600). Carus' usurpation: *Zos.* 1.71.4-5; *Petr. Patr. fragm.* 197 (Banchich) = *Anon. Cont. fragm.* 11 (*FHG* 4, p. 198); *Zon.* 12.29; cf. *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 37.4; *Eutr.* 9.17; *Jer. Chron.* 224; *HA, Prob.* 21.2-3, *Car.* 1.3, 6.1-2; *Epit.* 37.4; *Oros.* 7.23.6; *Malal.* 302 (*CSHB* 32). For a discussion of Carus' command and usurpation, see Altmayer 57-66, 188-189. For possibly unhistorical special commands, see *HA, Aur.* 11.4, 17.3 (cf. 18.1), *Firm.* 7.2, *Prob.* 7.4.

recover Britain and had re-established his continental dominion, leaving the Augusti concerned for the survival of their regime. Although Carausius and the Augusti had now made a truce, the peace had resulted from Carausius' victories, which had thus undermined the authority of Diocletian and Maximian. Maximian had failed to defeat a usurper within his half of the empire, and Diocletian had failed to protect his right to co-opt new emperors. While they avoided acknowledging Carausius' claims to legitimacy and collegiality, the cessation of hostilities and Maximian's possible cooperation with Carausius against German pirates betrayed weakness. The problem was twofold. Carausius' ongoing survival and martial success against both pirates and Romans posed a direct threat to the Dyarchs. Carausius might wish to press his claim to legitimacy by marching towards the Rhine, where he might win over legions in the same way that the British and Gallo-Rhenish legions collaborated under the Gallic emperors. Legions on the Rhine might instead declare allegiance to the militarily successful Carausius out of their own volition, since, as we have seen, military success was an especially important imperial trait during the later third century. On the other hand, Carausius' success was a potential encouragement to provincial rebellions elsewhere, and it represented the persistent problem of trying to control the armies and their officers. For the Dyarchs, it could not but recall the imperial divisions of previous decades. Diocletian and Maximian could give formal recognition to Carausius' claims, and in doing so counter-act the direct threat he posed, but this would only worsen the problem of regional rebellion, especially that of the military, that Carausius' success encouraged and represented.

There was surely anxiety about the army. With Maximian having been born c. 250, and Diocletian c. 240, the Augusti had grown up during a time in which regional military rebellion was a major problem. They had scaled the ranks during the years of imperial division, and had participated in civil war and separatism.¹⁶² Diocletian had himself launched a usurpation against a physically distant Carinus, and his command over the *domestici* in 284 perhaps suggests that in 282 he had supported Carus when that emperor usurped against Probus. Diocletian and

¹⁶² On the ages of Diocletian and Maximian, see *Paneg.* 11(3).7.6-7; *Epit.* 39.7, 40.11; Enßlin (1948) 2421; *PLRE* 1 Diocletianus 2; Barnes (1982) 30-31, 32; Rougé (1992) 79. The *Epitome* states that Diocletian was 68 when he died and implies that he died in early 313, which places his birth in the mid-240s. It also reports that Maximian was 60 when he died in 310, hence c. 250. However, the panegyrist in 291 elaborately celebrates that the Augusti have overcome their difference in age, which may suggest that the *Epitome*'s author or a copyist was mistaken regarding the age of Diocletian.

Maximian had attained their positions thanks to the problem of military rebellion, and they had every reason to worry that they would be next in a long line of emperors to be overthrown by the army. Indeed, Diocletian's well-known division of the provinces may have been partly motivated by a desire to reduce the competences of generals and governors.¹⁶³ Diocletian's use of the coin legend *Concordia Militum* ('harmony of the army') may be significant. Coins proclaiming the army's *concordia* only appear in large quantities during the tumultuous years of the middle and later third century. They were most frequently minted early within an emperor's reign or during civil war, and they were especially popular among emperors lacking military credentials. It would appear then that the legend hints at concern for military loyalty, and it is thus fitting that in 291 and 292, the imperial mint at Heraclea issued a coin with this legend in numbers that have rendered it a common find.¹⁶⁴ It is therefore likely that the Augusti were anxious about the army.

It was argued above that, in the later third century the presence of an emperor was a powerful factor in preserving loyalty to a regime, and that regional military populations demanded a present emperor both out of rational concerns and irrational entitlement. The Tetrarchy fits well as a solution to this problem. If the Caesars were both appointed on 1 March, their co-optation was a carefully stage-managed endeavour. In one half of the empire Diocletian appointed Galerius his Caesar, while in the other half Maximian did the same for Constantius, and the four rulers then parted ways to different militarized regions of the empire. Constantius was active in Gaul, the Rhineland and, upon its recovery, Britain. Maximian spent most of his time in northern Italy, and thus was also near Raetia and Noricum. Diocletian and Galerius were forced to deal with military emergencies on the eastern frontier and in Egypt from c. 296-299, but from c. 293-296, Diocletian was in the Balkans while Galerius was in the east, and from c. 299-305, Galerius was in the Balkans while Diocletian divided most of his time between Egypt, the Syrian provinces and Asia Minor.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Harries (2012) 50-52; Kulikowski (2016) 196. The division of provinces: Barnes (1982) 201-225; (1996) 548-550.

¹⁶⁴ *RIC* 5.2 Diocletian 284. *Concordia Militum* and imperial anxiety: Hedlund (2008) 98-101; Hebblewhite (2017) 198-202.

¹⁶⁵ Tetrarchic residences and journeys: Barnes (1982) 47-64.

Lactantius, Praxagoras and Aurelius Victor describe a fourfold division of the empire, but this does not appear the case.¹⁶⁶ Lactantius' claim forms part of his invective, in which Diocletian overturned the empire, and Praxagoras and Victor lived through times when there were clearer political divisions between the territories of co-emperors. The Dyarchic panegyrists had celebrated the empire as an *imperium singulare* (10(2).11.1-2) and *patrimonium indiuisum* (11(3).6.3-7.3), which might be empty praise, but we have seen that Diocletian and Galerius were flexible in where they were located. Moreover, from 302-303 and in 305, Diocletian and Galerius were both in Nicomedia, in 303 or 304, Diocletian inspected the Danube frontier while Galerius was also in the Balkans, and in 295 or 296, Maximian supervised the Rhine while Constantius campaigned in Britain.¹⁶⁷

There appears to have existed a division of sorts between Diocletian's east and Maximian's west. The second and fourth persecution edicts against the Christians (303-304) do not seem to have been effectively promulgated in the west. The same perhaps applies to the prices edict (301), of which every copy bar one has been found in the empire's eastern half, and the exception seems to have originated in the east, although provincial initiative may have more to do with this, since the eastern examples are limited to three provinces.¹⁶⁸ There are also only two recorded instances from the First Tetrarchy in which an eastern or western emperor entered the other half of the empire: Diocletian visited Italy from 303-304, and Lactantius reports a meeting between Maximian and Galerius without giving a location (*DMP* 18.1).¹⁶⁹ However, there is no evidence for a formal division. Every preserved edict of the First Tetrarchy stemmed from the court of the senior emperor Diocletian, except perhaps the Damascus incest edict (295), which, based on date and location, may have been issued by Galerius on the orders of Diocletian,

¹⁶⁶ Lact. *DMP* 7.2 (fourfold division), 8.3 (Maximian controlled Italy, Spain and Africa); Praxagoras in *FGrH* 2B, 219.1 (Constantius ruled Britain, Maximian Rome, Italy and Sicily, Galerius Greece, Macedon, Thrace and Asia Minor, Diocletian Bithynia, Arabia, Egypt and Libya); Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.30 (fourfold division, with Gaul beyond the Alps entrusted to Constantius, Africa and Italy to Maximian, the Balkans to Galerius and the rest to Diocletian); see also Jul. *Or.* 2.51d (Maximian governed Rome, Italy, Africa, Sardinia and Sicily, Constantius Gaul, Spain and the islands of the Ocean).

¹⁶⁷ No formal division: Seston (1946) 231-247; De Ste Croix (1954) 105-106; Williams (1985) 65; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 66 n. 31; Leadbetter (1998a) 225; (2009) 68-73; Potter (2014) 278; cf. Barnes (1982) 196-197. On the panegyrics, see also *Paneg.* 10(2).9.4, 10.1. Diocletian and Galerius in Nicomedia: (302-303) Lact. *DMP* 10.6-14.7; Eus. *HE* 8.5; (305) Lact. *DMP* 18-19. Diocletian on the Danube: (303) *CJ* 5.73.4; (304) Lact. *DMP* 17.4; Barnes (1976a) 191; (1982) 56 n. 43. Maximian on the Rhine: *Paneg.* 8(5).13.3.

¹⁶⁸ Persecution edicts: De Ste Croix (1954) 84-96, 105-106; Keresztes (1983) 384-390; Corcoran (2000a) 181-182. Prices edict: Corcoran 229-231; cf. Ermatinger (1996) 91-92.

¹⁶⁹ Barnes (1982) 196-197; (1996) 545-546.

and was perhaps local in motive and scope.¹⁷⁰ Although Africa was within Maximian's half of the empire, Diocletian responded to a petition from that province in 293 (*FIRA*² 2.665) and a letter on the Manichees from Africa's proconsul probably in 302 (*Coll.* 15.3). The latter might be explained by Diocletian's knowledge of the Manichees as the eastern Augustus, but such legislation certainly attests to fluidity in administration.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, the two praetorian prefects were formally a college, and therefore neither was formally associated with an Augustus.¹⁷²

Despite the absence of a fourfold division, the Caesars were not without power. The Caesars had the capacity to lead armies, and they conducted the most important campaigns of the period; the war against the British regime and the Persian war. Furthermore, they had some administrative authority. As previously noted, there were two praetorian prefects, and thus the Caesars did not have prefects of their own.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, one would expect the Caesars to have some administrative power, and there is evidence for this. Constantius resettled the Franks (*Paneg.* 8(5).8.4, 21.1-2), had something of a court (*Paneg.* 9(4).14.1), and had a *magister epistularum*, since he sent a letter to one Eumenius (*Paneg.* 9(4).13-14). This Eumenius, formerly a *magister memoriae* (6.2, 11.2), Constantius appointed as the *praeceptor* of a school with a salary of 600,000 sesterces (13-14). Admittedly, Constantius referred to Maximian in making the appointment (6.2), either because he needed the latter's permission or because Eumenius was Maximian's *magister memoriae*.¹⁷⁴ Maximian could issue rescripts, and it appears that the Caesars, who were named on all constitutions, had the same competence.¹⁷⁵ A rescript responding to an unknown petitioner on 5 Aug. 294 in Agrippina must be a constitution of Constantius if *Agrippinae* refers to Cologne (*CJ* 5.12.21).¹⁷⁶ Four private rescripts from Antioch

¹⁷⁰ Corcoran (2000a) 270. Incest edict: *Coll.* 6.4; Corcoran (2000b) 9-14. Galerius as the issuer: Barnes (1982) 62-63 n. 76; Corcoran (2000a) 173 n. 14, 270; cf. Leadbetter (2002) 88 n. 32. See also Lact. *DMP* 15.6, who claims that Diocletian and Galerius, in issuing the persecution edicts, did not consult Maximian and Constantius, who were then ordered to comply. Barnes (2011) 64-65 argues that both Augusti could issue edicts, but his examples date to the Second Tetrarchy.

¹⁷¹ Maximian in Africa: Barnes (1982) 59. On the Manichees letter, see Corcoran (2000a) 135-136, 271.

¹⁷² A college of two praetorian prefects: *ILS* 8929; *ILS* 619 = *CIL* 6.1125; *AE* 1987.456; Chastagnol (1989); Barnes (1996) 546-547; Corcoran (2000a) 88-89; see also Potter (2013) 109-110.

¹⁷³ Leadbetter (2009) 70-71.

¹⁷⁴ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 158 n. 26; Corcoran (2000a) 268-269; Rees (2002) 141-142, 146.

¹⁷⁵ On Maximian, see the constitutions used to reconstruct his movements in Barnes (1982) 57-60 (e.g. *FV* 41, 271, 282, 292, 313). Named on all constitutions: Kolb (1987) 43.

¹⁷⁶ Barnes (1982) 60 n. 64; Corcoran (2000a) 131.

in 294 might suggest Galerius was the issuer, but there are grounds for emending the locations to Pantichium or Anchialos, which matches Diocletian's itinerary and supposes that less familiar names were altered into more familiar ones.¹⁷⁷ *CJ* 2.12.20 was supposedly issued at 'Demesso' to the *praeses* Verinus in 294, and if the location is corrected to Damascus, it would necessitate Galerius as the issuer. However, during the Second Tetrarchy, Maximinus sent a letter to a Verinus when he was Caesar in the east, which might warrant emending the year (*CJ* 3.12.1).¹⁷⁸ The Caesars had some authority concerning the persecution, since Constantius permitted the destruction of churches and chose not to do more (*Lact. DMP* 15.6-16.1).¹⁷⁹

It must be admitted that Constantius II claimed that the Tetrarchic Caesars 'acted in the fashion of servants (*apparitores*), not residing in one place, but travelling hither and thither' (*Amm.* 14.11.10). This was how Constantius wished his Caesar to act, and Galerius' movements attest to his claim.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, Diocletian travelled to Galerius on the eastern frontier to determine peace terms for the Persians (*Petr. Patr. fragm.* 202 (Banchich)), which suggests that Diocletian's presence was needed for such an important treaty. But their deliberation and the fact that they sent the embassy 'in common' (κοινῆ) shows that Galerius' authority was maintained either in practice or in the public eye.¹⁸¹ Julian considered Diocletian to be self-effacing (*Caes.* 315a-b), and although later authors reported that Diocletian, after Galerius' defeat by the Persians, made the Caesar run in front of his carriage for nearly a mile, this is a fiction.¹⁸² It would have been ludicrous for Diocletian to so humiliate his heir apparent, and Lactantius does not mention it, which he could have made suit his narrative of a Galerius discontent with being Caesar.¹⁸³ Rather, hostile sources probably misinterpreted a show of deference during an *aduentus* ceremony, or a symbolic display of Galerius' determination to succeed.¹⁸⁴ The

¹⁷⁷ *CJ* 4.29.18, 5.12.24-25, 8.31.2, with Corcoran (2000a) 272-273.

¹⁷⁸ 'Demesso' and Verinus: Corcoran (2000a) 131, 143, 271; see also *CJ* 7.16.40. On the legislative capacity of the Caesars, see Corcoran 271-274.

¹⁷⁹ De Ste Croix (1954) 105-106. Eus. *HE* 8.13.12-13, Append. 4 and *VC* 1.13.3 claims that Constantius did not engage in the persecution, but in *MP* 13.12 he states that the persecution in the west, including Gaul, lasted for less than two years.

¹⁸⁰ *Amm.* 14.11.10: Quibus subserebat non adeo vetus exemplum quod Diocletiano et eius collegae ut apparitores Caesares non resides, sed ultro citroque discurrerent obtemperabant...

¹⁸¹ *Petr. Patr. fragm.* 202 (Banchich) = fragm. 14 (*FHG* 4, p. 189). Cf. Leadbetter (2009) 71.

¹⁸² Carriage story: *Eutr.* 9.24; *Festus, Brev.* 25; *Amm.* 14.11.10.

¹⁸³ Cf. Kolb (1987) 136.

¹⁸⁴ Kolb (1995) 24; Rees (2004) 14; Corcoran (2008) 233; cf. Klein (1997) 278.

evidence ultimately shows that the Caesars had military and administrative power, with their governance based on their proximity to subjects.¹⁸⁵

Indeed, the honours enjoyed by the Caesars corresponded to an active role in leadership. Unlike most Caesars, they received *cognomina deuictarum gentium* for their own victories and they shared in the *cognomina* won by others. They received tribunician power, and although epigraphy was in decline in the later third century, by which such power would be evidenced, among third-century Caesars tribunician power is otherwise attested only for the sons of Decius and Carus. According with their tribunician power, the Caesars received a count of their regnal years and they celebrated the *uota* of their rule. A panegyric honours them as *imperatores* (*Paneg.* 8(5).3.1, 15.4), and they received the auspices and the right to the salutation *dominus noster*.¹⁸⁶

There is no doubt that they had the military competence with which to reward and lead on campaigns the military units within their spheres of activity, and since they had some administrative power, they could be useful senior administrators. In this way, the dominion of the Tetrarchs was based upon proximity and hierarchy. The Tetrarchs legislated for the areas of the empire to which they were proximate, but the Augusti enjoyed greater power than their Caesars, and Diocletian retained the greatest administrative competence as the first-ranking Augustus. The empire's northwest was served by a present Constantius Caesar, Italy, Africa and Raetia by Maximian, and the east and the Balkans divided between Diocletian and Galerius, although emergencies forced both into the east from c. 296-299. This positioning of the rulers also ensured that any external enemy would soon find itself facing off against an emperor. Galerius could keep watch over the units stationed along the lengthy Danube frontier. Constantius could do the same along the shorter Rhine frontier while attending to the troubled provinces in Gaul and Britain. Diocletian could focus more attention on the eastern frontier and grain-rich and troubled Egypt. Maximian, who seems to have spent most of the First Tetrarchy in northern Italy, could 1) closely attend to the needs of the units based there and, like Carus under

¹⁸⁵ Governance based on proximity: Potter (2014) 278. The power of the Caesars: Barnes (1996) 546-548; Corcoran (2000a) 268-274; Bowman (2005) 75; Leadbetter (2009) 71-72, 80 n. 182; Neri (2013) 664.

¹⁸⁶ Honours: Kolb (1987) 85. The Caesars and tribunician power: Kolb 34-35, who argues that Maximian also had this honour as Caesar; Leadbetter (1998a) 219. The decline in epigraphy: MacMullen (1982). Regnal years: E.g. *RIC* 6 Trier 35; Barnes (1982) 28. Previous Caesars and regnal years/*uota*: Smith (1972) 1064; Kolb 35, 121. Auspices: *Paneg.* 8(5).15.2. *Dominus noster*: E.g. Pink (1931) 21.

Probus, in Raetia and Noricum; 2) provide closer imperial attention to Rome, Italy, Spain and Africa while leaving the northwest to Constantius, as far as Caesarian powers allowed; and 3) stand between Italy and the Alemanni.¹⁸⁷ Maximian had fewer units to concern himself with than his colleagues, who had charge over longer stretches of frontier, but his responsibility to Italy, the city of Rome, the praetorian guard, the senate and grain-rich Africa made up for that, and it should be borne in mind that his Augustan authority, which was surely superior to that of the Caesars and was based on proximity rather than political divisions, would have still been relevant to troops in Gaul and Pannonia.¹⁸⁸ The Tetrarchy was thus a carefully-planned scheme of imperial presence for the army and for the empire in general in order to prevent rebellion. This scheme was best achieved with Caesars. When Diocletian sent Maximian to Gaul to defeat the Bagaudae, he sent him in the capacity of Caesar. It surely meant more to the army to have a Caesar in their vicinity than a general with an extraordinary command. We have also seen that generals with extraordinary commands could use their power to usurp. If a general was already honoured with the purple, and an Augustus was his *auctor imperii*, to whom he should be bound through the *pietas* (loyalty) owed to one's benefactor, he was less likely to usurp.¹⁸⁹

Such an arrangement explains Maximian's apparent inaction during much of the First Tetrarchy. Maximian kept guard on the Rhine while Constantius retook Britain, and he campaigned in Spain and Africa from c. 296-298, but no campaign is attributed to him after the African war.¹⁹⁰ That the panegyrist in 307 appears to treat the African campaign as his most recent achievement confirms his military inactivity (7(6).8.3-6). His most important achievement was that he kept the soldiers contented, undoubtedly taking some on campaign, and otherwise remaining present to provide an interest, symbolic or actual, in their affairs. It is these soldiers who in 307 would throw their support behind Maximian and his son Maxentius rather than remain loyal to their new Augustus Severus.¹⁹¹

Various details strengthen the impression that the appointments were to please the soldiery. The day of the appointments, 1 March, was the traditional beginning of the

¹⁸⁷ Maximian's movements and residences: Barnes (1982) 56-60.

¹⁸⁸ For the discrepancy: Syväne (2015) 227.

¹⁸⁹ On the co-optation of Maximian, see also Williams (1985) 42-43; Altmayer (2014) 186.

¹⁹⁰ Maximian's residences and journeys: Barnes (1982) 56-60.

¹⁹¹ Severus' fall: Lact. *DMP* 26.6-11; *Origo* 3.6, 4.9-10; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40.6-7; Eutr. 10.2; Zos. 2.10.1.

campaigning season and the day of Mars, as well as the beginning of spring, which was symbolic of regeneration.¹⁹² We can surmise that the Augusti presented their sons-in-law before military assemblies that consisted of troops already with the emperors and officer representatives from other legions, since Lactantius describes such an assembly when Galerius co-opted Maximinus in 305 (*DMP* 19). Indeed, Lactantius claims that Maximinus' appointment outside Nicomedia was on the same spot as where Galerius had been appointed, which, while we have seen that this is incorrect, shows that the author understood it to be a similar ceremony. The appointees themselves were adults and military professionals. They could easily conform with the ideal of the military emperor so popular amongst the soldiery, especially during the later third century, and they had the career histories to provide the armies with confidence.

As for Constantius' immediate task, clearly he was expected to defeat Carausius and his successor Allectus. In 293 Constantius besieged and forced the surrender of Carausius' base at Boulogne, and the panegyrist in 296/7 claims that Constantius marched with such speed against the port that his arrival overtook news of his accession (8(5).6-7). If Constantius' march was indeed an immediate endeavour, planning for this campaign had begun before his co-option.¹⁹³ Apart from a campaign against Frankish aggression in 293/4, Constantius is not recorded on any other campaign before the collapse of Allectus' continental dominion possibly in 295 and the recovery of Britain in 295/6.¹⁹⁴ Maximian's deferral of this task suggests that he was unenthusiastic about challenging the usurper himself, but in delegating this war, Maximian also gave Constantius the opportunity to prove himself as a Caesar to the empire's northwest, regions with which he was familiar. In taking on this task, Constantius' goal was to reassert the legitimacy and authority of Diocletian and Maximian in this part of the empire. The Augusti were to remind the empire of their martial success through that of their Caesar, and the fates of Carausius and Allectus would serve as a notice of the monopoly on making emperors that Diocletian and Maximian held.

¹⁹² Enßlin (1948) 2436-2437; Kolb (1987) 80-81; Leadbetter (2009) 63; Kalas (2015) 29. The significance of spring is exploited in *Paneg.* 8(5).3.1-2.

¹⁹³ Kuhoff (2001) 126. If May was the month of Galerius' appointment rather than March, then there was some urgency to Constantius' appointment, and the desire to send him against Boulogne at the start of the campaigning season would explain this, although it must be reiterated that the evidence for this date is problematic.

¹⁹⁴ Frankish campaign: *Paneg.* 8(5).8.1-9.4; *Paneg.* 7(6).4.2; *Paneg.* 6(7).5.3. Allectus' continental dominion: Casey (1994) 129-132. Dating the reconquest of Britain: Burnett (1984) 22-24; Casey (1994) 43-45.

The empire's northwest was perhaps in more need of an imperial presence than other parts of the empire.¹⁹⁵ German incursions across the Rhine had brought economic damage on the provinces and pressure on the troops, and Armorica had suffered the collapse of its economic and social structures.¹⁹⁶ This situation fostered support for Gallic usurpers.¹⁹⁷ The Gallic empire had lasted from 260-274, but during Probus' reign, Bonosus and Proculus had also usurped, and Maximian became Caesar because of the Bagaudae.¹⁹⁸ Aurelian had to return to Gaul the year after he defeated the Gallic empire to deal with restless Gauls (Zon. 12.27), and the panegyrist in 307, referencing the Bagaudae, states that the Gauls were 'maddened by the injustices of a former time' (*efferatas priorum temporum iniuriis*) (7(6).8.3).¹⁹⁹ Fittingly, Probus and Carinus had made extended visits to Gaul.²⁰⁰ During the First Tetrarchy, the imperial mint at Trier issued many coins on which the imperial portraits are highly militarized, holding spear and shield.²⁰¹ This presentation may have been directed by Constantius' or Maximian's administration, and motivated by a fervent desire to court the units on the Rhine. Britain also needed attention. In the later third century, Britain suffered from a scarcity of coinage, her towns were in a low stage of their development, and troops were withdrawn to other theatres of war, evidenced in the declining number of garrisons and the dilapidation of her forts. These issues probably fostered support for the anonymous usurper under Probus and for Carausius' rebellion.²⁰²

A multi-emperor arrangement allowed greater imperial presence, but it also had the potential to further encourage geographical divisions. The Tetrarchic administrations countered this threat in several ways. As we have seen, the Tetrarchs adopted a presentation of dynastic unity, formal divisions were avoided, the Caesars occupied a subordinate position to the Augusti, and Diocletian maintained overall control as the first-ranking Augustus. Imperial self-representation sometimes clarified Diocletian's superiority. In the east, for instance, the representations of the college on the arch built by Galerius at Thessalonica and in the imperial cult chamber at Luxor Temple depict the two Augusti in the middle, but single out Diocletian as

¹⁹⁵ Leadbetter (1998a) 226; (2009) 52-53.

¹⁹⁶ Armorica: Galliou (1981).

¹⁹⁷ Drinkwater (1981) 231-232; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 129 n. 43.

¹⁹⁸ Bonosus/Proculus: *PLRE* Bonosus 1; Proculus 1.

¹⁹⁹ See also HA, *Prob.* 13.5.

²⁰⁰ Leadbetter (1998a) 226 n. 69.

²⁰¹ *RIC* 6 pp. 180-201.

²⁰² Casey (1994) 23-38, 101, 103-104. Anonymous usurper: Zos. 1.66.2; Zon. 12.29; see also HA, *Prob.* 18.5; Drinkwater (2005) 55.

supreme. At Thessalonica, Diocletian ostentatiously holds a sceptre to the sky, enjoys a more pronounced frontality and wears a gem-studded belt, and at Luxor he alone holds a sceptre.²⁰³ In official documents throughout the empire, the eastern emperor was named first and retained a higher iteration of tribunician power, consulships and *cognomina deuictarum gentium*.²⁰⁴ Moreover, despite the dynastic meaning that the Tetrarchs appear to have eventually intended for the *signa* Jovius and Herculus, audiences could regardless interpret them hierarchically, for it seems a natural assumption that Jovius enjoyed a unique connection to the supreme deity.²⁰⁵

Concern for unity may also explain why Diocletian and his co-emperors almost never minted coins that honour specific military units or provinces, the exception being several rare *Virtus Illurici* gold types issued to honour the reconquest of Britain.²⁰⁶ Instead, between 294 and c. 300, every mint in the empire issued as their standard bronze type a reverse inscribed with *Genio Populi Romani* ('to the Guardian Spirit of the Roman people') and an image of the Genius. This pattern of production indicates that the type was centrally directed, which may suggest that the regime wished to direct attention to the unifying *Romanitas* of the empire's constituents.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, Tetrarchic self-representation emphasized their collegial *concordia*. Coins and panegyrics extolled the *concordia* of the rulers, and imperial anniversaries were synchronized to reflect this harmony.²⁰⁸ The Tetrarchs were often represented in media as a

²⁰³ On these examples, see Seston (1946) 252; Laubscher (1975) 69, 72; Pond Rothman (1975) 22, 27; Rees (1993) 183-187; Van Dam (2007) 240-243. The Arch of Galerius: Laubscher (1975); Pond Rothman (1975); (1977); Meyer (1980); Kolb (1987) 159-176; Rees (1993) 181-182, 186-187; Kuhoff (2001) 598-627; Boschung (2006) 360-367. The Luxor frescoes: Kuhoff 628-632; Jones & McFadden (2015).

²⁰⁴ Barnes (1982) 17-20, 25-27, 93; Kolb (1987) 79, 98, 115.

²⁰⁵ Leadbetter (1998a) persuasively argues that Jovius and Herculus were originally hierarchically significant, as was an early tendency to honour Maximian with both Augustus and *nobilissimus Caesar*, but cf. Kolb 88-114. For Leadbetter (2009) *passim*, the *concordia* of the Tetrarchs was contingent upon Diocletian's acknowledged superiority, and any celebration of Tetrarchic *concordia* was a celebration of the obedience of the other Tetrarchs. Roberto (2014) 92 notes that the junior positions of the Caesars allowed Diocletian and Maximian to control the imperial college and set Constantius and Galerius up as heirs apparent (see also Lact. *DMP* 18.5; cf. Kolb (1987) 86). On Diocletian's superior rank and its representation, see also Bastien (1972) 87; Kolb (1987) 79, 98, 115; Srejović (1994c) 145 (height difference in visual representation); Corcoran (2000a) 266-274; Kuhoff (2001) 151; Rees (2002) 33 n. 36; Leadbetter (2004) 257-258, 262; Stefan (2005) 334-335; Neri (2013) 662, 664-665.

²⁰⁶ *RIC* 6 Trier 87a-b, 88-89 with p. 144. See also Davenport (2016) 389-390, who notes that Tetrarchic coins generally did not advertise the emperors' Illyrian background. The absence of other types is evident from a survey of *RIC* 5.2 and 6, Pink (1930) and (1931), and Bastien (1972) and (1980).

²⁰⁷ Centrally-directed: Sutherland (1963) 15-16; Kolb (1987) 124; Rees (1993) 189.

²⁰⁸ Coins: *RIC* 5.2 Diocletian 17, 290-292, 313, 321, Maximian 354, 601, 615-616, Constantius 628, Galerius 678; 6 Lyons 246-248, Ticinum 1, 25a-26b, 49a-50, Aquileia 2a-b, 41a-42, Rome 47a-b, 68a-70b, Siscia 91a-92b. Panegyrics: See e.g. *Paneg.* 8(5).4.1-2 with Flasar (1995) and Rees (2002) 110-114. Anniversaries: Kolb (1987) 115-127; cf. Potter (2014) 333-334.

group and with visual similarity to one another, while art demonstrated that military victories were the joint achievements of the four rulers. For instance, minters throughout the empire celebrated a victory over the Sarmatians with a reverse that has the legend *Victoria Sarmatica* and shows the four rulers sacrificing before a multi-turreted gate. The type thus represents the Tetrarchs as a college and presents their harmonious cooperation as integral to victory.²⁰⁹ The fact that the Tetrarchs shared *cognomina deuictarum gentium* is to be viewed in the same way.²¹⁰

But why did the Augusti choose Constantius and Galerius above other military men? Simply, when the Augusti had decided to co-opt two adult men with military experience as their Caesars, within these parameters, it made sense from a dynastic perspective that they should select their sons-in-law for these roles. It is therefore better to ask why the Augusti made these marriage alliances in the first place. Constantius had switched allegiance to Diocletian during the war with Carinus, and he subsequently received major commands, through which he became militarily accomplished. In c. 290 Galerius likewise held a post on the Danube, although it is unclear whether this command predates or postdates his marriage to Valeria. Despite the fact that aristocrats viewed humble origins as taboo, it is plausible that these four soldier upstarts had a mutual respect over their similar background. Not only had all four men ascended the ranks from relatively humble beginnings, but they had all originated in the Balkans.²¹¹ As I have argued, there was probably pride in being a Balkan soldier. Moreover, a network of links between military officers may have previously connected the four men.²¹²

²⁰⁹ *Victoria Sarmatica*: E.g. *RIC* 6 Trier 100-108, Ticinum 12a-13b, Rome 14a-26, Thessalonica 10, Antioch 32-33b. See the index entries in *RIC* 6 p. 705. The coins that celebrate the reconquest of Britain offer a combination of shared and individual credit: Burnett (1984) 23; Casey (1994) 44. Panels on the Arch of Galerius represent the Persian and British victories in the same way: Pond Rothman (1975) 21-23; Rees (1993) 181-182, 186-187; Leadbetter (2009) 96-97. Group presentation: E.g. Rees (1993) 182-187, 193; Thiel (2002); Boschung (2006); Eck (2006); Thiel (2006); Weiß (2006); Davenport (2014a) 47-50; Hekster (2015) 283; Kalas (2015) 23-45. Similitude: E.g. Andreae (1978) 327; Rees (1993) 182-183, 187-193; Srejovic (1994c) 146; Rees (2002) 55-60; Boschung (2006) 349-353; cf. Smith (1997) 180-181.

²¹⁰ Barnes (1976a); (1982) 27; Hebblewhite (2017) 56-57. Note also the use of joint consulships: Barnes (1982) 91-93. On the potential contradictions contained within these presentations of power, see Ch. 6.3.

²¹¹ The origins of the Tetrarchs: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.26-28. Diocletian's origin: Lact. *DMP* 19.6; Eutr. 9.19; *Epit.* 39.1; Const. Porphyr. *De Them.* 57-58 (*CSHB* 18); Zon. 12.31. Maximian's origin: *Paneg.* 10(2).2.2, 2.4-5; *Paneg.* 11(3).7.5; *Paneg.* 7(6).9.2; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.17; *Epit.* 40.10. Constantius' origin: *Origo* 1.1; Jul. *Mis.* 348d. Galerius' origin: Lact. *DMP* 9.2, 20.3, 27.2, 8; Eutr. 9.22; *Epit.* 40.15-16. Syväne (2015) 196-197 suggests that Diocletian chose Maximian and Galerius because they were unsophisticated brutes whom he could use as scapegoats, but this gives undue credence to Lactantius' polemic, who uses tyrant *topoi*.

²¹² C. Davenport pers. comm. Cf. e.g. Amm. 26.1.6, who says that Aequitius and Leo, officers who in 364 supported placing Valentinian on the throne, were fellow Pannonians and adherents of the man.

But like the creation of the Tetrarchy, the marriages of Constantius and Galerius point to a fear of usurpation. As previously noted, before 293 there was likely some mistrust between the emperors and these generals. Constantius' betrayal of Carinus constituted a show of loyalty to Diocletian, but it would have also demonstrated the possibility that he could betray his new benefactors. Moreover, unlike Maximian, Constantius had won military successes against Carausius; successes that rivalled Maximian's own achievements. Considering the epidemic of military usurpations, the Augusti should have perceived this potential threat, and fittingly, before 293, Constantius and Galerius had not enjoyed the consulship, the urban prefecture, nor, at least in Constantius' case, the praetorian prefecture. Therefore, the Augusti probably intended the marriages to bind the generals to their benefactors with bonds of *pietas*.

This is not to agree with Harries, who, as we have seen, suggests that Constantius pressured the Augusti into appointing him as Caesar.²¹³ If this were true, the authority of the Augusti over Constantius should have been weakened, and yet in 305 Constantius consented to a revised imperial college that favoured the political control of his junior, Galerius.²¹⁴ Admittedly, in 306 Constantius may have defied the wishes of Galerius if, as contemporary sources claim, he recommended to his troops that his son Constantine succeed him (Ch. 2.7).²¹⁵ According to Lactantius, he even made Constantine Augustus (*DMP* 24.8-9), despite the fact that Severus, as Constantius' Caesar, should have become the new Augustus. But by the time this happened, Diocletian and Maximian were in retirement. The fact that in 293 Maximian co-opted Constantius instead of his own son Maxentius casts further doubt on Harries's scenario. It is unlikely that Constantius could pressure his father-in-law to do such a thing when Maximian had Diocletian as his ally. It would be more understandable if Maximian had overlooked his son of his own free will or because Diocletian had encouraged or ordered him to do so. If the Caesars had forced their co-option, it would be less fathomable why the Augusti subsequently gave them the most prestigious military missions, which would have provided them with considerable political capital through military achievement. Enhancing the legitimacy of the Caesars makes more sense if it were to aid a scheme of imperial presence. Moreover, to threaten one's father-in-

²¹³ Harries (2012) 30-32.

²¹⁴ Lact. *DMP* 18-20; *Origo* 4.9; Eutr. 10.1-2; *Epit.* 40.1, 18; Oros. 7.25.15; Zos. 2.8.1.

²¹⁵ *Paneg.* 7(6).5.3; *Paneg.* 6(7).4.1-2, 7.3-8.6; Lact. *DMP* 24.8; Eus. *HE* 8.13.12-14, Append. 4-5; *VC* 1.18.2, 1.21-22; Oros. 7.25.16-26.1; Zon. 12.33.622-623; cf. *Origo* 2.4; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40.4; *Epit.* 41.3; Zos. 2.9.1.

law would have constituted a violation of familial *pietas*. While emperors did violate such bonds on occasion, one presumes that they usually did not do so lightly, being aware of the ire that it would incur.²¹⁶ It is therefore very unlikely that Constantius forced his way into the imperial college.

In summary, in the late 280s, Maximian bound Constantius to himself through a marriage alliance in order to nullify the potential threat posed by this man, and possibly around the same time, Galerius married Diocletian's daughter Valeria. Maximian's failed expedition to Britain and the subsequent loss of northern Gaul then produced fears that a crisis in loyalties would happen. Seeking to control the problem of regional rebellion, of which Carausius was emblematic, the Augusti created a scheme of succession that established their sons-in-law as Caesars; an arrangement which served as a system of imperial presence, and which moreover allowed Maximian to delegate the war against Carausius to Constantius. The ascendancy of Constantius and Galerius, and hence the Tetrarchy, was thus born out of a mixture of trust and mistrust. Diocletian and Maximian had probably favoured Constantius and Galerius for their similar backgrounds, possible pre-existing connections, and Constantius' show of loyalty during the war with Carinus. They awarded them military commands because they had some confidence in them. But there were limits to this trust. Constantius had demonstrated his capacity for betrayal, and his achievements rivalled those of Maximian. Fittingly, the Augusti established ties of marriage with these men, but they avoided awarding them the highest non-imperial positions in the state. However, by 293 the Augusti had decided to co-opt two military men as their Caesars, and they naturally selected their sons-in-law for these roles. That trust and mistrust could both govern the ascendancy of the Caesars is understandable in a time when one's general often became one's enemy.

²¹⁶ Note e.g. reactions to Nero's matricide (Tac. *Ann.* 14.12-13, 15.62, 67; Suet. *Ner.* 39, 40.4; Alston (2014) 181-183) and Caracalla's fratricide (Hdn. 4.5; HA, *Carac.* 2.7-11; Potter (2014) 136-137).

2. Diocletian vs Heredity: Succession Events and the Attitudes of the Soldiery

The previous chapter demonstrates that the imperial appointments in 293 were a response to military and regional rebellion, and that the resulting Tetrarchic arrangement was bound by ties of marriage and adoption. The Augusti wanted militarily experienced men to serve as their Caesars, and so they co-opted their martial sons-in-law, whom they subsequently adopted. The fact that they co-opted their sons-in-law and adopted them is not inherently unusual. The Julio-Claudian and Nerva-Antonine emperors repeatedly strengthened their connection to non-filial heirs through adoption. But in contrast, by 293 Maximian had a natural-born son; the child Maxentius.¹ By this time, only under extraordinary circumstances had emperors overlooked their blood descendants when it came to the imperial succession. Augustus rejected his grandson Agrippa Postumus as a potential successor, but this was because he had banished Agrippa as a traitor.² Septimius Severus named the general Clodius Albinus as his Caesar despite having sons, but evidently this was to forestall a war between the two imperial claimants while Severus dealt with another rival, Pescennius Niger, in the east. Following his victory over Niger, Severus recognized his son Caracalla as Caesar, thus igniting a war with Albinus.³ Moreover, from the late first century onwards, emperors only adopted when they lacked a natural-born son. Before this time, the Julio-Claudian emperors had employed adoption to furnish themselves with dual heirs. Augustus adopted his stepson/son-in-law Tiberius despite having a grandson in Postumus Agrippa, Tiberius adopted his nephew Germanicus while having a son in Drusus, and later did the same regarding his grandson Gemellus and grand-nephew Caligula, and Claudius adopted his stepson/son-in-law Nero despite his son Britannicus.⁴ However, this practice had lent itself to intra-dynastic murder and did not outlast the Julio-Claudians.

There was no law that required the emperor to bequeath the empire to his son, but by the third century, dynasties were the norm and emperors prioritized natural-born sons as heirs. This custom was taken seriously enough that children and teenagers could become emperor. For example, Caracalla was about seven or eight when he became Caesar and about nine when he

¹ Child: *Paneg.* 10(2).14.1-2.

² Kienast (2011) 75.

³ Kienast (2011) 161, 162.

⁴ Kienast (2011) 75, 77, 80, 82, 83, 85, 93, 96.

became Augustus, Severus Alexander was about twelve when he became Caesar and about thirteen when he became Augustus, and Gordian III was thirteen when he became Caesar and then Augustus.⁵ In the last chapter, I noted that it made sense for the Augusti to select Constantius and Galerius as their heirs if they wanted their Caesars to be adult military professionals, but this should not obscure the fact that they had done something unprecedented.⁶ At the time, the regime was governed by concerns that exceeded any immediate desire to establish a blood-based line of succession, and these concerns were sufficiently great that the normal practice of succession was ignored. The creation of the Tetrarchy would not be the only occasion on which these emperors overruled the norms of heredity.

As noted in the introduction, in 305 the Augusti abdicated so that their Caesars could become the Augusti in turn, while new Caesars were appointed to assist the new Augusti. These new Caesars were not selected from among the imperial sons. Rather, the emperors co-opted a friend of Galerius named Severus and Galerius' nephew Maximinus.⁷ Lactantius claims that Galerius adopted Maximinus (*DMP* 39.4), and Constantius may have adopted Severus, since the latter included Flavius in his nomenclature.⁸ However, in making these appointments, the emperors overlooked Maxentius, now an adult, Constantius' adult son Constantine, Constantius' sons to Theodora and Galerius' nine-year old Candidianus.⁹ Furthermore, at the conference of Carnuntum in 308, Galerius and Diocletian, who had briefly left his retirement palace to attend the meeting, appointed Galerius' friend Licinius as Augustus.¹⁰ Galerius skipped the step of making Licinius Caesar, and thus ignored the hierarchical superiority of the then Caesars Maximinus and Constantine, but in his co-option of Licinius, Galerius also overlooked his son Candidianus, Constantius' sons, Severus' son Severianus, Maximinus' son Maximus and Constantine's son Crispus.¹¹ The succession events thus pose the following question: Why were

⁵ Kienast (2011) 162, 177, 195.

⁶ See also Kolb (1987) 87 ('geradezu revolutionärer'); Rees (2004) 77.

⁷ Friend: Lact. *DMP* 18.12; *Origo* 4.9. Nephew: *Epit.* 40.1, 18; Zos. 2.8.1; cf. Lact. *DMP* 18.14.

⁸ The adoption of Severus: Leadbetter (2009) 141.

⁹ On the sons, see Ch. 2.1.

¹⁰ Conference of Carnuntum: Lact. *DMP* 29.1-3; *Origo* 5.13; *Chron. Min.* 1.231 (*Des. Cons.*); Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40.8; Zos. 2.10.4-5; see also *ILS* 659; *Paneg.* 6(7).14.6; *Epit.* 39.6. Friend: Lact. *DMP* 20.3; Aur. Vict. 40.8; Eutr. 10.4; Soc. *HE* 1.2.1; Zos. 2.11. In 307 Galerius sent him to negotiate with Maxentius (*Origo* 3.7).

¹¹ Severianus: Lact. *DMP* 50.4. Maximus: *DMP* 47.5, 50.6; Eus. *HE* 9.11.7. Crispus: *PLRE* 1 Crispus 4.

hereditary norms repeatedly ignored? Why was heredity not prioritized, even when the available candidates included adults among their number?

2.1. *The Sons*

To discuss hereditary succession during the Tetrarchic period, it is useful to first outline the imperial sons available to the emperors, beginning with the prince on whom we have the most information: Constantine.

The year of Constantine's birth is a point of contention. The panegyrists in 307 and 310, and Lactantius, writing of events in 305/6 and 310, refer on multiple occasions to Constantine's young age, and call him *adulescens* and *iuuenis*.¹² The panegyrist in 307 is especially emphatic. For example, he states that Constantine, in assuming power so early in his life, has surpassed Scipio Africanus and Pompey, and supports the state with *incipiente uirtute* ('courage at its outset') (7(6).5.2), which puts Constantine in 306 in his early twenties or younger.¹³ The orator also states that Constantine, when he was *primu ingressu adulescentiae* ('at the very beginning of adolescence'), married his wife Minervina (4.1). Minervina begot their son Crispus between c. 300 and c. 305. For although Crispus played a role in military actions in c. 319 and begot a daughter in 322, he was a youth (*νεανίας*) in 317 (Zos. 2.20.2) and, according to the panegyrist Nazarius, by 321 was *in annis pubescentibus* (4(10).3.4) and had filled his *pueriles annos* with triumphal renown (36.3).¹⁴ From the beginning of Constantine's reign, coins depicted the emperor with a boyish look derived from the third-century portrait types of boy Caesars.¹⁵ Moreover, in the 320s and 330s, there are retrospective panegyric comments that treat Constantine as a young man around the time of his accession. Nazarius relates that in 306 Constantine was *immaturus* (4(10).16.4).¹⁶ Eusebius states that Constantine had passed from

¹² *Paneg.* 7(6).5.2-3, 9.4, 13.5, 14.1; *Paneg.* 6(7).3.3, 17.1, 21.6; Lact. *DMP* 18.10, 24.4, 29.5. See also Nixon (1993) 239 on *Paneg.* 7(6).6.2, 6.5, 7.1.

¹³ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 196 n. 15.

¹⁴ The birth of Crispus: *PLRE* 1 Crispus 4; Barnes (1982) 44; Pohlsander (1984) 81-82; Potter (2013) 324 n. 9.4. Campaign: *Paneg.* 4(10).3.5, 17.2, 36.3; *RIC* 7 pp. 51, 76, 145-146; Barnes 83; Pohlsander 87-88; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 362 n. 77. Daughter: *CTh* 9.38.1; see also Pohlsander 83-85.

¹⁵ Smith (1997) 185.

¹⁶ See also 16.5-6.

childhood to youth when he saw him alongside Diocletian in Palestine, an event best dated to 301/2 (VC 1.19.1). Constantine himself told Eusebius that he was ‘still a mere child’ when Diocletian decreed the persecution of the Christians (VC 2.51.1), and Eusebius states that Constantine, during the persecution, was ‘still a tender young boy and blooming with the down of youth’ (VC 1.12.2).¹⁷

In contrast, later writers, in noting Constantine’s age at death, give him a birth year in the 270s, with most placing it in 272 or 273. These writers include Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, Jerome, the Anonymous Epitomator, Socrates, Sozomen and Zonaras.¹⁸ Eusebius also supports a date in the early 270s, stating that Constantine began his reign at the age at which Alexander died (VC 1.8.1) and that his life was about twice as long as his reign (VC 1.5.1, 4.53).¹⁹ Barnes favours these writers since he thinks that the contemporary sources merely reflect Constantine’s self-representation, which, as his coins show, emphasized the emperor’s youthfulness. Constantine had reason to make himself appear young, for it distanced him from a regime of persecutors. Indeed, Constantine’s testimony at VC 2.51.1 and Eusebius’ claim at VC 1.12.2 clearly aim to establish the emperor’s innocence. Barnes also objects that Constantine’s military career, which had begun by 297, does not accommodate him being born after the 270s.²⁰

While it is tempting to follow the numerous authors who relate a specific age at death, their testimony does not convince. Eusebius’ comparison of the life-spans and reigns of Constantine and Alexander is partisan and open to suspicion (VC 1.7-8), and many of the authors may draw directly or indirectly from it. More importantly, if Constantine was in his mid- or late thirties when the panegyrists were referring to him as *adulescens* and *iuuenis*, they were risking ridicule. One must wonder whether dissociation from the persecution was sufficiently important to Constantine in 307 to warrant such an awkward presentation of his age. In 307 and 308,

¹⁷ 2.51.1: κομιδῆ παῖς ἔτι. 1.12.2: παῖς ἄρτι νέος ἀπαλὸς ὠραῖός τ’ ἀνθοῦσιν ἰούλοις. For 1.12.2, trans. Cameron & Hall (1999). See also Lact. *DI* 1.1.14; Firm. Mat. *Math.* 1.10.13; Eus. *VC* 1.20.

¹⁸ Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 41.16 (62 at death); Eutr. 10.8 (65); Jer. *Chron.* 234.8-10 (65); *Epit.* 41.15 (63); Soc. *HE* 1.39.1, 40.3 (65); Soz. *HE* 2.34.3 (65); Malal. 324 (*CSHB* 32) (60); Phot. *Bibl.* 256, summarizing the *Vita Metrophanis et Alexandri* (65); Zon. 13.4 (65).

¹⁹ See also *Paneg.* 6(7).21.4, a controversial and idealistic passage that arguably implicitly renders Constantine to be over 30 in 310, and which is discussed with reference to Constantine’s age in Drijvers (1992b) 13-15; cf. Rodgers (1980) 267 n. 16; Barnes (1981) 301 n. 71. For a survey of the evidence for Constantine’s birth, see Barnes (1982) 39-40.

²⁰ Barnes (1982) 39-42; (2011) 2-3. See also *PLRE* 1 Constantinus 4; Chastagnol (1985) 109.

Constantine's mints issued coins for the retired Diocletian, and his panegyrist in 307 extols his alliance with Maximian and makes references to Diocletian that reinforce the legitimacy of both emperors.²¹ Admittedly, Lactantius claims that Constantine, upon coming to power, immediately ended the persecution in his territories (*DMP* 24.9; *DI* 1.1.13), but this is absent from the works of Eusebius and is thus possibly a falsehood.²² There were surely also less clumsy ways to distance an older Constantine from the persecution. The image of youthfulness enhanced the presentation of an energetic emperor, but the decision to specifically promote his youth is more understandable if Constantine indeed took power as a young man. Constantine's career is no hindrance to a youthful accession, as a prince would have been able to enjoy such a career from an early age. It seems best then to conclude that Constantine was born in the early 280s.²³

The legitimacy of Constantine's birth is another contentious point. Sources, including the *Origo* and Ambrose, relate that Constantine's mother, Helena, was of humble birth, and some also claim that Constantine was a bastard.²⁴ Jerome for instance records that Constantine, the son of a *concupina*, seized the throne (*Chron.* 228.21-25).²⁵ Zosimus alleges that Constantine was the product of an illicit union (οὐδὲ κατὰ νόμον) with a woman who lacked respectability (οὐ σεμνή), and he contrasts him with Constantius' legitimate (γνήσιοι) children (2.8.2, 9.1-2). Philostorgius, writing in the fifth century, considers Helena 'a low (φαύλη) woman no better than a harlot (χαμαιτύπαι)' (*HE* 2.16a).²⁶ These sources are in part demonstrably hostile or derived from a hostile source, such as Eunapius. Indeed, for Eunapius/Zosimus, the illegitimacy of Constantine as well as that of his sons, was a theme of their accounts, since such unions were

²¹ Panegyric: 7(6).3.2, 9.6. Note also that the panegyrist describes Constantine's relationship with Maximian in similar ways to how earlier panegyrists described the relationship of Diocletian and Maximian: 1.4-5, 13.1-14.2; cf. *Paneg.* 10(2).4.2, 9.1-3, 11.1-3, 6; *Paneg.* 11(3).7.6-7, 12.3-5; see also Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 186; Rees (2002) 171-172, 179; Hekster (2015) 305; cf. Grünewald (1990) 28-29; Christensen (2012) 140. Coins: *RIC* 6 London 76a, 77a, 81, 98, Trier 671, 673a, 674, 676a, 677a, 681a, 699, 712-713, 736, Lyons 200a, 216, 225, 258, 280; see also Sutherland (1957); (1963) 17; *RIC* 6 p. 238; Stewartby (1996) 160.

²² Against its historicity, see e.g. Cameron (1993) 49; (2005) 91. Barnes ((1973) 43-46; (1981) 14; (2011) 65-66) defends its historicity, most notably because Lactantius was a mostly reliable reporter of events. Barceló (1988) 80-82 argues that if Eusebius mentions Constantine's measure he would have to acknowledge that the persecution had happened within Constantius' territories, something that he denies (see also Corcoran (2000a) 185).

²³ See also Nixon (1993) 239-240; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 195 n. 10, 196-197 nn. 15-16; Potter (2013) 318 n. 14. Seeck (1898) 434-436 proposes the extreme date of 288.

²⁴ Humble birth: *Origo* 2.2; Amb. *De Ob. Theod.* 42 (*CSEL* 73.393); Zos. 2.8.2, 9.2; see also Eutr. 10.2.

²⁵ But cf. 226.3-4.

²⁶ Philost. *HE* 2.16a: ...φαύλης τινός γυναικός και τῶν χαμαιτύπων οὐδὲν διαφοροῦσης... See also Oros. 7.25.16 (derived from Jerome); *Chron. Min.* 1.447 (*Prosp. Ep. Chron.*) (derived from Jerome); 1.643 (*Chron. Gall.*); *Chron. Pasch.* 516-517. Scholarship arguing for his illegitimacy: Drijvers (1992b) 15-19; Pohlsander (1995) 13-14; Leadbetter (1998b) 74-85; Kuhoff (2001) 119-120.

stamped with impiety, a characteristic they ascribed to the emperor.²⁷ Against this, a better overall quality of sources considers Helena to have been Constantius' wife (*uxor*), including inscriptions from the reign of Constantine, the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* and the epitomes.²⁸ But dynastic legitimacy was of much importance to Constantine, as attested by panegyrics, coins and inscriptions.²⁹ There were no rules against the succession of an illegitimate son, but they did not enjoy an established legal position concerning paternal inheritance. Moreover, there may have been stigma attached to them, which should have complicated the succession of someone like Constantine.³⁰ Indeed, Zosimus assumes just that when he states that the soldiers chose Constantine to succeed Constantius after thinking none of the emperor's legitimate children worthy (2.9.1), and when he has Maxentius complain that Constantine, the son of an ignoble woman, should attain the emperorship, whereas he, the son of a remarkable emperor, should not (2.9.2). Constantine would have tried his utmost to suppress suggestions of illegitimacy, and inscriptions dedicated to Helena Augusta would have reflected this.³¹

A marriage between Constantius and Helena is unlikely. Augustus' *lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* and *lex Papia Poppaea* prohibited marriage between people of highly disparate social status, and in the 270s and 280s, Constantius was an equestrian officer, whereas Helena was of humble status.³² Admittedly, as Barnes notes, in Roman law a marriage could be rendered legally valid through constant cohabitation, without a wedding ceremony.³³ Moreover, Barnes uses linguistics and biblical allusions to argue that Ambrose's use of *stabularia* to describe Helena (*De Ob. Theod.* 42) suggests that she was not a stable-girl, but the daughter of

²⁷ Lieu & Montserrat (1996) 14-15.

²⁸ *CIL* 10.1483; *ILS* 708; *Origo* 1.1; *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.25; *Eutr.* 9.22, 10.2; *Jer. Chron.* 226.3-4; *Epit.* 39.2; *Chron. Min.* 1.445 (*Prosp. Ep. Chron.*) (derived from Jerome); 1.643 (*Chron. Gall.*). *Zon.* 13.1.1 records both traditions. Scholarship arguing for his legitimacy: Barnes (1982) 36; (2011) 30-35; Potter (2013) 318 n. 14. Cf. Drijvers (1992b) 17-18, who notes that *uxor* in Jerome, Prosper and the *Chronica Gallica* need not strictly mean wedded wife, pointing out that these sources also use *concupina*. Drijvers also notes that only *ILS* 708 and Victor use the stronger *coniunx*, and only Eutropius uses *matrimonium*, the strength of which is weakened by his use of *obscurus*.

²⁹ See e.g. *Paneg.* 7(6), which extols Constantine's dynastic links to Maximian and Constantius (2.2, 2.5, 3.3-5.1, 5.3-7.2, 13.3-4, 14.4, 6); *Paneg.* 6(7).6.4, a lengthy passage asserting Constantine's right to succession as Constantius' eldest son (see also 7(6).3.3, 14.4; Rodgers (1989) 235-238). See also the accounts of Constantine's accession that attribute a key role to Constantius: *Paneg.* 7(6).5.3; *Paneg.* 6(7).4.1-2, 7.3-8.6; *Lact. DMP* 24.8; *Eus. HE* 8.13.12-14, *Append.* 4-5; *VC* 1.18.2, 1.21-22; *Jul. Or.* 1.7d; *Oros.* 7.25.16-26.1; *Zon.* 12.33.622-623; cf. *Origo* 2.4; *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 40.4; *Epit.* 41.3; *Zos.* 2.9.1. See also Leadbetter (1998b) 79-81.

³⁰ Illegitimate sons: Phang (2001) 306-321; Ch. 3.

³¹ Drijvers (1992b) 18; Leadbetter (1998b) 79-81.

³² Drijvers (1992b) 18; Leadbetter (1998b) 78-79. Cf. Barnes (1982) 36, who dates the marriage to before c. 270.

³³ Barnes (2011) 33-34.

an inn-keeper at an imperial *mansio*.³⁴ If we thus give special weight to Ambrose's testimony and accept Barnes' conclusion, Helena was not as humble as is sometimes assumed. But regardless of Helena's specific status, she was fairly humble, and as Leadbetter asks, why would an ambitious equestrian officer marry someone socially disadvantageous when the option of concubinage was open to him?³⁵ Constantine was thus probably born illegitimate. Indeed, as previously noted, it is possible that the false claim of the epitomes that Constantius divorced Helena on becoming Caesar was a Constantinian fiction designed to counter accusations of illegitimacy.³⁶ It is also notable that, when Constantine died in 337, there was an interregnum of several months in which neither Constantine's sons nor the grandsons of Theodora promoted themselves to Augustus. The crisis was solved when Constantine's sons purged Theodora's side of the family, but the impasse is explicable if Theodora's offspring had used an early belief in Constantine's illegitimacy against their cousins.³⁷ Nevertheless, Constantine was the eldest son of Constantius, and despite his birth, as a prince he had enjoyed a privileged position in the state. This is made clear by the fact that, during the late 290s and early 300s, he lived at the courts of Diocletian and Galerius, and accompanied them on their campaigns as a tribune (Ch. 4.1).³⁸

As for Constantine's siblings, Constantius had three sons and three daughters to Theodora: Dalmatius, Julius Constantius, Hannibalianus, Constantia, Anastasia and Eutropia.³⁹ We do not know their ages, but since Constantius married Theodora in c. 288, it is possible that by 305 the eldest son had the *toga uirilis* (toga of manhood), which boys received at age sixteen.⁴⁰

Maximian's son Maxentius appears to have been born in the early or mid-280s. Maximian's panegyrist in 289 states that 'some lucky teacher' (*felix aliquis praeceptor*) awaits

³⁴ *De Ob. Theod.* 42 = CSEL 73.393. Barnes (2011) 30-33.

³⁵ Leadbetter (1998b) 78-79.

³⁶ Leadbetter (1998b).

³⁷ Leadbetter (1998b) 80.

³⁸ *Paneg.* 7(6).5.3, 6.2; *Paneg.* 6(7).3.3; Lact. *DMP* 18.10, 19, 24.3-8; Const. *Oratio* 16, 25; Eus. *VC* 1.12, 19.1-21.1; *Origo* 2.2-2.4; Praxagoras in *FGrH* 2B, 219.2; Aur. *Vict. Caes.* 40.1-4; *Epit.* 41.2-3; Zos. 2.8.2-3; Zon. 12.33.

³⁹ *PLRE* 1 Anastasia 1; Constantia 1; Constantius 7; Dalmatius 6; Eutropia 2; Hannibalianus 1.

⁴⁰ *Toga uirilis*: Wilson (1924) 52. See also Rougé (1992) 81. Dalmatius may have been the eldest son, since Constantine awarded him with a military and administrative career that included the censorship, and he received the ordinary consulship in 333, two years before Julius Constantius (*PLRE* 1 Constantius 7; Dalmatius 6). But it should be noted that Hannibalianus had probably died by 337, since his name is not among those killed that year when Constantine's sons purged Theodora's side of the family (Hannibalianus 1; Barnes (1982) 37). We thus cannot be certain of relative ages.

Maxentius, which suggests that he had not yet begun his education (10(2).14.1), and Lactantius relates that in 305 Maxentius was a man (*homo*) and was married to Galerius' daughter Valeria Maximilla (*DMP* 18.9).⁴¹ Furthermore, prior to his accession in 306, his wife had borne him a son, Valerius Romulus, since an inscription dedicated to Maxentius by his son refers to him as *uir clarissimus*, man of senatorial rank (*ILS* 666). It was claimed that Maxentius was born illegitimate. A panegyric delivered to Constantine in 313 describes Maximian as *pater illius credebatur* ('believed to be his father') (*Paneg.* 12(9).3.4), and the *Origo* relates that, following Maxentius' death, his mother Eutropia was questioned about his parentage, and that she confessed that he was the son of a Syrian (4.12; see also *Epit.* 4.13).⁴² It seems best to dismiss this as a fiction of Constantine, since in making such claim, he diverted attention away from his own birth to that of his rival, and distanced Maxentius from his sister Fausta, who was Constantine's wife.⁴³

Galerius' son Candidianus was nine in 305 (Lact. *DMP* 20.4). He was born illegitimate, but at some point, Galerius' wife Galeria Valeria adopted him because of her *sterilitas* and thus rendered him legitimate (Lact. *DMP* 50.2).

2.2. The Sources

Among the surviving ancient texts, only one seeks to explain the overlooking of natural-born sons. Lactantius dedicates two chapters of *DMP* (18-19) to the succession event in 305 since he wishes to explain why the Augusti abdicated, why Maxentius and his favourite emperor Constantine were snubbed and why the Second Tetrarchy favoured the political supremacy of Galerius. According to Lactantius, Galerius had become arrogant following his victorious

⁴¹ *Paneg.* 10(2).14.1: Sed profecto mature ille inlucescet dies, cum uos uideat Roma uictores et alacrem sub dextera filium, quem ad honestissimas artes omnibus ingenii bonis natum felix aliquis praeceptor exspectat, ... The marriage of Maxentius: See also *ILS* 666-667, 671; *RIC* 6 Rome 247-248, 254-255, Ostia 30-31; Lact. *DMP* 26.1, 26.6, 27.3; *Origo* 3.7; *Epit.* 40.14.

⁴² *Origo* 4.12: de cuius origine mater eius cum quaesitum esset, Syro quodam genitum esse confessa. *Epit.* 40.13: Sed Maxentium suppositum ferunt arte muliebri tenere mariti animum laborantis auspicio gratissimi partus coepti a puero.

⁴³ To distance Maxentius from Fausta: Barnes (1973) 43. The claim that Maxentius was the son of a Syrian perhaps suggests that he was conceived or born in Syria, and Maximian was probably in Syria with Diocletian in 283: Barnes (1982) 34 (c. 283); Leadbetter (1998b) 76; Donciu (2012) 39-40. But Eutropia was herself a Syrian (*Epit.* 40.12; see also *Jul. Or.* 1.6a), and so this alone might explain the claim.

campaign against the Persians (c. 297-298), much to Diocletian's fear (9.7). He disdained to be called Caesar, and when he heard this name used in letters he would shout with a fierce demeanour and in a terrifying voice: *Quo usque Caesar?* ('How much longer am I to be Caesar?') (8). Behaving with insolence, he wished to appear and be called the son of Mars, claiming that the god had lain with his mother (9).

Later, Lactantius narrates that Diocletian, whom prosperity had now abandoned, in November 303 visited Rome to celebrate his *uicennalia*. Intolerant of the free speech of the Roman people, he departed earlier than expected in December, entering upon his ninth consulship in Ravenna rather than Rome. He thus departed during the cold and rainy conditions of winter, and he contracted a slight but lingering illness. Obligated by the illness to be carried in a litter, he toured the Danube during the summer and then arrived in Nicomedia at which time the illness was increasing in severity. He appeared in public to dedicate a circus at the close of his *uicennalia*, after which he was so ill that prayers were offered for his life. On 13 December he entered a deathlike sleep. There was gloom in the palace, officials were in grief and tearful, and it was believed that Diocletian was not only dead but already buried. On the following morning it was rumoured that he was still alive. Some people suspected that his death was being kept a secret until the arrival of Galerius, lest the soldiers rebel, and the suspicion was widespread enough that no-one believed he was alive until he appeared in public on 1 March, hardly recognizable after the wasting effect of an almost complete year's illness. He had recovered his spirit, but now suffered from bouts of derangement (17).

Galerius then visited Nicomedia, not to congratulate his *pater* on his recovery but to pressure him into abdicating. Lactantius relates that Galerius, by this time, had clashed with Maximian and had frightened him with the prospect of civil war (18.1), and there follows a dialogue between Diocletian and his Caesar.⁴⁴ Galerius is at first gentle in his approach, suggesting that Diocletian is no longer fit for rule due to his age and physical condition and should give himself some repose (2). Diocletian instead proposes that all four men could be Augusti (4). Galerius however wants control over the empire and argues for the maintenance of Diocletian's *dispositio*, by which two Augusti hold the supreme power, and two Caesars assist

⁴⁴ Barnes (1996) 545-546 speculates that in 303 all four Tetrarchs met in Italy, and suggests that this was the occasion for Galerius' meeting with Maximian.

them, since concord cannot be maintained between four equals (5). He then asserts the following (6):

Si ipse cedere nolisset, se sibi consulturum, ne amplius minor et extremus esset.

If he (Diocletian) would not wish to concede, he would look to his own interests, lest he remain any longer junior and at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Galerius then complains that he has been doing the hard work for too long. It had been fifteen years since he had been sent to Illyricum to campaign against barbarians, whereas his colleagues were stationed in more peaceful lands (6). Upon hearing this, the tired old man, who had received from Maximian a letter concerning his meeting with Galerius, and who had learned that Galerius was increasing his army, tearfully replies *fiat si hoc placet* ('Let it be done, if this pleases you') (7).

The question of the new Caesars then arises, and Galerius asserts that they need not consult Maximian and Constantius, since they will accept whatever they decide. Diocletian responds (8):

Ita plane. Nam illorum filios nuncupari necesse est.

This is certainly so. For we must appoint their sons.

Lactantius temporarily leaves the dialogue to introduce Maxentius and Constantine to the reader (9-10):

Erat autem Maximiano <filius> Maxentius, huius ipsius Maximiani gener, homo perniciosae ac malae mentis, adeo superbus et contumax, ut neque patrem neque socerum solitus sit adorare, et idcirco utrique inuisus fuit. Constantio quoque filius erat Constantinus, sanctissimus adulescens et illo fastigio dignissimus, qui insigni et decoro habitu corporis et industria militari et probis moribus et comitate singulari a militibus amaretur, a priuatis et optaretur, eratque tunc praesens iam pridem a Diocletiano factus tribunus ordinis primi.

The older Maximian had a son, Maxentius, who was the son-in-law of just this younger Maximian (Galerius). He was ruinous and evil in disposition, and he was moreover arrogant and stubborn, so that he used to not do homage (*adoratio*) either to his father or his father-in-law, and for this reason

he was disliked by both. Constantius also had a son, Constantine, a young man of most morally pure character, and most deserving of that exalted rank (the rank of Caesar). By his distinguished and becoming presence, his military diligence, his good habits and his unparalleled affability, he was loved by the soldiers and the choice of the private citizens, and he was at that time present at court, having already been appointed by Diocletian long ago as a tribune of the first rank.

Lactantius then returns to the dialogue, and Galerius objects (11):

‘Ille’, inquit, ‘dignus non est. Qui enim me priuatus contempsit, quid faciet, cum imperium acceperit?’

‘Hic uero et amabilis est et ita imperaturus, ut patre suo melior et clementior iudicetur.’

‘Ita fiet ut ego non possim facere quae uelim. Eos igitur oportet nuncupari qui sint in mea potestate, qui timeant, qui nihil faciant nisi meo iussu.’

‘Maxentius’, he said, ‘is not worthy. For if he despises me as a private citizen, what will he do when he has received *imperium*?’

‘But Constantine is amiable and will rule in such a way that he will be judged better and milder than his father.’

‘In that case I would not be able to do what I want. Therefore, it is necessary to appoint those who would be in my power, who would fear me and who would do nothing unless by my order.’

Diocletian then asks whom they should appoint, and Galerius replies ‘Severus’, which prompts derision from the Augustus (12):

‘Illumne saltatorem temulentum ebriosum, cui nox pro die est et dies pro nocte?’

‘Dignus’, inquit, ‘quoniam militibus fideliter praefuit, et eum misi ad Maximianum, ut ab eo induatur.’

‘That drunken, intoxicated dancer, for whom the night is day and the day is night?’

‘He is worthy, for he has loyally commanded the soldiers, and I have sent him to Maximian to be invested by him.’

Galerius then shows Diocletian his other candidate for Caesar, an *adulescens* named Daia (actually Daza), whom Lactantius describes as *semibarbarus*.⁴⁵ The author also notes that Daia had received the name Maximinus from Galerius, whose name had been Maximinus before Diocletian changed it to Maximianus as a good omen (13). Diocletian does not recognize the man, and Galerius replies that he is an *affinis* (relation by marriage). Diocletian is unimpressed (14-15):

At ille gemebundus, ‘Non idoneos homines mihi das, quibus tutela rei publicae committi possit.’

‘Probaui eos’, inquit.

‘Tu uideris, qui regimen imperii suscepturus es. Ego satis laboraui et provide quemadmodum me imperante res publica staret incolumis. Si quid accesserit aduersi, mea culpa non erit.’

Groaning, Diocletian declared, ‘You are not giving me men fit to entrust with the protection of the state.’

‘I have tested them’, Galerius replied.

‘May you see to them, since you are going to undertake the guidance of the empire. I have laboured and taken care enough so that under my rule the state has remained unharmed. If some adversity should happen, it will not be my fault.’

In chapter 19, the narrative jumps ahead to the scene described at the beginning of this study. On 1 May, Diocletian convenes a military assembly outside Nicomedia and tearfully announces his abdication, explaining that he is infirm and needs rest after his labours. The soldiers excitedly await the appointment of Constantine as Caesar, who is standing on the podium alongside Diocletian, Galerius and others, but they are left surprised when Diocletian declares that Severus and Maximinus will be the new Caesars. Galerius draws forward Maximinus, a man whom they do not recognize, and Diocletian cloaks the appointee with his own purple mantle. Diocletian then re-adopts his old name, Diocles, and he descends from the

⁴⁵ Daza: Mackay (1999) 207-209; cf. Cambi (2004) 42.

platform to be carted to his homeland, elsewhere recorded as being Dalmatia.⁴⁶ Lactantius finishes the chapter with a summation of Maximinus' pre-imperial career (6):

Daia uero sublatus nuper a pecoribus et siluis, statim scutarius, continuo protector, mox tribunus, postridie Caesar, accepit orientem calcandum et conterendum, quippe qui neque militiam neque rem publicam sciret, iam non pecorum sed militum pastor.

But Daia, who had recently been taken up from cattle and forests, immediately became a *scutarius* (guardsman), then a *protector*, soon afterwards a tribune and on the next day a Caesar, and he received the east to lay waste and trample underfoot, as one might expect of someone who knew nothing of military or public affairs, a herdsman now not to cattle but to soldiers.

This concludes Lactantius' account of the succession event, but in chapter 20 he makes several more claims that are relevant. He states that Galerius hoped that Constantius would soon die so that he could make his long-time friend Licinius his co-Augustus (3).⁴⁷ After celebrating his *uicennalia*, he would then appoint his son Candidianus as Caesar and abdicate (4):

... tunc uero ipse principatum teneret ac pro arbitrio suo debacchatus in orbem terrae uicennalia celebraret, ac substituto Caesare filio suo, qui tunc erat nouennis, et ipse deponeret, ita cum imperii summam tenerent Licinius ac Severus et secundum Caesarum nomen Maximinus et Candidianus, inexpugnabili muro circumsaeptus securam et tranquillam degeret senectutem.

... then, he himself would hold dominion, and after raging against the world as he wished, he would celebrate his *uicennalia*. And at that time, after replacing himself with his son as Caesar, who was at present nine years old, he himself would relinquish his power. Thus, with Licinius and Severus holding supreme power and with Maximinus and Candidianus holding the second rank of Caesar, he would be safe, surrounded by an impregnable wall, and he could enjoy a peaceful old age.

No other account seeks to explain the overlooking of the sons, but one should note that Lactantius' account of the event is not well supported by other sources. The panegyrist in 307 states that Diocletian and Maximian abdicated in accordance with a *consilium* once made between the pair (7(6).9.2):

⁴⁶ Eutr. 9.19; *Epit.* 39.1; Const. Porphyry. *De Them.* 57-58 (CSHB 18); Zon. 12.31.

⁴⁷ See also 25.4.

Tale est, imperator, quod omnibus nobis incluso gemitu maerentibus facere uoluisti, non quidem tu rei publicae neglegentia aut laboris fuga aut desidiae cupiditate ductus, sed consilii olim, ut res est, inter uos placiti constantia et pietate fraterna ne, quem totius uitae summarumque rerum socium semper habuisses, in alicuius facti communitate desereres neue illius, uiderit quali, certe nouae laudi cederes.

Such a thing you wished to do, emperor, while all of us grieved with our groans suppressed; you were not indeed led by carelessness for the state or the avoidance of work or a longing for idleness, but by adherence, in fact, to a plan once determined between you both and by fraternal piety, so that in sharing some of the deed you would not desert him whom you always had as your partner for your whole life and in the most important affairs, and lest you cede to him the praise for it - of whatever kind that may be, certainly of a novel nature.

The orator also suggests that Maximian had diverse reasons for abdicating, and he specifies old age as a possibility (9.3). Moreover, he notes that it may have been right for Diocletian to abdicate on account of old age or ill health (9.5).

The panegyrist in 310 repeats the claim of a plan and agreement to abdicate, stating that Diocletian abdicated voluntarily (6(7).15.4), and that Maximian was bound by an oath sworn on the Capitol, although he was reluctant to do so (15.6):

At enim diuinum illum uirum qui primus imperium et participauit et posuit consilii et facti sui non paenitet nec amisisse se putat quod sponte transcripsit, felix beatusque uere quem uestra tantorum principum colunt obsequia priuatum... Hunc ergo illum, qui ab eo fuerat frater adscitus, puduit imitari, huic illum in Capitolini Iouis templo iurasse paenituit. Non miror quod etiam genero peierauit.

But certainly, that divine man (Diocletian) who was the first to both share and lay down the imperial power does not repent of his plan or his deed, nor does he believe himself to have let slip what he transferred voluntarily; fortunate and truly blessed is he whom such great princes as you with your deference revere as a private citizen... So, this man was ashamed to imitate that man who had been adopted by him as a brother, and repented of having sworn an oath to him in the temple of Capitoline Jupiter. I do not wonder that he perjured himself even before his son-in-law!

If historical, the most likely occasion for the taking of this oath is the visit of Diocletian and Maximian to Rome in November-December 303 to celebrate a joint *uicennalia* and triumph, since the last two reported times that Diocletian and Maximian were together are in 288 and 290/1.⁴⁸

The majority of other accounts likewise do not explain the succession with reference to Galerius. Rather, the two elements that appear repeatedly in the accounts of pagans and Christians alike are the illness of Diocletian and an abdication that was voluntary or agreed upon between the two Augusti.⁴⁹ Peter Patricius narrates that Galerius troubled Diocletian into handing over the empire using witchcraft (fragm. 206 (Banchich)), but his account is the exception.⁵⁰ Other texts do give some support to Lactantius' account, but this support is of a debateable quality. In Julian's satire *The Caesars*, the author depicts Maximian and Galerius as meddlesome, but at this point in the text Diocletian has already abdicated due to weariness (315). The early fourth-century poet Palladas appears to refer to Galerius as ἐπίφθονον (envious) of Diocletian in a lacunose epigram that criticizes the former as an inadequate successor to the latter. However, this envy, as far as we can tell, is not linked to the succession event itself.⁵¹ Aurelius Victor notes that some believe Diocletian to have abdicated, and to have persuaded a reluctant Maximian to do likewise, because he predicted future destruction and fragmentation. But Victor dismisses this view as lacking regard for truth, and he opines that Diocletian

⁴⁸ Visit in 303: Lact. *DMP* 17.1-3; *Chron. Min.* 1.148 (*Chron.* 354); Eutr. 9.27, 30; Jer. *Chron.* 227.25-228.2; Zon. 12.32. Occasion of oath: Seeck (1897) 1.37; Seston (1946) 187; Chastagnol (1967) 66 n. 2; Kolb (1987) 145-150; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 241 n. 73; Marcone (2000) 11; Bowman (2005) 86. The movements of Diocletian and Maximian: Barnes (1982) 49-60.

⁴⁹ Eus. *HE* 8.13.11 (Diocletian abdicates because he is deranged by illness); *VC* 1.18.1 (Eusebius confesses ignorance); Const. *Oratio* 25 (Diocletian suffers from derangement caused by guilt over the persecution); Eutr. 9.27, 28 (On account of his age, Diocletian voluntarily abdicates and makes Maximian abdicate as well); *Epit.* 39.5 (Diocletian voluntarily abdicates); Oros. 7.25.14, 26.7 (they retire as a reward to themselves); Soc. *HE* 1.2.1 (by mutual consent); *Chron. Min.* 1.522 (*Pol. Silv.*) (the Augusti voluntarily abdicate); Zos. 2.7.2 (Diocletian becomes a private citizen and Maximian follows his example); *Chron. Min.* 2.150 (Cassiod.) (the Augusti abdicate because of old age); Malal. 311-312 (*CSHB* 32) (a confused account in which Maximian abdicates in Antioch); Joh. Ant. fragm. 167.2 (*FHG* 4, p. 602) (the Augusti abdicate because they are frustrated at the survival of Christianity); Theoph. *Chron.* 5796 (the Augusti succumb to madness); Ced. 472 (*CSHB* 8) (frustration over Christianity); Scut. 41 (frustration over Christianity); Zon. 12.32 (frustration over Christianity). A fragment of Peter Patricius (fragm. 200 (Banchich) = *Anon. Cont.* fragm. 13.2 (*FHG* 4, p. 198)), which states that excessive action may lead to risks, may be a reference to the abdications (Banchich (2015) 133). Certain chronicles mention the abdications but provide no reason for them: Jer. *Chron.* 228.12-14; *Chron. Min.* 1.231 (*Des. Cons.*); 1.291 (Barb. Scalig.); 1.447 (*Prosp. Ep. Chron.*) (based on Jerome's text).

⁵⁰ Fragm. 206 (Banchich) = *Anon. Cont.* fragm. 13.6 (*FHG* 4, p. 198).

⁵¹ P.CtYBR inv. 4000, p. 11.27-28 with Wilkinson (2012b) 46.

abdicated because he spurned ambition (*Caes.* 39.46-48).⁵² The historical debate with which Victor engages is a debate that continues today.

2.3. *The Scholarship*

Lactantius has influenced many modern scholars on the succession in 305. For some, Galerius did not wish Maxentius and/or Constantine to succeed because they were not amicable towards himself and would not ensure his dominion, and certain scholars view the succession as a thinly veiled coup.⁵³ Barnes draws on Lactantius and religious policies in his interpretation. According to Lactantius (*DMP* 10.6-14.7) and Eusebius (*HE* 8.16.2-3, Append. 1, 4), Galerius was the chief instigator of the Christian persecution, and so Barnes suggests that Galerius encouraged the persecution partly to discredit Maxentius and Constantine, whom he postulates were known to be sympathetic towards Christianity.⁵⁴ Lactantius claims that Constantine ended the persecution in his territories immediately after succeeding his father (*DMP* 24.9; *DI* 1.1.13), and Eusebius relates that Maxentius did likewise when he was emperor (*HE* 8.14.1).⁵⁵ But the fact that Christians were not sacrificing was sufficient reason to initiate the persecution, and the later efforts of the sons had political benefits.⁵⁶

De Decker and Donciu argue that Maxentius was overlooked because he was a Christian. For Donciu, Diocletian was selective in whom he co-opted to ensure competent leadership, and he had wished Maxentius to succeed in 305, until Galerius persuaded him otherwise on account

⁵² Cf. Cullhed (1994) 24; Potter (2014) 333.

⁵³ Not amicable: Seeck (1897) 38-39; Costa (1920) 61-62; Barnes (1981) 26; Rougé (1992) 82; Cullhed (1994) 30; Mackay (1999) 201; Leadbetter (2009) 142, 178; Corcoran (2012) 6-7; Cowan (2016) 6; Kulikowski (2016) 217-218. Coup: Thomas (1973); Rousselle (1976) 457-461; Cullhed 17-31; Odahl (2010) 56, 71; Syväne (2015) 224. For Rousselle, Galerius imposed on Diocletian a succession model based on adoption. Diocletian then decided to abdicate and make Maximian do the same in order to enforce the overlooking of Maxentius and Constantine. Once Candidianus reached maturity, he would be co-opted.

⁵⁴ Barnes (1981) 26; (2011) 56-57. See also Baynes (1939) 669, who argues that Galerius issued the fourth persecution edict (304) while Diocletian was ill, and posits that Diocletian delegated the selection of the Caesars in 305 to Galerius, who needed the appointees to conduct his policy. Potter (2014) 331 suggests that Galerius supported Diocletian's antipathy for the Christians to convince the emperor that he would support his policies after the succession.

⁵⁵ Lactantius' claim: n. 22.

⁵⁶ Barnes (2011) 57 also argues that Galerius could not allow Maxentius and Constantine to succeed, since this would have prevented the succession of his own relatives. But Maxentius was Galerius' son-in-law, and it seems to me that the Tetrarchs could have made agreements to ensure the eventual succession of Candidianus if it were desired, in the same way that Hadrian adopted Antoninus Pius on the condition that he adopt Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.

of the prince's beliefs. Donciu considers Maxentius' subsequent rebellion as evidence for uncertainty surrounding the succession, and he notes that in 313 Constantine and Licinius supposedly rebuked Diocletian for not attending Licinius' wedding and accused him of having favoured Maxentius (*Epit.* 39.7).⁵⁷ However, the supposed evidence for Maxentius' Christian faith is inconclusive. In relating that Maxentius ceased the persecution, Eusebius claims that Maxentius initially feigned Christianity (*HE* 8.14.1), although he is certainly a partisan author. Eusebius also provides a letter that shows that Maxentius' mother Eutropia presented herself as a Christian while under Constantine's rule (*VC* 3.52), but this would have been a useful thing to do after the violent deaths of her husband and children.⁵⁸ The claim that Maxentius refused to give *adoratio* to Maximian and Galerius is also considered to be evidence for the prince's faith, but other explanations are possible (see below).⁵⁹

Williams thinks that the eastern Tetrarchs did not like Maxentius, and that mistrust between Constantius and Galerius ruled out Constantine.⁶⁰ With some similarity, Leadbetter argues that the succession in 305 was the result of a power struggle between Constantius and Galerius. Galerius had succeeded in convincing Diocletian to make himself his effective successor at the helm of the imperial college. For this to be achieved, Galerius needed the most influence within the college. Diocletian thus co-opted Severus and Maximinus, Caesars who, it was expected, would be more loyal to Galerius than to Constantius. As a compromise, Constantius, as the first-ranking Caesar, was ranked first in the new imperial college, although it is unclear what this meant for his legislative capacity. Leadbetter demonstrates that the territories of each Tetrarch became more defined after 305, and that the power of the Caesars increased as a result. He argues that these developments too were a part of the compromise, since they lessened Galerius' ability to interfere outside his realm.⁶¹ As for Constantine, Leadbetter and others conclude that he was overlooked because he was illegitimate. For Leadbetter, Constantius adopted Severus into his family to safeguard his legitimate sons against Constantine.⁶²

⁵⁷ De Decker (1968) 486-501; Donciu (2012) 44-47, 50-52, 54-58. Donciu suggests that Maximian opposed Constantine's co-option because his own son could not succeed.

⁵⁸ Lenski (2004) argues that Eutropia found new importance as a Christian.

⁵⁹ Corcoran (2015) 465-466 makes these objections.

⁶⁰ Williams (1985) 190.

⁶¹ Leadbetter (2009) 134-146, 160-164.

⁶² Chastagnol (1994) 30 (the reason or pretext); Kuhoff (2001) 311; Leadbetter (2009) 142 (also distrusted because of his ambition). Rougé (1992) 81 thinks it significant that Constantine was not a grandson of Maximian.

On the overlooking of Maxentius in 293, many scholars suggest that he was unsuitable because he was a child.⁶³ Similarly, certain scholars suggest that age was a factor in 305. For Chastagnol, Maxentius was still too young, and Kuhoff argues that Constantius' sons to Theodora had precedence over Constantine but as children were unable to succeed to the purple.⁶⁴ Neri suggests that the Tetrarchs only selected adults as successors, but that Diocletian also could not favour the sons of the western Tetrarchs lest it lead to imbalance between himself and Maximian.⁶⁵ The latter does not convince, since Maximian was loyal to Diocletian and Diocletian was to abdicate anyway.

In 1853 Burckhardt postulated a Tetrarchic system of abdication and adoption that barred children and the elderly from rule, and in which abdication allowed the supervised exclusion of sons from the succession.⁶⁶ The concept has since gained influence. Seston thinks that Galerius pressured Diocletian into giving himself pre-eminence in the Second Tetrarchy, but he also argues that the Tetrarchy was a meritocracy by the late 290s.⁶⁷ For Kolb, the Tetrarchy was created a meritocracy, and many scholars suggest that in 305 Severus and Maximinus were considered to have more merit than the sons.⁶⁸

⁶³ E.g. Rousselle (1976) 459; Chastagnol (1985) 108-109; Williams (1985) 63, 197; Cullhed (1994) 16, 27; Kuhoff (2001) 120, 312 (tentatively); Rees (2002) 97; (2004) 77-78 (but cf. 9); Corcoran (2006a) 40-41, 54; (2008) 232; Donciu (2012) 42, 46; Roberto (2014) 92-93. Seeck (1897) 29 suggests that Maximian co-opted Constantius because Maxentius might have been too young when Diocletian died. Similarly, on the succession in 305, Gwatkin (1911) 3 suggests that Diocletian intended to co-opt Maxentius and Constantine at a later date.

⁶⁴ Chastagnol (1994) 30; Kuhoff (2001) 311-312. See also Hekster (2014) 16; Potter (2014) 333. For Seeck (1897) 37-39, Diocletian wished to postpone his abdication until Constantine was old enough, but had to retire sooner than expected because of his illness. Diocletian initially intended to keep Maximian in power and promote Constantius, but Galerius persuaded him to make Maximian abdicate as well to allow Galerius' own promotion, and dissuaded Diocletian from viewing Maxentius and Constantine as successors, since they were hostile towards himself. Galerius then secured the succession of Severus and Maximinus.

⁶⁵ Neri (2013) 663-664.

⁶⁶ Burckhardt (1949) 47-51; see also Donciu (2012) 44, 52.

⁶⁷ Seston (1946) 185-186, 210-221, 252-255. Seston's argument includes an analysis of the Arch of Galerius that is unconvincing.

⁶⁸ Kolb (1987) 87, 93-94, 128-143; (1995) 29; see also Kuhoff (2001) 311-316; Stefan (2005) 332-333; Eck (2006) 326-328. Kolb thinks that Diocletian was influenced by the Antonines and thus wonders whether Commodus had become a cautionary tale. He also suggests that by 305 there were too many sons for blood-based hereditary succession. It seems to me unlikely that avoiding blood-based succession altogether was considered a better approach to a large dynasty than selecting two sons over others, and if Diocletian had really wanted to follow hereditary norms, he could have attempted to institute a workable system, whether that be through prioritizing the eldest descendants of the Augusti, through the insurance of the succession of both a Jovian and a Herculian, through prioritizing the choice of the abdicating Tetrarchs, or through oaths concerning future succession events. Constantine was not perturbed by the concept of a large dynasty when he left the empire to three sons and two nephews, and although large dynasties had suffered from intra-dynastic murders in the past, the civil wars of 68, 193

2.4. Problems with Lactantius' Account

Scholars who support Lactantius' version of events have reason to do so. His account is contemporary, Severus and Maximinus were partisans of Galerius, and Galerius' Persian victory and Diocletian's illness must have had political consequences.⁶⁹ Additionally, it has been argued that Maxentius and Constantine were treated like heirs apparent during the First Tetrarchy.⁷⁰ The panegyric to Maximian in 289 praises Maxentius in a way that might designate him Maximian's heir (10(2).14.1-2), and the panegyric to Constantius in 296/7 states that the Tetrarchs' children (*liberi*) will in future rule (8(5).19.4).⁷¹ As noted above, Constantine also lived at the courts of Diocletian and Galerius and enjoyed a military career, and Maxentius eventually married Galerius' daughter, just as Constantius and possibly Galerius had married into the families of the Augusti before being co-opted.⁷² I discuss these issues in more detail in Chapter 4, but they are not unambiguous evidence for Diocletian's intentions. The panegyrists may anticipate hereditary succession because it was the norm, and it would also not surprise if Maximian and Constantius

and the third century had not been fought by competing dynasts. For the idea that Diocletian considered Severus and Maximinus to have more merit, see Enßlin (1948) 2437, 2489-2490; Williams (1985) 191; Rougé (1992) 81 (Candidianus did not yet have the necessary qualities); Curran (2000) 50-51; Lenski (2006) 60-61; John & Hartmann (2008) 1051-1052; Christensen (2012) 32 n. 106, 35, 37; Börm (2014) 244-246 (the sons had not yet proved their merit); Hekster (2014) 16; Roberto (2014) 242 (regarding Severus). Jones (1964) 41 thinks that Diocletian was influenced by an Antonine conception of succession through adoption based on merit (see also Kolb (1987) 69; Roberto (2014) 94), but one should remember that the Antonine emperors who adopted their successors lacked natural-born sons. Kraft (1985), esp. 217-218, proposes that Tetrarchic coins minted with the legend *Vtilitas Publica* respond to criticism of Diocletian's system. Marotta (2010) uses Vergil's *Eclogue* 4, Tetrarchic coins and the Venice porphyry group to argue that the abdications were the result of a religious ideology based on cyclical renewal, and that this renewal required the succession of the most capable. Certainly, a regime, especially one that employed abdication, could be expected to promote a succession event with themes of cyclical renewal, but I am not convinced that the succession was governed by such an ideology. Marotta 179 and Roberto 233-234 also suggest that Diocletian was influenced by Republican traditions, since his jurist Charisius considered the office of emperor to be the inheritor of the office of dictator.

⁶⁹ Contemporaneity as a reason to believe Lactantius: Seeck (1897) 41; Thomas (1973) 233; Cullhed (1994) 22; cf. Kolb (1987) 138-139. Partisans of Galerius: n. 7. Galerius pushed for his candidates: E.g. Mattingly (1939) 340-341; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 189. Cf. Kolb 137-138, who thinks that Severus was chosen by Maximian and Constantius, since he does not think that Galerius could have forced one of his candidates on Maximian. I agree with the latter point, but Diocletian perhaps could have forced such a candidate on Maximian. Consequences of war/illness: De Decker (1968) 497; Thomas 243; Kuhoff (2001) 306; Corcoran (2012) 6-7.

⁷⁰ Heirs: Seeck (1897) 34; Gwatkin (1911) 2-3; De Decker (1968) 486-490; Rousselle (1976) 459; Barnes (1981) 9, 25-26; Cullhed (1994) 16-17; Potter (2004) 340-341, 344 (cf. (2013) 100, 122; (2014) 332-335, 337); Corcoran (2008) 250; Stephenson (2009) 114-115; Odahl (2010) 56; Barnes (2011) 47-48, 50-51, 60; Börm (2014) 244; Cowan (2016) 5; cf. Rougé (1992) 81-82.

⁷¹ Cf. Rees (2004) 77.

⁷² Marriage: n. 41. For De Decker (1968) 486-487, the fact that Maxentius received the *nomen* Valerius from his father, who had received it from Diocletian, is evidence for his heir apparent status. But it was normal for Maxentius to receive his father's *nomen*. Constantine: n. 38.

had assumed the same before Diocletian made his will known.⁷³ Several sources relate that Constantine was a hostage, which is plausible, and while Maxentius' marriage enhanced the importance of the prince, the motivation behind the marriage may well have been a desire to establish a more secure bond between the Jovians and the Herculians and to bind Maxentius to Galerius through familial *pietas*.⁷⁴ Certainly, the Augusti had co-opted their sons-in-law to ensure the loyalty of the Caesars, but it does not necessarily follow that Diocletian intended for Maxentius to succeed.⁷⁵ On the other hand, regardless of whether a dynastic marriage guaranteed a Tetrarchic prince's right to succeed, it nonetheless seems telling that Constantine does not appear to have enjoyed a dynastic marriage. As a prince, he was married to one Minervina, a woman of unknown relation (Ch. 4.1).⁷⁶

It is also not clear that one should accept Lactantius' claim that in 305 Galerius intended to appoint Candidianus Caesar after his *uicennalia* in 312 (20.4). Was a nine-year old Candidianus deemed too young whereas a sixteen-year old was not?⁷⁷ Rather, perhaps it means that Galerius at some point intended a return to hereditary norms. It is, however, possible that Lactantius' claim is false. Lactantius does not make this claim in isolation, but says that from 305 Galerius also intended to make Licinius Augustus in preference to his Caesars. Galerius eventually did make Licinius Augustus in the west instead of the western Caesar Constantine, but he was clearly motivated by mistrust for Constantine, who had sided with Maximian, by then

⁷³ See also Straub (1939) 94; Seston (1946) 216, 221; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 75 n. 50.

⁷⁴ Hostage: *Origo* 2.2; *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 40.2; *Epit.* 41.2; *Zon.* 12.33. Cf. Barnes (2011) 54, who argues that the hostage story was designed to distance Constantine from the persecution. Bond between Jovians and Herculians: Kolb (1987) 141; Leadbetter (2009) 142. Bond with Galerius: Cullhed (1994) 16-17, who however also suggests that it marked Maxentius for the succession.

⁷⁵ Cf. Rousselle (1976) 457-459; Corcoran (2008) 232. De Decker (1968) 487 and Corcoran (2012) 6-7 argue that Lactantius' claim that Maxentius was an heir apparent, despite Constantine's future opposition to Maxentius, supports the historicity of his account. But it was natural for Lactantius to cite Maxentius alongside Constantine when discussing a version of events in which two sons were meant to succeed. After all, Maxentius was an adult, the son of an Augustus and the only other future emperor.

⁷⁶ Minervina: *Paneg.* 7(6).4.1 with Barnes (1982) 42-43. Cf. the sources that claim that she was a concubine: *Epit.* 41.4; *Zos.* 2.20.2; *Zon.* 13.2.37. The significance of this marriage to the succession: Cullhed (1994) 30; Potter (2013) 98-101; (2014) 333. Barnes (2011) 48-49 unconvincingly hypothesizes that Minervina was related to Diocletian (Ch. 4.1).

⁷⁷ Kolb (1987) 140 finds this doubtful.

Galerius' enemy.⁷⁸ Lactantius' claim about Licinius thus seems like a teleological invention, which casts doubt on his claim about Candidianus.⁷⁹

The fact that Galerius had Candidianus legitimized simply shows that he wished to have a legitimate son. It does not tell us his plans for the succession and how these plans changed. Candidianus did not become Caesar when his father died in 311, only a year before he was supposedly to be co-opted. Galerius' illness was lingering, so there would have been plenty of opportunity to make the necessary arrangements.⁸⁰ Instead, Galerius placed his wife and son under the *manus*, the legal power, of Licinius (Lact. *DMP* 35.3), and considering Candidianus' survival after this time, there was no effort to assert his right to the throne. According to Lactantius, the prince subsequently feared for his life, and so he and his adoptive mother, who had received an unwanted marriage offer from Licinius, decided to live at the court of Maximinus together with Severus' son Severianus, Maximinus' own son Maximus, and Maximinus' daughter, to whom Candidianus was betrothed (*DMP* 50.2-6). In 313 Licinius defeated Maximinus and had Candidianus executed along with the other imperial sons and women (Lact. *DMP* 50-51), but if it was the case that Galerius had intended to co-opt his son, and that his successors subsequently prevented this plan, Maximinus' treatment of the prince is surprising. Maximinus would have gained politically from marrying his daughter to Galerius' son, but if Maximinus had prevented his succession in 311, one would not expect a cordial relationship. Rather, it is likely that Candidianus' intended co-optation was fabricated to justify Constantine's accession.⁸¹

Since it is not actually clear from other considerations that the princes were heirs apparent, how are we to assess Lactantius' account? At the outset, it should be noted that Lactantius' account is rendered problematic by the testimony of the panegyrics that, prior to

⁷⁸ See e.g. *Paneg.* 7(6); Zos. 2.10.5-7.

⁷⁹ Potter (2013) 121 thinks that Lactantius' statement about Galerius' plans dates itself to between 308 and the marriage alliance between Constantine and Licinius in 312.

⁸⁰ Illness: Lact. *DMP* 33, 35.3; Eus. *HE* 8.16.2-17.1, Append. 1. Chastagnol (1976) 228-229 suggests that Candidianus did become Caesar, since the papyri *P.Cair.Isid.* 51.7 (1 April 311) and *P.Prince.Roll* 2.5, 11 (17 June 312) record an additional regnal year. These regnal years should be the result of scribal error, since, as Barnes (1982) 6 n. 18 contends, Lactantius is silent on the matter, there is no coinage in Candidianus' name, he is missing from documents that attest to the imperial college from 310-311, and all other papyri and ostraca from 310-312 omit the additional regnal year.

⁸¹ On this last point, see Potter (2013) 121-122; (2014) 336-337.

events in 305, the Augusti had agreed to abdicate. One should not doubt the historicity of this agreement. Certainly, the panegyrist in 310 referenced the accompanying oath because he wished to portray Maximian as an oath-breaker. Maximian had committed suicide after an attempted usurpation against Constantine, and this was something that the panegyrist had to explain. But for the panegyrist in 307, the emperors' *consilium*, which had been decided 'some time ago' (*olim*) and was thus not an emergency measure, was an obstacle to overcome. The speaker needed to justify Maximian's return to active rule, which had happened in 306, and yet he acknowledged a long-existing agreement to abdicate. This indicates its historicity. If on the other hand he had explained that Maximian had abdicated to avoid civil war, this might have been regarded as virtuous, and yet the orator did not do so.⁸²

Diocletian's retirement palace at Split on the Dalmatian coast, near his birthplace of Salona, supports the existence of a prior agreement. While it is conceivable that Diocletian built his homeland residence for use during his reign, the palace was not strategically useful to the peripatetic and proactive emperor, being far from the *limes* and the main roads linking the east and west of the empire. Indeed, as emperor, Diocletian is not attested on the Dalmatian coast prior to his retirement.⁸³ There is thus reason to think that the palace had been designed with Diocletian's abdication in mind. If it had been completed by the time the retired emperor took up

⁸² Kolb (1987) 148-150; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 203 n. 34; Christensen (2012) 29-30; cf. Rees (2004) 79. Thomas (1973) 235-240 argues that the panegyric testimony should be rejected, but his arguments are defeated by those of Chastagnol (1980/81), Nixon (1981b) 70-76, Kolb 145-150 and Nixon & Rodgers 203 n. 34, 204 n. 37. Thomas' arguments and the counter-arguments are as follows: 1) The panegyrist in 307 speaks of Maximian's *aduentus* into Rome in ?299 (8.7), and then references Maximian's presence in Rome as consul for the eighth time in 304 as if it were the first time since the earlier visit (8.8). Thomas thus questions whether Maximian was in Rome in 303 (see also Rousselle (1976) 455-456). But the panegyrist does not refer to Maximian's arrival in 304, but only his departure. 2) According to Thomas, the same panegyrist claims that Diocletian, in abdicating, would have been driven to make Maximian his successor and see to it that he reign over both halves of the empire. Scholars reject this claim, and so Thomas asks why we should trust the panegyrist at all. But the panegyrist only asks a rhetorical question concerning what is politically acceptable (9.6). 3) The panegyrics are not in agreement, as there is no oath in the 307 speech. But in a speech that justifies Maximian's return from retirement, it is not in the speaker's interests to mention an oath. 4) Neither panegyric specifies a date for the agreement/oath. 5) The panegyrist in 307 considers illness to have been a possible factor governing the abdication (9.5), but within Lactantius' account Diocletian does not become ill until after he departed Rome. But the author is not purporting to know that illness was the determining factor, and he references it as a possibility with regard to the abdication itself, not the agreement. 6) The panegyrists had reason to fabricate an abdication agreement, against which, see the main text. Cullhed (1994) 26-27 supports Thomas and argues that it would have been imprudent for the panegyrists to bring up Galerius' hostility. But the panegyrist in 307 does not seem to have been so limited, since he obliquely references Galerius' opposition to Maximian's return to power (12.8).

⁸³ Diocletian's movements: Barnes (1982) 49-56.

residence, construction would have to have begun at least five years prior.⁸⁴ More tellingly, Lactantius himself supports the idea of an abdication agreement made on the occasion of the *uicennalia*, the best possible occasion on which Maximian could have taken his oath, when he states that Galerius intended to abdicate after his own *uicennalia* (20.4).⁸⁵ This seems a reliable detail, since the invective does not require it. Indeed, the palace of Galerius' mother Romula, located at Galerius' birthplace near Gamzigrad in modern Serbia, underwent major renovations following Diocletian's abdication and Romula's death, and eventually became Galerius' burial place. It may have thus become Galerius' intended place of retirement, like Diocletian's homeland residence.⁸⁶ It must be admitted that coins from Trier and an inscription in Numidia celebrate *uota suscepta* for the *tricennalia* in addition to the *uota soluta* for the *uicennalia*, as if there was no abdication plan. However, considering the evidence for an abdication agreement, this should either mean that certain officials did not know about the plan or its timing until 303, or that they simply retained a formality.⁸⁷ Therefore, the Augusti had previously agreed to abdicate after a certain period of time; possibly to fulfil the expectation that the Caesars would become Augusti, and to allow Diocletian to supervise the succession.⁸⁸ Lactantius' account is thus misleading.

⁸⁴ Brothers (1972) 175-176; Kolb (1987) 150-151; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 189; Kolb (1995) 30; Kuhoff (2001) 304-305; Leadbetter (2009) 138-139; Potter (2013) 100; Neri (2013) 665-666. On the architecture of the complex and its uses, see also McNally (1994); Belamarić (2003); Mayer (2014) 117-120; Posavec (2015).

⁸⁵ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 188; Leadbetter (2009) 138; cf. Cullhed (1994) 25.

⁸⁶ Srejšović & Vasić (1994) 123-156. Cf. Mayer (2014) 120-123, who thinks that the palace was intended for active rule near the frontier. Rees (2004) 79 cautions that Galerius died in office despite his lengthy illness. But there are many possible reasons why Galerius might not have felt ready to retire, including the possibility that he might survive. Perhaps he felt that his approaching death removed the need to retire.

⁸⁷ *ILS* 644; *RIC* 6 Trier 75-76, 96-98, 135-136, 608, 612-614. Note also Trier 35, which celebrates Constantius' fifth consulship (305) and 13th tribunician year (304/5) as the honours of a Caesar. On these sources, see Enßlin (1948) 2489; Chastagnol (1967) 66 n. 3; Thomas (1973) 242; Rousselle (1976) 456-457; Chastagnol (1985) 107; Kolb (1987) 151-152; Kuhoff (2001) 323; Rees (2004) 79-80; Weiser (2006) 220-222; Corcoran (2008) 250; (2012) 7; Potter (2013) 101. See also Rousselle 456 and Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 202 n. 33 on *Paneg.* 7(6).8.8. Potter (2013) 101 and (2014) 333-334 views the synchronization of the Egyptian regnal years in 303 as evidence that the plan dates to this year, but synchronization was typical of the Tetrarchs (Kolb (1987) 115-127).

⁸⁸ There is much scholarship on the abdications and the possible reasons for them: Burckhardt (1949) 47-51 (in 1853); Keim (1862) 78; Mason (1876) 236; Coen (1877); McGiffert (1890) 335 n. 16; Seock (1897) 33-39; Costa (1920) 60-64; Baynes (1924) 193; Homo (1927) 353-354; Lietzmann (1938) 53; Baynes (1939) 667-669; Mattingly (1939) 340-341; Seston (1946) 185-189, 225-226, 249-250, 252-254; Baynes (1948) 112-113; De Francisci (1948) 27-28; Enßlin (1948) 2489-2490; Jones (1948) 56; Wickert (1954) 2264; Seston (1957) 1044; Stein (1959) 68, 82; Chastagnol (1969) 17-18; Thomas (1973); Rousselle (1976) 455-461; Barnes (1981) 17, 19, 25; Keresztes (1983) 383-384; Chastagnol (1985) 104, 107; Williams (1985) 186, 189-190, 192; Kolb (1987) 87, 128-158; Chastagnol (1994) 29-30; Cullhed (1994) 17-31; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 188-190, 203-204 nn. 34-37, 241 n. 73; Kolb (1995) 29-31; Kuhoff (2001) 300-311, 319; Corcoran (2006a) 53-54; Van Dam (2007) 243-245; Corcoran (2008) 236, 250; Leadbetter (2009) 134-140; Stephenson (2009) 114-115; Marotta (2010); Odahl (2010) 65-67, 71; Bauer (2011) 65-

Lactantius' account is also misleading because Severus and Maximinus could not have been unknown to the soldiers. Although Lactantius writes that Maximinus was a relation by marriage to Galerius (18.14), the *Epitome* (40.1, 18) and Zosimus (2.8.1) relate that he was Galerius' nephew. Lactantius wished to downplay Maximinus' proximity to the Tetrarchs. However, he did not need to invent a marriage to do so, and such a union accords with the marital relations that bound the rulers of the First Tetrarchy. Therefore, Maximinus was Galerius' nephew and was additionally bound to him through a marital alliance.⁸⁹ Furthermore, by Lactantius' own testimony, in 305 Maximinus was a tribune (19.6), like Constantine (18.10). As for Severus, Lactantius has Galerius state that he has loyally commanded soldiers (18.12), and the *Origo* relates that he was Galerius' friend (4.9). He was thus a trusted officer of Galerius and someone of whom soldiers would have been aware.⁹⁰

In the introduction (Intr. a), it was established that *DMP* is fairly reliable as an account of events, but that the text includes Constantinian fictions, and that the interpretations within are subject to biases and the polemical needs of the work. A Christian rhetorician and his Christian or Christian-sympathizer friends could not have been privy to deliberations between Diocletian and Galerius, and so his account amounts to interpretation.⁹¹ The succession probably was surprising, and Galerius' Persian victory, Diocletian's illness and the fact that the new Caesars were partisans of Galerius undoubtedly encouraged speculation, but the succession as Lactantius depicts it accords perfectly with his worldview and the aims of his work. As previously argued, Lactantius believed that God's punishment for Diocletian was the emperor's helplessness as the *concordia* of his regime and his legacy collapsed around himself, and his thesis and polemical themes lead him to emphasize discord within the Tetrarchy, characterize Diocletian as timid and depict Galerius as power-hungry and destructive.⁹² Fittingly, in 18-19 the cowardly Diocletian is helpless as he loses his empire to a grasping and ungrateful Galerius, who subsequently subjects the empire to his own barbarous rule (21-23) and the unqualified governance of the new Caesars,

69; Corcoran (2012) 5, 7; Donciu (2012) 44, 52; Potter (2013) 100-101; Börm (2014) 246; Potter (2014) 333-334; Roberto (2014) 225-234; Kalas (2015) 23-45.

⁸⁹ Barnes (1999) 459-460; (2011) 59-60. Mackay (1999) 202-205 views the use of *affinis* as obscuration

⁹⁰ Kuhoff (2001) 313-315; see also Rougé (1992) 88; Lenski (2008) 257; cf. Potter (2014) 334.

⁹¹ Rougé (1992) 78; Kuhoff (2001) 308.

⁹² Intr. a.

of whom one is the rapacious Maximinus (32, 36-41).⁹³ Lactantius' presentation of the event seemingly leads him to avoid mention of the abdication agreement, and although the retired Diocletian subsequently enjoyed a symbolic role as Diocletianus Senior Augustus and *pater Augustorum*, Lactantius strengthens the impression of divine punishment when he claims that the emperor resumed the name Diocles (19.6).⁹⁴ Furthermore, when Lactantius narrates the course of the illness that leads to Diocletian's abdication, the only dates that he reports appear to be Tetrarchic festival days (17). In this way, Lactantius reinforces his thesis of divine retribution.⁹⁵

It is also evident that Lactantius wishes to contrast the legitimate Christian emperor Constantine with the illegitimate persecutor Maximinus, and thus presents the Caesar as an unknown who attained his position despite hereditary norms and the supposed wishes of the soldiery. The soldiers were too surprised to voice disapproval, and so Maximinus did not truly attain the approval of the legions in an age in which military acclamation was paramount to legitimacy.⁹⁶ Rather, the soldiers wanted Constantine to succeed, a presentation of events that would have appealed to both Lactantius and Constantine. Indeed, the impression that everyone including Diocletian assumed that Constantine would succeed emphasized the normality of hereditary succession, which would have pleased the Christian emperor.⁹⁷

Lactantius' explanation for why Maxentius did not become Caesar, that he showed his father and father-in-law disrespect, also accords with the author's biases, since the prince eventually became Constantine's enemy.⁹⁸ The *Epitome* similarly claims that Maxentius was dear to no-one, not even his father and father-in-law (40.14; *Is Maxentius carus nulli umquam fuit ne patri aut socero quidem Galerio.*), but the hostility of the statement suggests a pro-Constantinian origin, and the claim may well have been influenced by the fact that Maxentius later warred with Galerius and expelled his father from Rome.

⁹³ Kolb (1987) 136 notes that Diocletian is characterized as a coward, and Rougé (1992) 80, 85-86 and Kuhoff (2001) 310-311 observe that Diocletian's debate with Galerius presents the Augustus as feeble and senile. Cf. Cullhed (1994) 28; Christensen (2012) 315.

⁹⁴ E.g. *CIL* 6.1130 (= 31242); *RIC* 6 Rome 116a, 117a, 118a, 119a; see also Kuhoff (2001) 320-326, 786-787; Stefan (2005) 337-340. Rougé (1992) 87-88 notes that the *reda* in which Diocletian is carted away was not a prestigious vehicle.

⁹⁵ Kolb (1987) 28-32.

⁹⁶ Icks (2012) 465-467.

⁹⁷ Potter (2013) 122; (2014) 337.

⁹⁸ Kuhoff (2001) 312. Christensen (2012) 313-315 thinks that chapter 18 stemmed from an anti-Galerian political pamphlet which served Maximian's purposes in 307. This lacks supporting evidence.

As previously noted, Lactantius' version of events was not adopted by other extant accounts, including those of Christian writers.⁹⁹ Indeed, his account collapses under scrutiny. For Lactantius, the only Tetrarch who desired the succession arrangement was Galerius, who was ranked the lowest. Diocletian and Maximian abdicated unwillingly, and the western Tetrarchs accepted the co-option of Galerius' partisans rather than their sons, whose succession Diocletian also favoured. How could Galerius have successfully pressured his co-rulers into accepting this? Certainly, he and his army were militarily accomplished, but so were his colleagues. Lactantius seemingly attempts to dispel the idea that Galerius needed to bully Constantius when he later states that Galerius despised his colleague on account of his ill health, and was awaiting his death (20.1-2). But titulature suggests that Constantius campaigned annually against Germans between 302 and 304, and sources attest that from 305-306 he was in Britain campaigning against the Picts.¹⁰⁰ In 305 he was apparently also able to impose his will upon Galerius to return Constantine to the west.¹⁰¹ Therefore, Constantius was still formidable.¹⁰² Additionally, Maximian's army was loyal to their emperor, as evidenced by the defection of Severus' troops to Maximian in 307, after the latter had returned from retirement (Lact. *DMP* 26.9-10).¹⁰³ Furthermore, Galerius could not take for granted the loyalty of the legions along the Danube who in 305 were under his command, since Diocletian had commanded on that frontier in 285, 289/90, 294, 295/6 and possibly 303/4.¹⁰⁴ Galerius' legitimacy also depended upon Diocletian. How much loyalty could he expect once he had declared war on his *auctor imperii* and adoptive father?¹⁰⁵ Lactantius' Galerius is also a contradiction. He threatens the other emperors with civil war, but he later recognizes Constantine's accession because he fears war with the inexperienced emperor (25.1-3).¹⁰⁶

Even if we discount the possibility of civil war, it is unbelievable that Diocletian could have been bullied into such a succession when no previous emperor had abdicated except in the

⁹⁹ Kolb (1987) 129.

¹⁰⁰ Campaigns: Barnes (1976a) 179, 191; (1982) 61.

¹⁰¹ Lact. *DMP* 24; *Origo* 2.4.

¹⁰² Leadbetter (2009) 138.

¹⁰³ Kolb (1987) 136.

¹⁰⁴ Leadbetter (2009) 137; see also Kuhoff (2001) 310. Diocletian and Galerius on the Danube: Barnes (1976a) 177-178, 186-187, 191; (1982) 50-51, 54, 56, 63-64.

¹⁰⁵ Leadbetter (2009) 137.

¹⁰⁶ Kolb (1987) 135-136.

context of civil war, and almost none had blocked the hereditary succession of an adult.¹⁰⁷ Diocletian must have been an exceptionally imposing figure with an unusual capacity to influence others. He and Maximian brought to a halt a cycle of usurpations that had lasted half a century, and even before they had created the Tetrarchy, the only usurpation to have occurred was that of Carausius in Britain. Since Diocletian alone appears to have made empire-wide edicts, he seems to have maintained some control over the Tetrarchy, and since, following the abdications, Maximian later returned to active power, this strongly suggests that the abdications were not his idea and that Diocletian had persuaded Maximian to follow the unprecedented plan.¹⁰⁸ It is no doubt partly the case that the reason the Tetrarchy collapsed following Diocletian's abdication was because it was Diocletian's influence or *auctoritas* that had held the imperial college together. Certain ancient authors understood Diocletian to have been this figure of authority. Eutropius (9.24), Festus (*Brev.* 25) and Ammianus (14.11.10) record the story that Diocletian made Galerius run before his carriage following a military defeat. Aurelius Victor relates that Diocletian prevented Galerius from annexing territory from the Persians, the author noting that it was by Diocletian's nod (*nutus*) that everything was controlled (*Caes.* 39.36). In Julian's *The Caesars*, Diocletian enters the hall of the gods while his colleagues form a chorus around him with joined hands (315a). It is even possible that Lactantius used the story that Diocletian was bullied because it subverted a *topos*. That is to say, the disdainful author may have presented Diocletian as a coward partly because it undermined the emperor's reputation.

Diocletian also maintained influence for some years into his retirement. Maximian, after retaking active power in 306, wrote letters to Diocletian asking him to resume power as well, and in 308 Galerius invited Diocletian to the conference at Carnuntum, where Galerius and Diocletian made various decisions regarding the composition of the imperial college and the ranks of those within it.¹⁰⁹ At this same conference Galerius and Maximian sought to convince Diocletian to resume power, no doubt to assist them in their own designs, and Diocletian appears

¹⁰⁷ Other abdications: Kolb (1987) 144.

¹⁰⁸ Diocletian and edicts: Corcoran (2000a) 270; Ch. 1.6. Maximian's return to power: Barnes (1982) 13.

¹⁰⁹ Maximian writes to Diocletian: Eutr. 10.2; Zon. 12.33. Potter (2013) 326 n. 12.2 suggests that *Paneg.* 7(6).12.6 (307) represents another attempt at encouraging Diocletian's return. See also Lact. *DMP* 43.5-6, who asserts that a return to the rule of himself and Diocletian was Maximian's goal. The conference at Carnuntum: n. 10. Rougé (1992) 87-88 notes that Lactantius' representation of a demeaning retirement does not accord with the conference.

to have persuaded Maximian to return to retirement.¹¹⁰ Certainly, around this time Maximian again abdicated (*Paneg.* 6(7).16.1; Lact. *DMP* 29.1-3), and the panegyrist in 310 relates that, after he fled Italy (April 308), he was ‘rejected by Illyricum’ (*ab Illyrico repudiatum*) (6(7).14.6).¹¹¹ It is likely that Diocletian and not Galerius was responsible, since the latter was Maximian’s junior and had invaded Italy in order to overthrow him and his son.¹¹² These things attest to Diocletian’s clout and ability to influence, seemingly unimpaired by a prior episode in which he was bullied into a shameful succession.¹¹³ Indeed, Sutherland, noting that from 307-308 the Lyons mint honoured Diocletian as *Aeternus Augustus*, suggests that it did so because the city feared an impending civil war and saw Diocletian as a figure of supreme moral authority.¹¹⁴

It is only after Galerius’ death in 311, when no surviving ruler had experienced Diocletian as a colleague, that the emperor emeritus plausibly appears powerless. Lactantius claims that Diocletian unsuccessfully attempted to have Maximian return his wife and daughter from desert exile (39.5, 41), and that, while Diocletian was still alive, Constantine had certain images of Diocletian destroyed in his efforts to damn the memory of Maximian (42).¹¹⁵ Like the succession in 305, these stories helped to formulate Lactantius’ particular image of Diocletian, but as previously discussed, the author was a fairly reliable reporter of events, and his testimony should not be rejected without due consideration. But on the other hand, the *Epitome* reports that in 313 Constantine and Licinius invited Diocletian to the wedding celebrations for Licinius’ marriage to Constantia (39.7). Admittedly, the author claims that Diocletian refused on account of ill health, and that the threatening replies he received drove him to suicide. The story is also questionable since it appears in no other account. Nevertheless, the story shows that some believed that Diocletian, as late as 313, although lacking real power still had a legitimizing presence. Indeed, after 311 Maximianus’ mint at Alexandria continued to issue coins for

¹¹⁰ Galerius and Maximian: *Epit.* 39.6. Zos. 2.10.4-5 mixes up this attempt to entice Diocletian back into power with the earlier attempt of Maximian.

¹¹¹ Barnes (1982) 13; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 238-239 n. 66, 242 n. 76.

¹¹² Lact. *DMP* 27.2-8; *Origo* 3.6-7.

¹¹³ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 188.

¹¹⁴ Lyons: *RIC* 6 Lyons 258, 280 with Sutherland (1957).

¹¹⁵ Lact. *DMP* 39.5, 42.

Diocletian, and in 312 he issued a legal letter citing a precedent from *domino et parente nostro Diocletiano seniore Augusto* (CTh 13.10.2).¹¹⁶

The fact that Galerius and Maximian later tried to make Diocletian return to power also does not accord well with Lactantius' claim that he suffered from mental derangement (17.9). Christian sources alone claim that Diocletian's illness led to madness, evidently because this belief helped to justify the idea that the emperor had suffered the wrath of God. Indeed, Lactantius states that God was responsible for the illness (17.1), and Constantine implies the same connection (*Oratio* 25).¹¹⁷ In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* Eusebius claims that Diocletian abdicated because he was deranged by illness (8.13.11), but later in the *Vita Constantini* he says that he does not know the reason (1.18.1). The former claim is thus unreliable. Moreover, if the western Tetrarchs had believed the succession plan to have been influenced by derangement or pressure exerted by Galerius, it is unlikely that they would have accepted it.¹¹⁸ The scenario that remains is therefore clear. Diocletian was the senior-ranking Augustus and a man of great influence, and he had convened multiple times with his adopted son Galerius.¹¹⁹ Diocletian wished for Galerius' friend and nephew to be co-opted as Caesars, and the western Tetrarchs accepted his will.

2.5. The Will of Diocletian

Age alone cannot be the reason why in 305 Diocletian ignored hereditary succession, since Maxentius and Constantine were adults, and it is possible that one of Constantius' sons to Theodora also possessed the *toga uirilis*. Constantine was probably born illegitimate, but his military career and presence at the courts of Diocletian and Galerius suggests that he was considered an important figure. Perhaps his illegitimacy was already being suppressed (Ch. 4.3).

¹¹⁶ Alexandria: *RIC* 6 Alexandria 146. CTh 13.10.2 = CJ 11.49.1. Date and author of letter: Mitchell (1988) 122-123; accepted by Corcoran (2000a) 151.

¹¹⁷ Lact. *DMP* 17.1: Hoc igitur scelere perpetrato Diocletianus, cum iam felicitas ab eo recessisset, ... The reference to *felicitas* relates to divine justice since this is the thesis of *DMP*, and most of 17 is occupied by the narrative of Diocletian's illness. Const. *Oratio* 25: Διοκλητιανὸς δὲ μετὰ τὴν μαιφονίαν τοῦ διωγμοῦ αὐτοῦ ἑαυτοῦ καταψηφισάμενος, λέληθεν ἀποκηρύξας μὲν ἑαυτὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς ὡς ἄχρηστον, ὁμολογήσας δὲ τὴν τῆς ἀφροσύνης βλάβην μιᾶς εὐκαταφρονήτου οἰκίσεως καθειργμῶ. See also Theoph. *Chron.* 5796.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Cullhed (1994) 29-30.

¹¹⁹ The meetings of Diocletian and Galerius: Barnes (1982) 55-56, 63-64.

But even if we discount Constantine as a potential heir, Maxentius cannot be dismissed in a scenario in which age was the sole factor. Admittedly, it could be argued that Constantius' sons had more right to succeed than Maxentius, since Constantius was now Maximian's eldest son. In this scenario, Constantius' sons to Theodora were too young to succeed, and so Severus was made Caesar instead. But if age was all that hindered hereditary norms, why would Constantius accept Severus and ultimately Severianus as his offspring and successors rather than legitimize Constantine, as Galerius did for Candidianus? And why would the Augusti not delay their abdication by a few more years to allow a teenaged son to reach maturity? And why would Maximian not have Constantius adopt Maxentius rather than Severus? It could be argued that Constantius owed Maxentius after his replacement of the latter as eldest son.

Rather, Diocletian wanted Galerius to effectively control the Second Tetrarchy, at first in a de-facto capacity and then, following the death of Constantius, in name as well. Diocletian had enjoyed seniority within the First Tetrarchy, but there had been limits to his control. As noted in Chapter 1.6, certain persecution edicts and perhaps the prices edict had not been effectively promulgated in the west. Therefore, Diocletian and Galerius pursued an arrangement in which Constantius would indeed receive the first rank within the imperial college, as was his due, but in which Galerius would be able to influence both Caesars. The fact that Diocletian selected Galerius rather than Constantius as his effective successor, despite Constantius' seniority, suggests that Diocletian had become convinced that Galerius was the superior choice. This is understandable, since Galerius, as Diocletian's Caesar in the east, enjoyed closer relations with the Augustus and was in a position to influence him. Furthermore, whereas the eastern Tetrarchs were committed persecutors, Constantius had only permitted the pulling down of churches (Lact. *DMP* 15.6-16.1).¹²⁰ The intention to make Galerius supreme within the college also explains why in 308 Diocletian and Galerius made Licinius, another of the latter's partisans, Augustus in the west in place of a deceased Severus, even though Licinius had not served as Caesar. For whatever reason, Galerius apparently did not wish to transfer Maximinus to the west, and Constantine, who had been Severus' Caesar, had already showed his disloyalty when he supported Maximian's return from retirement.¹²¹ To an extent, I thus agree with Leadbetter's

¹²⁰ Cf. Eus. *HE* 8.13.12-13, Append. 4; *MP* 13.12; *VC* 1.13.3.

¹²¹ Constantine's support for Maximian: E.g. *Paneg.* 7(6); *Zos.* 2.10.5-7.

interpretation of the succession in 305, that Diocletian wished Galerius to take his place as the most influential figure within the imperial college, and thus its ruler.¹²²

But Galerius' dominance was not the only factor to have governed this event. If this were so, one would have expected the co-option of Candidianus. It should also be noted that, although Maxentius had supposedly refused to debase himself through the relatively new ceremony of *adoratio*, he was Galerius' son-in-law.¹²³ Admittedly, age may explain Candidianus' rejection, but other considerations indicate something different. The Augusti exploited marriage ties and used adoption in the consolidation of their regime, and in the years following Diocletian's abdication, media used dynastic-sounding yet metaphorical terms like *pater Augustorum* and *filius Augustorum* to clarify the symbolic and hierarchical relationships that joined the Tetrarchs to one another.¹²⁴ But it is telling that, whereas coins and inscriptions often denoted the links of kinship between rulers and other members of the imperial family, coins and inscriptions of the First Tetrarchy do not celebrate any links of kinship. It is never specified that a ruler is a *pater* or *filius*, and no coin or official inscription acknowledges the biological sons.¹²⁵ The only inscriptions to mention a natural-born Tetrarchic prince prior to their taking power are *ILS* 666-667.¹²⁶ In this pair of inscriptions, Maxentius and his wife are honoured by their son Romulus, and the imperial pedigree of Maxentius and Romulus is ignored. They are not named Jovius or Herculus, and they are both *clarissimi*, as is clarified in Romulus' dedication to his father (666).¹²⁷

domino patri | M. Val. Maxentio | uiro claris., | Val. Romulus c. p., | pro amore | caritatis eius, |
patri benignissimo

¹²² Ch. 2.3.

¹²³ See also Kuhoff (2001) 312-313. *Adoratio*: Matthews (1989) 244-247.

¹²⁴ Seston (1946) 216-217; Kolb (1987) 94-95; Stefan (2005). On the ways in which imperial self-representation changed from 305, see Carlà (2012); Hekster (2015) 287-296.

¹²⁵ Kolb (1987) 93-94, 141-142; Hekster (2015) 283-285. A survey of *ILS* vol. 1 demonstrates the propensity for inscriptions to denote links of kinship, and *RIC* provides many numismatic examples of this practice. For two particularly notable examples, note *CIL* 16.135, one of several diplomas that specify the familial relationships and ancestry of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, and Maxentius' *consecratio* coins (Cullhed (1994) 76-78), which as official media specify the familial relationships of the Tetrarchs, but during the late reign of Maxentius.

¹²⁶ *ILS* 666-667 = *CIL* 14.2825-2826.

¹²⁷ Seston (1946) 216-218; Kolb (1987) 93-94, 141-142; cf. Barnes (1981) 27, who states that Maxentius 'ostentatiously comported himself as a Roman senator.'

To my master father Marcus Valerius Maxentius, man of senatorial rank, Valerius Romulus, boy of senatorial rank, out of love for his esteem, [dedicated] to a most kind father.

By contrast, in Romulus' dedication to his mother, *Val. Romulus c. p.* honours his mother as *nobilissima femina* (*Val. Maximillae | nob. fem.*) (667), a title that seems akin to a feminine equivalent of *nobilissimus Caesar* (Ch. 5.2). The contrast between the senatorial status of the sons and the 'most noble woman' that is Galerius' daughter is striking, since in the later Roman Empire *nobilissimus* was reserved for members of the imperial family.¹²⁸ One might suggest that Maxentius was *clarissimus* because his father had perhaps retired by the time of the inscription, but this would not explain the status of Romulus, who was the grandson of Galerius.¹²⁹ The natural-born sons are also absent from surviving Tetrarchic art. Constantine's panegyrist in 307 describes a picture of Constantine and Fausta as children, the artwork supposedly located within a dining room in the palace at Aquileia (7(6).6.2-5). However, the speaker claims not to have seen the picture and does not reveal the source of his information, which means that his description and interpretation, of use to his rhetoric, is questionable.¹³⁰ The harmony between the lesser status and visibility of the sons and the non-hereditary succession events is unlikely to be a coincidence.

Furthermore, it should be noted that for a long time Diocletian did not enjoy any link of kinship with Maximian. Maximian's adoption of Constantius shows that age was not a barrier for the Tetrarchs (Ch. 1.4), but when Diocletian appointed Maximian as Caesar and then Augustus, he did not adopt him as his son nor bind him through a marriage alliance. Rather, they established a fictional brotherhood (Ch. 6). The fact that the Augusti avoided binding their joint rule through genuine ties of kinship in favour of something unusual and fictional is extraordinary. Unlike any prior imperial college, there was no familial link that bound the two Augusti between 285 and c. 300 or later, when Maxentius married Maximilla. The absence of a real tie of kinship between the Augusti suggests that, while they did eventually adopt their new Caesars, they nevertheless attached less importance to dynastic links than other emperors.

¹²⁸ Lewis & Short, *nobilis*. See e.g. *CTh* 10.25.1; *D.* 40.11.3; Barnes (1982) 17-23.

¹²⁹ Dessau, the editor of *ILS*, dates these inscriptions to 305/6 based on this postulation (1.152).

¹³⁰ Rees (2002) 169-170; Ch. 4.3.

Clearly, links of kinship were attributed less importance during the First Tetrarchy than during previous regimes, and when we combine this with the fact that the natural-born sons were overlooked in three different succession events, 293, 305 and 308, and the impression that Galerius did not attempt to replace himself with Candidianus, it is best to conclude that both Diocletian and Galerius attached less importance to hereditary succession and norms, and that a fairly consistent non-dynastic idea governed all the succession events in question.

2.6. *The Failure of Dynasty*

Hereditary succession was an appealing concept. It was understandable that emperors should have wanted to pass their *imperium* on to a son, and it would have also been a source of comfort for many of the empire's subjects. The de-facto rule that an emperor's closest male kin inherited his power was, in theory, a guarantee for a stable succession, and familial ties hopefully encouraged unity between co-rulers. For many, hereditary succession also allowed the emperor's attributes to live on through his successor. Note for instance that a recurring theme within early panegyrics to Constantine is the similarity between the emperor and his father in terms of appearance and virtues.¹³¹ At certain points in history, these considerations appear to have influenced the soldiery. For instance, in 218 Julia Maesa conjured military support for Elagabalus against Macrinus by claiming that Elagabalus was the son of the emperor Caracalla, their benefactor. The army was also upset with Macrinus because of issues relating to pay and the Parthian war, but Maesa clearly expected Elagabalus' dynastic credentials to help.¹³² The events of 238 provide an example of civilian support for hereditary succession. Gordian, the proconsul of Africa, had instigated a rebellion against Maximinus Thrax and had received the allegiance of the senate. Gordian and his son Gordian II perished twenty-two days into their rebellion, and the senate appointed two among their number, Pupienus and Balbinus, as the new Augusti. However, a mob interspersed with some soldiers and, Herodian suspects, friends and allies of the Gordiani rioted and refused to allow the new emperors to leave the temple of Capitoline Jupiter. They demanded that a relative of the Gordiani be made emperor and that he

¹³¹ *Paneg.* 7(6).3.3-5.2, 14.5; *Paneg.* 6(7).4.2-5; cf. *Paneg.* 4(10).3.4-4.2.

¹³² Dio 79.31-32; Potter (2014) 148-151. See also Zos. 2.46.2-47.1, where Magnentius' troops return their allegiance to the Constantinian dynasty because Constantius II's envoy reminds them of Constantine's military qualities.

should have the name Gordian. Herodian narrates that the senate resolved to trick the masses and located the thirteen-year old grandson of Gordian I, who bore the same name. They then showed him to the crowd, declared him to be Gordian's heir, called him Gordian and acclaimed him Caesar (7.10.5-9).¹³³ Herodian thus seems to imply that the senate renamed the grandson.¹³⁴ The people admittedly disliked Pupienus, but if we consider the fact that the Gordiani had ruled a mere twenty-two days, this popular dedication to hereditary succession, regardless of who the successor might be, is extraordinary.¹³⁵

But whereas Gordian's acclamation as Caesar reflects a popular obsession with dynasty, Herodian's account of his promotion to Augustus indicates that the praetorians were of a different attitude (8.8.1-7). Three months after Gordian became Caesar, the praetorians killed Pupienus and Balbinus, spurred on by hate for the senate and fear that the senatorial emperors were replacing them with Germanic soldiers.¹³⁶ They then acclaimed Gordian Augustus, who, according to Herodian, was chosen because the soldiers could find no other candidate in the present circumstances. The praetorians then took Gordian to their camp and shouted out to the people that they had chosen as emperor the descendant of Gordian, whom the Romans themselves had forced to rule.¹³⁷ If Herodian is correct, the praetorians thus promoted Gordian out of opportunity rather than loyalty.¹³⁸

Indeed, during the troubles of the mid- and late third century, hereditary claims appear to have dramatically diminished as an effective form of legitimacy in the eyes of the soldiery. During this period, soldiers murdered many Caesars and Augusti that had inherited their title. Beginning with sons, in 235 Severus Alexander was killed by his own soldiers when the usurper Maximinus approached his position. As discussed in the introduction (Intr. b), this happened because they considered Maximinus a better soldier.¹³⁹ In 244 Gordian III died while

¹³³ Thirteen: Hdn. 8.8.8.

¹³⁴ Whittaker (1970) 2.231 n. 2.

¹³⁵ The unpopularity of Pupienus: Hdn. 7.10.5-6. The *Historia Augusta* reasons that the Gordiani had won affection because of their rebellion (*Gord.* 22.6; *Max. et Balb.* 9.5). Drinkwater (2005) 32 emphasizes the role of their relatives and friends. See also Suet. *Claud.* 10, in which the people demand Claudius' accession following the assassination of Caligula; Tac. *Ann.* 13.69, in which the will of Claudius is not read out for fear that the adopted son Nero being preferred over the son Britannicus might upset the common people.

¹³⁶ Drinkwater (2005) 33 provides a summary of the problems facing these emperors.

¹³⁷ See also HA, *Max. et Balb.* 14.7. The accounts in HA, *Gord.* 22.5-6 and *Jord. Rom.* 282 are problematic.

¹³⁸ Cf. Drinkwater (2005) 33, who thinks that the praetorians had been suborned by Gordian III's supporters.

¹³⁹ Hdn. 6.8-9.

campaigning against the Persians, and Roman sources claim that his praetorian prefect Philip and the soldiers were responsible. Persian sources imply that Gordian was killed or mortally wounded in battle against Shapur I, and later Byzantine sources preserve a tradition in which Gordian fell from his horse during battle and died from his wounds, but certain Romans evidently believed that Roman soldiers had killed the last Gordian.¹⁴⁰ In 251, following the death of Decius, his surviving son and Caesar Hostilian was adopted and made Augustus by the new emperor Trebonianus Gallus, but he died soon afterwards. Victor (30.2) and the *Epitome* (30.2) relate that he died from a plague, but Zosimus claims that Gallus had him killed (1.25). Zosimus appears to have used a third-century account or even multiple such sources for book 1.¹⁴¹ If Gallus did murder Hostilian, he apparently did so without consequence, and it is regardless noteworthy that certain Romans suspected foul play. From 260-261 Gallienus faced rebellions from multiple armies after the Persians captured his father Valerian, with the result that his empire became divided.¹⁴² This was despite the fact that Gallienus had jointly ruled with his father since 253. Also in 260, Gallienus' son Saloninus, who had recently been promoted to Augustus, was killed in a military revolt, admittedly after he had tried to reclaim booty that the general Postumus had distributed among his troops.¹⁴³ In 261 the emperor Quietus, who was an adult, was killed soon after the deaths of his father and brother, Macrianus Senior and Iunior, who had died in battle against Gallienus' generals. Zonaras relates that the inhabitants of Emesa slew him (12.24), but if his soldiers had remained loyal this would not have happened.¹⁴⁴

In 284 Carus' adult son Numerian, after his father's death in the previous year, was probably assassinated by his officers and the household troops, although the praetorian prefect Aper was subsequently punished with death.¹⁴⁵ In the following year, Carus' eldest son Carinus

¹⁴⁰ Roman sources: *Oracula Sibyllina* 13.13-19; Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 3; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 27.8; Festus, *Brev.* 22; Eutr. 9.2; Jer. *Chron.* 217; *Chron. Min.* 1.147 (*Chron.* 354); Amm. 23.5.7-8, 17; HA, *Gord.* 29.1-31.3; *Epit.* 27.2; Oros. 7.19.5; Zos. 1.18.2-19.1 (cf. 3.32.4); Zon. 12.18. Persian sources: *RGDS* 1.3; Dignas & Winter (2007) 78 (triumphal relief at Bishapur). On the Byzantine tradition, see e.g. Zon. 12.17. The conflicting traditions, the bias against Philip among senatorial authors, Gordian's supposed deification and the fact that Philip erected a cenotaph for Gordian and transported his body to Rome has prompted debate: E.g. Honigmann & Maricq (1953) 118-122; Oost (1958); MacDonald (1981); Dignas & Winter 78-80.

¹⁴¹ Blockley (1980).

¹⁴² Ch. 1.5.

¹⁴³ HA, *Gall.* 17.1, *Tyr. Trig.* 3.1-3; *Epit.* 32.3; Zos. 1.38.2; Zon. 12.24.

¹⁴⁴ See also HA, *Gall.* 3.1-5, *Tyr. Trig.* 14.1, 15.4, 18.1.

¹⁴⁵ Eus. *Chron.* 227 Karst; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 38.6-39.1, 13; Eutr. 9.18, 20; Jer. *Chron.* 223; HA, *Car.* 12-14.6, 18.1; *Epit.* 38.4-5; Oros. 7.24.4-25.1; Zon. 12.30-31.

was slain by his officers and soldiers, despite his success fighting against Diocletian.¹⁴⁶ Carinus had already had to confront two similarly named but apparently different imperial claimants: the governor in Illyricum M. Aurelius Julianus following Carus' death, and the praetorian prefect Sabinus Julianus following that of Numerian. The fact that Sabinus usurped in Italy, the symbolic heart of the empire, suggests that Sabinus did not merely intend to replace Numerian in the east, but had sought to oust Carinus as well.¹⁴⁷ It is also notable that Diocletian awarded Carinus' praetorian prefect Aristobulus with various offices on account of his services (*officia*) (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.14), which may mean that he had betrayed Carinus, and had therefore done so with impunity.¹⁴⁸ Certainly, Carinus has a posthumous reputation for being a rapacious and womanizing tyrant, but this was a cliché applied to 'bad emperors' that would have certainly been applied to Carinus by Tetrarchic and Constantinian media regardless of his conduct, since the rise of Diocletian and Constantius had been hinged on his downfall.¹⁴⁹

On multiple occasions fathers and sons were together killed by their soldiers, despite the previous popularity of dynasty and hereditary succession. In 238 Maximinus and his son Maximus were killed during their siege of Aquileia, despite the pleas of the latter. Admittedly, many soldiers were angered by the death of their soldier emperor.¹⁵⁰ In 249 Philip and his son Philip II were killed. According to the Greek tradition, father and son were slain in battle against the usurper Decius, but the epitomes relate that Philip was killed by his soldiers after suffering the defeat, and that Philip II was later killed in the praetorian camp at Rome upon receiving news of the event.¹⁵¹ In 253 Gallus and his son Volusian, prior to an expected battle with the usurper Aemilian, were likewise murdered by their soldiers. According to Aurelius Victor, they hoped to

¹⁴⁶ Eus. *Chron.* 227 Karst; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.11-12, 14; Eutr. 9.20; Jer. *Chron.* 223; HA, *Car.* 10, 18.2; *Epit.* 38.8; Oros. 7.25.1; Petr. Patr. fragm. 199 (Banchich) = Anon. *Cont.* fragm. 13.1 (*FHG* 4, p. 198); Zon. 12.30.

¹⁴⁷ M. Aurelius Julianus: *RIC* 5.2 nos. 1-5; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.9-10; *Chron. Min.* 1.522 (Pol. Silv.). Sabinus Julianus: *Epit.* 38.6; Zos. 1.73.1-2 = Joh. Ant. fragm. 163 (*FHG* 4, p. 601). Some scholars consider the Juliani to be the same person: Stein (1918); *PIR*² A 1538; Bird (1976) 130; Barnes (1982) 143; Leadbetter (1994); Kreucher (2008) 422; Altmayer (2014) 166-171. But cf. *PLRE* 1 Julianus 24; Julianus 38; John, Hartmann & Gerhardt (2008) 1074; Kienast (2011) 263.

¹⁴⁸ Aristobulus: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.14; *PLRE* 1 Aristobulus; Barnes (1976b) 248; (1982) 97.

¹⁴⁹ Carinus as tyrant: E.g. Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.11-12; Eutr. 9.19; HA, *Car. passim*; *Epit.* 38.7-8; Zos. 1.73.1-2 = Joh. Ant. fragm. 163 (*FHG* 4, p. 601). Cliché: Bird (1976) 130; Leadbetter (2009) 50. Examples: Lact. *DMP* 7 (Diocletian), 8 (Maximian), 37.6-40.6 (Maximinus); Eus. *VC* 1.33-35 (Maxentius); *Epit.* 40.10 (Maximian).

¹⁵⁰ Hdn. 8.5.2-6.1; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 27.4; Eutr. 9.1; *Epit.* 25.2; HA, *Maxim.* 23-24; Zos. 1.15; Zon. 12.16; cf. Oros. 7.19.

¹⁵¹ Greek tradition: Zos. 1.22.2; Zon. 12.19. Epitomes: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 28.10-11; Eutr. 9.3; *Epit.* 28.2-3; Oros. 7.20-21.

be rewarded (*Caes.* 31.2), whereas Zosimus relates that they realised that Gallus was a lax coward and saw that the numbers of their army were inferior (1.28.3), and Zonaras claims that they had suffered an initial defeat before the betrayal (12.21).¹⁵² In 274 Tetricus and his son and co-Augustus Tetricus II defected to Aurelian out of fear of their own army, and according to the *Historia Augusta*, Tetricus' predecessor Victorinus was killed together with his son of the same name whom he had recently made co-Augustus.¹⁵³ Victorinus Iunior was invented to complete the author's list of *tyranni triginta*, but the idea of Augustus and son being slain by their troops evidently became a *topos*.¹⁵⁴ None of the aforementioned father-son regimes endured more than two years, and it is also notable that in 268, when Gallienus was assassinated by his officers, the senate ordered the execution of his last surviving son, seemingly with impunity.¹⁵⁵

Despite a history of fraternal collegiality and succession, brothers fared no better. Gallienus' brother Valerianus, who was consul in 265, was either killed in Milan alongside the emperor, or, like Gallienus' son, he was executed in Rome on the orders of the senate, presumably with the aid of the praetorians.¹⁵⁶ In 270 the general Aurelian overthrew the emperor Claudius' brother and successor Quintillus after a reign of about two months. Aurelian had been combatting the Goths in the Balkans, and he had claimed the purple less than a month after Quintillus' accession.¹⁵⁷ According to Zonaras, some said that whereas Quintillus was acclaimed by the senate, Aurelian was acclaimed by the army (12.26).¹⁵⁸ Quintillus killed himself rather than confront Aurelian (*Zon.* 12.26), and the *Historia Augusta* claims that this happened after he had been abandoned by his army and his soldiers had refused to listen to his speech attacking Aurelian (*Aur.* 37.6).¹⁵⁹ The *Historia Augusta* may have invented these details, but it shows that fourth-century Romans considered Quintillus to have had little hope of contending with Aurelian.

¹⁵² See also *Eutr.* 9.5; *Epit.* 31.1.

¹⁵³ The Tetrici: *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 35.3-4; *Eutr.* 9.13; *HA, Tyr. Trig.* 24.2-3, *Aur.* 32.3; *Oros.* 7.23.5; see also *Eutr.* 9.10; *Oros.* 7.22.12. Drinkwater (1987) 42-43 and Watson (1999) 93-94 doubt the story's historicity. The Victorini: *Tyr. Trig.* 6.3, 7.1, 24.1, 31.2.

¹⁵⁴ Invention: Barnes (1978) 69; Drinkwater (1987) 65.

¹⁵⁵ *Zon.* 12.26; see also *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 33.31-34. On the possible identity of this son, see *PIR*²L 198; *PLRE* 1 Marinianus 1; Mennen (2011) 102.

¹⁵⁶ Milan: *Eutr.* 9.11; *HA, Val.* 8.2-3, *Gall.* 14.9. Rome: *Zon.* 12.26. See also *PLRE* 1 Valerianus 14.

¹⁵⁷ Aurelian's usurpation and its chronology: Watson (1999) 45-48, 221-222.

¹⁵⁸ See also *HA, Claud.* 12.3; cf. *Eutr.* 9.12; *Oros.* 7.23.3.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *Claud.* 12.5, in which Quintillus is killed by his soldiers.

In 276 the general Probus similarly ended the c. two and a half-month reign of one Florian, the praetorian prefect, successor and possible brother of the emperor Tacitus.¹⁶⁰ According to Zosimus (1.64.1), the senate acclaimed Florian Augustus whereas the soldiers in the east acclaimed Probus.¹⁶¹ As Zosimus and the other sources relate, the two claimants challenged each other, and Florian was ultimately betrayed and killed by his own soldiers before he had even fought a major engagement. This was despite the fact that Florian's army enjoyed numerical superiority.¹⁶² Several sources claim that Tacitus and Florian were brothers; namely, Aurelius Victor, the *Historia Augusta*, the chronicler Polemius Silvius and the Armenian historian Moses Khorenats'i.¹⁶³ Moreover, the *Historia Augusta* states that their fraternity was uterine (*Tac.* 17.4; cf. 14.1, *germanus*), which fits the fact that they did not share the same *nomen*: Claudius Tacitus and Annius Florianus.¹⁶⁴ However, some scholars think that Victor has assimilated Florian's accession to that of Quintillus, since Zosimus does not mention kinship.¹⁶⁵ If this is the case, the other sources have transmitted Victor's mistake. The *Historia Augusta's* detail of a uterine relationship does not stem from an account of Quintillus, but the author may have assumed such relationship based on the difference in *nomina*. On the other hand, while it is possible that Victor did make a mistake, it is also possible that Zosimus simply failed to record the detail of kinship in his account of a little-known emperor. Ultimately, the similarity between accounts of Quintillus and Florian may reflect a similarity of political circumstances rather than error.

For an observer like Diocletian, the history of the mid- and late third century would have appeared an indictment against hereditary succession. Brothers had disastrously failed to secure support for their successions, sons mostly did not survive long after the deaths of their fathers, and father-son regimes, despite the promise of stability that they had once offered, were fleeting, with the exception of that of Valerian (253-260) and Gallienus (253-268). Gallienus performed fairly well as an emperor, and thanks to longevity he was sufficiently popular at the end of his

¹⁶⁰ Duration of reign: Kreucher (2008) 400.

¹⁶¹ See also Zon. 12.29, who uses Zosimus as his source (Banchich & Lane (2009) 127 n. 105).

¹⁶² Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 36.2, 37.1, who claims that Florian also did not have the support of the senate, which is repeated by the HA references; HA, *Tac.* 14, *Prob.* 10.8-9, 11.3-4, 13.3-4; *Epit.* 36.2, which mistakenly claims that Florian committed suicide; Zos. 1.64; Zon. 12.29.

¹⁶³ Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 36.2; HA, *Tac.* 13.6, 14.1, 4, 17.4, *Prob.* 11.3, 13.3; *Chron. Min.* 1.522 (Pol. Silv.); Moses Khorenats'i, *Hist. Arm.* 76 (trans. Dodgeon & Lieu (1991) 316).

¹⁶⁴ *PLRE* 1 Florianus 6.

¹⁶⁵ E.g. Syme (1971) 246; Barnes (1972) 158; Bird (1994) 154 n. 36.3.

reign that Claudius had to calm the soldiers following his murder.¹⁶⁶ But far from being a model of rule, the period of Valerian and Gallienus was considered an age of disaster: Valerian was captured by the Persians, and his supposedly lazy son not only failed to rescue him, but lost the west to Postumus and the east to Palmyra, while his central empire suffered from other usurpations as well as major Alemannic and Gothic invasions.¹⁶⁷ As early as 296/7, Constantius' panegyrist described how the empire was fragmented during Gallienus' reign, whether through neglect (*incuria*) or bad fortune (*fata*), and claimed that it was through the achievements of the Tetrarchs that the empire had been restored (8(5).10). Gallienic failure established the scale of Tetrarchic success.¹⁶⁸ Fourth-century authors ridiculed Gallienus, and his reign influenced the author of the *Historia Augusta* to write the lives of thirty usurpers, some invented, who within the author's narrative appeared during that time.¹⁶⁹ The reign of Gallienus and the rapid falls of other dynasts, both child and adult, could not have inspired Diocletian with confidence concerning hereditary succession.

Aurelian (270-275) and Probus (276-282), the two great emperors of recent memory, provided a different lesson. The success of these emperors was not related to dynasty. Neither emperor raised a son or brother as *princeps iuuentutis* (prince of youth), Caesar or Augustus, both came to power as established military professionals, and both proved themselves as exceptionally energetic and able on campaign. While both suffered assassination in the end, the lengths of their reigns exceeded those of the majority of emperors in this period and they successfully commanded against external enemies, fleeing usurpers and, in the case of Aurelian, the empires of Gaul and Palmyra.¹⁷⁰ Probus only lost the support of his army when he made them do physical labour instead of campaign.¹⁷¹ As for Aurelian, importantly he appears to have died a loved emperor, a rarity for the period. He was not killed by his soldiers, but rather a court conspiracy because certain officers had been tricked into a fear of the emperor by a member of the secretariat, who had used a forged document to make them believe they were due for

¹⁶⁶ HA, *Gall.* 15; Zos. 1.41; cf. Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33.32, where the senate murders supporters of Gallienus, and Claudius orders this to cease, the latter ostensibly because the army demanded it. See also Hebblewhite (2017) 12.

¹⁶⁷ Gallienus: See e.g. De Blois (1976).

¹⁶⁸ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 122-125 nn. 30-35; Rees (2002) 123-124, 127; Potter (2014) 292-294.

¹⁶⁹ Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33; Eutr. 9.7-8, 11; HA, *Val.*, *Gall.*, *Tyr. Trig.*

¹⁷⁰ Aurelian: See e.g. Watson (1999). Probus: See e.g. Kreucher (2003).

¹⁷¹ Probus' death: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 37.4; Eutr. 9.17; Jer. *Chron.* 224; HA, *Prob.* 21.2-3, *Car.* 1.3, 6.1-2; *Epit.* 37.4; Oros. 7.23.6; Zos. 1.71.4-5; Petr. Patr. fragm. 197 (Banchich) = *Anon. Cont.* fragm. 11 (*FHG* 4, p. 198); Malal. 302 (*CSHB* 32); Zon. 12.29.

execution. Upon killing Aurelian, the assassins tellingly fled rather than proclaim a successor, and the army was so surprised by the assassination that they, for once in this period, deferred the question of succession to the senate while they buried their emperor. The hunt for the assassins then occupied Tacitus' reign (275-276) and continued into the beginning of that of Probus.¹⁷² Aurelian, who had reunited the empire after the fragmentation of Gallienus' reign, was to an observer like Diocletian the most successful emperor in a long time.

Furthermore, Aurelian appears to have surrounded himself not with relatives, but accomplished military officers, including Placidianus, Marcellinus and Probus.¹⁷³ An observer could also conclude that Gallienus had survived the crises of 260 and had ruled until 268 because of the men with whom he had surrounded himself. After 260, Gallienus did not give his brother or last surviving son imperial power or, it appears, prominent commands. Rather, he relied on career soldiers and successful generals, including Aureolus, Claudius and Aurelian.¹⁷⁴ Certainly, officers assassinated Gallienus and Aurelian in the end, but they do not appear to have bound these men to themselves through ties of familial *pietas*, a mistake from which Diocletian learned.

Recent history therefore did not inspire confidence in blood-based hereditary succession, and made clear the importance of military expertise, both of the emperor and of those who assisted the emperor. Indeed, it appears that in the later third century the promise of hereditary succession did not encourage the loyalty of soldiers and officers, and that hereditary claims garnered little sympathy within the military sphere. Soldiers wanted their emperors to be generals who closely looked after their affairs, and they had higher expectations in this regard than during the early empire because of the high level of external aggression and civil war during this period. A familial link was no guarantee that an emperor or heir apparent could successfully fulfil these obligations.¹⁷⁵ The interests of the various armies in their own regions gave extra

¹⁷² Aurelian's death: *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 35.7-8; *Epit.* 35.8; *Zos.* 1.62; cf. *Lact. DMP* 6.2; *Eutr.* 9.15; *HA, Aur.* 35.5, 36.4-6; *Zon.* 12.27; *Watson* (1999) 104-116, 169; *Potter* (2014) 270-271.

¹⁷³ *PLRE* 1 Marcellinus 1, 2, 17; *Placidianus* 2; *Watson* (1999) 167-169.

¹⁷⁴ *Mennen* (2011) 216-246.

¹⁷⁵ *Hebblewhite* (2017) 8-12 similarly notes the failure of imperial attempts to assert the dynastic principle of succession and concludes that soldiers had come to prefer military expertise over dynastic claims. *Hebblewhite* is especially concerned with how emperors sought to provide their dynastic heirs with a veneer of military legitimacy (12-15). He reasons that the instability of the period hindered such efforts. Cf. *Jones* (1964) 4, who argues that the soldiers had a strong affection for hereditary succession (see also *Seeck* (1897) 39; *Rousselle* (1976) 460; *Barnes* (2011) 50; *Börm* (2014) 245-246). *Drinkwater* (2005) 59-60 similarly suggests that hereditary succession was

legitimacy to the claims of local commanders, and the advent of military professionals as emperors may well have encouraged the opinion that a soldier should succeed a soldier. Indeed, the successes of Aurelian and Probus demonstrated to the armies what career soldiers could achieve once they had acquired the purple. These developments came at the expense of blood-based claims to legitimacy, and the fact that no lasting dynasty could be established compounded the problem, as brevity in power limited the potential for an emperor to familiarise his family with the soldiery or for his family to command a strong aura of legitimacy.

This problem in all likelihood influenced the Tetrarchic succession events. The political players that mattered most in this period were the officers and soldiers. If they were sympathizing less with hereditary claims, Diocletian could have ill afforded to ignore it.¹⁷⁶ The possibility that Diocletian did not have a biological male descendant may have also led him to feel unattached to hereditary succession.¹⁷⁷ Romulus, the son of Maxentius and Maximilla, may have been his biological great-grandson, but this depends on whether Maximilla was his granddaughter via Galeria Valeria, which is unclear.¹⁷⁸ Regardless of this possibility, Diocletian was of humble soldier beginnings. It is entirely possible that he sympathized with the sentiments of the soldiers.

In any case, the succession events were tailored to the wishes of the armies. It has already been established that Constantius, Galerius and Severus were military officers when they were co-opted. Likewise, Lactantius describes Licinius as a long-time intimate, military companion and advisor to Galerius (*DMP* 20.3), and Eutropius notes that he had achieved vigorous labours and performed his duties acceptably during the Persian war (10.4).¹⁷⁹ As for Maximinus, Lactantius relates that he had been promoted from *scutarius* to *protector* to tribune (*DMP* 19.6). The fact that he had been a *scutarius* suggests that he had entered the army before his uncle's co-

popular in principle but generally unworkable due to the youth of the heirs and the challenge posed by more able military leaders. These ideas are questionable (see Ch. 3).

¹⁷⁶ See also Lee (2007) 28, who briefly notes that 'the dynastic principle had had to bow increasingly to the claims of military competence. The climax of this countervailing tendency was Diocletian's experiment in sharing power between four emperors chosen for their military competence and without reference to blood.' Note also Williams (1985) 197, who states that the appeal of dynastic loyalties had not been very effective except where the heir was an able ruler in his own right, and notes that the dynastic option was thus not available in 293, but available in 305.

¹⁷⁷ See also Roberto (2014) 92-93.

¹⁷⁸ See Appendix.

¹⁷⁹ Other sources confirm their friendship: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40.8; Soc. *HE* 1.2.2; Zos. 2.11.

option.¹⁸⁰ Thus, Maximinus, like his uncle, had been a career soldier, and he therefore had more military experience than Constantine (on Constantine's career, see Ch. 4.1). It is therefore fitting that these officers became Caesars at military assemblies, where the soldiers gave their approval.¹⁸¹

This is not to say that every soldier had become disenchanted with hereditary succession. This was after all the norm, and an imperial college bound through familial ties encouraged unity. But in 284 one could expect dynastic ties based upon the selection of military men to have commanded more authority than the transfer of power to a less-qualified biological relation. As discussed in Chapter 1.6, by using adoption and shared nomenclature, Diocletian and Maximian clarified the eventual succession of the Caesars and assured their subjects that the imperial college, although eccentric, was still a unified dynasty.

2.7. A Failed Succession

In retrospect the succession in 305 appears foolish. Military legitimacy had trumped dynastic legitimacy during the later third century, and Diocletian reacted to this. However, in 306 Constantine and Maxentius successfully claimed imperial power, the latter admittedly aided by serious discontent in Rome and his father's return from retirement.¹⁸² The fact is, the political and military situation had changed since 284. Galerius had inflicted defeat on the Persians, and although barbarian incursions persisted across the northern frontier, the problem was not as serious as it had once been. For example, it had been decades since the Balkans had been overrun with Goths or Italy had been penetrated by the Alemanni. The Tetrarchs attributed entirely to themselves the pacification of the empire and its frontiers following the troubles of Gallienus' reign (e.g. *Paneg.* 8(5).10), and they must have gained much legitimacy in the eyes of the army.¹⁸³ Furthermore, the Tetrarchs had remained in power longer than their predecessors. By 306 they had thus gained an aura of legitimacy that was so great and well-established that it had passed on to their sons. Constantine and Maxentius could challenge the succession because they

¹⁸⁰ Barnes (1982) 39.

¹⁸¹ Lact. *DMP* 19.

¹⁸² Barnes (1981) 27-30; Leadbetter (2009) 170-188; Potter (2013) 107-110, 115-116.

¹⁸³ Tetrarchic claims to imperial restoration: Potter (2014) 292-294.

were extensions of their glorious fathers. Of course, the ability to lead in the field still mattered. Zosimus claims that the soldiers chose Constantine over his legitimate (γνήσιοι) half-brothers because, not only did Constantine look well and they hoped for reward, but they did not consider his siblings worthy (ἀξιόχρηστοι) of rule (2.9.1). One presumes that Zosimus refers to their young age, in which case the older age of Constantine and Maxentius was an advantage.

As I have argued, this was despite Diocletian's intentions, and furthermore, it was despite his expectations. If Diocletian had thought it likely that Constantine and Maxentius could muster sufficient military support to successfully challenge his arrangements, he would have reconsidered those arrangements and not allowed Maxentius to reside in Rome. Diocletian appointed Severus and Maximinus because he believed they would maintain support for the regime and engender Galerius' dominion. He had no reason to give Galerius supremacy if he thought it likely that the sons would successfully disassemble it. Even if one follows Lactantius, it is unbelievable that Diocletian had confidence in the political capital of the sons, since if he did he could have challenged Galerius by using the military support for the sons against his Caesar. Rather, Diocletian must have underestimated these sons and the support they could muster.¹⁸⁴ He was influenced by the failure of dynasty in the decades leading up to his accession, and he had been reinforced in his underestimation by the success of the 293 arrangement, which had already overlooked Maxentius. Diocletian was willing to solve problems with new ideas, like the college of four and the use of abdication. But like his prices edict and the persecution of the Christians, the succession in 305 was an ambitious but misguided failure. The eldest sons had gained political capital, and the result was a return to traditional dynasty.

Maxentius eventually proved so successful at eliciting support that in 308 he resisted an attempted deposal by his own father. The praetorians had already become disenchanted with the original Tetrarchs because of their absence from Rome and their plans to disband the unit, and Maxentius had fostered further support when he defended Rome against Galerius while Maximian was absent in Gaul. According to Lactantius, the fact that Maxentius had returned to Maximian his imperial position had also undermined obedience to the older emperor (*DMP* 28.1). Thus, when Maximian opportunistically attempted to depose Maxentius before an

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Kulikowski (2016) 217, who thinks Diocletian too smart to have overlooked the sons without Galerius' influence.

assembly, the soldiers refused to abide by the effort, and Maximian hence fled the city. Like Diocletian, Maximian had underestimated his son.¹⁸⁵ As for Constantine, Börm has persuasively argued that from Constantine onwards, ‘the dynastic principle was established as an *explicit* element of the legitimation of Roman rulers once and for all.’¹⁸⁶ For instance, the panegyrist in 310 claims that, because of the paternity of Constantius and (fictional) ancestry of Claudius II, Constantine was alone among his colleagues born an emperor, and that, because of his lineage, the *imperium* had added nothing to his honour (6(7).2.5). Moreover, in 317 Constantine and Licinius unprecedentedly co-opted their eponymous infant sons as Caesars, which could only be justified through heredity.¹⁸⁷ Constantine undoubtedly understood that he could use his dynastic connections as a means of competing with his colleagues, and the promotion of these connections in combination with his success and longevity as an emperor allowed his dynasty to maintain power into the 360s. The success, longevity and blatantly dynastic self-representation of the Constantinian dynasty restored blood-ties as a persuasive form of legitimacy and made this form of legitimacy stronger than it had been in the early empire, which in turn enabled the success of the Valentinian and Theodosian dynasties.¹⁸⁸

Nevertheless, the idea that military credentials might supersede family ties did not die in 306. As we have seen, Candidianus was overlooked in 308 and 311 without consequence. Presumably Galerius considered him too young to successfully elicit military loyalty in the war against Maxentius, the war to which Licinius was assigned when Galerius co-opted him instead in 308.¹⁸⁹ By 313 Licinius considered Candidianus enough of a risk that he had him killed along with Severianus and Maximus, but even after the Tetrarchic period there is evidence for a tension between military and dynastic qualities. Certainly, in the fourth century dynasties retained power whereas they had not in the preceding century, but military officers were still able to secure long-lasting military support as usurpers after overthrowing less militarily-inclined dynasts. Magnentius was well-supported after the overthrow of Constans, Magnus Maximus secured the throne after the overthrow of Gratian, and the de-facto rule of Arbogast through Eugenius

¹⁸⁵ *Paneg.* 6(7).14.6; Lact. *DMP* 28; Eutr. 10.3; Zos. 2.10.6-7, 11.1; Zon. 12.33.

¹⁸⁶ Börm (2014) 246-251, with quotation from 239.

¹⁸⁷ Barnes (1982) 7, 44-45.

¹⁸⁸ Börm (2014) 250-259.

¹⁸⁹ *Origo* 5.13; Zos. 2.11.1.

achieved strong support after the death of Valentinian II.¹⁹⁰ The accession of Valentinian and Valens is instructive. In 364 the emperor Jovian died suddenly, and the military officers determined that one of their own, Valentinian, should take his place. The soldiers, however, demanded a co-ruler.¹⁹¹ Tellingly, the co-option of his son Gratian was deferred, presumably because he was deemed too young, and according to Ammianus, when Valentinian asked the advice of his officers, the commander of the cavalry, Dagalaifus, attempted to dissuade the emperor from co-opting his brother Valens (26.4.1):

...silentibusque cunctis Dagalaifus tunc equestris militiae rector respondit fidentius “si tuos amas”, inquit, “imperator optime, habes fratrem, si rem publicam, quaere quem uestias.”

When all were silent, Dagalaifus, at that time the commander of the cavalry, boldly answered: ‘Best emperor, if you love your relatives you have a brother, but if you love the state seek another man to invest with the purple.’

Valentinian ultimately did not follow his advice, but well after the end of the Tetrarchy, military credentials could still trump kinship in the eyes of the officers and soldiers.¹⁹² For Dagalaifus, an emperor could either care for the empire, or he could promote an unqualified relative in the pursuit of self-interest. In the mid- and late third century, these same concerns existed, but the different circumstances ensured that they also prevailed. With powerful enemies on multiple frontiers, the empire ravaged by invasion, multiple civil wars and an absence of longevity in emperors, military professionals outperformed dynasts in the struggle for military support. In these circumstances one such military professional, Diocletian, ascended the ranks to the emperorship, and when it subsequently came to questions of succession, his decisions were coloured by the political situation in which he had found success.

¹⁹⁰ Hebblewhite (2017) 15-22 discusses the tension between dynastic legitimacy and military legitimacy from 306-395.

¹⁹¹ Amm. 26.1.3-7, 2.1-11.

¹⁹² Valens’ co-option: Amm. 26.4.2-3.

3. Heredity and Military Society

Having argued that Diocletian overlooked hereditary claims partly to appease the soldiery, it is useful to consider here the claims of certain scholars that the soldiers generally had a powerful affection for heredity. Most notably, A. H. M. Jones suggests that the strong affection of the soldiery had ensured the success of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian dynasties, and reasons that this was to be expected because Rome's humbler citizens were used to being clients of the great senatorial families, generation after generation, and because provincials were accustomed to hereditary monarchies.¹ Similarly, Drinkwater suggests that, in the later third century, hereditary succession was popular in principle but generally unworkable due to the youth of the heirs and the challenge posed by more able military leaders.² But does this idea hold up to scrutiny? Has the affection of the soldiers been exaggerated?

As discussed in the previous chapter, hereditary succession was indeed appealing to the empire's inhabitants. In theory, it improved the likelihood of a stable imperial college and succession, and for some it promised the transferral of qualities from an emperor to his heir.³ But it is not clear that the soldiers were as personally devoted to heredity as is sometimes suggested. Rome's aristocracy placed much importance on family and the emulation of one's ancestors, and this, combined with the longevity of Augustus' reign, allowed dynastic succession to become the norm after that emperor established the *domus Augusta*. Jones uses the politics of the first century to demonstrate a soldierly affection for heredity, but the fact that it became the norm meant that, to some degree, the soldiers could be expected to conform to hereditary succession regardless of any affection for the concept that they may have had. In 41 the praetorian guard, against the wishes of the senate, elevated Claudius to Augustus, but the guard had an interest in being a source of legitimacy for imperial candidates, since it was an opportunity to renegotiate privileges and allegiances, and Claudius indeed promised them a donative.⁴ They wished to benefit from a form of succession that was becoming standard practice despite the sentiments of certain senators, and which had the support of the common people, who demanded Claudius'

¹ Jones (1964) 4. See also Seeck (1897) 39; Börm (2014) 245-246. It is perhaps related that Rousselle (1976) 457, 460 and Barnes (2011) 50 dismiss the idea of a non-dynastic policy as anachronistic.

² Drinkwater (2005) 59-60.

³ Ch. 2.6.

⁴ Börm (2014) 242-243.

accession.⁵ We must also bear in mind that, during the first century, dynasty would have appeared the preferable alternative to the Republican civil wars. Many had died in these wars, and as long as the imperial families paid the military some attention, their loyalty could generally be expected. Even Nero, who was not inclined towards campaign, did not ignore the soldiery. His praetorian prefect Burrus, for instance, made efforts to ensure the support of the praetorian guard.⁶

Jones' argument that lower-class and provincial society preconditioned soldiers to be devoted to heredity is also questionable. When soldiers joined the army, they were exposed to a distinct military society that had the potential to undermine prior experience. Epigraphy shows that young men typically entered the army between the ages of 17 and 20.⁷ Thus, the typical Roman soldier's societal context changed at an early age, when the most important thing in their lives became loyalty to one's comrades, their unit and the emperor. Indeed, I think that military society at times had the opposite effect to what Jones suggests. This chapter posits that the military's lesser sympathy for hereditary claims during the later third century ran deeper than practical concerns. It accorded with the societal perspective of the military.

As I have already noted, it seems fair to conclude that the importance of family to Roman life had allowed dynastic succession to replace the Republican system, which had collapsed through civil war. Roman law and custom placed juridical and executive power in the hands of the *pater familias*, and for aristocrats one's ancestors were of great importance. Ancestors bestowed status and clients on their descendants, and the accomplishments of ancestors, as well as claims of legendary or divine ancestry, helped aristocrats to win political offices. This respect for family could be transferred into the public sphere as respect for dynasty, and Augustus' receipt of the title *pater patriae* suggests as much.⁸ As Börm notes, it was only proper for a Roman noble to support the claims of a younger relative.⁹ Thus, Roman traditions of family and the idea of an imperial family were entwined.¹⁰ Furthermore, even in circumstances where dynastic succession had become the norm, one can expect someone with children to sympathize

⁵ Claudius' accession: Suet. *Claud.* 10; Dio 60.1.

⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 12.69.

⁷ Scheidel (1992); (1996) 97-116.

⁸ Hekster (2015) 12-21 discusses Roman ancestry and Hellenistic kingship as historical precedents for dynastic rule.

⁹ Börm (2014) 240.

¹⁰ See also Eck (2006) 326, 328.

more deeply with the bestowal of power onto a son. Several considerations suggest that the soldiery valued marriage and children, and by extension familial inheritance, less than their civil counterparts. It seems reasonable to suggest that an emphasis on loyalties other than familial, and an emphasis on ability over inheritance within the army would have fostered a similar attitude towards the allocation of power elsewhere.

Firstly, during the early empire there existed a marriage ban for soldiers, which was probably instituted by Augustus but is first attested during the reign of Claudius I (Dio 60.24.3). This ban created legal complications for the wives and children of soldiers, and stripped from fathers the duty of supporting their children, who were deemed illegitimate and who did not fall under the *patria potestas* of their father or his *pater familias*. Until Hadrian (BGU 1.140), the children of soldiers did not have the right of intestate succession to their father, and when they did receive this right, legitimate children born outside of the service period and agnates were prioritized.¹¹ Although an unofficial marriage could be awarded legitimacy upon a soldier's retirement, the nature of *conubium* (the right to intermarry) and legitimate birth in Roman law suggests that this did not automatically legitimise existing children, which is supported by parallels in Roman law.¹² Stigma was perhaps attached to illegitimacy. Constantine prohibited illegitimate children (and their concubine mothers) from receiving *donationes*, bequests or purchases in their names from their fathers (CTh 4.6.2-3), and later Roman emperors determined that they could only inherit a fraction of their fathers' estates, although one wonders if Christianity influenced such legislation.¹³ Phang persuasively argues that the ban did not just apply to soldiers, but also to sub-equestrian officers; centurions and *principales*. Claudius awarded soldiers the rights of a married man, regardless of the ban (Dio 60.24.3). This privilege is explained by Augustus' *lex Iulia et Papia*, which rewarded marriage among the wealthy. For such a law to have relevance should indicate that wealthier officers were also targeted by the ban.¹⁴

¹¹ Marriage ban: *CIL* 16.132; *P.Catt.* 1.*recto*; *SB* 1.5217; *Lib. Or.* 2.39-40; Campbell (1978); (1994) 151-160; Phang (2001) 13-133, 197-228, 296-392; Scheidel (2007) 417-419.

¹² Phang (2001) 306-316.

¹³ Phang (2001) 317-320 thinks that Christianity was the influencing factor.

¹⁴ Phang (2001) 129-132; see also Epictetus [Arrian, *Discourses*] 3.22.79.

Herodian, writing in the third century, gives the impression that in 197 Septimius Severus lifted the ban (3.8.4-5):

...ἄλλα τε πολλὰ συνεχώρησεν ἃ μὴ πρότερον εἶχον: καὶ γὰρ τὸ σιτηρέσιον πρῶτος ἠΐξησεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ δακτυλίοις χρυσοῖς χρῆσασθαι ἐπέτρεψε γυναιξί τε συνοικεῖν, ἅπερ ἅπαντα σωφροσύνης στρατιωτικῆς καὶ τοῦ πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον ἐτοίμου τε καὶ εὐσταλοῦς ἀλλότρια ἐνομίζετο.

... but he (Severus) granted many privileges which they (the soldiers) had not previously enjoyed, for he was also the first emperor to increase their food rations, and he allowed them to wear gold rings and live with their wives, which were all considered harmful to military discipline and the zealous and orderly conduct of war.

However, the marriage ban appears to have remained in force after this date. In 2011 Werner Eck published a military diploma from 206 which grants citizenship to retiring auxiliary soldiers and uses the following formula:¹⁵

...quorum nomina subscripta sunt | civitatem Romanam qui eorum non haberent <dederunt> et | conubium cum uxoribus quas tunc habuissent | cum est civitas iis data aut cum iis quas postea | duxissent dumtaxat singulis singulas. |

...to those men whose names are written above who did not have it, they (the emperors) awarded Roman citizenship and the right to intermarry with the wives whom they had had at that time when citizenship was granted to them, or with those whom they would have later married provided it was one woman for one man.

This formula also appears in diplomas that predate 197.¹⁶ As earlier diplomas show, *uxor* does not necessarily mean ‘wife’ in the legal sense, and *quas postea duxissent* is the legal formula for a *matrimonium iustum*.¹⁷ The diploma of 206 then outlines a privilege:

Praeterea praestiterunt filiis decurionum | et centurionum quos ordinati susceperunt, | <ut> cives Romani essent.

¹⁵ Eck (2011).

¹⁶ Eck (2011) 73.

¹⁷ Eck (2011) 76 with n. 35.

Moreover, they made it so for the sons of the decurions and centurions whom they received as officers that they had been Roman citizens.

Whereas earlier diplomas awarded citizenship to the existing children of decurions and centurions if they had been born prior to the beginning of service, this diploma grants citizenship to offspring born during their tenure as officers (*ordinati*). Therefore, this privilege did not apply to ordinary soldiers and applied to the period of office, which indicates that marriage restrictions still affected the post-service status of children.¹⁸

Eck also discusses the diplomas that were issued to sailors of the Italian fleets, the latest of which dates to 249/50 (*CIL* 16.154). These diplomas use a standard formula:

Ipsis filiisque eorum, quos susceperint ex mulieribus, quas secum concessa consuetudine uixisse probauerint ciuitatem Romanam dedit/dederunt et conubium cum iisdem, quas tunc secum habuissent, cum est ciuitas iis data aut, si qui tunc non habuissent cum iis quas postea uxores duxissent.

To they themselves and their children, whom they may have received from women whom they may have proved to live with themselves in companionship at the time of retirement, he/they awarded Roman citizenship and the right to intermarry with the women whom they had had at that time when citizenship was granted to them, or, if any were bachelors at that time, with those whom they would have later married.

The relationships of sailors are *consuetudines* (companionships), not marriages, and sailors obtain the right of *conubium* so that they may take their companions in *matrimonium*. The diplomas clarify the distinction between women in *consuetudo* and those who are legitimate wives, since the former are referred to by the biological term *mulieres* ('women'), whereas the latter are *uxores*, and the children that emerge from the *consuetudo* are *filii*, not *liberi*, the latter being the legal term for children. This formula is unchanged from the 150s, when the sailors, unlike the auxiliaries, received the privilege of having citizenship grants upon retirement extend to their existing children. Considering this privilege, it is unlikely that in the mid-third century other soldiers could marry whereas sailors could not. Such a selective lifting of the marriage ban

¹⁸ Eck (2011) 74-76.

would have been counterproductive.¹⁹ It thus appears that Severus did not lift the marriage ban, and Eck suggests that Severus rather allowed soldiers to reside with their de-facto wives outside the camp.²⁰

The marriage ban was a testament to military ideology. Women and children constituted an economic burden for long-service armies, since they needed to be fed, but on top of this, the idea that women had a destructive influence on *disciplina militaris* was well-established and had its origins during the Republic. Women in the camp threatened the stern discipline and hardship of the camp, and that they dissociated soldiers from the military way of life. The previously quoted passage of Herodian attests as much, but most notable is a passage from the *Annals* of Tacitus (3.33). In 21 Caecina Severus proposed in the senate that no magistrate allotted a province should be accompanied by his wife. Tacitus explains this motion:

... inesse mulierum comitatu quae pacem luxu, bellum formidine morentur et Romanum agmen ad similitudinem barbari incessus conuertant. Non imbecillum tantum et imparem laboribus sexum, sed, si licentia adsit, saeuum, ambitiosum, potestatis auidum; incedere inter milites, habere ad manum centuriones; ...

In a retinue of women there were elements able to retard the business of peace, by luxury, or war, by timidity, and to transform a Roman march into something resembling a barbarian procession. Weakness and an inability to cope were not the only troubles of the sex. If they have license, they become savage, ambitious and desirous of power. They parade among the soldiers. They have the centurions at hand.²¹

This ideology is also reflected in juristic writings of the Severan period. Ulpian states that the wife of a soldier was not known to her husband through his military service (*Dig.* 49.17.6, 49.17.8), and he says that it is better for a proconsul to go out to the provinces without his wife (*Dig.* 1.16.4.2). Papinian judges that dowries should not be included in a soldiers' *castrense peculium* (camp property), the property that a soldier could have independent of their *pater familias*. He reasons that this is because marriage is separate from military life, perhaps implying

¹⁹ Eck (2011) 63-65; cf. Phang (2001) 68.

²⁰ Eck (2011) 76. On the reasons for Severus' measures, see Phang (2001) 381-382; Davenport (2012) 115-118.

²¹ Cultural context and reasons for the marriage ban: Phang (2001) 344-383. Practical considerations: Serrati (2005) 266.

that an active soldier should not be supporting a wife and children (*Dig.* 49.17.16.pr.).²² The fact that marriage remained illegal despite Severus' concession and his awarding of other privileges is testament to the ideological importance attached to this ban.

Therefore, as late as the mid-third century soldiers still could not marry, and there existed a well-established idea that women had a negative impact on the military. One can expect this idea and the many years of the marriage ban to have impacted the attitudes of soldiers, even after the lifting of the marriage ban. For many, male bonding may have taken precedence over wives and children, since great social and legal importance was attached to the comradely 'fraternal' bonds of *commilitones*.²³ It was also not necessarily easy for soldiers to find suitable wives, and families were more difficult to establish. Because of the tumultuous conditions of the later third century, soldiers were more often on the move due to campaigns and the relocation of vexillations. This made starting a family more difficult and less desirable, and the troubles of the period would have entailed a more dangerous existence for families living near the camp. During the period when the ban existed, the prohibition must have also deterred many women from marriage. Meanwhile, the primeval desire for nurture and sexual contact could be satiated with concubines.²⁴ These expectations are supported by documentary evidence.

In her book on the marriages of imperial Roman soldiers, Phang conducts a study of epitaphs commemorating Roman soldiers from the first to early third centuries.²⁵ Her surveys are limited to Africa, the Danube region, the praetorians and the fleet at Misenum, and it is unfortunate that the soldiers in the east are unaccounted for, since they lived in towns and cities and thus had a somewhat different situation. Nevertheless, the study demonstrates that many soldiers were not commemorated by 'wives' and even less so by their children, even after the concession of 197. Rather, wives and children competed with other soldiers, *amici*, siblings, parents and others. Perhaps, for soldiers, the *pater familias* took precedence over the wife as commemorator, or perhaps married soldiers made comrades the heirs to their *castrense peculium* because of proximity, while non-military property remained for the time being in the hands of

²² Phang (2001) 112-113, 372.

²³ Male bonding takes precedence: Phang (2001) 161-162; see also Ch. 6.3.

²⁴ See also Sheidel (2007) 420-423. I acknowledge a modern study concerning US army soldiers in which most soldiers in the study had relationship satisfaction scores that categorized them as non-distressed (Anderson, et. al. (2011)), but the conditions that govern a modern US soldier are of course very different to that of a Roman soldier.

²⁵ Phang (2001) 142-196, 404-409.

the *pater familias*.²⁶ But if either of these were a factor, they could only have been so during the window of time in which a soldier was married and his father still lived. A demographic simulation suggests that most adult Romans did not have a living father.²⁷ For the periods surveyed, it would also be surprising if making one's comrade into an heir was a matter of convenience, since active campaigning will have occupied a relatively small proportion of a soldier's career, and during the second and early third centuries the geographic positioning of troops had become fairly stable.²⁸ It is also noteworthy that, during the late empire, we know of whole families and family members accompanying soldiers on campaign.²⁹ The least problematic explanation and the one that accords with what we know of the marriage ban and military ideology is that most active soldiers did not have wives or children, or alternatively that comrades were considered more appropriate commemorators, which would also be telling for the different values placed on family and comradeship.³⁰

Phang's surveys mostly present the proportion of soldiers commemorated by their wives at below 36% (ignoring the variable of the soldiers' ages), and the figures suggest that these marriages generated disproportionately few children. If we take Phang's epitaphs as indicative of the number of soldiers who had wives and children, as Phang does, then soldiers married and procreated less often than civilians. Although there is a relative paucity of civilian funerary commemorations, it is inherently unlikely that the marriage levels of civilian populations were as low as that which is implied by the military epitaphs.³¹ Dedications by wives appear relatively late in the lifespan of a soldier, and do not exceed one-third of the total until the late forties, when soldiers were retiring. This suggests that soldiers became married later than civilians, with an average age around the late 30s compared with a civilian male average of 30. Among the soldiers surveyed, veterans are most frequently commemorated by conjugal families, which should not surprise since they could legally marry. This could admittedly mean that many soldiers desired a conjugal family but avoided starting one until after retirement. If this were so,

²⁶ Serrati (2005) 265 similarly notes the possibility that parents were more likely commemorators than wives.

²⁷ Saller (1991) 36-37.

²⁸ Mann (1983) 49-56, 63-64.

²⁹ Lee (2007) 150-152.

³⁰ See also Alston (2002) 326, who notes that it is not a given that significant others were the most likely to commemorate. He also points out that the function of funerary epigraphic as social display and commemoration is little understood.

³¹ See also Sheidel (2007) 419-423.

it would still be the case that active soldiers lived in a society where the conjugal family played a lesser role, and where it was unpopular to have children before one's service was complete. Alternatively, soldiers became more interested in marriage and procreation after returning to civilian life. But despite approaching coeval civilian levels, marriage and procreation among veterans still falls short. Special ranking soldiers became married and had children more often than common soldiers, but they do not reach veteran levels. Wives and children commemorated by soldiers are much less numerous. The soldier husbands are almost always special ranks or veterans, and the soldier fathers are almost always veterans.³²

Previous studies lend Phang's surveys some support. In 1984 Saller and Shaw published a similar set of tombstone-based surveys for the first three centuries AD, in which they sought to compare the family life of civilian, military and servile populations. Although they did not take account of change over time, their finds suggested that there was indeed a considerable disparity between soldier and civilian marriage levels. They also observed very low figures for commemoration by family members for the *equites singulares* and for the soldiery in the north-western provinces.³³ In the same year, Shaw published a study of late Roman epitaphs in the west, but unfortunately the sample size for soldiers is small, and the study covers the fourth to seventh centuries while, in the case of soldiers, again taking little account of temporal change within the period. Perhaps tellingly, Shaw noticed that parent-children relationships and the nuclear family in general were attested less often in military epitaphs than in those of civilians. He also noticed that the soldier epitaphs, like those of the aristocracy, revealed a greater emphasis on the nuclear family than in the early empire, but the sample size, the broad temporal scope and the Christian context limits the relevance of that find to this study.³⁴

Of course, marriage and procreation still did appeal to many soldiers. De-facto wives and children are attested, and Severus' concession was, after all, a reward. But the marriage ban, its attendant ideology, the practical difficulties of marriage and commemoration trends suggest that

³² See n. 25.

³³ Saller & Shaw (1984) 133-134, 139-145, 152-155. The proportions of familial commemoration were high in their African, Pannonian and Spanish samples, but as noted, their study does not take sufficient account of chronology, and Phang's study shows that, in the case of Africa and Pannonia, figures for commemoration by wives and children are low.

³⁴ Shaw (1984) 469, 472. For regional studies of military unions, see Alston (1995) 117-142; Cherry (1998) 101-140; Pollard (2000) 151-159.

active soldiers who married were in the minority, at least until the early third century. Indeed, Tacitus claimed that soldiers were accustomed neither to take wives nor care for children (*Ann.* 14.27.2), and in 381 Libanius reminisced of the days when soldiers did not marry, and it was ensured that they had no need of marriage (*Or.* 2.39-40), an idealistic comment, but presumably one with a basis of truth.³⁵ The decline in epigraphy during the later third century limits our data for that period, but the unstable conditions would not have encouraged family-building, which perhaps even declined.³⁶

The lesser roles of marriage and procreation within military society may have lessened the importance of familial inheritance. As previously noted, the marriage ban weakened the hereditary claims of wives and children. Non-familial *heredes* (heirs) are commonly attested on epitaphs, and Saller and Shaw note that the ‘cohesive feeling among the *equites singulares* was in fact so strong that even those who did marry occasionally followed the custom of their celibate fellow soldiers and instituted a *commiles* as heir in preference to, or along with, their wife.’³⁷ There is unfortunately only one surviving military will from late antiquity, but the second-century will *BGU* 1.327 is noteworthy, according to which a veteran of the fleet at Misenum selects a fellow veteran as his primary heir over Aitete Phrontis, who is possibly his wife.³⁸ Furthermore, a ruling of Severus Alexander from 223 states that *querela inofficiosi testamenti* (complaint of undutiful testament) was denied the sons of officers and soldiers, regardless of whether the will was executed according to military or civil law (*CJ* 3.28.9).³⁹ Since the law is preserved in the *CJ*, this shows that, even after the marriage ban was lifted, a soldier’s obligation to his children was less than that of a civilian. This constitution should include property *sui iuris*, since they do not specify the *castrense peculium*. On the other hand, a Tetrarchic rescript concerning a soldier’s *castrense peculium* states that a *querela inofficiosi testamenti* made by his father and children cannot annul it (*CJ* 3.28.24). In fact, soldiers could institute as heirs or leave

³⁵ On the latter passage, see Lee (2007) 149.

³⁶ The decline in epigraphy: MacMullen (1982).

³⁷ Saller & Shaw (1984) 134 with *CIL* 6.3194, 3267, 3282, 3288, 3300. It is perhaps relevant that a rescript of Severus Alexander (*CJ* 6.21.6) shows that a soldier appointed his daughter and brother as heirs, since the brother could be a sibling or a *commilito*.

³⁸ In *BGU* 1.326, a veteran favours two freedwomen over a kinsman and a daughter of one of the freedwomen who is probably also that of the veteran. For a discussion of these wills and the heirs of soldiers, see Phang (2001) 217-223. Will from late antiquity: *P.Col.* 7.188 (320).

³⁹ On this law, see Phang (2001) 103. See also *CJ* 3.28.37.

legacies to whomever they wished, unless the law specifically prohibited the intended heir.⁴⁰ They also could not be forced to repay even a legal dowry on the dissolution of a marriage, since a wife might be considered *non ex castris notus*, not known to her husband through his military service.⁴¹ Such laws may have been similar to the marriage ban in their reasoning, in that women did not belong in the military sphere, and it is possible that the unstable conditions of the later third century further lessened the importance of familial succession within military society, since a soldier's death on campaign may have rendered it impractical.

An obvious point, but one worth making, is that a son did not inherit his father's position in the army. Fathers could of course have hopes that their sons would follow their career path, as suggested by the occasional tombstone that depicts a child in legionary garb.⁴² The sons of veterans recruited into the army were earmarked for high-ranking positions, presumably as a reward and to encourage recruitment.⁴³ But there is insufficient evidence to comment on the percentage of sons that emulated the military careers of their fathers.⁴⁴ The claim in the *Historia Augusta* that Severus Alexander presented land to the *limitanei* on the condition that their heirs serve in the army has nothing to support it and appears to be a fiction (*Alex.* 58.4). The passage mistakenly presents the *limitanei* as frontier cultivators and tells us more about the ideology surrounding recruitment in the late fourth century than in the third century.⁴⁵

It is also worth considering that, in terms of inheritance, many soldiers may not have benefitted much from their own parents. Many would have joined the army because they came from poor families or they were not the eldest son, and thus not the principal heir. By joining the army, they received income and food from the government, and they attained more money and/or land upon retirement.⁴⁶ Soldiers were also partially independent from *patria potestas*, since they

⁴⁰ Gaius, *I* 2.110; *CJ* 6.21.5. Soldiers and officers also enjoyed the unique right to make a will free from formal legal requirements (Gaius, *I* 2.109-110; *Tit. Ulp.* 23.10; *Dig.* 29.1.1-2, 1.21, 1.24, 1.34.2; *CJ* 6.21.4, 14). See also Campbell (1994) 162.

⁴¹ Phang (2001) 379.

⁴² Phang (2001) 303.

⁴³ Strobel (2007) 273, 277-278.

⁴⁴ Phang (2001) 329-330.

⁴⁵ Phang (2001) 328.

⁴⁶ Sources in Campbell (1994) 193-221.

retained control of their *castrense peculium* independent of it, and they could dispose of such property by will.⁴⁷

It thus seems that military society did not accord well with hereditary succession. Marriage was illegal until at least the mid-third century, and for many during the later third century marriage, procreation and familial succession would have been impractical. Women and children were possibly considered an economic burden on the army, and military ideology treated marriage as a problem for *disciplina militaris*. Epitaphs suggest either that soldiers married and procreated less than civilians, or that it was considered more appropriate for soldiers rather than wives and children to commemorate their fallen *commilitones*. Sources attest that *commilitones* could be made heir alongside or ahead of family, and legal privileges ensured that, even after the marriage ban was lifted, a soldier's obligation to his children was less than that of a civilian. Many soldiers may not have inherited much from their own parents, and they were partially independent from *patria potestas*. The relationship between military society and family was thus unusual, and marriage, children and familial inheritance played a weaker role than they did in civilian life. If we are to consider how societal factors may have influenced political actions, as seems entirely reasonable, it would appear that military society did not predispose soldiers to support hereditary succession. Soldiers did not support hereditary succession because of a deep affection for the concept, like the people of Rome displayed when they demanded a Gordian succeed, but because it was a norm from which they could benefit, or because a prince's succession may have ensured stability, or because a particular imperial family had succeeded in creating an aura of legitimacy. But in the troubled conditions of the later third century, there was no such family, and there was much to be gained from appointing a fellow military professional, for whom the soldiers may well have also had a sentimental attachment. Dynastic succession temporarily ceased to be popular, and out of these troubles rose Diocletian. The succession events that followed responded to this change.

⁴⁷ Juv. *Sat.* 16.51-54; Dig. 49.17.11; *Jl.* 2.12.pr.; *CJ* 12.36(37).3-4; *Tit. Ulp.* 20.10; Phang (2001) 318.

4. The Accursed Princes: Constantine and Maxentius before 306

In the years before 306, the future must have appeared stark, even perilous, for the imperial sons. The first-ranking Augustus Diocletian did not wish for them to succeed, and their own fathers were bending to the will of their *auctor imperii*. From the Flavian period until 293, biological sons, when available, had taken pride of place in co-optation and succession. But the failure to co-opt Maxentius in 293 had marked a change, and in the years leading up to 305, it must have become understood among the Tetrarchs that they would not co-opt the sons upon the abdication of the Augusti. The princes must have wondered what would happen to them once the Augusti were no longer in power, and especially once their fathers had passed on. Norms dictated that they should succeed. Without their fathers to protect them, how safe would they be from the machinations of future emperors wishing to protect themselves from an ambitious prince? Indeed, Licinius' murder of Candidianus, Severianus and Maximus following the death of Maximinus morbidly illustrates this reality.¹ For many, succession would have appeared a matter of life and death.

This problem facing the sons was consequently a problem for Diocletian as well as Galerius, the succession's primary beneficiary. While Diocletian appears to have had little confidence in the ability of the princes to win a strong and lasting military following, and seems to have underestimated them (Ch. 2.7), he must have realised that a discontented son could still cause problems. Any seizure of power, no matter how fleeting, was of course not in the interests of a regime, and if a son led that putsch, not only would it have undermined the image of Tetrarchic *concordia*, but the prince's defeat and death would have provoked tensions within the imperial leadership. The situation begs several questions. First and foremost, how did Diocletian attempt to handle the sons? How did he seek to keep them subdued, and did he treat them in ways that befitted a prince? Moreover, did the individual princes have different experiences? What do their experiences tell us about the intentions and ambitions of the individual Tetrarchs? And what do their experiences suggest about how the imperial college functioned? In answering these questions, this chapter will focus on Constantine and Maxentius, on whom we have the most information.

¹ Lact. *DMP* 50.

At the outset, let us revisit a point discussed in Chapter 2.5, that familial links seem to have been downplayed within the media produced by the imperial governments. Coins and official inscriptions of the First Tetrarchy do not celebrate familial links nor acknowledge the natural-born sons, and the only inscriptions to mention a natural-born Tetrarchic prince prior to their taking power are *ILS* 666-667, in which Romulus honours his parents Maxentius and Maximilla, and in which the imperial pedigree of Maxentius and Romulus, who are titled *clarissimi*, is ignored. The sons are also absent from surviving Tetrarchic art. It would appear then that the media being produced by the Tetrarchic governments accorded the sons a lesser status and visibility, which should be attributed to Diocletian. Let us remember that, although there were four imperial governments, Diocletian was the first-ranking Augustus and *auctor* of the imperial college, and thus could exercise influence over his co-rulers and establish policies that would be followed to different extents throughout the empire.² Indeed, we have seen that Diocletian enjoyed profound influence or *auctoritas*.³ For these reasons, the lesser status and visibility of the sons should reflect the fact that Diocletian did not wish for them to succeed or had not guaranteed their succession. Moreover, the emperor may have desired this self-representation lest his subjects assume that the sons were heirs apparent.⁴ One finds further evidence for such concerns in the specific case of Constantine.

4.1. Constantine

Constantine is the son for whom we have by far the most evidence; a natural result of his later importance. As argued in Chapter 2.1, Constantine was born in the early 280s and was probably illegitimate. Nevertheless, during the later years of the First Tetrarchy he lived at the courts of the eastern Tetrarchs and enjoyed a military career. Fragmentary evidence allows a reconstruction of his career up to his accession in 306. To begin, the panegyrist in 307 states the following (7(6).5.3):

² Ch. 1.6.

³ Ch. 2.4.

⁴ See also Seston (1946) 216-218; Kolb (1987) 93-94, 141-142; Hekster (2015) 283-285.

Gesseris enim licet multa fortiter, multa sapienter, cum per maximos tribunatus stipendia prima conficeres, sentias necesse est tantae auspicia fortunae imperator adulescens.

For although you accomplished many things brave and wise, when, holding your most important tribunates, you completed your first campaigns, you must perceive these, youthful emperor, as omens of great good fortune.

The speaker also claims to have seen a painting in the palace at Aquileia that depicts Fausta offering to Constantine a plumed and ornate helmet (6.2), as if Constantine was departing for military service. Similarly, the panegyrist in 310 relates that Constantine had served in the ranks (*stipendiis in ordinem meritis*) and had passed through the grades of the military hierarchy (*militiae gradibus emensis*), having confronted the dangers of war and engaged in single combat (6(7).3.3).

Praxagoras reports that Constantius had sent his son to Nicomedia to be brought up by Diocletian (*FGrH* 2B, 219.2). The *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* claims that Constantine, as a hostage, served bravely in Asia under the eastern emperors (2.2), and Zonaras similarly states that Constantine was sent to Galerius both as a hostage and to be trained in the soldiery art (12.33). In his *Oratio Ad Coetum Sanctorum*, Constantine himself claims that he had seen the ruins of idolatrous Babylon and Memphis (16). The only context in which Constantine could have visited Babylon was if he had been with Galerius' army in 297/8, when the Caesar defeated the Persians in Armenia and then invaded their empire.⁵ Eusebius relates that he saw Constantine journey through Palestine at the side of Diocletian (*VC* 1.19.1):

ἤδη δ' ἐκ τοῦ παιδὸς ἐπὶ τὸν νεανίαν διαβάς τιμῆς τῆς πρώτης παρ' αὐτοῖς ἠξιοῦτο· οἷον αὐτὸν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἔγνωμεν τὸ Παλαιστινῶν διερχόμενον ἔθνος σὺν τῷ πρεσβυτέρῳ τῶν βασιλέων, οὗ καὶ ἐπὶ δεξιὰ παρεστῶς περιφανέστατος ἦν τοῖς ὀρᾶν ἐθέλουσιν, οἷός τε βασιλικῶ φρονήματος ἐξ ἐκείνου τεκμήρια παρέχων.

Now that he had passed from childhood to youth, he (Constantine) was deemed worthy of the first honour in their (the emperors') presence. As such, we even recognized him ourselves when he passed through the land of the Palestinians with he who took precedence among the emperors, at

⁵ Barnes (1982) 41-42. Dating the Persian war: Barnes (1976a) 182-186; Thomas (1976) 273-275; Zuckerman (1994) 65-66, 68-70; Barnes (1996) 543-544; cf. Kolb (1995) 23-27.

whose right he even stood, most conspicuous to those wishing to see and furnishing sure signs of an imperial mind.

The occasion seems to be a journey of Diocletian between Syria and Egypt, and Constantine's testimony that he had seen Memphis supports this. Diocletian travelled between Antioch and Egypt in 297/8 and again in 301/2.⁶ The former should be ruled out by Constantine's involvement in the Persian campaign, and so presumably in 301/2 Constantine was a member of Diocletian's retinue.⁷ Constantine states that he was an eyewitness to when the palace in Nicomedia caught fire (*Oratio* 25), which happened in spring 303.⁸ Eusebius compares Constantine to Moses and claims that, during the time of the persecution, which began in 303, 'he sat at the tyrants' hearth' (τυραννικαῖς ἐφήδρευσεν ἐστίας) (*VC* 1.12.2). We have seen that in April 305 Constantine was again with Diocletian in Nicomedia, and that by then he had long held the office of tribune of the first rank (*tribunus ordinis primi*) (*Lact. DMP* 18.10).⁹ Kuhoff postulates that Constantine had been given command over a newly created guard unit, whereas Barnes suggests that the title might indicate that he was simultaneously a tribune and a *comes* of the first rank at court.¹⁰ As we have seen, a month later he also stood on the tribunal when Diocletian abdicated (*Lact. DMP* 19).¹¹

The *Origo* (2.2-3) and Zonaras (12.33) relate that Galerius attempted to have Constantine killed by having him engage Sarmatians in combat. The former specifies that Constantine was serving in the cavalry, and both accounts describe an occasion on which Constantine dragged a Sarmatian before Galerius by the hair. Zonaras claims that this Sarmatian was a king whom Galerius had ordered Constantine to attack. The *Origo* also narrates that Galerius sent the prince on horseback into a swamp against Sarmatians, where he made a way for the rest of the army. Lactantius (*DMP* 24.3-5) and Praxagoras (*FGrH* 2B, 219.2) similarly claim that Galerius made plots against Constantine's life, and both as well as Zonaras (12.33) state that Galerius had the prince fight wild animals under the pretence of exercise and recreation. Eusebius too claims that Constantius' imperial colleagues conjured plots against Constantine, since they observed with

⁶ Barnes (1982) 54-55.

⁷ Barnes (1982) 41-42.

⁸ *Lact. DMP* 14; Barnes (1982) 42, 64.

⁹ Ch. 2.2.

¹⁰ Kuhoff (2001) 311; Barnes (2011) 51.

¹¹ Ch. 2.2.

envy his physique and good sense, and believed that his presence was dangerous for themselves, but out of respect for his father they avoided the option of execution (*VC* 1.19.2-20.2). The author of the *Origo* narrates the incidents on the Sarmatian campaign after he reports Diocletian's abdication, and thus implicitly dates the campaign to 305/6.¹²

Numerous accounts relate that Constantine, after Diocletian's abdication, left Galerius' court and joined his father in the west. Lactantius (*DMP* 24.5-8) and the *Origo* (2.2-2.4) narrate that this happened after Constantius had requested the return of his son from Galerius, who reluctantly consented. Lactantius claims that Galerius put off several requests before he finally consented and told Constantine to set out the next morning when he will have received instructions. Galerius intended to either hold Constantine back on some pretext, or have Severus detain him on his journey west. But the prince anticipated this and secretly departed after dinner, getting rid of the post-horses along the way so that he could not be pursued. On the next day, when Galerius realised what had happened, he regretted his decision to allow the prince's departure, and called for the post-horses so that he could bring Constantine back, to no avail. In contrast, the *Origo* states the following (2.2):

... quem post depositum imperium Diocletiani et Herculi, Constantius a Galerio repetit; sed hunc Galerius obiecit ante pluribus periculis.

After Diocletian and Herculus laid down their *imperium*, Constantius asked Galerius for his son, but Galerius threw him before many dangers.

The author goes on to describe Constantine's encounters with the Sarmatians and states that Galerius at that time (*tunc*, 2.4) returned the prince to his father. Constantine then crossed the Alps with the greatest possible speed to avoid Severus. Lactantius claims that, by the time Constantius requested the return of his son, Galerius had already plotted against the prince's life (*DMP* 24.4), and Eusebius (*VC* 1.20.1-21.1), Praxagoras (*FGrH* 2B, 219.2) and Zonaras (12.33) relate that Constantine fled Galerius for fear of his life. On the other hand, Aurelius Victor (*Caes.* 40.1-4) and Zosimus (2.8.2-9.1) claim that Constantine was disappointed in the fact that he had

¹² On Constantine's career up to this point, Barnes ((1976b) 250-251; (1982) 41-42; (2011) 51-56) provides a similar reconstruction. See also Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 197 n. 16.

not been co-opted into the imperial college, and fled so that he could succeed his father, killing or maiming the post-horses along the way.¹³

Lactantius (*DMP* 24.8), Eusebius (*VC* 1.21.1), Victor (*Caes.* 40.3), the *Epitome* (41.2) and Zosimus (2.9.1) report that Constantine reached his father in Britain when the latter was close to death. Soon after his arrival, the Augustus died, and the troops proclaimed Constantine their new emperor. However, the panegyric delivered to Constantine in 310 relates that he joined his father when the latter was about to sail to Britain (6(7).7.5), and the *Origo* states that the prince joined his father at Boulogne (2.4), presumably the port from which they sailed. The panegyric (7-8) and the *Origo* (2.4) narrate that Constantius and his son then campaigned against Picts, and that the emperor afterwards died. In 305 a victory must have already been won, since a military diploma from 7 January 306 shows that by then Constantius and Galerius held the title *Britannicus Maximus II* (*AE* 1961.240), which can only refer to this campaign.¹⁴ Therefore, Constantine must have departed Galerius' court soon after Diocletian's abdication, which leaves little room for Lactantius' claim that Galerius refused multiple requests to send the prince west.¹⁵

Constantine's career seems quite distinguished, in that he lived at the courts of the eastern Tetrarchs and served on campaign as tribune. Indeed, Barnes thinks that Diocletian groomed Constantine for the succession, and Odahl suggests that Diocletian encouraged the dynastic ambitions of his western colleagues to ensure their loyalty.¹⁶ But ancient authors narrate that Galerius tried to have Constantine killed, and that the prince needed to flee to his father. Such stories were useful to Constantine the emperor. Potter notes that they reinforced the *uirtus* of Constantine, and that they denigrated the character and questioned the legitimacy of the persecutor Galerius and his partisan Severus, who had been co-opted at the expense of the biological sons and, by virtue of precedence, had ranked higher than Constantine within the imperial college.¹⁷ They also dissociated Constantine from the persecution and distanced him

¹³ On the post-horses, see also *Epit.* 41.2.

¹⁴ Barnes (1976a) 191; Kolb (1987) 135; Barnes (2011) 62.

¹⁵ Kolb (1987) 135 notes that this discredits Lactantius' narrative, and Barnes (2011) 52-53, reflecting on this issue, argues that the Sarmatian campaign in which Constantine took part happened during the First Tetrarchy. Likewise, Barnes (1982) 41-42 thinks it possible that the author of the *Origo* merely wished to situate the Sarmatian campaign before Constantine's accession, and dates Constantine's involvement against the Sarmatians to 299. Wilkinson (2012b) 48, however, is convinced that Constantine took part in a campaign against the Sarmatians in 305.

¹⁶ Barnes (1981) 25; Odahl (2010) 56, 71; Barnes (2011) 50.

¹⁷ Potter (2013) 111-112.

from Galerius, who, inconveniently for Christian authors, recognized him as Caesar in 306. We have additionally seen that several authors falsely claimed that Constantine had reached his father when the latter was close to death, possibly because Constantine did not wish his accession to be associated with a long-planned conspiracy. The panegyrics, Lactantius and Eusebius instead presented Constantine's accession as the spontaneous acclamation of the troops following the recommendation of a dying Constantius, which presumably reflected the emperor's wishes.¹⁸ Such considerations have led scholars to doubt that Galerius had plotted against the prince.¹⁹

However, it is quite believable that Galerius sought Constantine's death. Diocletian's succession arrangements did not allow for the co-option of Constantine, and Galerius was the primary beneficiary. But what now were the eastern Tetrarchs to do with Constantine? While it is likely that Constantine was born illegitimate, there was still a risk that the discontented prince might usurp. His later accession, alliance with Maximian and eventual take-over of the empire demonstrate his ambition, and a bastard, especially one as ambitious as Constantine, could regardless claim to have more right to the purple than somebody who was not a son. After all, just as there was no rule that required hereditary succession, there was no rule barring illegitimate sons from succeeding to the throne. It is perhaps notable then that both the adulatory Eusebius (*VC* 1.20.1) and the hostile Zosimus (2.8.3) claim that Constantine, while at the eastern courts, was viewed with suspicion. As previously noted, Eusebius claims that the emperors saw Constantine as a danger to themselves, and Zosimus explains that Constantine maimed the post-horses for the following reason:

...περιφανής γὰρ ἦν ἥδη πολλοῖς ὁ κατέχων αὐτὸν ἔρωσ τῆς βασιλείας...

...for it was already evident to many that he possessed a desire to rule...

Victor (*Caes.* 40.1-4) and Zosimus (2.8.2-9.1) claim that Constantine was disappointed by the succession arrangements in 305, and it would not be surprising if the young prince, yet to

¹⁸ Potter (2013) 112. Constantine becomes emperor because of his father and the troops: *Paneg.* 7(6).5.3; *Paneg.* 6(7).4.1-2, 7.3-8.6; Lact. *DMP* 24.8; Eus. *HE* 8.13.12-14, Append. 4-5; *VC* 1.18.2, 1.21-22; see also Jul. *Or.* 1.7d; Oros. 7.25.16-26.1; Zon. 12.33. Several later accounts ascribe no role to Constantius: *Origo* 2.4; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40.4; *Epit.* 41.3; Zos. 2.9.1.

¹⁹ Creed (1984) 105 n.24.1; Cameron (1993) 48; Leadbetter (2009) 158; Stephenson (2009) 116, 330; Barnes (2011) 4, 54, 63; Christensen (2012) 119-121; Potter (2013) 110-112.

acquire political finesse, had confided in the wrong people his desire to rule. Certainly, Diocletian and Galerius could not openly kill Constantine without risking a civil war with Constantius, but we cannot ignore the possibility that Constantine, while in the east, was at times unsafe. It is possible then that Constantine's administration eventually used the emperor's own suspicion that he had been placed in dangerous situations to construct stories of value to Constantine's regime. Likewise, the eastern Tetrarchs may have kept Constantine close so that they could place him under surveillance and supervise his reaction to the succession.

Additionally, several authors state that Constantine was a hostage (*obses*; ὄμηρος); namely the *Origo*, Victor, the *Epitome de Caesaribus* and Zonaras.²⁰ Some scholars doubt this, and Barnes argues that the emperor Constantine's administration invented his role as a hostage to distance the emperor from the regime of the persecutors.²¹ But Victor and the *Epitome* record the intriguing detail of a religious pretext. Victor relates the following (*Caes.* 40.2):

Quod tolerare nequiens Constantinus, cuius iam tum a puero ingens potensque animus ardore imperitandi agitabatur, fugae commento ... in Britanniam peruenit; nam is a Galerio religionis specie ad uicem obsidis tenebatur.

Constantine, whose remarkable and able mind was already then from childhood being driven by an eagerness to rule, was unable to endure this (the succession arrangement of 305), and contriving an escape ... he arrived in Britain. For he was being held as a hostage by Galerius on a pretense of religion.

The *Epitome* likewise records the *religionis species* (41.2), and this circumstantial detail renders it more likely that Constantine was indeed a hostage. By keeping Constantine as a hostage, the eastern Tetrarchs maintained the loyalty of his father. Constantius was geographically very distant from his eastern colleagues, and it is possible that he never interacted with them in person for the entirety of his time in the imperial college.²² He had also served under Maximian rather than Diocletian for most of the Dyarchy, which perhaps made him more loyal to the western

²⁰ *Origo* 2.2; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40.2; *Epit.* 41.2; Zon. 12.33. See also Williams (1985) 191 (he was not a hostage, but Diocletian did not know what to do with him); Leadbetter (2009) 142-143 (Constantine's ambition was monitored); Potter (2013) 110 (looks like something of a potential hostage).

²¹ Barnes (2011) 54. See also Rees (2004) 78; Leadbetter (2009) 142, who notes that there is no evidence that Constantius' other sons or Maxentius were also hostages; Christensen (2012) 122-123, who states that there was no reason to make Constantine a hostage, since Diocletian had the support of the other Tetrarchs; Icks (2012) 467.

²² The journeys and residences of the Tetrarchs: Barnes (1982) 47-64; cf. (1996) 544-546.

Augustus and less familiar with the senior emperor, and his partial commitment to the persecution of the Christians demonstrated that there were limits to how much Diocletian could direct him.²³ The distance alone was justification for using his son as a surety, but the planned arrangements for the succession may have also been a factor, depending on when they were decided upon. Constantius may have hoped that Constantine or another son would succeed him, and there was a risk that he might balk at a succession that, despite granting him the first rank in the college, actually favoured Galerius. If Diocletian had long determined to make Maximian abdicate alongside himself, the senior emperor may have even considered the risk that the western Tetrarchs might unite against him if sufficiently dissatisfied. Although possibly influenced by his later return to power, multiple authors claim that Maximian was reluctant to abdicate.²⁴ Regardless, it was prudent to keep Constantine as a hostage.

Mistrust seems to have governed Constantine's career in yet another respect. The prince was allowed a military career, but he apparently never held an independent command. In arguing that Constantine was kept under surveillance, Leadbetter points out that no source claims that he commanded independently, but rather went on campaign alongside emperors.²⁵ This is an *argumentum ex silentio*, but one that I find convincing, for the fact that no source attests an independent command for Constantine, despite the pro-Constantinian bias influencing much of the source material, renders the existence of such a command improbable. The silence of the panegyrist in 307 is especially telling. As we have seen, the speaker states that, although Constantine had held *maximi tribunatus*, these were omens of great things to come (7(6).5.3). Although this is evidence that Constantine had held tribunates, the statement is vague and looks to the future instead of providing details on the past. Moreover, the panegyric relates nothing else of Constantine's pre-imperial career. This is surprising, since Constantine, who was only a year into his rule, had not yet achieved a great deal as emperor. The speaker briefly notes that the emperor has defeated the Franks (4.2):

²³ Constantius under Maximian: Ch. 1.4; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 70 n. 38, who thinks it possible that Constantius was 'Maximian's man'. Constantius and the persecution: Lact. *DMP* 15.6-16.1; cf. Eus. *HE* 8.13.12-13, Append. 4; *VC* 1.13.3. See also *VC* 1.14, a probably fictional story in which Diocletian reprimands Constantius for the state of his treasury, who then appeases his Augustus by tricking him.

²⁴ *Paneg.* 6(7).15.6; Lact. *DMP* 26.7; Aur. *Vict. Caes.* 39.48; Eutr. 9.27, 10.2; Oros. 7.25.14. On this claim, see Kolb (1987) 145; Kuhoff (2001) 302.

²⁵ Leadbetter (2009) 143.

... tu iam ab ipsis eorum regibus auspicatus es, simulque et praeterita eorum scelera punisti et totius gentis lubricam fidem timore uinxisti.

You have already begun with their kings themselves, and at the same time both punished their past crimes and bound the slippery faith of the entire race with fear.²⁶

Constantine's punishment of the Frankish kings reappears in two later panegyrics and was clearly important to the emperor.²⁷ But the orator in 307 then acknowledges that Constantine is yet to do more (4.4):

... tibi cunctis hostibus alacritatis tuae terrore compressis interim deest materia uincendi.

Since all your enemies are restrained by terror of your zeal, for now there is lacking an occasion for you to conquer.²⁸

One might thus expect the speaker to say more about Constantine's career prior to accession. Indeed, Constantius' panegyrist in 296/7 specifies that the Caesar, before his co-optation, had captured a king who was preparing an ambush, and had ravaged Alemannia from the Rhine bridge to Guntia (8(5).2.1), even though Constantius had been Caesar since 293, and had recovered Boulogne and Britain and had defended Batavia in the time since his accession. In recognizing the vagueness of 5.3, Nixon asks whether the speaker had insufficient knowledge of Constantine's pre-imperial career.²⁹ I suggest that this is the case, and that this is further reason to believe that Constantine had not received an independent command, nor had he been given much opportunity for individual achievement. Despite being in his early twenties in 305, as a prince he was old enough to have been entrusted with an independent command, even if that command were to be supervised by experienced subordinates.³⁰

Constantine's pre-imperial career can be compared with that of his father. Constantius had defeated Carausius' forces in Gaul and had captured a king. Maximian does not appear to

²⁶ Trans. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 195 with minor alterations.

²⁷ *Paneg.* 6(7).10.2, 11.5; *Paneg.* 4(10).16.5-6; see also Eutr. 10.3. Potter (2013) 117 notes its importance to the emperor.

²⁸ Trans. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 196 with minor alterations. Börm (2014) 247-248 cites this quote as evidence that, in 307, Constantine had not performed a significant service for the *res publica*, and he argues that Constantine used a dynastic self-representation early in his reign to compensate for his deficiency in military legitimacy.

²⁹ Nixon (1993) 240.

³⁰ Constantine's age: Ch. 2.1.

have taken credit for the latter, and the former won Constantius such renown that Maximian's panegyrist in 289 acknowledged it and specified that it was not the personal victory of the Augustus (10(2).11.4-5).³¹ Certainly, Zonaras claims that Constantine had captured a Sarmatian king (12.33), but the more reliable and possibly near-contemporary *Origo* does not identify Constantine's captive as a king (2.2-3). Moreover, both sources have Constantine serve under Galerius, and as we have seen, the story may have been fancy inspired by truth. One might object to the comparison, since the tribunates of Constantine were typical for an imperial heir. However, one should remember that, not only Constantius, but many during the later third century who claimed the purple, were generals in charge of certain provinces or theatres of war, and that the Caesars of the Tetrarchy were to be, first and foremost, military commanders.³² The eastern Tetrarchs instead kept Constantine close, which supports the idea that he was under surveillance, but also ensured that the prince had less opportunity to win independent military renown and could not command large numbers of troops. Again, Diocletian seems to have underestimated the ability of the princes to achieve long-lasting military support against the challenges of generals, thus his succession arrangement, but regardless, a discontented imperial son could use his dynastic legitimacy to mount some kind of challenge, which, no matter how fleeting, could destabilise the regime. If Diocletian did not want Constantine to be co-opted, it would have been imprudent to have that son command many troops and to allow him to win military renown.

For his standing within the regime, Constantine's first marriage is also telling. Constantine's eldest son Crispus, who was born between c. 300 and c. 305, was begotten by a woman named Minervina.³³ The *Epitome* (41.4), Zosimus (2.20.2) and Zonaras (13.2) consider her a concubine, but they all possibly depend on the hostile Eunapius for this claim, who emphasized sexual scandals at Constantine's court (cf. Zos. 2.29). Indeed, Eunapius appears to have falsely denied that any of Constantine's sons were born in wedlock (Zos. 2.20.2, 39.1).³⁴ The panegyric in 307, which was delivered on the occasion of Constantine's marriage to Maximian's daughter Fausta, is explicit in describing a prior marriage (7(6).4.1):

³¹ *Paneg.* 10(2).11.4-5; *Paneg.* 8(5).2.1; Ch. 1.4.

³² Ch. 1.6.

³³ Crispus' birth: Ch. 2.1. Minervina's name: *Epit.* 41.4; Zos. 2.20.2.

³⁴ Barnes (1976c) 267; (1982) 42-43; Blockley (1983) 14-17.

Quomodo enim magis continentiam patris aequare potuisti quam quod te ab ipso fine pueritiae ilico matrimonii legibus tradidisti, ut primo ingressu adulescentiae formares animum maritalem, nihil de uagis cupiditatibus, nihil de concessis aetati uoluptatibus in hoc sacrum pectus admitteres, nouum iam tum miraculum, iuuenis uxorius? Sed, ut res est, mente praesaga omnibus te uerecundiae obseruationibus imbuebas, talem postea ducturus uxorem, ...

For how could you better match the temperance of your father than by surrendering yourself to the laws of matrimony immediately your boyhood was at an end, so that you developed the mind of a married man at the very outset of adolescence, so that you admitted into this sacred breast no trace of promiscuous lusts, not a hint of the pleasures conceded your age, so that a new marvel then appeared, a young man devoted to his wife? But, as a matter of fact, with prophetic mind you imbued yourself in every observance of modesty, you who were later to marry a wife of such a kind (Fausta).³⁵

As Barnes notes, the past tenses and the contrast with Fausta make clear that the orator is describing an earlier marriage.³⁶ There seems little reason to invent the union. Crispus' legitimacy depended upon it, but he is neither mentioned in this panegyric nor that of 310, and so it is questionable how important he was to Constantine's self-representation at this time.³⁷ The panegyrist in 307 discusses the marriage as a demonstration of Constantine's *continentia* from an early age. If Minervina was known to have been a concubine, the paradoxical rhetoric would have invited ridicule, and one would have to wonder why the speaker attempted to use the affair in such a way rather than differently demonstrate *continentia*. Therefore, Minervina was a legitimate wife.

Minervina's relations are unknown to us. Barnes, who believes that Constantine was being groomed for the throne, hypothesizes that Minervina was a close relative of Diocletian, based on her name (Minerva was the daughter of Jupiter), Constantine's presence at Diocletian's court, and the fact that one might have expected Constantine to marry within an imperial family.

³⁵ Trans. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 194-195 with minor alterations.

³⁶ Barnes (1982) 43; see also *PLRE* 1 Minervina.

³⁷ Cf. Potter (2013) 117, who suggests that the panegyrist mentioned the marriage to bolster the legitimacy of Crispus against the dynastic claims of future half-brothers. For Potter, Constantine could sympathise with Crispus' situation. Eventually, the panegyrist in 313 (*Paneg.* 12(9).26.5) and perhaps that of 311 (*Paneg.* 5(8).14.4) alluded to Crispus. On the latter passage, see Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 286-287 n. 61, who note that it could instead refer to Sol-Apollo.

Barnes notes that Constantine as emperor would have sought to distance himself from the persecutor Diocletian, and that knowledge of Minervina's connections may have thus been suppressed.³⁸

Barnes' scenario does not hold up to scrutiny. The panegyric that mentions Minervina but fails to note a connection to Diocletian was delivered in 307, too early in Constantine's reign for Barnes' hypothesis to work. In 307 and 308 the new emperor's mints still issued coins for the retired Diocletian, which roughly coincided with the minting activity of the other imperial mints, except for those at Antioch and Alexandria and those in Maxentius' realm.³⁹ Furthermore, the panegyric of 307 makes references to Diocletian that reinforce the legitimacy of Maximian and Constantine, the two emperors being praised. Speaking at Constantine's court, the orator compares Maximian's promotion of Constantine to that of Maximian by Diocletian (3.2), and he describes Constantine's relationship with Maximian in similar ways to how earlier panegyrists described the relationship between the latter and Diocletian (1.4-5, 13.1-14.2).⁴⁰ He also asks the following (9.6):

Quid enim aliud participi maiestatis tuae dare potuit ueniam quietis quam ut tu imperio succederes pro duobus?

For what else could permit the retirement of your partner in majesty (Diocletian) than that you would succeed to imperial power in place of both?

The panegyrist states that Maximian's succession to the first rank in the empire alone justifies the retirement of his *particeps maiestatis*, and he says this while standing in the court of Constantine. Furthermore, the *Epitome* claims that in 313 Constantine and Licinius invited Diocletian to their wedding (39.7), which, true or not, the epitomator's source found believable. Admittedly, Lactantius claims that Constantine ended the persecution in his territories immediately after coming to power (*DMP* 24.9; *DI* 1.1.13), but this may be a falsehood, since it

³⁸ Barnes (2011) 48-49.

³⁹ Coins: *RIC* 6 London 76a, 77a, 81, 98, Trier 671, 673a, 674, 676a, 677a, 681a, 699, 712-713, 736, Lyons 200a, 216, 225, 258, 280; see also Sutherland (1957); (1963) 17; *RIC* 6 p. 238; Stewartby (1996) 160.

⁴⁰ Note the following similarities. Harmony attendant with differences in age: 13.2-14.2; cf. *Paneg.* 11(3).7.6-7. Constantine as the loyal soldier of the First Augustus: 14.1-2; cf. *Paneg.* 10(2).4.2, 11.6; see also Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 186; Rees (2002) 179. Romantic discourse: 1.4-5, 13.1, 14.2; cf. *Paneg.* 10(2).9.1-3, 11.1-3; *Paneg.* 11(3).12.3-5; see also Rees (2002) 171-172, 179; Hekster (2015) 305. Cf. Grünwald (1990) 28-29; Christensen (2012) 140.

is absent from the works of Eusebius. Barceló argues that if Eusebius mentioned Constantine's measure against the persecution, he would have to acknowledge that Constantius had engaged in the persecution, something that he denies.⁴¹ But if the measure is historical, one wonders why Eusebius could not find some way of celebrating it without incriminating Constantius, perhaps through reference to rogue pagans. The historicity of this measure is thus a matter of debate.⁴² But even if it were not, Constantine and those around him still treated Diocletian as someone to be honoured and from whom they could derive benefit.

This makes it very unlikely that the orator in 307 would mention the marriage to Minervina but fail to mention a Diocletianic connection. The panegyrist celebrates that Constantine was Maximian's grandson through adoption, son through *maiestatis ordo* and son-in-law (3.3).⁴³ If Minervina were a relative of Diocletian, the speaker could have also made Constantine the nephew of Maximian through Diocletian, in which case the speaker would have invoked both Constantine's multifarious kinship with Maximian and Diocletian's relationship with both emperors. A reference to Diocletian would have better justified mentioning the marriage within a speech that celebrated a later marriage, and the orator could have used the political significance of the earlier union to compare the old marital tie to the new. It is thus unlikely that Minervina was a close relative of Diocletian, and the lack of information on her and the fact that authors asserted that she was a concubine suggests that she was not closely related to any of the emperors.

By way of comparison, Constantius married into Maximian's family before his co-option, and Galerius married into Diocletian's family, also possibly before he became Caesar.⁴⁴ Likewise, Maximinus had married a close relative of Galerius before he entered the imperial college.⁴⁵ Evidently the Augusti considered marriage ties to be important for co-option, and yet

⁴¹ Barceló (1988) 80-82; see also Corcoran (2000a) 185. Eusebius on Constantius: *HE* 8.13.12-13, Append. 4; *VC* 1.13.3; but cf. *MP* 13.12, where he states that the persecution in the west, including Gaul, lasted for less than two years. Barnes ((1973) 43-46; (1981) 14; (2011) 65-66) also defends the historicity of the measure, most notably because Lactantius was a mostly reliable reporter of events. Barceló 78-83 seeks to place the legislation within the wider context of imperial religious policy, and Barnes (2011) 64-66 sees the effort as an assertion of imperial power. Creed (1984) 105-106 n.24.7 views the measure as an executive act rather than a formal decree.

⁴² Against its historicity, see e.g. Cameron (1993) 49; (2005) 91.

⁴³ See also 14.4.

⁴⁴ Ch. 1.4.

⁴⁵ Ch. 2.4.

Constantine did not enjoy a close marital connection.⁴⁶ Of course, Constantine was Constantius' son anyway, but the Tetrarchs combined marital ties with other forms of kinship. Constantius was adopted by Maximian after he had become his son-in-law, and Galerius was adopted by Diocletian either simultaneous to or after his marital alliance.⁴⁷ Maximinus was Galerius' nephew prior to his marriage, and we have also seen that Maxentius married the daughter of Galerius.⁴⁸ Therefore, Maximinus and Maxentius entered dynastic marriages despite their biological connections. Constantine thus appears an outsider. The prince was not granted a dynastic marriage, and one suspects that this was yet another way in which Diocletian sought to discourage assumptions about who was to be co-opted.⁴⁹

To this end, Diocletian may have been partially successful. It is perhaps telling that none of the panegyrics delivered to Constantine during the Tetrarchic period describe him as if Diocletian or Galerius had treated him as an imperial candidate.⁵⁰ Certainly, in 305 Constantine did not become Caesar, but there is nothing within the panegyrics to suggest that the eastern Tetrarchs ever envisioned him as a ruler, and the panegyrist in 307, despite his allusions to Diocletian, does not specify a relationship between Constantine and the emperor emeritus.⁵¹ But Diocletian and Galerius had also given the young prince a military career, and they had allowed him to be seen alongside themselves. Does this mean that there was indecision about what role Constantine should play within the regime? Perhaps there was a time when Diocletian considered Constantine a potential successor, or perhaps he accorded the prince certain privileges because it was the norm to honour imperial sons with special treatment. These considerations lead us on to Maxentius.

⁴⁶ Rees (2004) 77-78; Potter (2013) 100-101.

⁴⁷ Ch. 1.4.

⁴⁸ Ch. 2.1, 2.4.

⁴⁹ See also Cullhed (1994) 30, and Potter (2013) 98-101 and (2014) 333, who argue that Constantine's marriage to Minervina shows that he was not an imperial candidate.

⁵⁰ *Paneg.* 7(6); *Paneg.* 6(7); *Paneg.* 5(8).

⁵¹ Potter (2013) 100 also notes the silence of the panegyrics.

4.2. Maxentius

The evidence for Maxentius' early life is far slimmer than that of Constantine. Lactantius claims that by 305 he had refused to perform *adoratio* to Galerius (Lact. *DMP* 18.9), which may mean that he had spent time in the east. Lactantius reports a meeting between Maximian and Galerius without giving a location (*DMP* 18.1), but there is otherwise no evidence that Galerius had been to the west, and Galerius saw Rome for the first time when he besieged it in 307 (Lact. *DMP* 27.2).⁵² Unfortunately, if Maxentius did live in the east, we have no information on how he spent his time.

Unlike Constantine, Maxentius enjoyed a dynastic marriage. As previously noted, by 305 Maxentius had married Galerius' daughter Valeria Maximilla, and before his usurpation in 306, they had produced a son, Valerius Romulus.⁵³ The union made sense for collegial harmony. If Diocletian did not wish for Maxentius to succeed and wished for Galerius to be the college's de-facto head, theoretically a marital bond made it less likely that Maxentius would defy the succession, since he would be bound to his father-in-law through familial *pietas*.⁵⁴ The marriage between Maxentius and Maximilla also bound the Jovian and Herculian dynasties closer to one another. Indeed, before this marriage, Diocletian and Maximian had not enjoyed a familial connection to one another, except for an artificial brotherhood. Through this new connection, Romulus constituted a nexus between their two families, for he was simultaneously the grandson of Maximian and Galerius, and the great grandson of Diocletian through that emperor's adoption of Galerius.⁵⁵ We have seen that the Augusti considered marriage ties to be important for co-option, but the clear benefits of this marriage show that it is unnecessary to believe that a plan for Maxentius' succession had governed the marriage. But if hereditary succession did influence the marriage, perhaps Diocletian at some point considered Maxentius to be a possible heir, or he vacillated on the issue.

⁵² See also Barnes (1981) 288 n. 58. Donciu (2012) 50 suspects that Maxentius had military experience alongside his father, noting Maxentius' later military successes against Severus and Galerius. But I would caution that Maxentius defeated these invasions from behind the walls of Rome.

⁵³ *ILS* 666-667, 671; *RIC* 6 Rome 247-248, 254-255, Ostia 30-31; Lact. *DMP* 18.9, 26.1, 26.6, 27.3; *Origo* 3.7; *Epit.* 40.14. Donciu (2012) 48-49 speculates on the dates.

⁵⁴ Cullhed (1994) 16-17 notes the marriage's importance to *pietas*, but suggests that it implied Maxentius' succession.

⁵⁵ Kolb (1987) 141; Leadbetter (2009) 142.

By the time of his usurpation in October 306, the prince was living near Rome. Eutropius relates that, when the praetorians made Maxentius their emperor, he had been spending time in a nearby public villa (10.2):

Romae interea praetoriani excito tumultu Maxentium, Herculii filium, qui haud procul ab urbe in villa publica morabatur, Augustum nuncupaverunt.

In the meantime, the praetorians at Rome rose in rebellion and proclaimed Maxentius, the son of Hercules, Augustus, who was spending time in a public villa not far from the city.

Likewise, the *Epitome* notes the following (40.2):

Maxentius imperator in villa sex milibus ab urbe discreta, itinere Lavicano, ... efficitur, ...

Maxentius was made *imperator* at a villa, six miles from the city, on the road to Lavicanum...

Epigraphic testimony confirms the claim of the *Epitome*. As previously discussed, before Maxentius became emperor, his son dedicated a pair of statues to his parents (*ILS* 666-667), and the surviving statue bases were found on the Via Labicana, about 16 miles from the ancient city. Moreover, Zosimus narrates that when Constantine succeeded his father, he announced his accession by sending laurelled portraits to Rome. At the time Maxentius was in the city, and finding the situation intolerable he usurped (2.9.2).

Barnes suggests that, after the abdications, Maxentius had taken up a strategic position outside the city so that he could pursue his imperial ambitions.⁵⁶ But this scenario assumes that it was easy for the prince to do so. The Tetrarchs appear to have avoided using Rome as a permanent residence. Even from 299 to 305 when Maximian was militarily inactive, Milan and Aquileia appear to have remained his principal residences.⁵⁷ This is not entirely surprising, since any emperor who used Rome as his principal residence could have used the city's prestige to claim a form of *auctoritas* that the other rulers could not claim, upsetting the *concordia* and hierarchy of the regime.⁵⁸ Rome was, after all, the ideological heart of the empire.⁵⁹ And yet, in

⁵⁶ Barnes (1981) 27.

⁵⁷ Maximian's movements and residences: Barnes (1982) 56-60.

⁵⁸ See also Cullhed (1994) 65-67; Hekster (1999) 721; Mayer (2014) 116.

⁵⁹ On the place of Rome within late imperial ideology, see Hekster (1999).

306 Maxentius was living near Rome, despite having been snubbed by the emperors in the previous year's succession event. It is unlikely that the prince could reside so close to Rome unless an emperor wanted him to be there.

It is not known when Maxentius moved to the state-owned residence, nor under what legal capacity. These questions are complicated by the fact that from May 305 he became the son of an emperor emeritus or *Senior Augustus*; a situation without precedent.⁶⁰ But Leadbetter is probably correct when he suggests that the emperors kept Maxentius near Rome as an informal representative, his job being to foster the loyalty of the senate and, I would add, the city in general.⁶¹ Despite the ideological importance of the *urbs*, it had received very few visits from the emperors. Diocletian had visited only once or twice, and as previously noted, Galerius saw Rome for the first time when he besieged it.⁶² One might perhaps then view Maxentius as a successor of sorts to known senatorial allies, such as Rufinianus Bassus, Diocletian's first consular colleague. He was after all a *uir clarissimus*.⁶³ But despite his senatorial status, he was of course more than a senator. The presence of an imperial family member would have reassured the senate and people of Rome that the *urbs* still mattered, and because his nuclear family constituted a nexus between the emperors of the east and west, Rome thus enjoyed a connection to both the eastern and western rulers, which benefitted the city and encouraged a balance in imperial influence.⁶⁴ Maxentius may have considered his importance to Rome's loyalty when he gave his son the same name as that city's legendary founder, although the name may instead have been a courtesy to Galerius' mother Romula, a portentous reference to familial unity, or a combination of the above.⁶⁵ Plausibly, the prince attended meetings in the *curia*, inspected the

⁶⁰ Donciu (2012) 49-50 speculates on his residence and the date of his arrival, and he concludes that Maxentius must have moved there while Maximian was still in power, suggesting 304, for the authorities in Rome would not have granted a state residence to a mere senator. He suggests that the villa was adapted to the pretensions of a future emperor, and that Maxentius was still an heir in the eyes of Maximian. Maxentius' title was indeed *uir clarissimus*, but it is questionable that after May 305 Maxentius was treated like any other senator with regard to where he lived. In retirement his father was at least somewhat an honorary emperor (Ch. 2.4).

⁶¹ Leadbetter (2009) 178-179.

⁶² The movements of the Tetrarchs: Barnes (1982) 47-64.

⁶³ Leadbetter (2009) 178-179. Bassus: *PLRE* 1 Bassus 2, 18; Diocletianus 2; Barnes (1982) 93 n. 6, 97; Bagnall et al. (1987) 102-103; Kuhoff (2001) 26; John, Hartmann & Gerhardt (2008) 1068; cf. Barnes (1996) 537 n. 26; Mennen (2011) 60-62.

⁶⁴ Leadbetter (2009) 179.

⁶⁵ A result of Maxentius' *urbs*-based ideology: Rees (1993) 197; Cambi (2004) 43-44; Lenski (2006) 63. A courtesy to Romula: Cullhed (1994) 16; Hekster (2014) 18. Familial unity: Leadbetter (2009) 142. Explanations not mutually exclusive: Hekster (1999) 726; Potter (2013) 132, 327 n. 6.

praetorian guard and made himself and his family visible at games and festivities, while the Tetrarchs hoped that this would be to their benefit.

In the end, Maxentius' activities in the city only helped the prince to build support for himself, and he seized power with the backing of the praetorians and his senatorial allies. The impression that Diocletian and Galerius had permitted Maxentius to remain near Rome after denying him the Caesariate shows that they had badly underestimated the prince. Admittedly, Maxentius' position near Rome ensured that he had no legions under his command and could not build a military reputation. Indeed, although it does not explain why Rome was his specific place of residence, this may have been another reason why the emperors sent him there.⁶⁶ Military legitimacy was after all necessary for lasting success as an emperor. But Rome had the praetorians and the Aurelian wall, and as the Tetrarchs seem to have realised, the city's ideological importance could lend a usurper great *auctoritas*. Indeed, the emperor Maxentius would utilise the city's prestige in advertising his own superior *Romanitas*.⁶⁷ There was also discontent in the city, not only because of the absence of emperors, but because of plans to tax the population and truncate the praetorian guard.⁶⁸ And yet, whereas Constantine remained under supervision, Maxentius left the imperial courts for the symbolic heartland of the empire.⁶⁹ Furthermore, by permitting Maxentius such an important marriage, Diocletian strengthened the impression that Maxentius was an imperial candidate. Indeed, Maxentius' belief in his own importance may have been the reason he refused to perform *adoratio*.⁷⁰ It is inescapable that the treatment of Maxentius was one of the Tetrarchy's greatest blunders.

4.3. *Filial Concerns in the West*

So far, this discussion has concerned itself with how Constantine and Maxentius fitted into the regime of Diocletian. But of course, this was a regime of four rulers, and Diocletian was the father of neither prince. At this point it is appropriate to return to Constantine, since he poses an

⁶⁶ Leadbetter (2009) 142 states that Maxentius' position had no power, since it was not military and not located near Galerius. He sees this as evidence that the prince was no longer an imperial candidate.

⁶⁷ Cullhed (1994) 45-67.

⁶⁸ Maxentius' seizure of power: Barnes (1981) 27-30; Leadbetter (2009) 170-188; Potter (2013) 107-110, 115-116.

⁶⁹ The asymmetry is recognized by Potter (2013) 110.

⁷⁰ Cullhed (1994) 17; see also Leadbetter (2009) 178.

interesting question. Diocletian and Galerius had allowed him a military career from an early age and to be seen alongside themselves, and they had considered him important enough to be made into a hostage and to be kept under surveillance. One wonders if, by the late 290s, the emperors attached more importance to Constantine than might have been expected for an illegitimate son, for whom legal disadvantages and possible stigma were issues.⁷¹ Perhaps illegitimacy was less of a barrier to dynastic importance than might be presumed.⁷² Alternatively, is it possible that the likely fiction of Helena's marriage did not begin with Constantine, but with Constantius himself? Or perhaps he adopted his son. After all, at an unknown time Galerius had his sterile wife Valeria adopt his bastard son Candidianus, thus rendering him legitimate (Lact. *DMP* 50.2). If so, Constantine may have suppressed the truth for fear of appearing less legitimate than his half-brothers. Such things must remain speculation, but they do lead us to the question of dynastic ambitions in the west. Certainly, the legitimation of a prince alone is not evidence that an emperor intended for imperial hereditary succession. If Constantius treated his son as legitimate, he may have done so simply to better allow him to inherit property. But the eldest son was dynastically useful, since he would be better able to succeed his father if he were to die suddenly, and he could be married off. One must not underestimate the uniqueness of what Diocletian was attempting to do. To ignore the hereditary claims of biological sons and grandsons was to ignore a dynastic practice that one could trace back to Augustus and that was still in use as late as Carus, who in 283 co-opted his sons Carinus and Numerian. It is certainly possible that Maximian and Constantius, regardless of their soldierly origins, thought it proper and desirable to follow hereditary norms. Later events may attest to such concerns, but the evidence is problematic. As previously noted, contemporary sources claim that in 306 the dying Constantius made Constantine his successor and recommended him to his troops.⁷³ However, it was in the interests of Constantine to profess as much. In the same year, Maximian returned to active power in support of Maxentius when the latter rebelled in Italy, but he appears to have been more interested in restoring his own power, since in 308 he sought his son's overthrow.⁷⁴ Is there then

⁷¹ On law and stigma: Phang (2001) 306-321; Ch. 3.

⁷² Sources claim that Elagabalus and Severus Alexander claimed to be the bastard sons of Caracalla, but the specification of illegitimacy may have instead resulted from gossip in response to the simple claim that they were Caracalla's sons (Hekster (2015) 218-221).

⁷³ *Paneg.* 7(6).5.3; *Paneg.* 6(7).4.1-2, 7.3-8.6; Lact. *DMP* 24.8; Eus. *HE* 8.13.12-14, Append. 4-5; *VC* 1.18.2, 1.21-22; *Jul. Or.* 1.7d; *Oros.* 7.25.16-26.1; *Zon.* 12.33; cf. *Origo* 2.4; *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 40.4; *Epit.* 41.3; *Zos.* 2.9.1.

⁷⁴ *Paneg.* 6(7).14.6; Lact. *DMP* 28; *Eutr.* 10.3; *Zos.* 2.10.6-7, 11.1; *Zon.* 12.33.

less problematic evidence for heredity in the west that specifically pertains to the years before 306?

To appreciate filial concerns in the west, let us begin with Maximian before the Tetrarchy began. In Gaul in 289 an orator delivered a panegyric before this emperor, and he praised the young Maxentius in a manner that looked to the future (10(2).14.1-2):

Sed profecto mature ille inlucescet dies, cum uos uideat Roma uictores et alacrem sub dextera filium, quem ad honestissimas artes omnibus ingenii bonis natum felix aliquis praeceptor exspectat, cui nullo labore constabit diuinam immortalemque progeniem ad studium laudis hortari. Non necesse erit Camillos et Maximos et Curios et Catones proponere ad imitandum; quin potius uestra illi facta demonstret, uos identidem et semper ostendat praesentes et optimos imperatoriae institutionis auctores.

But assuredly that day will soon dawn, when Rome sees you (pl.) victorious, and, alert at your right hand, your son, born with every endowment of talent for a study of the most respectable arts, whom some lucky teacher awaits. For him it will be no labour to encourage in this divine and immortal scion a yearning for glory. It will not be necessary to put forward the Camilli, Maximi, Curii and Catones for imitation. But rather, let him point out your (pl.) deeds to the boy, and repeatedly and continually display you (pl.) as the living and best champions of the imperial arrangement.⁷⁵

The speaker does not state that Maxentius will succeed, but he does look forward to a day on which Diocletian and Maximian are present in Rome with Maxentius standing at their right side, and he expects the child to easily acquire a yearning for glory, encouraged by the example of the living emperors. Prominent in the public eye and seeking glory, implicitly Maxentius is the imperial heir to his father, and the very fact that the orator discusses the son within a panegyric to the emperors indicates the son's importance.⁷⁶ The panegyrist probably hints at himself when he speaks of *felix aliquis praeceptor*, hoping for the status and influence that came with being the teacher of a future emperor.⁷⁷ The speaker perhaps only assumes that Maximian intends for his

⁷⁵ Trans. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 75 with alterations.

⁷⁶ See also Roche (2002) 47-51 on the minimal treatment accorded family members within panegyric. Cf. Rees (2004) 77, who states that the orator 'falls far short of predicting that he would assume imperial office'.

⁷⁷ Barnes (2011) 48 suggests that the Republican heroes chosen as role-models were selected because they did not produce sons who distinguished themselves, in which case this would be another hereditary sentiment. But these men were standard role-models to invoke (P. Roche pers. comm.; e.g. Cic. *Sest.* 143; Man. *Astron.* 4.86-87; Luc. *BC* 7.358-360.)

son to succeed, but this is unlikely. He does not describe Maxentius as if he were newly born, and so he was probably not the first to speak of Maxentius as if he were his father's heir, as would have been normal. It thus should be the case that Maximian had been content with such praise, in which case he intended for Maxentius to succeed, or he at least assumed that it would happen. However, the panegyrist in 291 treats the prince differently (11(3).19.4):

Quae uobis concordiam sempiternam et uestrorum generum caritatem et fouendae rei publicae studia conciliant, ...

These (the stars) which procure for you (pl.) everlasting harmony, the affection of your (pl.) offspring and your assiduous care for the state ...

The panegyrist does not elaborate upon the emperors' offspring nor specify their identities, and there is no reference specific to Maxentius, at this time the only imperial son. By 291 it had perhaps become apparent that Maxentius would not be serving as Maximian's Caesar. Nevertheless, for a time Maximian had been publicly content with hereditary succession.⁷⁸

The sentiments expressed in 289 do not stand in isolation. The panegyric delivered to Constantius in 296/7 possibly betrays dynastic thought of a vaguer quality, notably when the speaker describes the loyalty of the inhabitants of Britain to the Tetrarchs, to whom control over the island had recently been restored (8(5).19.4-20.1):

...uobis se, uobis liberos suos, uestris liberis omnis generis sui posteros deuouebant. Nos quidem certe, o perpetui parentes et domini generis humani, hoc a dis immortalibus omni uotorum nuncupatione deprecamur, ut liberi nepotesque nostri et si qua omnibus saeculis erit duratura progenies, cum uobis tum etiam his quos educatis atque educabitis dedicentur. Quid enim melius posteris nostris optare possumus quam quo fruimur ipsi?

They pledged themselves to you (pl.), their children to you (pl.), and to your (pl.) children they pledged all the descendants of their race. Certainly indeed, O everlasting parents and masters of the human race, we demand this from the immortal gods with each pronouncement of our vows, that

⁷⁸ See also Seston (1946) 221; Kolb (1987) 140-141, who suggests that there had been a cautious attempt to affiliate Maxentius with the *domus diuina*, a prospect that had changed by 291; Cullhed (1994) 14-15; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 75 n. 50, who posit that, whereas the orator in 289 knew of no succession plans involving adoption, by 291 Maximian was no longer voicing any dynastic hopes that he may have entertained; Donciu (2012) 41-42; Hekster (2015) 306.

our children and grandchildren and our progeny, if there be any, enduring through all the ages, be dedicated not only to you (pl.) but also to those you (pl.) are rearing and will rear hereafter. For what better thing can we wish for our descendants than that which we ourselves enjoy?⁷⁹

The inhabitants of Britain, the speaker claims, have pledged themselves and their descendants both to the emperors and their *liberi*, and they demand from the gods that their descendants be dedicated to the emperors as well as to those they rear and will rear hereafter. The emphasis on succession, the kinship term *liberi*, and the verb *educare*, which often refers to the fostering of children, conjure a traditional image of imperial heredity.⁸⁰ However, the orator speaks of those whom the emperors will rear rather than anyone specific.⁸¹ Perhaps it was now understood that the natural-born sons would not necessarily succeed.⁸² Hekster suggests that the orator refers to kinship and heredity because dynastic terminology helped to clarify the relationships between the Tetrarchs.⁸³ Certainly, the Caesars were the adopted sons of the Augusti, and future succession events could be expected to entail adoption. It is notable that the same orator reasons that the Caesars had been co-opted because the Augusti ‘were bound by piety to give *imperium* to a son’ (3.3: *imperium filio pietate debebant*). But it is possible that the orator still holds out hope for traditional hereditary succession, or still assumes that hereditary succession will take place without knowing specifically who would succeed. Perhaps Constantius was also unaware of what would happen come the succession, but thought hereditary succession to be likely.⁸⁴

Again, the fact that it was the norm for biological offspring to succeed the emperor makes these references to heredity entirely understandable. Unfortunately, an analysis of heredity in the west is limited by the uncertainty surrounding the allusions in 296/7, and the fact that no complete panegyrics delivered to Diocletian or Galerius survive. With these limitations, one cannot posit an east-west divide over heredity with any certainty. Nevertheless, our considerations so far may help clarify a controversy that surrounds the marital history of

⁷⁹ Trans. Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 140-141 with alterations.

⁸⁰ *Liberi*: OLD², *liberi*². *Educare*: Lewis & Short, *educō*²; OLD², *educō*²; Neri (2013) 666.

⁸¹ Hekster (2015) 307 thinks that the reference to those whom the emperors will rear may reflect the near-absence of kinship-terms in central media, but note the use of *liberi*.

⁸² Kolb (1987) 141 notes that the passage’s vagueness suggests that Diocletian had no explicit intention to support hereditary succession.

⁸³ Hekster (2015) 307. See also Seston (1946) 221, 255, who thinks that the passage is merely a reference to future emperors.

⁸⁴ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 141 n. 72 also note the principle of heredity in these passages.

Constantine. The panegyrist in 307 delivers his speech before Maximian and Constantine on the occasion of the latter's marriage to the former's daughter Fausta, and he claims that Constantine had been betrothed to Fausta when he was not yet of marriageable age. He states the following (7(6).6.1):

Neque enim dubium quin tibi mature sacrum istud fastigium diuinae potestatis adstrueret qui te iam olim sibi generum, etiam ante <quam> petere posses, sponte delegerat.

For there is no doubt that he (Maximian) was building for you (Constantine) at an early date that pinnacle of sacred power, he who had already some time ago chosen you of his own accord to be his son-in-law, even before you could have sought this.

The speaker then relates that this is demonstrated by a picture in the palace at Aquileia. In an ekphrastic flourish, he describes the picture, in which a young Fausta gives a young Constantine a bejewelled and plumed helmet (2). The orator refers to the helmet as a betrothal present (*sponsale munus*). His description and interpretation of the picture is questionable, since he claims not to have seen it and does not reveal the source of his information. The speaker describes a distant but not too fanciful composition, and so it would have been hard to contradict him.⁸⁵ He then asserts that the artist was lucky to be able to paint the couple (3), and he describes how the painter derived pleasure from gazing at the couple, from eliciting grave expressions from youthful merriment (*ab hilaritate illius aetatis*), and from expressing the unspoken presentiments of their love, which their modesty denied for themselves (4-5). He then asserts the following (7.1):

Sed profecto hoc iam tunc, Maximiane, diuina mente praesumpseras; hoc, cum ferret aetas, ut rogareris optaueras, cum tibi in illa iucundissima sede laetitiae harum nuptiarum gaudia praestinas, ut simul illam paruulam et hunc intuendo crescentem diu fruereris exspectatione uoti quod hac coniunctione firmasti.

But certainly, already at that time, Maximian, you had anticipated this in your divine mind; this, when age allowed, you had wished to be asked, when you were purchasing for yourself the joys of these nuptials in that most delightful seat of happiness, so that, observing at the same time that little

⁸⁵ Rees (2002) 169-170.

girl and this growing boy, for a long time you might derive enjoyment from the expectation of vows, which by this union you have confirmed.

The panegyrist's claim of an early betrothal is supported by the emperor Julian, who, in a panegyric to Constantius II, asserts that Constantius' grandfathers, Maximian and Constantius I, had arranged Constantine's marriage to Fausta (*Or.* 1.7c-d):

τῆς δὲ ὁμονοίας αὐτῶν τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους τὸ μέγιστον σημεῖον παραλιπεῖν οὐδαμῶς εὐλογον, καὶ ἄλλως προσῆκον τῷ λόγῳ. κοινωνίαν γὰρ τὴν καλλίστην τοῖς αὐτῶν παισὶν ἐπινοήσαντες τῶν σῶν πατέρων τοὺς γάμους ἤρμωσαν.

It would in no way be reasonable to omit the greatest mark of their unanimity, and besides it relates to the subject. For since they intended the most beautiful partnership for their children, they arranged the marriage of your own parents.

Any such arrangement would have preceded Constantius' death in July 306, and thus supports the idea that a marriage between Constantine and Fausta had been planned before Maximian's return to active power after October of the same year. Indeed, if Constantine had been born in the early 280s, as is likely, then this betrothal could be dated to the years before c. 300, before Constantine was of marriageable age.⁸⁶

However, scholars are divided on whether this betrothal should be considered historical.⁸⁷ Certainly, Constantine first married Minervina, and only afterwards, at the time of the speech in 307, did he marry Fausta. But it is possible that the emperors broke off the early betrothal. Rees contends that such a scenario would have compromised 'the loyalty and integrity of all concerned'.⁸⁸ But political marriages could be changed out of political necessity, especially if that necessity was being urged by the first-ranking Augustus (see below).⁸⁹ Of course, an early engagement was in the interests of the panegyrist of 307, as it allowed him to claim that

⁸⁶ Constantine's age: Ch. 2.1.

⁸⁷ Historical: E.g. Rousselle (1976) 459; Barnes (1981) 9; Creed (1984) 98 n. 18.7; Chastagnol (1985) 109; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 198 n. 18; Leadbetter (2009) 67, 79 n. 150; Donciu (2012) 48, 97. Fictional: E.g. Drijvers (1992a) 501-503; Rees (2002) 169-171; Barnes (2011) 56; Potter (2013) 117; Hekster (2014) 16; (2015) 287.

⁸⁸ Rees (2002) 170.

⁸⁹ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 198 n. 18, in arguing that the early betrothal is plausible, likewise note the flexibility of political marriage.

Maximian had long intended for Constantine to become an Augustus (6.1). He thus illustrates the betrothal with ekphrasis. But the engagement need not have been invented.

There is reason to believe Julian and the panegyrist of 307. Again, it would have been considered normal to establish dynastic plans involving the sons, and panegyrics seem to attest to this. In 289 Maximian tolerated panegyric rhetoric on his son's succession, and the panegyrist in 296/7 likewise possibly alludes to the succession of biological sons. We have also seen that the emperors deemed Constantius' eldest son to be important enough to have a military career, to be seen alongside Diocletian and Galerius, to be made into a hostage and to be kept under surveillance. Therefore, while it is understandable that Constantine should have eventually been denied a dynastic marriage, it would be surprising if Maximian and Constantius had never discussed such a plan for Constantine in the time since their marriage alliance in c. 288. It is unknown when Fausta was born, but discussions of a future engagement did not require a daughter to exist, but merely the possibility that she may exist in the future.⁹⁰

It is also notable that the panegyrist in 307 does not deny the existence of Constantine's first marriage (4.1). The speaker displays considerable skill and care in his presentation. He undertakes an impressive effort to justify both Maximian's return to active power in support of his usurper son Maxentius, despite an abdication agreement, as well as his promotion of Constantine to Augustus, despite the wishes of Galerius.⁹¹ At the same time, he avoids explicit references to the figures who complicate the political situation, such as Maxentius and Galerius. It is improbable that the same speaker accidentally contradicts himself when he references both Minervina and an early betrothal to Fausta.

It might surprise that the panegyrist discusses a broken engagement, but he evidently had no serious qualm with discussing controversial topics. In addition to the abdication agreement (9.2), he abstractly alludes to Galerius' hostility (12.8), and appears to reference the fact that Maximian had returned to power in aid of a usurper, when he compares his return to how Helios

⁹⁰ On Fausta's age, Barnes (1982) 34 suggests that she was born in 289 or 290, since she was born in Rome (*Jul. Or.* 1.5d), and Maximian's movements permit a stay in Rome during these years. For Barnes, *Paneg.* 7(6).2 in 307 assumes that she is of child-bearing age, since the orator celebrates the rearing of offspring.

⁹¹ Maximian's return to power: 8.8-12.8. Constantine's promotion: 1.1, 2.1, 5.3, 6.1, 7.2-4, 8.2, 13.3-14.7.

seized the reins of the sun chariot after his son had lost control of it (12.3).⁹² In all cases he spins the controversies to Maximian's benefit. He uses the abdication agreement to praise Maximian's fraternal piety. In the case of Galerius, darkness and waves of unrest will soon subside because of Maximian's supremacy, which is compared to the elements. In the case of Maxentius, Maximian brings order and is compared to the sun.⁹³ Likewise, the speaker discusses the marriage with Minervina, despite the central theme of the speech, the new marriage with Fausta. But he uses it as proof of the emperor's *continentia*. It is thus not surprising that he uses the engagement, avoiding reference to the fact that it had to have been broken.

Since marriage ties were important for co-optation into the imperial college, the betrothal of Constantine to Fausta suggests that the western Tetrarchs, at some point, may have viewed Constantine as a potential heir.⁹⁴ But the proposed marriage also excluded their eastern counterparts. It appears that Maximian and Constantius had wished to strengthen what the panegyrist in 307 praised as the *domus* of the Herculians.⁹⁵ Such exclusivity was not hostile. After all, they eventually accepted Diocletian's succession arrangements. Rather, it made sense to merge the families of the two western rulers for the sake of future harmony, even more so if they expected their dynasty to rule in both halves of the empire, since Constantine and Maxentius were the eldest sons, and Constantius had three other sons to Theodora.

But why did they break off the engagement? The best answer is that Diocletian disapproved. Diocletian and Galerius were the rulers with nothing to gain and something to lose from the engagement, and Diocletian was the only person other than the western rulers themselves with the influence to end the betrothal. At some point Diocletian decided that he did not want Constantine to be co-opted, and a dynastic marriage would have encouraged assumptions to the contrary.⁹⁶ Whether early or later in his reign, he also determined that Galerius would dominate the post-Diocletianic imperial college. A new marriage alliance that

⁹² 12.8: Nixon (1993) 244-245; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 207-208 n. 44; Rees (2002) 179; Leadbetter (2009) 192. 12.3: Grünewald (1990) 33; Nixon & Rodgers 207 n. 43.

⁹³ On the latter two examples, see Rees (2002) 178-179.

⁹⁴ For Gwatkin (1911) 2-3, Rousselle (1976) 459 and Barnes (1981) 9, the betrothal is evidence that Constantine was heir apparent.

⁹⁵ *Paneg.* 7(6).2.5, 8.2, 14.3-14.7. König (1974) 576 suggests that Maximian used the betrothal to strengthen his authority.

⁹⁶ Cf. König (1974) 576, who suggests that the union was delayed because of Constantine's hostage status.

excluded the eastern rulers did not favour this plan. Therefore, the most likely scenario is that Diocletian had used his superior rank and great *auctoritas* to end the betrothal.

The panegyric references to heredity, the betrothal of Constantine and Fausta, and the simple fact that hereditary succession had been the norm makes it likely that Diocletian had needed to persuade the western emperors that his succession plan was the best way forward. Indeed, we have seen that the Herculians had much reason to support hereditary succession. They had the eldest sons, and Constantius had four of his own. In contrast, the only biological prince in the east was Candidianus, and Diocletian had no son of his own beyond Galerius, whom he had adopted upon making him Caesar. Moreover, a disagreement over hereditary succession would help explain why the succession in 305 appears to have been accompanied by negotiations between the eastern Tetrarchs and Constantius, with the result that limitations were placed on Galerius' dominance. Specifically, it appears that the territories of each Tetrarch were more defined after 305, and that the powers of the Caesars had increased as a result. Eutropius (10.1-2) claims that Constantius received the west but declined the responsibility of governing Italy and Africa, and Eusebius (*HE* 8.13.11) and Orosius (7.25.15) state that, upon the abdications, the empire was divided into two parts for the first time in its history.⁹⁷ Eusebius and Orosius presumably reference the division between Constantius' territory and that of Galerius and his partisans. During the Second Tetrarchy, there was less unity in the production of coin types, and whereas during the First Tetrarchy, gold coins with the mark *SM* (*Sacra Moneta*) were issued mostly or wholly in the cities where an Augustus was resident, during the Second, the same honour was accorded to the Caesars. This may attest to new financial power.⁹⁸ Moreover, whereas during the First Tetrarchy, Diocletian issued all or most edicts, during the Second Tetrarchy, not only did Galerius issue edicts as the second-ranking Augustus, but in 305 Maximinus supposedly issued edicts intensifying the persecution of the Christians (Eus. *MP* 4.8).⁹⁹ As Leadbetter recognizes, these developments make sense if they were part of a compromise between the Tetrarchs with respect to the succession, in which, to appease

⁹⁷ See also Eus. *VC* 1.25.1, who refers to Constantius' portion (μοῖρα) (Potter (2013) 110).

⁹⁸ *RIC* 6 pp. 90-93.

⁹⁹ On the legislative acts of Galerius, see Corcoran (2002); Leadbetter (2009) 228-230 (but cf. 174-175); Barnes (2011) 65; Potter (2013) 110. On Eus. *MP* 4.8, Corcoran (2000a) 182 doubts that there was a new edict.

Constantius, the ability of Galerius to interfere outside his own realm was somewhat lessened.¹⁰⁰ The impression that a compromise was made need not have been governed by an east-west division over heredity. The fact that Constantius had to accept a succession arrangement that favoured his junior Caesarian colleague was controversy enough. It is nonetheless plausible that a disagreement over heredity had also governed this compromise.

4.4. Conclusions

A recurring theme of this chapter has been the ways in which Diocletian sought to control the princes and dissuade the assumption that they were to become Caesars. The sons did not receive titles that marked their imperial pedigree, and they are almost invisible within the media that survives from 285-306. Diocletian did not give Constantine an independent military command, and he and his Caesar appear to have kept the prince under surveillance. There is reason to think that Diocletian ended a betrothal between Constantine and Fausta, and the prince was ultimately denied a dynastic marriage, most likely in accordance with the senior emperor's will. The eastern Tetrarchs may have even sought Constantine's death through indirect means. In the case of Maxentius, his marriage to Galerius' daughter in theory bound him to the eastern Caesar through familial *pietas*, and Diocletian may have located Maxentius in Rome or permitted him being sent to Rome by Maximian partly so that the prince would be far from the legions and could not enjoy a military career.

¹⁰⁰ Leadbetter (2009) 160-164, although he does not use Eutropius and Eusebius, Maximinus' efforts against the Christians or numismatic disunity in support of his argument. He places emphasis on *CJ* 3.12.1, a rescript issued from Maximinus' court, as evidence of the enhanced power of the Caesars, since there is no constitution that can be attributed with certainty to the Caesars of the First Tetrarchy. But on the power of the Caesars of the First Tetrarchy, see Corcoran (2000a) 271-274; Ch. 1.6. On Eus. *HE* 8.13.11, Oulton (1932) 2.298-299 n.5 takes it to refer to divisions over religious policy. On Constantius' self-abnegation, Odahl (2010) 76-77 posits that he remained in Gaul as he would have a better chance at securing Constantine's succession. Potter (2013) 109-110 attaches significance to the fact that an official previously described as *agens uicem praefectorum praetorio* (acting in place of the praetorian prefects) is, under Maxentius, referred to as *agens uicem praefecti praetorio* (acting in place of the praetorian prefect) (*IRT* 464). For Potter, this change suggests that the praetorian prefects now had a more defined geographical authority and were attached to specific rulers. But Maxentius was not an accepted member of the imperial college, and he presumably only acknowledged the authority of the praetorian prefect that he himself had appointed.

The implications of these efforts may have been clear to some contemporaries. After all, the panegyrist in 296/7 alludes to the succession without reference to specific heirs. But this does not mean that there was a clearly-expressed idea that sons were, as a rule, to be excluded from the imperial college in favour of adopted heirs. It is likely that Maximian and Constantius did not share Diocletian's vision. Whereas Maximian and Constantius probably wanted their sons to succeed, in accordance with centuries of imperial practice, Diocletian had his own unique plans. The fact that he could persuade them to agree to his unusual arrangements again attests to his exceptional *auctoritas*. But Diocletian himself contributed to a degree of uncertainty. Although Constantius had sent Constantine to the east as a hostage, Diocletian granted him military tribunes and allowed the prince to be seen alongside himself and Galerius. Although Maxentius' marriage strengthened his connection to Galerius, it was also a prestigious marriage fit for a Caesar-in-waiting. Although Maxentius was located far from the legions, his relationship with Rome lent the prince a special kind of *auctoritas* as well as access to a powerful but discontented city. And even though Diocletian denied the succession of Maxentius and Constantine, one should recall that he permitted the co-option of another blood relation; Galerius' nephew Maximinus.¹⁰¹

Diocletian clearly underestimated Maxentius' ability to conjure support, but there were other reasons for his treatment of the prince. Maxentius' residence near Rome was meant to foster the city's loyalty to the regime, and his marriage strengthened not only his bond to Galerius, but also the relationship between the Jovians and Herculians. It is also possible that there were times when Diocletian did consider Maxentius and/or Constantine to be potential successors, but that he came to question and eventually reject these princes as candidates. But one suspects that Diocletian was unsure of how to treat these princes. While he did attempt to control them, and dissuade the assumption that they would become Caesars, the long history of hereditary succession dictated that princes were important. Diocletian may have felt obliged to retain this importance, especially to please his western colleagues. Moreover, for a time, Diocletian may not have been sufficiently transparent about the prospects of the sons. The arrangements so favoured Galerius that it seems likely that Diocletian and his Caesar initially

¹⁰¹ *Epit.* 40.1, 18; *Zos.* 2.8.1.

devised the plan without input from their western colleagues. Perhaps then Victor was right when he criticized the emperor for his mistrust and lack of openness (*Caes.* 39.46):

Valerio parum honesta in amicos fides erat discordiarum sane metu, dum enuntiationibus posse agitari quietem consortii putat.

Through fear of disharmony, Valerius (Diocletian) certainly had too little honest faith in his friends, since he believed that the peace of the fellowship could be shaken by transparency.

Lastly, let us compare the experiences of Constantine and Maxentius. The emperors favoured Maxentius in two major respects. Maximian's son was allowed a dynastic marriage, whereas Constantine was denied one, and whereas Constantine lived as a hostage under the direct surveillance of the eastern Tetrarchs and possibly in some danger, Maxentius was sent to Rome to foster support for the regime. Admittedly, while Constantine was enjoying a military career, Maxentius was residing far away from the legions, but overall, the emperors apparently showed Maximian's son more favour and trust. Indeed, the *Epitome* claims that when Diocletian refused the invitation from Constantine and Licinius to attend the latter's wedding, the old emperor received threatening replies in which 'it was exclaimed that he had favoured Maxentius and was currently favouring Maximinus' (*incredabatur Maxentio fauisse ac Maximino fauere*) (39.7). Regardless of the story's veracity, the epitomator's source found the accusation to be believable. It should not surprise that the sons had such different experiences. Constantine was probably of illegitimate birth, and the son of a Caesar, not an Augustus. Moreover, as discussed above, Diocletian's relationship with Constantius was weaker than those that he enjoyed with Maximian and Galerius, thus the need for a hostage. Diocletian probably better trusted Maxentius as the son of his long-time ally.

Ultimately, the image one receives of the princes is complicated and untidy; the natural result of the unusual situation in which they lived. Not only were hereditary norms being discarded in an unprecedented manner, but there were four different rulers whose interests were not necessarily aligned with one another. Not only did Constantine and Maxentius have very different experiences from one another, but even in isolation these experiences were paradoxical. Constantine was the tribune standing at the right hand of Diocletian, but he was also a hostage, a target of surveillance, a possible target of assassination, and the husband of one Minervina, on

whom the sources have nothing to say beyond accusations of concubinage. Maxentius was the representative of the emperors in Rome and the husband of Galerius' daughter, but he was also kept far from the legions. As it happened, both princes were tenacious and politically astute. Constantine did not need a good marriage to take command of his father's army, and Maxentius did not need a legion to initiate a rebellion. By 306 Diocletian was no longer in active power and thus no longer able to direct his vision. In July of that year, Constantine asserted his claim to the purple, perhaps with the support of Constantius, and by year's end, Maxentius had done the same, helped by his own father Maximian, Diocletian's oldest ally.

5. Invisible *Feminae* and Galerian Empresses: The Representation of Imperial Women

This study has so far focussed on the Tetrarchs themselves and their sons, but of course an understanding of dynastic politics and self-representation is incomplete when one does not take account of women. Within Roman dynasties, women played important roles as mothers, wives, sisters and daughters. They produced heirs and they married those with whom an alliance was desirable, and because of their proximity to the emperor, they could influence the ruler and could even serve as regent for a child, as in the case of Theodosius II's older sister Pulcheria. Their proximity and wealth ensured that they were valuable to those involved in politics, and they amassed networks of allies and clients. These factors ensured that imperial women made an impact on historiography, and to this day certain empresses continue to fascinate and capture the imagination. Livia, Messalina and Agrippina the Younger are among the most renowned of the Julio-Claudians, and Julia Domna, Galla Placidia and Theodora stand out among the personalities of the later empire.¹ Increasingly, modern research has also paid attention to the women of the Tetrarchy and to their representation within contemporary media. Scholars have sought to draw connections between the representations of these women and Tetrarchic emperorship. Indeed, despite an unfortunate dearth of reliable information on the lives of these women, much can potentially be gleaned about Tetrarchic emperorship from how women appear in representations of the regime, especially those which were either made by imperial directive or which can be expected to accord with imperial self-representation.

However, there has not yet been a comprehensive study of the Tetrarchic women and their representation in media. Seston and Kolb offer comments on the topic that are submerged within chapters on Tetrarchic ideology. Hekster likewise discusses women within a chapter on the broader topic of Tetrarchic emperorship, and although he offers more detail, his coverage is understandably not comprehensive. Clauss and Harries discuss the Tetrarchic women within

¹ On Roman empresses, see e.g. Kleiner & Matheson (1996); Bartman (1999); Temporini & Vitzthum (2002); Barrett (2005); Levick (2007); Langford (2013); Angelova (2015).

chapters that also discuss those of the Constantinian period, again preventing a more detailed coverage of the topic.²

This chapter offers the most detailed investigation so far of the representation of Tetrarchic women. It begins with an analysis of the titles and visual representation accorded imperial women during the later third century, showing that it was normal for the most important women to be honoured as Augusta and/or *diua* on coins and inscriptions. It is then demonstrated that, from 284 to 306, the imperial women of the Tetrarchy were largely excluded from visual and literary representations of the regime, and were denied the title of Augusta, instead receiving the epithet *nobilissima femina*. It is proposed that Diocletian sought to exclude women from the *domus diuina* so that he could establish an ideological basis for his rejection of hereditary claims. Lastly, the chapter surveys and discusses how, during the last years of the Tetrarchy (307-311), the representation of imperial women changed under the guidance of Galerius, whose wife became an Augusta and whose mother became a *diua*.

5.1. Augustae and Diuae in the Later Third Century

During the early empire, it was common for emperors to honour certain imperial women as Augusta (empress). For instance, Claudius made his wife Agrippina into an Augusta, as did Trajan for his sister Ulpia Marciana, and Severus Alexander for his mother Julia Mamaea. Since the late second century, the title *mater castrorum* ('mother of the camp') was sometimes attached to Augusta, perhaps to better integrate empresses into the masculine world of the army. Faustina the Younger, Julia Domna and, again, Julia Mamaea serve as examples.³ Moreover, if an empress still enjoyed favour after death, they could be deified with the title *diua* (deified woman), as in the cases of Marciana, Faustina and Domna.⁴ These titles were acknowledged on coins, statue inscriptions and milestones, and in the case of coinage, the practice came to be that only Augustae and *diuae* were commemorated among the imperial women.⁵

² Seston (1946) 218; Kolb (1987) 93-94, 142; Clauss (2002); Harries (2014); Hekster (2015) 277-314.

³ Mother of the camp: See e.g. HA, *Marc.* 26.8; *ILS* 426, 433, 437, 442-444, 450-451, 459, 470, 482, 485.

⁴ References in Kienast (2011).

⁵ See e.g. the *RIC* vols and *ILS* 1.

As coins and inscriptions attest, these trends continued into the post-Severan period. Coins and a statue base are dedicated to one *diua* Caecilia Paulina Augusta, who was probably the wife of Maximinus Thrax, whom he supposedly murdered.⁶ Then in the 240s, Gordian III made his wife Sabinia Tranquillina into an Augusta, whereas Philip's wife Otacilia Severa and Decius' wife Herennia Etruscilla became both Augusta and *mater castrorum*.⁷ Coins dedicated to Cornelia Supera Augusta are best attributed to Aemilian's reign.⁸ During the reign of Valerian and Gallienus, the latter's wife Cornelia Salonina became an Augusta and *mater castrorum*, and one Mariniana was deified, who appears to have been the former's late wife.⁹ One Sulpicia Dryantilla Augusta was probably the wife of Regalianus.¹⁰

The practice of creating Augustae continued into the 270s and 280s. The Palmyrene Empire honoured Zenobia as Augusta, and Aurelian's wife Ulpia Severina became an Augusta and *mater castrorum*.¹¹ The latter appears on such an abundance of coins, and at every mint except Tripolis, that some believe she ruled the empire for part of 275, during the space of time between her husband's death and the accession of Tacitus.¹² Carinus made his wife Magnia Urbica into an Augusta and *mater castrorum*, and she was visible on about 10% of all coin types produced at imperial mints.¹³ However, by the later third century one observes a change. There are no attested empresses during the six-year reign of Probus, or during the admittedly very brief reigns of Claudius, Quintillus, Tacitus and Florian. Carinus minted for Urbica, but Carus and Numerian did nothing similar. The Gallic emperors too did not use imperial media to promote Augustae and *diuae*, although theirs is an unusual example. Victoria, the mother of the emperor Victorinus, appears to have been a very powerful figure not only during the reign of her son but

⁶ *RIC* 4.2 Paulina with p. 135; *ILS* 492. Murder: Zon. 12.16. See also Amm. 14.1.8, who claims that Maximinus' wife was a moderating influence.

⁷ Tranquillina: *RIC* 4.3 Tranquillina; *ILS* 502-504. Severa: *RIC* 4.3 Severa; *ILS* 505-507, 509-510, 513. Etruscilla: *RIC* 4.3 Etruscilla; *ILS* 521.

⁸ *RIC* 4.3 Supera with p. 193.

⁹ Salonina: *RIC* 5.1 Salonina; *ILS* 548, 551-552; *AE* 1982.272; *IGRR* 3.237. Mariniana: *RIC* 5.1 Mariniana with p. 27; *PIR*² E 39; Mennen (2011) 102.

¹⁰ Dryantilla: *RIC* 5.2 Dryantilla with pp. 575-577.

¹¹ Zenobia as Augusta: *CIG* 4503b; Milne (1933) 104 no. 4353; *RIC* 5.2 Zenobia 1-2. The authenticity of the Zenobian coinage has been questioned: e.g. Mattingly (1936) 113. Severina: *RIC* 5.1 Severina; *ILS* 587; *AE* 1930.150.

¹² On this issue, see Watson (1999) 109-116, 224-225.

¹³ *RIC* 5.2 Urbica; *ILS* 610. Percentage: Hekster (2014) 15; (2015) 283.

also during that of the Tetrici.¹⁴ Moreover, it is possible that a triple portrait on an aureus celebrating the *aeternitas* of the emperor Postumus depicts his wife and two sons (*RIC* 5.2 Postumus 18), although the unreliable *Historia Augusta* alone attributes to him a son (*Tyr. Trig.* 4).¹⁵ As for Carausius and Allectus, again, neither promoted Augustae or *diuae*, although certain coins may celebrate a marriage of the former.¹⁶ None of these emperors ruled for extended periods of time, and thus we cannot draw conclusions about their dynastic intentions. But when one considers that nearly every third-century emperor up to Gallienus (253-268) honoured certain female relatives as Augustae or *diuae*, and that they did this despite their short reigns, including Aemilian and Regalianus, who both ruled for less than a year, the contrasting pattern during the later third century deserves comment. From the 260s onwards, it was no longer guaranteed that an Augustus would pair himself with an Augusta.

5.2. *The Representation of Women 284-306*

As we have seen, the four original Tetrarchs all had wives and daughters, and marriage alliances were among the connections that bound the emperors to one another. Indeed, the Caesars were married to the (step)daughters of their respective Augusti, and the eastern and western regimes were bound partly through the marriage of Maximian's son Maxentius and Galerius' daughter Maximilla. But in considering the representation of imperial women in media, how does the reign of Diocletian compare with earlier periods? To begin with coinage, it should first be recalled that Tetrarchic coinage received some direction from the administrations of the Augusti. For example, from 294 until c. 300, every mint in the empire issued coins with the reverse legend *Genio Populi Romani* as their standard bronze coin, which, as previously noted, suggests that the type was centrally directed, whether that means by the administration of the first-ranking Augustus Diocletian or by agreement of both Augusti.¹⁷ Women are absent from coins for much of the Tetrarchic period. From 284 to 308, none of the Tetrarchic women was celebrated on coins

¹⁴ Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33.14; Drinkwater (1987) 39-40, 184-186. Cf. *RIC* 5.2, pp. 326-327, on the notion that Victoria's portrait was used for the numismatic portraits of Victory, a notion that the authors rightly find doubtful. She makes historically dubious and fictional appearances in the *Historia Augusta: Gall.* 16.1, *Tyr. Trig.* 1.1, 5.3, 6.3, 7.1, 24.1, 25.1, 30.1, 23, 31, *Claud.* 4.4; with Drinkwater 65-67.

¹⁵ *RIC* 5.2 p. 333.

¹⁶ Williams (2004) 66-67.

¹⁷ Sutherland (1963) 15-16; Kolb (1987) 124; Rees (1993) 189.

as Augusta or *diua*, and until 307, no imperial woman appears on a coin in any capacity. Likewise, Tetrarchic coins did not celebrate the marriage alliances of the rulers.¹⁸

The imperial women are also absent from the surviving panegyrics, which took cues from imperial self-representation. Imperial marriage does appear within the panegyric of 289, where, as discussed in Chapter 1.4, the orator appears to celebrate Constantius' marriage to Theodora (10(2).11.4): *Tu quidem certe, imperator, tantum esse in concordia bonum statuis, ut etiam eos qui circa te potissimo funguntur officio necessitudine tibi et adfinitate deuinxeris, ...* ('You in truth, Emperor, consider there to be so much good in harmony that you have also bound to yourself through friendship and marriage even those who perform the highest office in your entourage, ...').¹⁹ But the Tetrarchic women themselves consistently go unmentioned in the four Latin panegyrics preserved from the reign of Diocletian.²⁰ Panegyric as a genre was admittedly focussed on its male subject and not the subject's family members. Other speeches also ignore female kin, and although Pliny dedicates paragraphs 83-84 of his panegyric to Trajan's wife Plotina and sister Marciana, he renders them subservient extensions of the emperor.²¹ Nevertheless, it is notable that the absence of women within the Tetrarchic panegyrics accords with their absence from coinage.

The imperial women of this period make sporadic appearances in the other literary sources, and it is perhaps significant that there is little in the way of reliable information. Lactantius claims that Galerius' mother Romula was born north of the Danube and that she was a worshipper of 'mountain deities', for whom she offered daily sacrifices and made sacrificial banquets for *uiciani* ('peasants') (*DMP* 11.1).²² He then claims that she was a major influence behind Galerius' enthusiasm for the persecution of the Christians (11.2). This may well have been the case, but it should be remembered that Lactantius wished to vilify the persecutor Galerius as a savage barbarian. For Lactantius, Romula was an extension of her son.²³ The author also claims that Diocletian forced his wife Prisca and daughter Galeria Valeria to sacrifice (*DMP*

¹⁸ For catalogues of the coins of this period, see *RIC* 5.2 and 6.

¹⁹ A reference to Constantius' marriage: Barnes (1982) 125-26; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 70-71 n. 38; Leadbetter (1998b) 75-77; Kuhoff (2001) 119; De Trizio (2009) 111-112 (tentatively); Leadbetter (2009) 60-61.

²⁰ *Paneg.* 8(5)-11(3).

²¹ Roche (2002) 47-51. Cf. however Eus. *VC* 3.41.1-47.3 on Helena. Note also that Menander Rhetor, 370.9-28 recommends that panegyrists reference family members if they are distinguished.

²² Moreau (1954) 267-268 suggests that these deities were Silvanus, Diana and Liber Pater.

²³ Harries (2012) 255; (2014) 201.

15.1), but he likewise relates this to vilify a persecutor. Lactantius (*DMP* 9.9) and the *Epitome de Caesaribus* (40.16) relate that Galerius claimed that he was born divine since Romula had slept with a god, and Lactantius identifies the god as Mars. An explicit claim of divine parentage is unlikely, since it would have been unique for a Roman emperor, but it is plausible that Galerius promoted a connection between his birth and Mars, since Mars was one of the regime's protector gods, and Diocletian and Maximian had suggested a special connection to Jupiter and Hercules with the *signa* Jovius and Herculus.²⁴ Nevertheless, Lactantius narrates this story to disparage Galerius as hubristic, and thus preserves a distorted version of events.²⁵ As for the women of the west, the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* reports that Constantine, following his victory over Maxentius, made his enemy's mother Eutropia confess that Maxentius was the son of a Syrian (4.12). As we have seen, the illegitimate birth of Maxentius may be a fiction that was disseminated by Constantine's court.²⁶ The dearth of reliable biographical information perhaps suggests that the imperial women did not enjoy a strong public profile.²⁷ This impression should not allow us to oversimplify the matter. If Eutropia was the ex-wife of Hannibalianus (see *Theodora* in the Appendix), her influence was in some way responsible for the fact that Hannibalianus became the name of both a son and grandson of Constantius.²⁸ But if women were excluded from both coins and panegyrics, perhaps they were rather invisible to the public.²⁹ The treatment of Tetrarchic women within the other literary sources matches our expectations in this respect.

One can potentially date two statue bases for Tetrarchic women to the years 284-306, and they are significant for what they reveal. At Salona, Diocletian's place of birth, a very large statue base was found inscribed with *Aureliae | Priscae | nobilissimae | feminae*.³⁰ Prisca's statue

²⁴ Divine ancestors and companions in the Roman Empire: Hekster (2015) 239-275. Divine filiation within the Tetrarchic regime: Neri (2013) 661. Mars as protector god: Kuhoff (2001) 135; see also Kolb (1987) 168-169 n. 498.

²⁵ It is notable that Galerius' palace at Romuliana is decorated with representations associated with Dionysus, Hercules and Asclepius, who were all begotten by a god lying with a mortal woman (Srejović (1994a) 303). However, their representation may be solely linked to Galerius' deification, since they were all admitted into the ranks of the gods.

²⁶ Ch. 2.1.

²⁷ Harries (2012) 257-258.

²⁸ Harries (2014) 201. Eutropia later found revived importance as a Christian during Constantine's reign (Lenski (2004)).

²⁹ Harries (2014) 200.

³⁰ Published by Jeličić-Radonić (2009) 311-314.

seems to have originally been in a temple to Jupiter, and thus was probably erected as part of the imperial cult.³¹ It was presumably fitting to honour Diocletian's wife in his place of birth, but its uniqueness may suggest that statues of Prisca were not a common phenomenon. There are also tondi on the interior frieze of Diocletian's mausoleum at Split that Delbrück interprets as the emperor and Prisca.³² The relief of the woman is idealized and lacks individual features, but the mausoleum would of course be an appropriate place to display Prisca's image, regardless of commemorative practice elsewhere.³³

The second statue base is one of a pair that has already been discussed in Chapter 2.5. On two inscribed bases found near Rome, Romulus honours his father Maxentius and his mother Maximilla, the daughter of Galerius (*ILS* 666-667).³⁴ The base of the latter celebrates her maternal virtues:

dominae matri | Val. Maximillae | nob. fem., | Val. Romulus c. p., | pro amore | adfectionis eius, |
matri carissimae

To my mistress mother Valeria Maximilla, noblest woman, Valerius Romulus, boy of senatorial rank, out of love for her affection, [dedicated] to a most dear mother.

Domina is used in the sense of 'mistress of the household', since Maxentius is likewise *dominus* and not yet an emperor (*domino patri* | *M. Val. Maxentio* | *uiro claris.*). Like Prisca, Maximilla is titled *nobilissima femina*.

It is significant that the Prisca and Maximilla statues honour the dedicatees as *nobilissima femina* rather than Augusta. These are the earliest examples of the title, and there is thus no direct precedent. In the third and fourth centuries, the superlative *nobilissimus* was given to Caesars, and in the third century, junior-ranking Augusti were sometimes honoured with both *nobilissimus Caesar* and Augustus.³⁵ *Nobilissimus Caesar* thus indicated juniority within the

³¹ Jeličić-Radonić (2009) 314.

³² Delbrück (1932) 61; followed by Cambi (1976) 27.

³³ Jeličić-Radonić (2009) 313-314 questions the identification.

³⁴ *ILS* 666-667 = *CIL* 14.2825-2826.

³⁵ Kienast (2011) 166-325; see also Barnes (1982) 17-23. Dual title: Pflaum (1966/67) 180; Peachin (1990) *passim*; Leadbetter (1998a) 222-224; but cf. *P.Corn.* 12, in which Carus, Carinus and Numerian are together ἐπιφανέστατοι Κάϊσαρες Εὐσεβεῖς Εὐτυχεῖς Σεβαστοί. See also Zos. 2.39.2, who says that Constantine appointed his sons to the rank of the *nobilissimate* (νοβελισσίου).

imperial college. If we compare *nobilissimus Caesar* and Augustus with *nobilissima femina* and Augusta, it should follow that *nobilissima femina* did not rank in status as highly as Augusta. To be sure, the Augusti therefore gave certain women a title that associated them with the Caesars and thus honoured their familial associations with the emperors. But if we consider this new title alongside the near-absence of women within media and the absence of the title Augusta, it is apparent that *nobilissima femina* was a substitute title that enabled the continued honouring of imperial women, as was customary, while the Augusti withheld from them Augustan status. Indeed, it may even be the case that the Tetrarchs invented the title.³⁶

To recapitulate, from the accession of Diocletian in 284 to the accession of Constantine in 306, the imperial women do not appear on coinage, they are absent from the surviving panegyrics, they may not have had a great public presence, and based on the available titulature, they were *nobilissimae feminae* rather than Augustae. It should also be noted that, as far as we can tell, the women did not receive the *signa* Jovia and Herculia, and there are no known family portraits from the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, but rather portrayals of the imperial college.³⁷ Therefore, in media the imperial women were nearly invisible, and their status was below that of an empress.

5.3. A Case of Deliberate Exclusion?

While Tetrarchic scholars have been silent on the nature of the term *nobilissima femina*, the absence of imperial women from Tetrarchic coins and panegyrics, and the absence of the term Augusta, has been previously recognized.³⁸ How one interprets this apparent demotion is less clear, but before one considers imperial self-representation with respect to women, one should again remember that the First Tetrarchy did not consist of a single imperial government under Diocletian's absolute control. Although the empire was officially undivided, each Tetrarch had his own army, court and the ability to legislate, and Maximian had his own palatine secretaries

³⁶ See below (Ch. 5.4) for later examples of this title. It is also worth noting that eventually, in 406, an imperial law referred to *prouincias nobilissimarum puellarum filiarum* (CTh 10.25.1).

³⁷ Women and the *signa*: Seston (1946) 218.

³⁸ Kolb (1987) 93-94, 142; Clauss (2002) 340-343; Eck (2006) 326-327; Carlà (2012) 65; Harries (2014) 200; Hekster (2014) 15; (2015) 282-283, 293, 313-314.

and praetorian prefect. But as previously discussed, Diocletian was the senior-ranking Augustus and a ruler with considerable *auctoritas*. He enjoyed varying degrees of influence over the other Tetrarchs, and he could establish policies that were followed to different extents throughout the empire; e.g. his first persecution decree against the Christians. One should bear in mind that the Tetrarchs were individual emperors who did not necessarily act in concord, but if unity in self-representation is detectable, the *auctoritas* of Diocletian would be a plausible reason for this.³⁹

One can view the lesser representation and status of the Diocletianic women in one of two ways: 1) The Tetrarchs continued a late third-century trend of lesser representation; 2) The Tetrarchs deliberately excluded women from their self-representation because of a distinctly Tetrarchic or Diocletianic conception of emperorship. To begin with the former, if the lesser emphasis on women in the years preceding Diocletian was deliberate, one might postulate a connection to the military. Harries suggests that, during the late third and early fourth centuries, military ethos resulted in less power for imperial women, and as we have seen, from 268 onwards, military professionals mostly occupied the position of emperor, which also continued to be plagued by military rebellion.⁴⁰ It is thus likely that these emperors were more influenced by the ethos of the camps than their senatorial predecessors. As discussed in Chapter 3, military culture was actively masculine, and women were believed to have a softening and destructive effect on the discipline and hardship of camp life. Indeed, it was considered better that magistrates allotted a province not be accompanied by their wives. Perhaps similar concerns led to a reduced number of Augustae. However, one must bear in mind the strong possibility that the absence of Augustae during the reigns of Tetricus, Probus and others was not a result of dynastic policy, but an accident. We do not know if these emperors had living wives, and since they did not enjoy long reigns, they may well have died before they could marry or find a suitable *Augusta/diua*.

On the other hand, the absence of Augustae for the entirety of the twenty-year reign of Diocletian and Maximian must reflect the will of one or both emperors, and this must have been governed by a particular view of emperorship. Despite the lesser emphasis on women during the

³⁹ The governance of the Tetrarchic empire: Corcoran (2000a), esp. 75-94 (palatine secretaries), 266-274 (the powers of the lesser Tetrarchs). The Praetorian Prefecture: Barnes (1996) 546-548. The influence of Diocletian: Ch. 2.4.

⁴⁰ Harries (2012) 257-258; (2014) 200, 202, 212-213.

later third century, an absence of empresses had not become the new norm. Gallienus had Salonina, the militaristic Aurelian had Severina, and Carinus had Urbica. Whereas Carinus had a multitude of coins minted for Urbica, his immediate successor Diocletian had none minted for Prisca, and since Livia became Augusta in 14, the empire had never seen an emperor rule for twenty years without making an Augusta. Therefore, Diocletian did not follow a new norm, but chose to avoid making empresses. Perhaps he and certain previous emperors delayed or avoided making empresses because of a shared view of military emperors, but alternatively Diocletian was driven by other considerations, in which case the lesser number of empresses in the 260s and 270s, if it influenced Diocletian's emperors, simply ensured that he did not feel immediately obliged to create Augustae.

It is ultimately likely that the Tetrarchs' ongoing exclusion of women and their repeated rejection of hereditary norms were related. Other scholars have postulated such a connection. For Seston, Diocletian was desirous to strengthen the weakened authority of the emperors by establishing the emperor as a divine representative. Because of this and the impression that the imperial college was in some way a meritocracy, Diocletian promoted the idea that the emperors were chosen by Jupiter for their qualities. The imperial college was a divine family whose membership was decided by merit, and in accordance with this, family members who were not emperors did not enjoy divine links.⁴¹ Kolb likewise argues that Diocletian wished to promote a meritocracy and endow the emperors with an aura of divinity, and thus presented the Tetrarchy as a divine and exclusive imperial family that did not include the sons and women.⁴² Hekster similarly views the Tetrarchic presentation of women as part of a broader kinshipless representation of power.⁴³ I agree that the exclusion of women and sons together constituted a presentation of power based around co-option and not blood. Marriage alliances and adoption were important to Tetrarchic co-option, but the exclusion of sons and women attests a regime in which familial connection alone could not guarantee succession if other candidates were deemed more suitable. However, I will go further and posit that Diocletian excluded women to make easier his exclusion of natural-born sons.

⁴¹ Seston (1946) 209-30.

⁴² Kolb (1987) 93-94, 142.

⁴³ Hekster (2014) 15; (2015) 282-283, 293, 313-314; see also Clauss (2002) 340-343.

Regardless of what Diocletian and Galerius desired for the succession events, Maximian and Constantius had the eldest sons, Maxentius and Constantine, and it should not surprise if they wished them to succeed, in accordance with centuries of imperial practice. Indeed, as I demonstrated in Chapter 4.3, there is possible evidence for this. The panegyric delivered to Maximian in 289 treats Maxentius as if he is to succeed to the purple, and Constantine appears to have been betrothed at a young age to his future second wife Fausta.⁴⁴ The succession event in 305 was also controversial in other ways, since Maximian had to follow Diocletian into an unprecedented retirement, and Constantius had to accept an imperial college in which both Caesars were partisans of Galerius.⁴⁵

Diocletian surely thought it possible that trouble would result from the snubbing of sons. But by largely excluding women from imperial self-representation, he established an emperors-only *domus diuina* whose membership was not determined solely by family but was subject to imperial selection. As discussed in Chapter 2.5, coins and official inscriptions also did not celebrate kinship links, and the only inscriptions to mention the sons before their taking power, Romulus' dedications to his mother and father, treat Maxentius and Romulus as *clarissimi*. Indeed, visual depictions of the imperial college do not display a family in any traditional sense, but rather four adult men who rule the world in fraternal harmony and who are partially removed from the mortal realm.⁴⁶ Furthermore, as long as Eutropia and Theodora were not Augustae, Augustan honours were not accorded the bearers of Maxentius and Constantius' sons, and while Diocletian might deny the sons of Maximian and Constantius the title of Augustus, he likewise denied his own wife and daughter the title of Augusta.⁴⁷ Such a representation of rule gave Diocletian the ideological basis with which to co-opt new rulers without necessarily deferring to hereditary norms. Therefore, Diocletian used his seniority and influence to direct the media produced by the imperial governments, and in doing so advertised to his colleagues and subjects a new kind of imperial college. By minimizing honours for Eutropia, Diocletian was better able

⁴⁴ Dynastic sentiments: *Paneg.* 10(2).14.1-2; *Paneg.* 8(5).19.4-20.1. Betrothal: *Paneg.* 7(6).6.1-7.1; *Jul. Or.* 1.7c-d.

⁴⁵ Partisans: Lact. *DMP* 18.11-15, 20.4; *Origo* 4.9; Eutr. 10.2; Oros. 7.25.16; Soc. *HE* 1.2.1; *Chron. Min.* 1.447 (*Prosp. Ep. Chron.*); *Chron. Pasch.* 517. Sources claim that Maximian was reluctant to abdicate: *Paneg.* 6(7).15.6; Lact. *DMP* 26.7; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.48; Eutr. 9.27, 10.2; Oros. 7.25.14. This claim may be retrospective (Kolb (1987) 145; Kuhoff (2001) 302).

⁴⁶ Rees (1993); Boschung & Eck (2006); Hekster (2015) 277-314. See also Jones & McFadden (2015) on the Tetrarchic frescoes in Luxor.

⁴⁷ Cf. Kolb (1987) 94, who asserts that the absence of women from the *domus diuina* made co-option through adoption mandatory.

to overlook the child Maxentius in 293. By continuing to minimize the role of women within the *domus diuina* after this time, Diocletian better maintained the flexibility to choose successors as he saw fit. However, the evidence for dynastic sympathies within the panegyrics of the western emperors shows that hereditary interests did not die so easily.

5.4. *Tetrarchic Empresses 307-311*

With the accession of Constantine, the importance of women to imperial self-representation began to increase. The last years of the Tetrarchy were replete with power struggles between emperors, and imperial claimants used whatever claims to legitimacy could be invoked to gain an advantage over their rivals, including dynastic credentials.⁴⁸ Early in this process, on the occasion of his marriage to Maximian's daughter Fausta in 307, Constantine minted coins for his new wife, who appeared on the obverse with the title *nobilissima femina* and with Venus Felix on the reverse. In promoting his marriage, Constantine advertised an alliance strengthened through marital ties and he promised a stable succession.⁴⁹ This was a radical departure from what had happened during the First Tetrarchy. However, it is worth noting that the monetary effort was tepid, with only a single very rare silver issue minted at Trier.⁵⁰

The marital alliance of Constantine and Maximian received more detailed endorsement in a panegyric delivered to the two emperors at Constantine's court on the occasion of the wedding.⁵¹ The speech is largely a celebration of the dynasty being forged by the two emperors, but it is curious that the speaker gives little attention to Fausta herself.⁵² Despite the nuptial context, the orator never describes Fausta nor praises her attributes, and he does not refer to her by name. The speaker admittedly describes a painting of the couple and relates how the painter conveyed their love for one another (7(6).6). In this context, the speaker addresses the husband

⁴⁸ Carlà (2012); Hekster (2015) 287-296.

⁴⁹ *RIC* 6 Trier 756.

⁵⁰ On its rarity, see Warmington (1974) 374, who views the reason for its rarity to be Constantine's lukewarm commitment to his alliance; Carlà (2012) 71, who concludes that Constantine's new coins were not very revolutionary; Hekster (2015) 290, who notes that Constantine's adherence to Tetrarchic (kinshipless) presentations of power explains the issue's rarity.

⁵¹ *Paneg.* 7(6).

⁵² *Dynasty*: E.g. 2.1-5. On this panegyric, see Grünwald (1990) 25-34; Nixon (1993); Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 178-210; Rees (2002) 153-184.

and wife (6.5). But this is the only time that the panegyrist addresses Fausta.⁵³ Her representation thus accorded with the limited acknowledgment she received on coins.

Fausta's actions during the Tetrarchic period are a mystery. Reporting on events in 310, Lactantius relates that Maximian was pardoned by Constantine after a failed usurpation, and that Maximian then plotted against Constantine's life. In doing so, Maximian sought help from Fausta, who subsequently foiled his plan by revealing it to her husband (*DMP* 29.3-30.6). Although Eutropius (10.3) and Zosimus (2.11) also report that Fausta revealed a plot by her father to Constantine, no other source records both a usurpation and an assassination attempt, and the panegyric in 310 only records the former (6(7).14-20). Therefore, the story is probably a Constantinian fiction that emphasizes the duplicity of Maximian.⁵⁴

Despite the elusiveness of Fausta, we can conclude that Constantine briefly ignored the Tetrarchic manner of representing women in order to promote his dynastic alliance. This was a precursor to later Constantinian self-representations, since, as we will see below, from the late 310s to the late 320s, coinage honoured both Fausta and Helena with the titles *nobilissima femina* and later Augusta. But by the time this happened, Galerius had already completely broken with the Tetrarchic pattern. From 308 until Galerius' death in 311, the mints of Siscia, Serdica, Thessalonica, Heraclea, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antioch and Alexandria, that is, those under Galerius and his subordinate Maximinus, systematically produced coins that depict Galerius' wife (and Diocletian's daughter) Galeria Valeria on the obverse and Venus Victrix on the reverse. Moreover, these coins honour Valeria not as *nobilissima femina*, but as Augusta.⁵⁵ Since it appears to have been the norm that Tetrarchic women were titled *nobilissima femina*, it is likely that Valeria used the title Augusta only from 308 onwards. Through coinage and titulature, Galerius thus challenged the dynastic self-promotion of Maximian and Constantine by celebrating his marital connection to Diocletian.⁵⁶

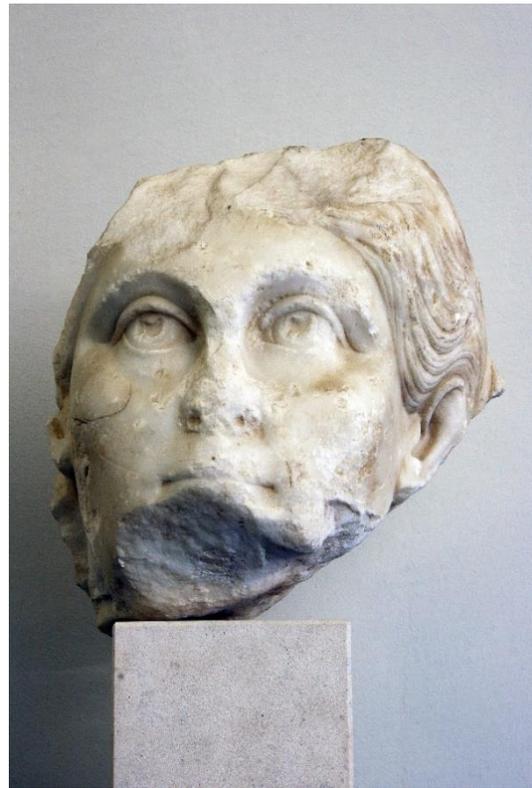
⁵³ See also Rees (2002) 168; Hekster (2015) 313-314.

⁵⁴ Barnes (1973) 41-42. Other sources on the fall of Maximian: Eus. *HE* 8.13.15, Append. 3; *Chron. Min.* 1.231 (*Des. Cons.*); Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40.22; *Epit.* 40.5. Byzantine authors believed that Fausta enticed Constantine, early in his reign, to follow the pagan religion (Scutariotes 44; Zon. 13.1).

⁵⁵ E.g. *RIC* 6 Serdica 32-34, 41-43. Dates: Bruun (1979).

⁵⁶ Bruun (1979) 259-260, 274; Stefan (2005) 340-341; Donciu (2012) 102; Hekster (2014) 19. But cf. Carlà (2012) 71, 74, who rightly doubts that the recognition of Valeria was specifically responding to the Fausta issue of coin.

The representation of Valeria in media was not confined to coins. Aurelius Victor (*Caes.* 40.9-10) reports that Galerius named the Pannonian province of Valeria in honour of his wife, after clearing forests and draining Lake Pelso, and Ammianus likewise states that the province was named after Diocletian's daughter (19.11.4).⁵⁷ Victor dates this development to the period when coins were being minted for Valeria, since he narrates that these events happened after the emperor's invasion of Italy (307) and the co-option of Licinius (November 308), and that Galerius died afterwards (311).⁵⁸



Figs. 1-2. Portraits of Tetrarchic imperial women (?) from Salona, the Archaeological Museum in Split. Photos: Archaeological Museum in Split.

⁵⁷ See also *Lat. Ver.*, fol. 255, verso 16 (Barnes (1982) 203).

⁵⁸ For Barnes (1982) 223, the province of Valeria cannot predate 299, since Galerius was not based in the Balkans until this time. Srejšović (1994a) 298 dates the naming of the province to 296 without providing a reason, and he suggests that Galerius named the province to thank his wife for having adopted Candidianus, noting that Candidianus was born in 295/6. It is notable that the African province of Byzacena, which was created during the First Tetrarchy, was also named Valeria since the reign of Diocletian (*CIL* 8.23179; Barnes 168). The province may well have been named Valeria in order to invoke the *nomen* Valerius, which was shared by all of the Tetrarchs. After all, the nomenclature of *provinciae* was feminine. It is less likely that Valeria herself was being invoked, since her western counterpart Theodora did not receive any such honour with regard to an eastern province.

Three statue bases dedicated to Valeria have been found in Phrygian Apamea (*ILS* 8932), Teos in Asia (*IGRR* 4.1562) and Thebes in Achaëa (*IG* 7.2503). The Phrygian base, dedicated by the *praeses* of Pisidia, describes her as ‘our mistress Galeria Valeria, most sacred and most pious Augusta and mother of the camp’ (*d. n. Gal. Valeriae | sacratissimae | ac piissimae Aug. | matrique castrorum*), and the Asian example gives a similar formulation (τὴν κυρίαν ἡμῶν | Γαλερ. Οὐαλερίαν | εὐσεβε[στ]άτην | Σ[ε]βαστ[ή]ν], μητέ[ρα | κάστρων]). Likewise, the Theban example, which was dedicated by the *polis*, refers to Valeria as ‘our mistress’ and ‘mother of the camp’ (δέσποιναν ἡμῶν | τὴν Γαλ. Βαλεριαν | [μητέ]ρα κάστρων). If the coins that honour Valeria as Augusta indicate when she held the title, these statues constitute further traces of her enhanced representation from 308 onwards.⁵⁹ Also noteworthy are two marble portraits from Salona (Figs. 1-2). They share the Scheitelzopf hairstyle characteristic of Valeria’s coin portrait and in fashion during the Tetrarchic period, and they have sustained deliberate damage to the face, which suggests the importance of the women depicted. Their youth may suggest Valeria.⁶⁰

Valeria also appears as a tondo coupled with one of Galerius on the front of the so-called Small Arch of Galerius in Thessaloniki. The portrait now shows the city’s Tyche, wearing the typical mural crown, but there are marks of recutting around the head (Fig. 3). This indicates that the portrait was refashioned, presumably for political reasons, and the original image appears to have had a fuller hairstyle. The original portrait thus should have been of Valeria. A Persian supports each tondo, a reference to Galerius’ victory over Narseh in c. 298, and the arch itself was inserted into a peristyle wall within the imperial palace.⁶¹

Unlike other Tetrarchic women, Valeria Augusta appears on milestones. One such milestone found near Hermokapeleia in Lydia and dated to 308-310 includes ‘Galeria Valeria most sacred (?) Augusta’ (Γαλ. [Οὐα]λερίαν θιοτάτην (?) Αὐγούσταν) alongside the senior Augusti Diocletian and Maximian, the Augusti Galerius and Licinius and the *fili Augustorum* Maximinus and Constantine (*AE* 1979.602a), this being a rank created by Galerius that was superior to Caesar. She is listed after the Augusti and before Maximinus and Constantine, and so

⁵⁹ On these statues, see also Davenport (2014) 52.

⁶⁰ Jeličić-Radonić (2009) 314-315. Wegner (L’Orange & Unger (1984) 140-141, 151) catalogues certain statue portraits that have been identified as Tetrarchic imperial women, but which have not been included here because of the very flimsy grounds on which these identifications are based. Wegner too recognizes the fragile nature of these identifications.

⁶¹ Kiilerich (2014) 63.

the milestone attributes to her a superior status to that of the junior Tetrarchs. In contrast, a building inscription from Kabyle in Thrace and dated to the same period lists Valeria (βασι|λίσσης ἡμῶν Γαλερίας Οὐαλ[ερίας...]) after the Augusti Galerius and Licinius and Caesars Maximinus and Constantine (*SEG* 42.646). A milestone from Beirut in Maximinus' territory and dated to 310/1 lists Valeria (*Valeriae Augus[tae] | ma]tri castroru[m]*) after the same four rulers, now all Augusti.⁶²



Fig. 3. Head of Valeria/Tyche, Small Arch of Galerius, the Archaeological Museum in Thessaloniki. Photo: Bente Kiilerich.

The combined evidence of coinage, literature, inscriptions and statues thus shows that Valeria received multiple honours from both her husband and their subjects. Galerius promoted Valeria by making her Augusta, by having his mints produce coins for her and by naming a province after her, and their subjects responded with statues and inscriptions honouring their

⁶² Mouterde (1908/09) 538-539 no. 3.

empress. Furthermore, Valeria was apparently the only Tetrarchic woman to receive the title Augusta, and it is notable that Lactantius, when discussing women, attributes the title to her alone (*DMP* 39.1, 40.2, 41.1).⁶³

Valeria's elevated importance was not overlooked by Licinius and Maximinus, who both sought her as a wife following Galerius' death. Not only was she the daughter of Diocletian and former wife of Galerius, but she was now highly visible within imperial media. According to Lactantius, Galerius had placed Valeria in the *manus*, the legal power, of Licinius (*DMP* 35.3), but after she refused a marriage proposal from this emperor (50.5), she and her mother Prisca moved to the court of Maximinus, who already had a wife (Anonymous 3 in the Appendix) (39.2). Nevertheless, Maximinus offered to divorce his wife to marry Valeria, and when she rejected the offer, Maximinus sent mother and daughter into desert exile (39, 41, 50.5). While Lactantius wished to depict Maximinus as a rapacious tyrant, this *topos* did not govern his depiction of Licinius.⁶⁴ The story thus appears to be historical.

Valeria's death is perhaps a testament to her recognisability. Lactantius reports that Licinius, after defeating Maximinus, had the sons of Galerius, Maximinus and Severus executed, as well as Maximinus' wife and daughter (Anonymous 4 in the Appendix). Women were targets because anyone who married them could claim the emperorship or sire someone with such a claim. Valeria and Prisca took up disguises and fled to avoid this fate, but in 314 they were executed when, so Lactantius claims, Valeria was recognized in Thessalonica (*DMP* 50-51).

It remains to examine one more woman from this period; Galerius' mother Romula, who is, in fact, the only mother of the original four Tetrarchs whom we can reliably name (see Appendix). Maxentius' son Romulus may have been named after Romula, but of greater interest is Romuliana, a palatial complex of Galerius in Dacia Ripensis.⁶⁵ The *Epitome de Caesaribus* relates that Galerius re-named the place in which he was born and would eventually be buried as Romulianum after his mother (40.16).⁶⁶ Excavations near Gamzigrad in Serbia have revealed a

⁶³ See also *DMP* 39.4 (*illius nominis ac loci feminam*).

⁶⁴ Rapacious: 32, 36-41.

⁶⁵ Romulus and Romula: Cullhed (1994) 16; Hekster (2014) 18. Cf. the idea that he was named Romulus because of Maxentius' *urbs*-based ideology: Rees (1993) 197; Cambi (2004) 43-44; Lenski (2006) 63. These possibilities need not be mutually exclusive: Hekster (1999) 726; Potter (2013) 132, 327 n. 6. Leadbetter (2009) 142 views Romulus as a portentous name since his birth united the Jovian and Herculan dynasties.

⁶⁶ 40.16: *Ortus Dacia Ripensi ibique sepultus est; quem locum Romulianum ex uocabulo Romulae matris appellarat.*

Tetrarchic palatial complex, and an archivolt found within the complex includes the inscription *Felix Romuliana*.⁶⁷ On the Magura hilltop overlooking the complex, the mausoleum of Galerius and the smaller mausoleum of a family member have been identified along with the tumulus memorials of their consecration, similarly differentiated in size. The site was constructed in two broad phases. Through building materials, the techniques of construction and the fashioning of architectural elements, the earlier fortifications and a temple are chronologically associated with the mausoleum and consecration memorial of the family member, whereas the later fortifications and a larger temple are temporally linked with those of Galerius. The first phase of building is dated to between 294 at the earliest, based on coinage, and the post-abdication years of the Tetrarchy at the latest, since relief decorations of the later fortifications depict six emperors: the retired Augusti, the Augusti and the Caesars.⁶⁸ The family member is probably a parent, since Galerius' wife and children were still alive during the period of construction and died in circumstances unfavourable to such a burial. Furthermore, the *Felix Romuliana* archivolt and another archivolt with an erased inscription, found near the main gate of the later fortifications, suggest that the family member is Romula, for they are decorated with peacocks, the traditional symbol of female apotheosis, and an ivy wreath that should be interpreted as the *corona laurea funeraria*.⁶⁹ *Felix* in this context belongs to the charismatic and ritual sphere. It thus appears that the complex was established in the first instance as a residence for Romula and then as her burial place. Galerius then continued to associate himself closely with his birthplace and mother by developing the complex to be his intended retirement palace and place of burial, and he established his mausoleum and consecration memorial directly next to those of his mother.⁷⁰

Romula's consecration memorial and the archivolts suggest that she was deified. Indeed, whereas the larger temple is opposite the mausoleum and tumulus of Galerius, the older and smaller temple is opposite that of Romula, which may suggest that it served as a temple to the imperial mother (although the presence of a *fossa sanguinis* may suggest that Cybele was also

⁶⁷ *Felix Romuliana*: Srejšović & Vasić (1994a) 128 fig. 4.

⁶⁸ On these reliefs, see Srejšović (1994c) 145-146.

⁶⁹ Peacocks and female apotheosis: E.g. Anđelković, Rogić & Nikolić (2010) 233-238.

⁷⁰ Galerius' intention to retire: Lact. *DMP* 20.4. The Tetrarchic history of Felix Romuliana and its purpose: Srejšović & Vasić (1994a); (1994b) 123-156; Leadbetter (2009) 237-240; Mayer (2014) 120-123. Srejšović (1994a) 299-300 dates the beginning of construction at Romuliana to 298/99, in accordance with a distinctly Galerian ideological program. This is because he dates the story of divine conception and the construction of the Arch of Galerius to this time.

worshipped there).⁷¹ The later fortifications are also decorated with relief ornaments that symbolised immortality: the picking of grapes, intertwined vine and ivy twigs, and *kantharoi*.⁷² The mausoleum indicates inhumation, which suggests that Romula's ceremony of apotheosis was enacted on the site of her consecration tumulus only after her body had been laid in the mausoleum.⁷³ The fact that Romula is the only mother that we can name might suggest that she enjoyed a unique status, and that her deification was unique.⁷⁴

Romula's deification should probably date to the years following the abdications.⁷⁵ Her divine status was incompatible with the representation of women under Diocletian and Maximian, but compatible with Galerius' promotion of Valeria. Just as Galerius wished to promote his marital ties via Valeria, he wished to strengthen his ancestry via Romula. Moreover, we have seen that Lactantius (*DMP* 9.9) and the *Epitome* (40.16) record that Galerius used his mother to claim divine filiation. Again, no other emperor ever made such an explicit claim, and if there is truth to the report, it should be that Galerius promoted or alluded to a connection between his birth and Mars.⁷⁶ Lactantius implies that Galerius promoted his special birth soon after his Persian victory, since the author narrates it as an example of Galerius' subsequent hubris:

Exinde insolentissime agere coepit, ut ex Marte se procreatur et uideri et dici uellet tamquam alterum Romulum maluitque Romulam matrem stupro infamare, ut ipse diis oriundus uideratur.

Thereafter he began to act most arrogantly, insomuch that he wished to be called and be seen as begotten from Mars as if another Romulus, and he preferred to disgrace his mother Romula with dishonour so that he himself might appear born from the gods.

However, Lactantius may not intend complete chronological accuracy here, and may simply mean that Galerius later exploited his victory to claim divine filiation. It is unlikely that Galerius suggested such a relationship while he was Caesar under Diocletian. Diocletian and Maximian

⁷¹ Srejović (1994a); Srejović & Vasić (1994a) 141. Cybele: Srejović, Lalović & Janković (1983) 195.

⁷² Srejović (1994a) 301.

⁷³ Srejović (1994a) 302.

⁷⁴ Srejović (1994a) 303 notes the presence of Dionysus within the decoration of Galerius' palace at Romuliana and on the Arch of Galerius in Thessaloniki, and he suggests that Galerius deified his mother because Dionysus had done the same for his mother Semela.

⁷⁵ Suggested by N. Lenski pers. comm.

⁷⁶ Divine ancestors and companions: Hekster (2015) 239-275.

had implied a special relationship with the gods through the *signa* Jovius and Herculus, but there is no evidence that their mothers were closely affiliated with Jupiter or Hercules, which in any case would have been at odds with the contemporary representation of imperial women. Rather, if Galerius promoted a close connection between his birth and Mars, he probably did so when he was Augustus and when he deified Romula.

I further posit that Romula was deified after Diocletian's abdication and before Valeria's promotion. Despite her divine status, no coins were minted in her honour. We have seen that, before Diocletian, numerous empresses had been honoured on *consecratio* coins as *diua*. Imperial mothers had received this honour, including Domitilla, Plotina and Matidia.⁷⁷ Moreover, in 307/8 Constantine had *consecratio* coins minted for Constantius *Diuus*, between 309 and 312 Maxentius issued such coins for his son Romulus as well as Constantius, Maximian and Galerius, and Maximinus and Licinius honoured Galerius after death in like manner.⁷⁸ Galerius certainly honoured Romula *Diua* within the local context of where she had given birth to Galerius and later spent her old age. One can expect Romula to have been a local benefactor, and in vilifying her paganism, Lactantius provides the circumstantial and believable detail that she had made sacrificial banquets for *uiciani* (*DMP* 11.1). But why should Galerius not have minted *consecratio* coins? Romula's deification plausibly represents the transition between the prior treatment of women and Galerius' promotion of Valeria, much like Constantine's limited promotion of Fausta in 307. Galerius deified his mother with relatively limited publicity, and perhaps did so because he was not yet willing to completely break with the previous representation of the imperial college.

As it happened, however, the deification of Romula, the silver issue for Fausta and the promotion of Valeria did not return imperial women to their former prominence within imperial self-representation. Admittedly, Eusebius relates that Maximinus placed the names of his children on tablets and statues (*HE* 9.11.7), and we know him to have had a son and a daughter (Lact. *DMP* 50.6). Also, as previously noted, later Constantinian media made much effort to promote Fausta and Helena. In 318/9 the mint at Thessalonica minted two series of bronze coins

⁷⁷ Domitilla: *RIC* 2 Titus 69-73, 153-154. Plotina: Hadrian 31. Matidia: Hadrian 423-427.

⁷⁸ Constantine: *RIC* 6 Trier 789-790, Lyons 251, 264-269. Maxentius: Cullhed (1994) 76-78. Galerius: *RIC* 6 Siscia 220-221, 223-224, 226, Thessalonica 48, Alexandria 133, 143, 148, 151, 154, 159.

for these women with the title *nobilissima femina*, and immediately after the defeat of Licinius in 324, coinage and inscriptions empire-wide honoured them both as Augusta until their deaths later in that decade.⁷⁹ Furthermore, in 326/7 the mint at Constantinople issued a bronze type for Constantine's half-sister Constantia as *nobilissima femina*.⁸⁰ However, it is notable that seven years separated Thessalonica's *nobilissima femina* types from the death of Galerius in 311, and that these types were confined to a single mint. Moreover, it is curious that Constantine did not honour his wife and mother as Augusta until he was sole Augustus. Perhaps Valeria's ignoble death had temporarily impacted upon the title's appeal.

On the other hand, it is also notable that the number of Augustae celebrated between Constantine's death in 337 and that of Theodosius in 395 was far below numbers for the first, second and third centuries. From 337 to 340, Constantine's sons again honoured Helena as Augusta, as well as Theodora.⁸¹ From 379 until her death in 386, Theodosius honoured his wife as Aelia Flaccila Augusta.⁸² Constantine's eldest daughter Constantina and Valens' wife Domnica supposedly also took the title Augusta, but only literary sources attest to this.⁸³ While the principle of hereditary succession made a full recovery with the success of Constantine and his dynasty, the same did not apply to the position of Augusta. The factors that governed the attitude of each regime towards the honouring of particular women probably varied, but one wonders if the absence of Augustae for most of the Tetrarchic period made a lasting impact on what was considered the norm. In his satire *The Caesars*, Julian has Marcus Aurelius defend himself before the gods for having deified his wife despite her improprieties. Marcus argues that it was an established if perhaps absurd custom, and that if he had not done so, it would have been deemed almost an injustice (334b-335a). As for Julian himself, despite being a pagan emperor,

⁷⁹ Fausta: (*nobilissima femina*) *RIC* 7 Thessalonica 49, 51; (Augusta) *RIC* 7 London 300, Lyons 235, Trier 443, 459-460, 482-484, Arles 277, 279, 285, 298, 300, 308, Rome 251, 271, 292-294, Ticinum 178, 182, 191, 203-204, Siscia 188, 197, 205, Sirmium 55, 61, Thessalonica 137, 160-162, Heraclea 80, 86, Constantinople 12, Nicomedia 69a, 77-78, 96-97, 130-131, 149-150, Cyzicus 29, 40, 50, Antioch 68-69, 76-77, Alexandria 39-40; *ILS* 710. Helena: (*nobilissima femina*) *RIC* 7 Thessalonica 48, 50, with pp. 493-494; (Augusta) *RIC* 7 London 299, Lyons 234, Trier 458, 465, 481, 508, 515, Arles 278, 299, 307, 317, 324, 340, Rome 248, 250, 291, Ticinum 177, 183, 190, 202, 209, Siscia 187, 196, 204, 218, Sirmium 54, 60, Thessalonica 134, 149, 159, Heraclea 79, 85, 89, 95, 109-110, Constantinople 11, Nicomedia 79-80, 95, 129, 148, 159, Cyzicus 28, 39, 49, 54, Antioch 67, 75, 80, 82, Alexandria 38, 44, 48, 53, 57; *CIL* 10.1483; *ILS* 708-709.

⁸⁰ *RIC* 7 Constantinople 15.

⁸¹ *RIC* 8, pp. 139, 248, 446.

⁸² *PLRE* 1 Flaccila.

⁸³ Constantina: Philost. *HE* 3.22. Domnica: Soc. 4.26.21; Jord. *Rom.* 314.

he did not accord divine honours to his late wife Helena.⁸⁴ An unprecedented 23 years without *diuae*, Augustae or women on coins may have assisted a change in custom.

5.5. Conclusions

In summary, between 284 and 308 the imperial women were not honoured on coins as Augusta or *diua*, they did not appear on coins at all until 307, they are absent from the panegyrics that survive from the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, and based on the available titulature, prior to 308 the imperial women were titled *nobilissima femina* rather than the higher-ranking title of Augusta. During the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, the women were also excluded from depictions of the imperial college and seem to have had a limited public presence. When one considers how this representation of women compares with other regimes of the first, second and third centuries, one must conclude that the Tetrarchs deliberately excluded women from representations of their regime. As with the absence of sons and kinship terms within official media, the Tetrarchic approach to women is best explained by the succession events. Diocletian did not wish to defer to hereditary norms, and he most likely used his seniority and influence to create and maintain a kinshipless representation of the regime so that he had an ideological basis with which to overlook hereditary claims. Following the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian in 305, the exclusion of women came to an end. Galerius deified Romula, albeit without minting *consecratio* coins, and in 307 Constantine minted a rare silver issue for his new wife Fausta, while still honouring her as *nobilissima femina*. Finally, in 308 Galerius made Galeria Valeria Augusta, who subsequently received widespread promotion and honours throughout the empire's east, marking a complete break with the representation of women under Diocletian and Maximian. However, these changes did not return imperial women to their former prominence within imperial self-representation, and one wonders if the absence of Augustae for most of the Tetrarchic period made a lasting impact on imperial custom.

To return to an ongoing theme of this study, to what extent did military politics and the military and provincial instability of the later third century govern the Tetrarchic representation

⁸⁴ *PLRE* 1 Helena 2.

of women? If one argues that the Diocletianic representation of women was determined by military masculinity, then the answer is of course yes, but I find this hypothesis to be unconvincing. If, however, we are to view Diocletian's *domus diuina* as being intimately connected to the succession events, as I have argued, then to some degree military politics must have still been involved. In Chapter 2, I argued that many in the military had become disinterested in blood-based hereditary succession, and that this factor had partly governed the succession events. If this was the case, then imperial women suffered a demotion of sorts because hereditary succession had failed to conjure strong support among the soldiery. If Diocletian and Maximian had overlooked Maxentius in 293 simply because he was a child, a fear of military rebellion would have still swayed this decision, since third-century child emperors had consistently failed to inspire military support. Moreover, the succession event in 305 was tailored to enable Galerius' domination over the imperial college, which, as I have argued, was designed to ensure the college's ongoing cohesion. Again, one suspects that the memory of military and provincial rebellion influenced such an effort. As it happened, however, the arrangement proved misguided, and in the aftermath of its failure, Augustae and *diuae* reappeared in the political landscape.

6. *Virtutibus Fratres*: The Brotherhood of Diocletian and Maximian

Throughout this study, it has been argued that the Tetrarchic dynasty and its self-representation were heavily influenced by the military and the spectre of military rebellion. Diocletian and Maximian created the Tetrarchy as a solution to regional rebellion, especially that of the military, the failure of dynasts against generals in the power struggles of the later third century encouraged Diocletian to ignore hereditary norms in the co-optation of rulers, and Diocletian's unique approach to co-optation influenced the imperial treatment of princes and women. We are thus now in a position to return to the early years of the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, to when the Augusti first sought to express to their subjects the nature of their relationship to one another. It may seem counterintuitive to return to this period after discussing the years that followed, but if one first understands that military issues to a large degree influenced the creation of the Tetrarchy, their dynastic politics and their self-representation, this may help to better understand political issues and issues of self-representation that originated during the less well-documented years of the Dyarchy.

Early in their reign, the Augusti sought to strengthen their rule through reference to the divine. As previously noted, sometime before 289, Diocletian and Maximian adopted the *signa* Jovius and Herculius respectively, evoking the supreme god Jupiter and his heroic son Hercules. It was unprecedented for emperors to adopt theophoric *signa*, and the new names implied a close association with the gods being evoked. Jupiter and Hercules appear on the vast majority of Dyarchic and Tetrarchic coins that honour deities. Jupiter is the most frequently appearing god on coins of the eastern mints, and Hercules the most frequent in the west.¹ An early *aureus* type makes clear the parallelism between the Augusti and their divine counterparts. Illustrated on the reverse are the standing figures of Jupiter and Hercules, clasping hands and accompanied by the legend *Virtus Augg.* Clearly, the image is a divine imagining of Diocletian's relationship with Maximian.² Maximian's panegyrists in 289 and 291 interpret the *signa* in terms of a genetic relationship, in which Hercules is the ancestor of Maximian, and Jupiter that of Diocletian. For both speakers, the emperors possess the qualities of their namesakes, and the speaker in 291 uses the *signa* to effectively equate the emperors with the gods and present the rulers as divine and

¹ Hekster (2015) 298-299.

² *RIC* 5.2 Maximian 432-436; Hekster (2015) 299.

omnipresent.³ The names were also inheritable. Constantius and Severus adopted Herculius, Galerius and Maximinus Jovius, and the panegyrist Eumenius refers to Hercules and Maximian as Constantius' grandfather and father respectively (9(4).8.1). The names themselves are rare on coins, absent from papyri, and appear on almost no imperial pronouncements or other legal sources, the exception being a letter of Jovius Maximinus Augustus quoted by Eusebius (*HE* 9.9a.1). Rees thus wonders whether the *signa* 'were considered too informal or modish for certain media, with a cachet suited only to particular levels of discourse.'⁴ This may be correct, but of the ten confirmed Latin attestations in inscriptions, two can be considered official usages of the *signa*, since they were apparently dedicated by the rulers themselves (with the emperors' names in the nominative), and one formed part of a triumphal arch (*ILS* 634, 659).⁵ Moreover, Hekster notes that the empire-wide distribution of the inscriptions attesting to these *signa*, and their consistency of language, suggests that there was some form of central dissemination.⁶

Aurelius Victor reports that the Augusti took the names after (*postea*) Maximian's campaign against the Bagaudae (285/6) (*Caes.* 39.18). More tellingly, whereas Hercules is absent from coinage produced during the sole reign of Diocletian, from the beginning of Maximian's tenure as Augustus, coins not only depict Hercules, but they portray Maximian with lionskin and club. This suggests that, at the outset of their joint rule as Augusti, Diocletian and Maximian were advertising a close connection to both gods.⁷ The uncertainty surrounding when Maximian became Augustus and when Carausius rebelled means we cannot determine with certainty whether the *signa* were initially a response to the latter, but there are several reasons why the Augusti may have adopted these names, and they need not be mutually exclusive.⁸ It is possible that the *signa* were designed to compensate for a lack of distinguished ancestry. Only

³ On the panegyric treatment of the *signa*, see Rees (2005) 226-235, who shows the diverse ways in which the speakers approached the names. For the panegyrist in 291, the Augusti complement each other, whereas the earlier speaker flirts with the superiority of Herculius.

⁴ Rees (2005) 225 (quotation), 236 n. 25.

⁵ Hekster (2015) 297-298. Other inscriptions: *CIL* 5.8042; *ILS* 621-623, 658, 661, 681, 8930-8931.

⁶ Hekster (2015) 298.

⁷ Kolb (1987) 63-66, using the numismatic analysis of Bastien (1972). Kolb also notes that Perinthus was renamed Heraclea before 13 October 286, which, while not conclusive, does strengthen the impression that the Augusti adopted the *signa* very early in the Dyarchy. Kolb additionally claims that a medallion with the *signa* dates to the beginning of 287, but the medallion's date is uncertain (Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 48-50).

⁸ Uncertain relationship to Carausius: Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 50. Seston ((1946) 222; (1950b) 266 n. 34) dates the adoption of the *signa* to 287 and views them as an attempt to impose a divine order that would exclude Carausius from the imperial college.

two coin types explicitly include one of the *signa*; two folles of the Caesar Maximinus with the legend *Iovio Propagat(ori) Orbis Terrarum* ('To Jovius, the extender of the world').⁹ Hekster notes that one of these belongs to the same group of coins that first honoured Galeria Valeria as Augusta and promoted Constantine as *filius Augusti*; that is, it belongs to a group that appears to make a dynastic claim. This strengthens the suggestion that the *signa* were used as an alternative to family relations.¹⁰ Another benefit of advertising a close relationship to the gods was that divine protection would have been seen as a bulwark against military rebellion and rival imperial claims. Indeed, Rees suggests that the *signa* may have had a military origin. He points out that there were military units named the Joviani and Herculiani, which were probably first raised under Diocletian, and that the *signa* are disproportionately featured in the legends of medallions, which were minted for presentation to high-ranking officers.¹¹ Moreover, Leadbetter argues that the *signa* had a hierarchical function, in that they clarified that Diocletian, as Jovius, was superior in authority to his Herculian colleague.¹² In arguing against a hierarchical significance, Kolb demonstrates that coinage and other media presented both emperors as enjoying an intimate connection to Jupiter, and that Jupiter was treated as their mutual *auctor imperii*.¹³ For instance, coins alternatively show Diocletian or Maximian receiving a Victoriola on a globe from the supreme deity.¹⁴ But as Kolb acknowledges, coins also depict Maximian receiving a globe from Diocletian, and the latter certainly enjoyed seniority.¹⁵ Regardless, by 293 the emperors appear to have intended the *signa* to be more dynastic than hierarchical in meaning, since Constantius could be Caesar Herculius, due to his adoptive father, and yet rank higher than his Jovian counterpart.¹⁶ Indeed, as with other examples of imperial self-representation, the meaning attached to the *signa* was surely not unchanging nor beholden to the aims of the emperors, but varied with medium, time, place and the reception of different audiences.¹⁷

⁹ *RIC* 6 Antioch 134; http://www.forumancientcoins.com/notInRic/6ant-120_ui_s.html.

¹⁰ Hekster (2015) 297-298.

¹¹ Rees (2005) 236 n. 25. The Joviani and Herculiani: Jones (1964) 53.

¹² Leadbetter (1998a).

¹³ Kolb (1987) 88-114.

¹⁴ E.g. *RIC* 5.2 Diocletian 252, 321, 325, Maximian 575, 621, 623. Likewise, the panegyrist in 307 describes how, in retiring, Maximian had attempted to return his *imperium* to Jupiter (7(6).12.6).

¹⁵ *RIC* 5.2 Diocletian 290, Maximian 585-587.

¹⁶ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 50-51; Hekster (2015) 300. Seston ((1946) 77, 220-224; (1950a); (1950b)) and Kolb ((1987) 52-66) use *Paneg.* 11(3) and the *Passio Marcelli* (*BHL* 5253-5255a; Lanata (1972)) to argue that the Augusti celebrated the birth or epiphany of their divine *numines*. This idea has been refuted by Nixon (1981a); Barnes (1982) 4 n. 5, 178 n. 6; (1996) 538.

¹⁷ Hekster (2015) repeatedly demonstrates this point when discussing imperial ancestry.

If the panegyrist could interpret Diocletian as a descendant of Jupiter, and Maximian a descendant of Hercules, and could apply the qualities of each god to their respective emperors, one might be forgiven for thinking that, like Jupiter and Hercules, the Augusti represented their relationship as that of a father and son. But in fact, the same panegyrist refer to the Augusti as brothers. Indeed, multiple forms of media treated the relationship of the Augusti as fraternal, and modern scholars have sought to understand the nature of this representation and why it was adopted. For Kolb, the Augusti modelled themselves as *diuini fratres* on the image of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and, even though Diocletian was the first-ranking Augustus, the *concordia* of their fraternity was based upon a self-representation of equal leadership.¹⁸ Kuhoff likewise thinks that their fraternal representation was inspired by the celebrated Antonine brothers, and similarly notes that, while Diocletian could have adopted his younger colleague and thereby imitated the relationship of Jupiter and Hercules, the fact that he did not testifies to a desire to share the empire equally, driven by the requirements of the time and outdoing Aurelius and Verus in the process.¹⁹ Rees argues that the emperors advertised a fraternal relationship because brotherhood had been a ‘fundamental family relationship used in the presentation of a united imperial college’.²⁰ For Leadbetter, Diocletian propagated a metaphorical brotherhood because he needed a political language that could express the relationship of the two unrelated emperors, because he wished Maximian to be an active ruler like Diocletian and thus not strongly subordinated, and also because he wished to establish a dynasty but did not have male kin.²¹ On the other hand, Hekster argues that the notion of an imperial brotherhood was either put forward by the centre to a limited circle of people and then used by the panegyrist, or that the panegyrist and others began referring to their relationship as a fraternity because they were ‘looking for ways to formulate relations between unrelated rulers’.²² This chapter argues that the imperial administration did originally put forward the idea of an Augustan fraternity. Moreover, while it is agreed that the fraternity carried with it a notion of equality, it is advanced that, as with other aspects of the Tetrarchic dynasty, military concerns and/or the military background of

¹⁸ Kolb (1987) 66, 104-105.

¹⁹ Kuhoff (2001) 42-43. For Kuhoff, Diocletian’s unwillingness to adopt Maximian was a reason why Maximian’s Caesariate was so short in duration.

²⁰ Rees (2002) 52-54 (quotation from 52).

²¹ Leadbetter (2004).

²² Hekster (2015) 305-307, 311 (quotation from 306).

the emperors influenced the presentation. Specifically, the Augustan fraternity was a brotherhood between *commilitones* on an imperial scale.

6.1. *The Augustan Fraternity in the Panegyrics*

Our most detailed sources for the fraternity of the Augusti are panegyrics, and the panegyric delivered to Maximian in 289 is also the earliest known explicit testimony on their relationship. Speaking on the anniversary of the foundation of Rome, the panegyrist makes the fraternity of the Augusti into a theme of his speech, and one that links the Augusti to Romulus and Remus, fittingly for the speech's occasion.²³ Their brotherhood is introduced in the first chapter. The orator begins with the founding of Rome and quickly progresses to Hercules, who in myth had played a part in the origins of Rome through his defeat of the tyrant Cacus and consecration of the site (10(2).1.1-3). The speaker celebrates that, because Maximian, driven by his own hidden force of character, has upheld his Herculean lineage by honouring Rome's birthday so generously, he may celebrate the city's birthday as if he were its founder (4). He then states the following (5):

Re uera enim, sacratissime imperator, merito quiuis te tuumque fratrem Romani imperii dixerit conditores: estis enim, quod est proximum, restitutores et, sit licet hic illi urbi natalis dies, quod pertinet ad originem populi Romani, uestri imperii primi dies sunt principes ad salutem.

For in truth, most sacred emperor, one might justifiably call you and your brother the founders of the Roman Empire, since you are, what is the nearest thing, its restorers. And although this is the birthday of that City, which pertains to the origin of the Roman people, the first days of your rule signal the beginning of its deliverance.

Like Hercules, the Augusti are not founders, but something akin.²⁴ However, by employing a supposed fraternal connection, the orator implicitly also compares the Augusti to Romulus and Remus. Whereas Romulus and Remus are the city's founders, the Augusti have restored the city to greatness. The speaker thereby ties the brotherhood of the Augusti into the imperial claim that

²³ Leadbetter (2004) 260-261.

²⁴ Rees (2005) 227.

Diocletian and his co-emperors had saved the empire after the troubles of Gallienus' reign (e.g. *ILS* 617; *Paneg.* 8(5).10; *Prices Edict* pr. 5).²⁵

Later, the speaker elaborates upon this fraternity. The orator first praises the emperors for sharing the same virtues. Maximian demonstrated *uirtus* (valour) in his campaigns against the Germans (7.6), and Diocletian showed *similis uirtus* (similar valour) when he invaded German lands (9.1). When they later joined one another for a conference described as 'trusting and fraternal' (*fidum ... fraternumque*), they offered each other mutual examples of all the virtues (*omnium ... uirtutum*) (9.1-2). When the orator then relates that Diocletian showed Maximian the gifts he had received from the Persians, and that Maximian showed Diocletian the spoils he had won from the Germans, he comments that Diocletian is not discouraged from *liberalitas* (generosity) by Maximian's *bellica uirtus* (military valour), and vice versa (3). The implicit result is that the virtues of the Augusti are complementary.²⁶ Having established this sharing of virtues, the speaker then celebrates that the brotherhood of Diocletian and Maximian is based upon *similitudo* (similarity) with regard to their *uirtutes* and *mores* (character), and that an equal fraternal rule has been entered upon voluntarily. Their brotherhood is thus superior to a relationship based upon the accident of blood, and thanks to their *similitudo*, it is characterized by *concordia* (9.3-5):

... ambo nunc estis largissimi, ambo fortissimo atque hac ipsa uestri similitudine magis magisque concordēs et, quod omni consanguinitate certius est, uirtutibus fratres. Sic fit ut uobis tantum imperium sine ulla aemulatione commune sit neque ullum inter uos discrimen esse patiamini, sed plane ut gemini illi reges Lacedaemones Heraclidae rem publicam pari sorte teneatis.²⁷ Quamquam hoc uos meliores et iustiores, quod illos mater astu coegit, cum nemini fateretur quem prius edidisset in lucem, pari aetatis auctoritate regnare, uos hoc sponte facitis, quos in summis rebus aequauit non uultuum similitudo sed morum.

²⁵ Tetrarchic claims to imperial restoration: Potter (2014) 292-294. On *restitutor*, see also Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 54-55 n. 7; De Trizio (2009) 62.

²⁶ The sharing of virtues: Rees (2002) 55; De Trizio (2009) 104-106.

²⁷ For Kolb (1987) 104-105, this passage is evidence that the Tetrarchs represented themselves as equal. But it should be noted that a panegyrist speaking before Maximian would seek to flatter the emperor, and we will see below that Tetrarchic self-representation seems to have actually employed a contradictory image of equality and hierarchy (Ch. 6.3).

Both of you are now most bountiful, both most brave, and because of this very similarity in your virtues, the harmony between you is ever increasing, and you are brothers in virtue, which is surer than any tie of blood. Thus, it happens that so great an empire is shared between you without any jealousy; nor do you allow there to be any difference between you, but clearly, like those twin Lacadaemonian kings, the Heraclidae, you hold an equal share in the state. However, in this you are better and more just, for with cunning their mother compelled them to rule as peers in age and authority, since she would confess to no-one to which she had first given birth, whereas you do so voluntarily, you whom not any similarity in visage, but rather a similarity of character, has made equal in the most important matters.

The fact that Maximian's relationship with Diocletian, unlike that with Hercules, is not based upon blood but the surer tie of *uirtutes* is emphasized by the panegyrist's comment that the Augusti do not physically resemble one another. Indeed, whereas later Tetrarchic art employed a physical *similitudo* between the emperors to highlight their *concordia*, the orator's claim accords with contemporary coinage produced at the key Gallic mint of Lyons, which emphatically differentiated between the Augusti.²⁸ Furthermore, the comparison with the Lacadaemonians is made potent by Maximian's Herculean credentials, since the Heraclidae were considered to be ancestors of the hero.²⁹ The speaker goes on to compare the small size of Lacadaemonia with the realm of Diocletian and Maximian, and asserts that the sharing of rule over such a small region is unimpressive compared with that of the Augusti, whose rule extends to the heavens (10.1). The orator declares that the Augusti, in sharing such might and power, demonstrate a 'divine and truly immortal fidelity' (*diuinae profecto immortalisque fiduciae*). As with 9.1 (*fidum ... fraternumque*), the orator thus draws a connection between fraternity and *fides*; a mutual *fides* that is conducive to harmony.

Towards the end of the speech the orator explicitly compares the Augusti to Romulus and Remus in an address to Rome herself (13.1-3):

Felix igitur talibus, Roma, principibus (fas est enim ut hoc dicendi munus pium unde coepimus terminemus); felix, inquam, et multo nunc felicior quam sub Remo et Romulo tuis. Illi enim,

²⁸ Rees (2002) 55-60. On the portraiture at Lyons, see *RIC* 5.2 p. 212. Carson (1990) pl. 36, no. 526 is a good example, which is discussed by Rees 58-59. Rees 54-55 notes the contrast between the relationship with Diocletian and that with Hercules.

²⁹ Leadbetter (2004) 261.

quamuis fratres geminique essent, certauerunt tamen uter suum tibi nomen imponeret, diuersosque montes et auspicia ceperunt. Hi uero conseruatores tui (sit licet nunc tuum tanto maius imperium quanto latius est uetere pomerio, quidquid homines colunt) nullo circa te liuore contendunt. Hi, cum primum ad te redeant triumphantes, uno cupiunt inuehi curru, simul adire Capitolium, simul habitare Palatium. Vtere, quaeso, tuorum principum utroque cognomina, cum non cogaris eligere: licet nunc simul et Herculua dicaris et Iouia.

Thus, fortunate Rome, under leaders such as these (for it is proper that we conclude this pious duty of speechmaking where we began); fortunate, I say, and much more fortunate now than under your Remus and Romulus. For they, although they were brothers and twins, nonetheless vied with one another over which would impose upon you his name, and they chose separate hills and auspices. Assuredly these preservers of yours (notwithstanding the fact that your empire is now greater by as much as the inhabited world is more extensive than the old *pomerium*) strive for you without envy. These rulers, as soon as they return to you in triumph, long to be conveyed in the same chariot, to approach the Capitol together, to live on the Palatine together. Use, I beseech you, the *cognomina* of each of your princes, since you need not choose. Now together you may be called both Herculua and Jovia.

The comparison with the founders again demonstrates the superiority of the imperial fraternity. Whereas the twins ruled a small finite space, the emperors rule the world. Whereas Romulus killed Remus, the Augusti so wish to be with one another that they almost resemble a married couple. The implicit message of these comparisons is that the emperors are the best of brothers, and this is earlier made explicit when the orator, in describing Diocletian's co-option of Maximian, denotes the former as *frater optimus* (4.1). Other references to their brotherhood serve to strengthen this theme. At 3.1 the orator refers to Diocletian as 'your kindred divinity Diocletian' (*cognate tibi Diocletiani numine*), and at 10.6 the Persian *Shahanshah* makes supplication to *fratri tuo*.³⁰

The fraternity of the Augusti reappears in the panegyric delivered to Maximian in 291. Debate exists over whether the speakers in 289 and 291 are the same person, but the stylistic similarities between the speeches show that the latter was at least familiar with the earlier

³⁰ The multiple references to the relationship and the orator's discussion of its nature leads Rees to wonder whether the speech was broadcasting their brotherhood for the first time ((2002) 53-54). See also De Trizio (2009) 104-105.

speech.³¹ But unlike the panegyric in 289, the speech in 291 provides a lengthy exploration of the emperors' *pietas* (11(3).6-12). It is within this context that the speaker references the imperial brotherhood, beginning at 6.3:

Deinde, id quod maxime deorum immortalium cum religione coniunctum est, quanta uosmet
inuicem pietate colitis! Quae enim umquam uidere saecula talem in summa potestate concordiam?
Qui germani geminiue fratres indiuiso patrimonio tam aequabiliter utuntur quam uos orbe
Romano?

Next, what is especially connected to the veneration of the immortal gods, with what great piety you honour each other! For what ages ever saw such harmony in supreme power? What full or twin brothers manage an undivided inheritance as equally as you manage the Roman world?

The implicit meaning is that the emperors act like brothers, and that, as in the panegyric of 289, their brotherhood is marked by *concordia* and equality, and is superior to the relationships of other brothers.³² The fact that their fraternity is compared to full and twin brotherhoods implies the fact that theirs is neither, which again suggests that a brotherhood voluntarily entered upon is stronger.

Next, the orator illustrates these points. The empire is common to the Augusti, who are above feeling jealousy (6.5-6), and each emperor celebrates the victories of the other, since whatever the gods offer to one belongs to both (6.7-7.3). The panegyrist then makes explicit that this is because of the brotherhood of the Augusti (7.4-7):

Obstupescerent certe omnes homines admiratione uestri, etiam si uos idem parens eademque mater ad istam concordiam Naturae legibus imbuissent. At enim quanto hoc est admirabilius uel pulchrius quod uos castra, quod proelia, quod pares uictoriae fecere fratres! Dum uirtutibus uestris fauetis, dum pulcherrima inuicem facta laudatis, dum ad summum fortunae fastigium pari gradu tenditis, diuersum sanguinem adfectibus miscuistis. Non fortuita in uobis est germanitas sed electa; notum est saepe eisdem parentibus natos esse dissimiles, certissimae fraternitatis est usque ad imperium similitudo. Quin etiam interuallum uestrae uincit aetatis et seniore iunioremque caritate mutua reddit aequales, ut iam illum falso dictum sit non delectari societate rerum nisi pares annos.

³¹ Rees (2002) 193-204.

³² On this passage, see also Rees (2002) 74-76.

Intelligimus enim, sacratissimi principes, geminum uobis, quamuis dispares sitis aetatibus, inesse consensum: neque tu illi uideris promptior neque tibi ille cunctantior, sed inuicem uosmet imitamini, inuicem uestros adfectatis annos. Sic uos geritis quasi iuniores ambo, <ambo> seniores. Neuter plus suis moribus fauet; uterque se uult hoc esse quod frater est.

Surely all men would be astounded with admiration for you, even if the same father and same mother had impressed upon you that harmony of yours by the laws of Nature. But certainly, how much more admirable or excellent is this that camps, that battles, that equal victories have made you brothers! While you are indulging in your virtues, while you are praising in turn the finest deeds, while with equal step you strive for the highest summit of fortune, you have blended different blood by your affections. Your brotherhood is not by chance but by choice. It is known that those born to the same parents are often different, whereas the similarity of the most certain fraternity reaches up to the imperial power without interruption. Indeed, it even conquers the difference in your ages and makes older and younger equals by your mutual esteem. Now that saying is false that one cannot delight in doing things with another unless of the same age. For we understand, most sacred princes, that within you, although you are different in age, there is a twin unanimity: Neither do you seem too energetic for him nor he too slow for you, but you imitate one another, you each strive after the other's years. Thus, you both behave as if younger, both as if older. Neither favours his own character more; each wishes to be what his brother is.

The excerpt is not free from scribal controversy, since the passage concerning a brotherhood of choice (7.6: *sed electa ... fraternitatis est*) has only been found in Cuspinianus' Vienna edition of 1513. But not everything new in this edition is necessarily conjecture. The passage conforms to the ancient conventions regulating clausulae, and it was possibly omitted by parablepsy (*est germanitas ... fraternitatis est*).³³ Again, *concordia* and equality are features of the imperial brotherhood, and their relationship is especially strong and admirable not in spite of but because their relationship is not beholden to Nature. Whereas in 289 they are brothers because of a *similitudo* in *uirtutes*, in 291 the emperors are brothers because of their shared military experience. It is nonetheless notable that within both speeches military achievement underpins their fraternity, since in 289 the brothers shared in military *uirtus*.³⁴

³³ Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 36-37, 536; Rees (2002) 76 n. 29 (parablepsy).

³⁴ Rees (2002) 75-77. Rees 74 notes that the panegyrist is inconclusive on the kinship of the emperors when he references their divine parentage, using phrases that imply a close kinship (3.2: *uestri generis*, 4.1: *stirpis uestrae*), as well as phrases that indicate different parentage (3.3: *uestri illi parentes*, 3.8: *parentes*, 19.4: *uestrorum generum*).

With the co-option of the Caesars, panegyrists now had to take account of four rulers. It thus does not surprise that the panegyric of 296/7 and that of Eumenius do not employ the fraternity of the Augusti as a theme. In any case, neither speech was delivered before an Augustus.³⁵ However, Constantius' panegyrist in 296/7 describes Maximian and Diocletian as Constantius' *pater* and *patruus* (1.3), and perhaps alludes to their brotherhood when he links the Augusti to the *cognata maiestas* of Jupiter and Hercules (4.1):

Et sane praeter usum curamque rei publicae etiam illa Iouis et Herculis cognata maiestas in Iouio Herculoque principibus totius mundi caelestiumque rerum similitudinem requirebat.

And certainly, beyond the undertakings and concerns of the state, that kindred majesty of Jupiter and Hercules yet required in the Jovian and Herculan princes a similarity between the entire world and heavenly affairs.

The panegyric delivered in 307 to Maximian and Constantine makes several references to the Augustan fraternity. The orator notes that Maximian and his *frater* have tamed Germany (7(6).8.5), and in explaining Maximian's abdication, as we have seen, he claims that the emperor abdicated because of his adherence to a plan as well as his *pietas fraterna* towards Diocletian, who had been his *socius* for the whole of his life and in the most important affairs (9.2). The speaker later has Rome demand that, just as Maximian had ruled at the request of his *frater*, now he must rule at the behest of his mother (Rome) (11.4).

Constantine's panegyrist in 310 is the only speaker to explicitly state that Diocletian had adopted Maximian as his brother, using the verb *asciscere*.³⁶ The orator compares Maximian's attempt to overthrow his son-in-law Constantine with the former's return to active power despite the wishes of Diocletian, and he implicitly treats these marital and fraternal relationships as being of similar importance (6(7).15.6):

Hunc ergo illum, qui ab eo fuerat frater adscitus, puduit imitari, huic illum in Capitolini Iouis templo iurasse paenituit. Non miror quod etiam genero peierauit.

³⁵ Hekster (2015) 306.

³⁶ Hekster (2015) 311 views this as part of the revival of kinship terms from 308 onwards.

Thus, this man was ashamed to imitate that man who had adopted him as a brother, and regretted having sworn an oath to him in the temple of Capitoline Jupiter. No wonder he perjured himself even before his son-in-law!

6.2. *The Augustan Fraternity in Other Media*

The panegyrics are not the only sources to attest to a fraternal relationship. Curiously, no coin or inscription dated to the Dyarchy or First Tetrarchy refers to the emperors as *fratres*. However, on the dedicatory inscription for the Baths of Diocletian in Rome, dated to the Second Tetrarchy (305-306), it is stated that Maximian, upon returning from Africa, dedicated the complex ‘in the name of Diocletian Augustus, his brother’ (*Diocletiani Aug. fratris sui | nomine*) (CIL 6.1130 (= 31242)).³⁷ Moreover, we have seen that in 292/3, when Carausius was presenting himself as a member of the imperial college, his mint at Colchester issued an Antoninianus that represented him, Diocletian and Maximian as brothers. The obverse depicts the jugate cuirassed busts of the three Augusti with the legend *Carausius et Fratres Sui*, and the reverse shows Pax with *Pax Augg*.³⁸ Considering the other evidence for a fraternal bond between Diocletian and Maximian, it would appear that Carausius and his minters deliberately used terminology being applied to those emperors to reinforce the legitimacy of the British regime. On the coin, Carausius is not an outsider, but rather one of the imperial brothers, and thus coexists alongside them in *concordia*. Although the special standing of Diocletian is acknowledged in the obverse image, as he is flanked by his apparent colleagues, the jugate presentation of three Augustan brothers also suggests a nearly equal status.³⁹

³⁷ The transcription of the inscription, although by the Anonymous of Einsiedeln, has been confirmed by fragments. The most recent fragments are published in Crimi & Cicogna (2012); Crimi (2015). Hekster (2015) 286-287, 313-314 suggests that *frater* was included in official titulature only after the abdications of the Augusti because familial terms helped to explain the unprecedented situation of having two retired Augusti. I suggest caution on this hypothesis, since the Baths inscription is the sole such use of *frater*.

³⁸ RIC 5.2 Carausius, Diocletian and Maximian 1; Carson (1959) 36; (1971) 61-62; (1987); Casey (1994) 67, 110-111; Lyne (2003) 162-165.

³⁹ Equality: Kolb (1987) 99. On Diocletian’s special status, note also the Carausian coin legend *Augustis Cum Diocletiano* (BM 12.1.1; Rees (2002) 33 n. 36).

Lactantius also references the brotherhood of Diocletian and Maximian, but reframes their *similitudo* and *concordia* to suit his invective (*DMP* 8.1):⁴⁰

Quid frater eius Maximianus, qui est dictus Herculus? Non dissimilis ab eo; nec enim possent in amicitiam tam fidelem cohaerere, nisi esset in utroque mens una, eadem cogitatio, par uoluntas aequa sententia.

What of his brother Maximian, who was called Herculus? He was not dissimilar to him; for they could not be united in so loyal a friendship unless there were in them both a single mind, the same thinking, an equal will and like opinions.

The Christian author also implies that the fraternal representation of Diocletian and Maximian set a pattern for later Tetrarchic Augusti when he discusses why in 305 Galerius did not co-opt Licinius as Caesar (20.3):

...sed eum Caesarem facere noluit, ne filium nominaret, ut postea in Constantii locum nuncuparet Augustum atque fratrem...

...but he did not wish to make him Caesar lest he had to call him his son, and in order that he could later proclaim him Augustus and brother in place of Constantius.

This concludes the explicit testimony available on the fraternity. However, art of the First Tetrarchy made implicit references to the Augustan brotherhood in the form of the hero twins Castor and Pollux; the Dioscuri. Whereas Romulus and Remus were useful brothers with whom the Augusti could be compared, since the Augusti were bound to look better next to the feuding twins, the story that Zeus' son Pollux shared his divinity with his slain half-brother Castor, with the result that with each day they alternate between divinity and death, made the Dioscuri an ideal symbol for the Augustan brothers.⁴¹ Certainly, through their cyclical nature the Dioscuri had become an allegory for eternity, and they could thus advertise stability in leadership.⁴² Nevertheless, previous emperors had also employed the Dioscuri as symbols of fraternal *pietas*. For example, Augustus had associated his grandsons and then the sons of Livia with the

⁴⁰ Leadbetter (2004) 264.

⁴¹ On the Dioscuri, see e.g. Pin. *Nem.* 10.55-90; *OCD*⁴, Dioscuri.

⁴² Note the coins of Maxentius that depict the Dioscuri with the legend *Aeternitas Aug N* (*RIC* 6 Ostia 35-38). Pond Rothman (1975) 25 discusses a group of marriage sarcophagi that depict the Dioscuri and express hope for an eternal union.

Dioscuri, and coins and inscriptions associated the heroes with Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.⁴³ Likewise, the resemblance between the twins and Diocletian and Maximian would have been clear to audiences.⁴⁴ Like the Augusti, the Dioscuri enjoyed a close connection to Zeus/Jupiter, and the eternal bond of the twins was evocative both of the emperors' fraternal *concordia* and, as with Carausius' coin, the special status of Diocletian, since the older emperor was surely Pollux. Diocletian had shared his divine *imperium* with Maximian.⁴⁵ Moreover, the Dioscuri were warriors who harmonized well with the military aspects of the Augustan fraternity expressed within the panegyrics.⁴⁶

The paired heads of a Tetrarch and a Dioscurus found at the palace in Split appear to have belonged to a statue group of Dyarchs or Tetrarchs with Dioscuri.⁴⁷ More notably, the Dioscuri are present among the reliefs that decorate the Arch of Galerius in Thessalonica, which was erected between c. 300 and 305.⁴⁸ They appear on the famous panel of the emperors enthroned, located at eye level.⁴⁹ The Augusti are seated in the centre, Diocletian on the left and Maximian on the right. They are flanked by their Caesars, and a selection of gods surround them, including Serapis and Jupiter, who stand directly to the left and right of the Tetrarchs respectively and who represent the empire's eastern and western halves. At the side of these gods stand the Dioscuri, that is, a brother in the east and a brother in the west. They each have a crescent moon above their head, and the horses of the Dioscuri, one of which has a crescent moon on its chest strap, are led towards the Caesars by Virtus and Mars.⁵⁰ The Dioscuri also appear alongside Victorias and captured spoils on the surviving fragments of the *nouus arcus*

⁴³ Kolb (1987) 105, who thinks that Diocletian used the Dioscuri partly to invoke the Antonines; Poulson (1991) 120-136; Bannon (1997) 178-179.

⁴⁴ See also Pond Rothman (1975) 24 ('...the idea is that the twins are naturally appropriate companions of rulers who are coequals...'); Rees (1993) 197 ('As brothers who lived in perfect harmony, they were ideal for inclusion in Tetrarchic art.').

⁴⁵ See also Bannon (1997) 178, who argues that imperial invocations of the Dioscuri exploited the fact that the brothers were in one sense equal and identical, but that this was by the grace of one brother. For Bannon, this ambiguity was considered useful for offsetting fraternal rivalry over the succession. Cf. Kolb (1987) 104-105, 171-172, who argues that the Dioscuri symbolized an equal connection to Jupiter.

⁴⁶ On the Dioscuri as symbols of military victory, see Poulson (1991) 139-141.

⁴⁷ Cambi (1976); Kolb (1987) 105.

⁴⁸ Date: Kolb (1987) 159-162.

⁴⁹ Eye level: Kolb (1987) 162.

⁵⁰ The horses: Kolb (1987) 171-172. Seston (1946) 252-254 argues that the Dioscuri are depicted alongside Serapis and Isis, who were associated with the imperial *uota*, because together they represented the cyclical turn-over of leadership. Baynes (1948) 112 counters that they may simply represent the recurrent *uota*. Pond Rothman (1975) 24-25 argues that the combination of the Dioscuri, Fortuna, Isis (often syncretized with Fortuna), Oceanus and Tellus constitutes an image of eternal, fated and universal rule.

Diocletiani, erected in Rome during the First Tetrarchy on the occasion of an imperial anniversary.⁵¹ In the context of a jubilee, the Dioscuri were of course symbolic of eternal, stable rule, but again, the Augustan fraternity and, through the accompanying images, the martial valour of the imperial brothers would have been a natural association for audiences. Similarly, the imperial mint at Aquileia minted a gold coin for Constantius Caesar that represents the Dioscuri with the legend *Comites Augg Et Caess NNNN* (Companions of Our Augusti and Caesars).⁵² Aquileia issued the coin as part of a jubilee series of gold types that included the reverse legends *Concordia Augg et Caess NNNN*, *Vot(a) X Caess*, *Vot(a) XX Augg*, *Herculi Comiti Aug N* and *Ioui Conseruatori Augg NN*.⁵³ The group constitutes a message of harmonious longevity under divine protection, and again, the Dioscuri can be linked to both eternal rule and imperial fraternity. The association of the Dioscuri with Constantius seems to imply that successive generations of brothers will achieve the longevity being promised. This lends credence to Lactantius when he implies that Galerius and Licinius employed a fraternal framework to represent their own relationship.

The nomenclature of the Augusti also references a fraternity. As previously discussed, Maximian adopted Diocletian's *nomen* Valerius, and the Augusti shared the *nomina* Marcus Aurelius.⁵⁴ Undoubtedly, once the emperors began to be presented as brothers, their shared nomenclature would have been viewed as fraternal, but their nomenclature may have always been associated with fraternity. It is possible that Maximian received Valerius into his nomenclature as early as 285, when Diocletian appointed him Caesar, since the only document to unambiguously attest to his Caesariate honours him thus: *Aur[eli]|o Vale|rio Max|imiano nobilissi|mo Caes.* (*CIL* 8.10285).⁵⁵ Because of the strong hierarchy attached to the Augustan-Caesarian relationship, it has been suggested that Maximian received Valerius because Diocletian had initially adopted him as his son.⁵⁶ If this was so, the adoption was subsequently

⁵¹ Kolb (1987) 122. Date: Kolb 180-183.

⁵² *RIC* 6 Aquileia 1.

⁵³ Pink (1931) 25-26; *RIC* 6 p. 300, Aquileia 1-7b; Kolb (1987) 105, 120.

⁵⁴ Tetrarchic nomenclature: *PLRE* 1 Constantius 12; Diocletianus 2; Maximianus 8; 9; Barnes (1982) 4-6; Cambi (2004). Previously discussed in Ch. 1.4.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of the evidence for Maximian's Caesariate, see Leadbetter (1998a) 216-221.

⁵⁶ Seston (1946) 64-65, 222, who incorrectly claims that Maximian is called *filius Augusti* in *P.Lond.* 3.710 (Kolb (1987) 44-45); Rousselle (1976) 457; Chastagnol (1985) 94; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 45; Rees (2002) 33; Neri (2013) 660-661. Rees 33 n. 33 notes that the terms Caesar and *filius* are associated with one another in Lact. *DMP* 20.3 and 32.5 in the context of the post-305 power struggles. This is understandable, since the Caesars of the First

ignored when, in that or the following year, Diocletian promoted Maximian to Augustus and media thereafter treated them as brothers. However, the only ancient author to refer to Maximian as Diocletian's son is the sixth-century chronicler John Malalas, who confuses Maximian with Galerius Maximianus, whom we know Diocletian adopted (306 (*CSHB* 32)). It would also be strange if Diocletian and Maximian had established a legal paternal-filial relationship only to ignore it in favour of a fraternal image, already evidenced in 289.⁵⁷ One should be wary of attaching too much importance to a single document whose author may have assumed that Maximian had adopted his benefactor's *nomen*, but if Maximian did receive Valerius when he became Caesar, it was not necessarily meant to convey hierarchical filiation. Maximian's Caesariate appears to have been distinctly transitional. No coin was minted in Maximian's name during his tenure as Caesar, and yet, not only was a huge number of coins minted under Diocletian, but length of tenure had not prevented the likes of Laelian and Marius from issuing coinage during their brief reigns.⁵⁸ Rather, just as no imperial mint issued coins in the names of Trajan and Gallienus during their Caesariates, Diocletian's mints did not issue coins in the name of Maximian Caesar and apparently instead waited for Maximian's promotion, which came at the end of 285 or during the first half of 286.⁵⁹ If Maximian's Caesariate was intended to be strictly transitional, fraternity and the greater equality attached to that form of kinship may have been the reason Maximian adopted Valerius.⁶⁰

Indeed, Diocletian likewise may have adopted Marcus Aurelius from the nomenclature of Maximian.⁶¹ Maximian's full name was M. Aurelius Valerius Maximianus. Diocletian's nomenclature tended to be given as C. Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus, but Marcus sometimes

Tetrarchy were the adopted sons of the Augusti. But to link this to Maximian's brief tenure as Caesar is too tenuous a connection.

⁵⁷ Maximian's adoption has also been doubted by Smith (1972) 1066-1067; Kolb (1987) 44-47; Hekster (2015) 277-278 (278: '... making a brother out of your son would be difficult, even in fiction.').

⁵⁸ *RIC* 5.2 Laelian, Marius.

⁵⁹ Kolb (1987) 44-47, who posits that the nature of the emperors' kinship during Maximian's Caesariate was open to interpretation; Kuhoff (2001) 31; see also Casey (1994) 51; cf. Seeck (1897) 25-26; Leadbetter (1998a) 219-220, 225-226. For the date of promotion, see Intr. c. On Gallienus' Caesariate, Pflaum (1966/67) argues that literary sources, inscriptions and local coins are correct in attributing to him a Caesariate, but cf. Peachin (1988), who argues against this.

⁶⁰ See also Leadbetter (2004) 259, who states that Valerius attests to a fraternal adoption. As noted in Ch. 1.4, Valerius eventually became a *nomen* of status on account of Diocletian (Hekster (2015) 277), but it is questionable that Valerius was widely used in this way as early as 285.

⁶¹ So Rea (1984) 190; Worp (1985) 98-99; Barnes (1996) 535-536; Corcoran (2008) 230 ('The two "brothers" marked their bond by each adding the other's *nomen* to his own...').

appeared within his nomenclature, and one inscription names him M. Aurelius C. Valerius Diocletianus.⁶² We have seen that Aurelius appears within Maximian's nomenclature as Caesar. No document that has been shown to precede Maximian's promotion to Augustus names Diocletian Aurelius, and a papyrus from 31 March 286 is the first to name both Augusti Aurelius Valerius (*BGU* 4.1090).⁶³ It is admittedly possible that Diocletian adopted M. Aurelius to evoke the memory of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, and then shared the *nomina* with Maximian.⁶⁴ However, the nomenclature of the Caesars may attest to the *nomina* originating from Maximian. Both Gaius and Marcus are attested for Constantius' *praenomen*, but Marcus is rendered more likely by the fact that, as previously discussed, the Tetrarchs promoted an image of symmetry and synchronicity to convey imperial *concordia*.⁶⁵ Whereas Diocletian and Galerius shared the *praenomen* Gaius, Maximian's *praenomen* was Marcus.⁶⁶ If Galerius had received his *praenomen* from Diocletian, one would expect similar in the west.⁶⁷ Moreover, in 294 Aurelius Aristobulus, as proconsul of Africa, attributed Marcus to Constantius in a dedication to the Tetrarchs (*ILS* 637). The senator was a long-time and intimate ally of the emperors. He held the prestigious proconsulship for an exceptionally long tenure of four years (290-294), and he was then rewarded with the urban prefecture (295-296). Moreover, in 285 he had served as ordinary consul and praetorian prefect under Carinus, and he was retained in those roles after Carinus' defeat because of his services (*officia*) (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.14), which may mean that he had betrayed his previous benefactor in favour of Diocletian.⁶⁸ One would expect a dedication by

⁶² For the inscription, see Lorient (1973); Barnes (1996) 535-536. Kolb (1987) 16-17 with n. 36 follows Lorient in dating the inscription to 284, and attaches significance to the apparent fact that Diocletian had called himself M. Aurelius since the beginning of his reign, but Barnes 535-536 persuasively argues that the inscription should date to between 287 and 289. For other appearances of M. Aurelius within Diocletian's nomenclature, see Kolb 16-17 n. 36.

⁶³ Bagnall & Worp (1979) 2-4; Rea (1984); Worp (1985) 98-99. Bagnall & Worp 2 list the papyrus *SB* 6.8971, which gives Diocletian the *nomen* Aurelius, under that emperor's first Egyptian regnal year (284/5), but the document's regnal year is not preserved. Rea 190 objects that the only reason the original editor H. I. Bell assigned this date was because he was reluctant to envisage that two emperors' names could fit on the document.

⁶⁴ So Seston (1946) 39-40; Kolb (1987) 16-17 with nn. 35-36; Kuhoff (2001) 19, 29-31, who thinks that Diocletian also wished to associate himself with Claudius II, Probus and Carus; Cambi (2004) 40-41.

⁶⁵ Gaius: *CIL* 3.3205, 8.10125, 10.7504 (which mistakenly calls him Aurelius); *ILS* 649, 650a (which mistakenly calls him Fabius instead of Flavius). Marcus: *CIL* 5.8042 (which possibly mistakenly calls him Aurelius), 8.608, 10287, 15563; *ILS* 637. On contrived Tetrarchic synchronicity, see Chastagnol (1967); Thomas (1971); Smith (1972) 1061-1071; Rousselle (1976) 452-454; Pasqualini (1979) 24-27; Barnes (1982) 25-28; Kolb (1987) 26-27, 115-127; Leadbetter (1998a) 218-219; Kuhoff (2001) 151-152; Ch. 1.6.

⁶⁶ On the *praenomina* of Diocletian and Galerius, see *PIR*² A 1627, V 126. *CIL* 10.7505 attributes Marcus to Galerius, but is alone in doing so, and is rightly deemed an error in *PIR*².

⁶⁷ Barnes (1982) 4 n. 7 notes that, 'since Constantius was the adoptive son of Maximian, Marcus should be officially correct.'

⁶⁸ *PLRE* 1 Aristobulus; Barnes (1976b) 248; (1982) 97, 169; Johne, Hartmann & Gerhardt (2008) 1074.

him to be accurate. Furthermore, Constantius was not the only son of Maximian to be named Marcus. Maxentius was a Marcus, and *ILS* 666 shows that he possessed the name before becoming emperor.

If Maximian, Constantius and Maxentius shared Marcus as their *praenomen*, and yet Galerius' *praenomen* was Gaius, this may attest to a scenario in which Maximian shared M. Aurelius with his brother and passed Marcus on to his adopted and biological sons, whereas Galerius received Gaius because it was Diocletian's own *praenomen* rather than a name that Diocletian had received from his co-Augustus. It would not surprise if the low-born Maximian had always had M. Aurelius as part of his nomenclature, since his family would have received the *nomina* if they had been enfranchised during the Severan period by the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. Aurelius was the most common name in the empire for this reason.⁶⁹ The nature of the evidence ultimately does not permit certainty, but one suspects that Diocletian and Maximian, in an early show of Tetrarchic *concordia* and symmetry, had exchanged *nomina*. To share names was to suggest kinship, and if done in the symmetrical manner suggested, it would have accorded with a fairly equal and thus fraternal presentation. But even if the names were not shared in the scenario suggested, but rather Diocletian shared both Valerius and M. Aurelius with Maximian, it seems to me that the sharing of names without adoption or a marriage alliance would have struck many as fraternal or something akin to fraternal regardless of the manner in which they were shared.⁷⁰

Likewise, let us consider similitude in depictions of the Tetrarchs. Dynastic rulers employed physical likeness as a means of demonstrating similarity between emperor and successor, and thus the hereditary claims of the successor.⁷¹ In the case of Tetrarchic art, artists exaggerated physical likeness to an unprecedented degree. One finds a regimented similitude in the coin portraits that post-date the coinage reform of c. 294. While individuality is detectable on some of these portraits, all portraiture features short hair, short beards, strong, square jaws, eyes staring straight ahead, thick necks, tight lips and eyebrows sternly furrowed. The new portrait style alluded to power, severity and duty, and in continuing the hair and beards of their military

⁶⁹ Most common: Hekster (2015) 277.

⁷⁰ Cf. Cambi (2004) 41, who thinks that Maximian adopted Valerius and Aurelius from Diocletian and briefly suggests that Maximian did so to demonstrate their brotherly closeness.

⁷¹ Smith (1997) 181.

predecessors, including Aurelian and Probus, the Tetrarchs maintained the image of a military *imperator*.⁷² However, as Hekster notes, variation between portraits coined by different mints could be more substantial than variation between portraits of different rulers issued by the same mint.⁷³ Indeed, Bastien shows that in 304/5, the mint at Lyons replaced individuality on its folles with a single, idealized portrait.⁷⁴ Busts of the Tetrarchs also display this likeness, to the degree that most busts remain unidentified as individuals.⁷⁵ Most famously, statue groups made of red porphyry depict the imperial college with striking use of visual similarity. In the case of the group now in Venice, two Augustus-Caesar pairs are shown in harmonious embrace. All four rulers are depicted with similar faces and with one hand on the hilt of their sword, and they wear identical armour and Pannonian caps, the latter indicative of their background as Balkan officers. The Augusti are distinguished from the Caesars by their stubbly beards, but there is otherwise little distinction. Likewise, a porphyry group now in the Vatican depicts a pair of Augusti and a pair of Caesars, with each pair again embracing and with similar faces and identical armour. Each ruler is wreathed and holds a globe, and again, facial hair distinguishes Augustus from Caesar.⁷⁶ Considering the dynastic use of visual likeness, this employment of exaggerated similarity would have implied to audiences not only *concordia* but kinship. Based on what was already known about the Tetrarchs, audiences would have linked these similarities to fraternity between the Augusti, the filiation of the Caesars, and perhaps again fraternity between the Caesars.

6.3. A Fraternity between *Commilitones*

To discuss why the relationship of the Augusti was framed in fraternal terms, one should consider whether this presentation was originally directed by the emperors and their administrations, or whether it began as the invention of panegyrists. As previously noted, Hekster suggests that panegyrists and others began referring to a fraternity because they were

⁷² L'Orange & Unger (1984) 16, 26; Rees (1993) 183, 187-189; Smith (1997) 180-181.

⁷³ Hekster (2015) 282.

⁷⁴ Bastien (1980) 50, 55-56, 110-111, 139; see also L'Orange & Unger (1984) 4.

⁷⁵ See e.g. Rocca, Presicce & Monaco (2015) 379-382; *LSA* 244-246, 297-298, 368, 382, 396, 523, 806, 811, 836, 845-846, 853, 855, 1027-1031, 1041-1043, 1045-1047, 1055, 1114, 1116, 2115, 2354.

⁷⁶ On Tetrarchic similitude, see also Andrae (1978) 327; Rees (1993) 182-183, 187-193; Srejsovic (1994c) 146; Rees (2002) 55-60; Boschung (2006) 349-353.

trying to formulate a relationship between two unrelated emperors. Whereas panegyrists propagated the idea of a brotherhood, coins and inscriptions, apart from the Baths inscription, did not apply the term *frater* to the Tetrarchs. In the Roman world as now, one could use metaphorical fraternity to express a relationship between unrelated men, and such an approach may have appealed to panegyrists. Imperial rule had been dynastic for so long that many would have struggled to conceive of or express emperorship in a non-dynastic way, and it was perhaps difficult for panegyrists to elaborate on the Augustan relationship without resorting to familiar concepts of succession, ancestry and kinship. Thus, even though coins and inscriptions of the First Tetrarchy did not refer to filiation or marriage, panegyrists did so. For example, we have seen that the panegyrist in 289 praises Constantius' marriage to Theodora (10(2).11.4) and Maximian's son Maxentius (14.1-2), and that the panegyrist in 296/7 refers to the succession of *liberi* (8(5).19.4-20.1) and states that the Caesars were co-opted because the Augusti were bound by piety to give *imperium* to a son (3.3). Hekster therefore suggests that the image of *uirtutibus fratres* was not directed by the imperial authorities, but a panegyric presentation that fitted into known frames of reference and was likely to please.⁷⁷

However, the orators need not have framed the Augustan relationship in explicitly fraternal terms. Panegyrists and ancient authors refer to the Augusti as *socii* (companions), *participi* (partners), *amici* (friends) and *collegae* (colleagues), and a specific label was perhaps unnecessary as long as the virtues and achievements of the Augusti could be shown to be shared and complementary, in accordance with the imperial self-representation of collegial *concordia*.⁷⁸ It is understandable that fraternal imagery would have been especially popular among panegyrists, since it indeed would have provided an established and evocative framework with which to envision the relationship of the Augusti. But without a fraternal presentation by the emperors themselves or some direction from above, such imagery would have been problematic. As previously noted, fraternal imagery and the closely related presentation of equality, usually inherent within concepts of fraternity, co-existed uneasily with the divine *signa*, since Jupiter and Hercules were father and son, and enjoyed a hierarchical relationship.⁷⁹ Diocletian had not

⁷⁷ Hekster (2015) 305-307, 311. On the engagement of panegyrists with kinship terms as a whole, see 300-311. On non-biological and metaphorical fraternity, see Boswell (1996) 17-26, 271-275; Bannon (1997).

⁷⁸ *Socii*: *Paneg.* 7(6).9.2. *Participi*: *Paneg.* 7(6).9.6. *Amici*: Lact. *DMP* 8.1 (*in amicitiam tam fidelem*); Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.17 (*Maximianum statim fidum amicitia*). *Collegae*: Eutr. 9.27.

⁷⁹ On the relationship between fraternity and equality, see Boswell (1996) 22-23.

adopted Maximian, which, one presumes, would have deterred panegyrists from presenting them as father and son, but the *signa* still would have made any presentation of fraternity and equality into a risky endeavour. Moreover, the panegyrist in 289 refers to the imperial brotherhood with frequency, and both this orator and that of 291 discuss its precise nature. Such presentations would have appeared excessive and overly specific if the emperors had not already promoted their relationship as fraternal, and the theme could have miscarried if it was not well understood by the audience and did not meet the approval of the emperor(s) present.⁸⁰ As I have argued, the Augusti had indeed already suggested their fraternity through the mutual exchange of *nomina*.

Nevertheless, Hekster's thoughtful hypothesis forces one to confront the unusual spread of evidence. The absence of *frater* from coins and its near-absence from inscriptions was in keeping with the absence of other kinship terms from titulature during the Dyarchy and First Tetrarchy. As previously discussed, terms of filiation and marriage did not appear within titulature on coins and inscriptions, and yet we know from panegyrics, Lactantius and the epitomes that the Caesars were the adopted sons and sons-in-law of the Augusti.⁸¹ Diocletian evidently wished imperial titulature to avoid explicit references to kinship, but still wished to use marriage and adoption to strengthen the Tetrarchy and its self-representation as a harmonious and unanimous college. The Augusti surely celebrated these weddings and adoptions in public, and the Caesars advertised their new bonds through the fact that they possessed the names and *signa* of their superiors. Likewise, it appears that the Augusti did not allow *frater* to become a regular part of their titulature, but still sought to have their fraternity advertised. This happened through nomenclature, visual similitude, the Dioscuri, and, with likely encouragement from the emperors, panegyrists. Moreover, one suspects that the emperors themselves spoke of their fraternity when they delivered *adlocutiones* (addresses to the soldiers), a mode of imperial communication that is depicted, for instance, on the Arch of Galerius.⁸² In any case, the message of fraternity was sufficiently pervasive for Carausius, Constantine's panegyrists and Lactantius to react to it.

⁸⁰ For the latter point, see Leadbetter (2004) 263-264.

⁸¹ Marriages and adoptions: Ch. 1.4. The absence of kinship within titulature: Ch. 2.5.

⁸² The *adlocutio* panel of the Arch: Laubscher (1975) 45-48; Pond Rothman (1977) 439.

As for the nature of this fraternity, one could not formally adopt someone as a brother. Indeed, a rescript of Diocletian and Maximian, dated in the *CJ* to 3 December 285, explicitly states that no-one including peregrines can do so, and that property held under the title of an adopted brother should be surrendered (6.24.7).⁸³ One should not presume that the emperors established a relationship with no place within Roman law. The imperial fraternity was thus metaphorical. But to what extent was this presentation an evocation of dynasty? The empire certainly had a history of fraternal succession and collegiality. In 81 Domitian succeeded his brother Titus, in 161 Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, having been adopted by Antoninus Pius, succeeded their father as co-Augusti, and in 195 Septimius Severus falsely claimed that he had been adopted by Marcus Aurelius, and that Commodus was thus his brother.⁸⁴ In the third century, the brothers Caracalla and Geta had briefly ruled as co-emperors, as had Carinus and Numerian, whereas Claudius had been briefly succeeded by his brother Quintillus, and Tacitus by his possible brother Florian.⁸⁵ However, it must be said that this was an unfortunate history. Aurelius and Verus were worthy of evocation, but Domitian had been a tyrant, Caracalla had murdered Geta, generals overthrew Quintillus and Florian, and Numerian and Carinus were casualties in the very power struggle that bestowed *imperium* on Diocletian.

More importantly, if Diocletian and Maximian had only wished to convey dynastic unity through their brotherhood, why did they settle for a metaphor? Previously, emperors had used marriage and adoption when appointing heirs not related by blood, and the Augusti themselves later established these ties in relation to their Caesars. However, as we have seen, Diocletian did not adopt Maximian, and it was not until c. 300 or later, when Maxentius married Maximilla, that a marital link bound the Augusti. As previously admitted, age was a complicating factor. The jurist Gaius considered it questionable whether an adopter could be younger than an adoptee (*I* 1.106), and the *Institutes* of Justinian states that an adopter should be at least eighteen years older than an adoptee (1.11.4). But unlike fraternal adoption, an illegal concept in Roman law, filial adoption was a legal and well-established practice, and through the privilege of *princeps legibus solutus*, emperors could ignore stipulations concerning age, as the adoption of the Caesars

⁸³ Carlà (2012) 65-66; Hekster (2015) 305. On *CJ* 6.24.7, see also Corcoran (2000a) 77 n. 15, 115, 173 n. 15.

⁸⁴ Severus: Hekster (2015) 205-217.

⁸⁵ Ch. 2.6.

demonstrates.⁸⁶ Furthermore, although the *Epitome de Caesaribus* implies that Diocletian was born in the mid-240s and Maximian in c. 250 (39.7, 40.11), we have seen that their difference in age was considerable enough for the panegyrist in 291 to elaborately celebrate that they have overcome this difference (11(3).7.6-7).⁸⁷ If Maximian were Diocletian's son, this would not have prevented the former from being an active wielder of power, since Gallienus and Carinus had both served as active Augusti alongside their fathers. Conversely, the relationship of the Augusti was not based upon blood, marriage or adoption. The kinship of the Augusti did not extend beyond metaphor, and so one must not overestimate Diocletian's interest in dynastic concerns. A presentation of dynastic unity cannot alone account for such a new approach to imperial kinship.⁸⁸

Let us return to a theme of this study; the influence of military politics over the Tetrarchic regime. Diocletian and his colleagues had risen to political power as military professionals, and it may well have been this fact that gave rise to the Augustan brotherhood. Fraternal sentiment was strong among soldiers. Tacitus implies as much when he recounts the mutiny in Pannonia at the beginning of Tiberius' reign. According to the author, one of the inciters of the mutiny, Vibulenus, fraudulently claimed that their commander Junius Blaesus had ordered gladiators to murder Vibulenus' brother, who had been sent by the army in Germany to debate the common interest of the two armies (*Ann.* 1.22). Vibulenus' extravagant lament provoked the legionaries to put Blaesus' gladiators and servants in chains, and undertake a search for the brother's body, and they were only prevented from slaying their commander when it became apparent that there had been no murder, nor a brother (23). The account implies that killing a soldier's brother was one of the greatest transgressions that one could make against him.⁸⁹

But not all brothers in the military were related to one another. Roman soldiers forged close bonds with their comrades or *commilitones* through the shared experience of hardship and danger that came with camp life and campaign. These bonds, which connected soldiers personally to their comrades and collectively to their unit, were often viewed in terms of

⁸⁶ Ch. 1.4.

⁸⁷ On the ages of the Augusti, see also Enßlin (1948) 2421; *PLRE* 1 Diocletianus 2; Barnes (1982) 30-31, 32; Rougé (1992) 79. The *Epitome* states that Diocletian was 68 when he died and implies that he died in early 313, whereas it reports that Maximian was 60 when he died in 310.

⁸⁸ Rees (2002) 105, 120 suggests that the brotherhood's novelty was a reason for its popularity with panegyrists.

⁸⁹ Phang (2001) 162.

fraternity. Just as brothers were bound by familial *pietas* to protect one another and their household or *domus*, military ‘brothers’ were expected to protect one another and the civic *domus*, that is, the state.⁹⁰ Surveys show that *fratres* were often the commemorators of military epitaphs, and Saller and Shaw, in their study of epitaphs during the early empire, found brother-brother commemorations to usually be more common in military samples than in civilian samples.⁹¹ But it is also well attested that some soldiers honoured fellow soldiers as *frater* despite not sharing *nomina*, and in some cases despite explicitly having different fathers.⁹² For example, in one epitaph, M. Julius is honoured by his *frater* and *heres* (heir) M. Arruntius (*CIL* 3.2715), in another, Bato, son of Neritanus, honours his *frater* Pacatus, son of Mucar (*CIL* 3.3558), and in yet another, *heres* Julius Niger, son of Ittixon, is honoured by his *frater* and *heres* Dunomagius, son of Toutannorix (*CIL* 13.17). Admittedly, it is possible that these brothers shared a mother, but a dedication from Prusias ad Hypium demonstrates that metaphorical brotherhood exists on military inscriptions (*IK* 27.101):

Val(erius) Titianus b(-) b(-), decanus | num(eri) scut(ariorum), natione Dalmata, uixit annos XXXXV, | militauit annos XXII. Fecit memoria(m) Ursus | ex numero ipso pro fraternitate.

Valerius Titianus, b. b. decanus of the troop of scutariotes, of the Dalmatian people, lived forty-five years and served twenty-two years. Ursus, from this very unit, made the remembrance by virtue of fraternity.

The dedication professes that Titianus’ subordinates loved their commander in the manner of a brother, and it shows that fraternal sentiments among the soldiery could transcend rank.

Moreover, legal sources suggest the intensity of both biological and metaphorical fraternal relationships within military society. In a rescript to a soldier named Gallus, Gordian III ruled that the inheritance bequeathed to Gallus by his brother, who had served in the same camp, should be included in Gallus’ *castrense peculium* rather than pass to their father, even though he was in his father’s *potestas* (*CJ* 12.36.4). Gordian justified the ruling with the following:

⁹⁰ Bannon (1997) 138-141, 147.

⁹¹ Saller & Shaw (1984) 141 n. 64; Shaw (1984) 472 (late empire); Phang (2001) 162 (early empire).

⁹² Keparova (1986).

Etenim peregrinationis labor sociatus commiliti eius et obeundorum munerum consortium adfectioni fraternae nonnihilum addidisse, quin immo uice mutua cariores inuicem sibi reddidisse credendum est.

For I am compelled to believe that hardship in living abroad, the companionship of joint military service, and the fellowship in carrying out duties not only added in some measure to his fraternal love, but indeed rendered each mutually dearer to the other.

The rescript directly links the strength of the soldiers' brotherly kinship to the mutual experience of military service, and because of this powerful connection between soldierly brothers, the emperor deems it fit to make Gallus' inheritance independent from *patria potestas*, and instead a part of Gallus' uniquely military property, his *castrense peculium*. Of course, the brothers here shared the same father, but Roman law acknowledged a connection between metaphorical fraternity and inheritance. The jurist Paul states the following (*D* 28.5.59.1):

Qui frater non est, si fraterna caritate diligitur, recte cum nomine suo sub appellatione fratris heres instituitur.

A man who is not a brother, if he is loved with fraternal affection, is correctly instituted heir by his name with the appellation 'brother'.

Therefore, soldiers (and others) could use the term *frater* to institute an unrelated man as heir. It is perhaps then related that the term *frater et heres* (or *heres et frater*) is often found on military epitaphs.⁹³

We should not suppose that, within military society, the relationship between biological brothers was considered superior to that which existed between metaphorical brothers. Metaphorical fraternity carried legal import, military service could strengthen fraternal bonds from a legal standpoint, and one doubts that the soldiers who honoured their 'brothers' on epitaphs or who instituted a 'brother' as heir viewed their fraternity as inferior to one based on blood. Moreover, in 270 a *commilito* famously outcompeted a biological brother on an imperial

⁹³ Kpartova (1986) 12 records numerous examples, but note e.g. *CIL* 3.803, 807, 2715. On fraternal sentiment among soldiers in law, see also Phang (2001) 162-163. Also note *CJ* 2.3.19, a rescript of Diocletian and Maximian that rules that a pact made between two brothers before going into battle, in which the survivor would receive the other's property, is legally valid. Soldiers and officers enjoyed the unique right to make a will free from formal legal requirements (*Gaius*, *I* 2.109-110; *D* 29.1.1-2, 1.21, 1.24, 1.34.2; *CJ* 6.21.4, 14; *Tit. Ulp.* 23.10).

level. As previously discussed, Quintillus had attempted to succeed his brother Claudius, but had failed to maintain enough of a military following to defeat the usurpation of Claudius' general, Aurelian. Aurelian could claim a close relationship to Claudius through his services to that emperor, but in the war for legitimacy, he presumably also exploited the fact that he and Claudius had been senior officers under Gallienus. Faced with the choice between Claudius' biological brother and his general and former *commilito*, the legionaries chose the latter.

Should we then view the brotherhood of Diocletian and Maximian as something that had been inspired by military society? As discussed in the introduction (Intr. c), both men had been career soldiers, and they had been long-time friends.⁹⁴ One can thus presume that the friendship between these two Balkan officers had developed through military service, and in this respect, two *commilitones* had become a pair of *imperatores*. Furthermore, upon taking power, both emperors desperately needed to find ways of securing military loyalty. Since 235 nearly every emperor had been murdered by their soldiers and officers, and one suspects that fraternity formed a part of the emperors' strategy for confronting this issue.

While the emperors did not claim that they were brothers to their soldiers, but instead maintained a quasi-divine allusiveness through their *signa*, they were to one another brothers in arms and in the service of the state. In presenting this image, they conveyed their close bond to one another, but expressed it in terms that would appeal to the armies. Furthermore, they may have used this presentation to promote their military backgrounds and credentials without publicizing the specifics of their non-aristocratic origins, in the same way that panegyrists praised their provinces of birth without discussing their parents or early careers.⁹⁵ But moreover, with their pre-existing friendship and shared history in the army, the Augusti probably already viewed their relationship in fraternal terms. Of course, the likely military origins or inspiration for their fraternity has been somewhat obscured by our principal surviving sources, the panegyrics, which were intellectual works tailored to a mixed audience of courtiers, officers, aristocrats and others. But the panegyrist in 291 may be closer to the truth than one may think when he avers that camps, battles and equal victories have made the emperors brothers (11(3).7.5). The Augusti were not biological brothers, but soldiers who had established their fraternal bond though shared

⁹⁴ Friendship: *Paneg.* 7(6).9.2; *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.17; *HA, Car.* 15.1.

⁹⁵ *Paneg.* 10(2).2.2; *Paneg.* 11(3).3.9-4.1.

military experience. As in the case of Gordian's rescript, where military experience had lent a special significance to the kinship between two brothers, the shared experience of the Augusti would have been considered evidence for a very close relationship. Indeed, we have seen that the panegyrist in 291 asserts that shared military experience rendered the imperial brotherhood much more admirable and excellent (7.5). Furthermore, one suspects that the emperors, like their panegyrists, advertised the superiority of their military kinship over relationships based upon blood. As in the case of the panegyric in 289, their close brotherhood demonstrated their similarity and their shared and complementary virtues, which encouraged unanimity as well as military and diplomatic success.

We have seen that Maximian's panegyrists also considered equality to be a feature of the imperial relationship. The inscription from Prusias ad Hypium shows that metaphorical fraternity could transcend rank. But as previously noted, in the pre-modern world, whereas paternity often denoted hierarchy, the various uses of 'brother' that were not biological generally contained a notion of equality, and sometimes amounted to a substitute for and challenge to hierarchy and government.⁹⁶ Indeed, Constantine's panegyrist in 311, discussing the brotherhood of the Romans and the Aedui, asserts that *frater* attests to 'fellowship of love' (*communitas amoris*) and 'equality of dignity' (*dignitatis aequalitas*) (5(8).3.1). The fraternal presentation of the Augusti thus suggested equality, and in this way accorded with certain other presentations of Tetrarchic power. As previously noted, coins alternatively show Diocletian or Maximian receiving a Victoriola on a globe from the supreme deity. The idea that both Augusti enjoyed such a connection to Jupiter suggested parity.⁹⁷ Other coins also present an image of parity. Aurei from Cyzicus and Antioch show on the reverse the Augusti sitting side by side, each with globe in hand and crowned by Victory, with the legend *Concordiae Augg NN*.⁹⁸ Antoniniani from Lyons depict the patron deities Jupiter and Hercules clasping hands with the legend *Virtus Augg*.⁹⁹

However, such presentations did not accord with reality. Diocletian enjoyed seniority over his colleague, and as previously noted, certain forms of media in both the east and west

⁹⁶ Boswell (1996) 22-23.

⁹⁷ Kolb (1987) 98-102; see also n. 13.

⁹⁸ *RIC* 5.2 Diocletian 292, 313, Maximian 601, 615-616.

⁹⁹ *RIC* 5.2 Maximian 432-436. On this and the previous type, see also Kolb (1987) 102.

acknowledged this fact. On the panel of the emperors enthroned at Thessalonica, Diocletian showily holds a sceptre to the sky, enjoys a more pronounced frontality and wears a gem-studded belt. In the imperial cult chamber at Luxor Temple, Diocletian is depicted alongside his colleagues but alone holds a sceptre.¹⁰⁰ A pilaster found at Romuliana depicts three pairs of Tetrarchs, and while they appear nearly identical, within each pair one ruler is distinctly taller than the other. Distinguished by their civil garb, one pair represents the retired Augusti, in which case Diocletian must be taller than Maximian.¹⁰¹ As previously noted, one could interpret the *signa* Jovius and Herculus as having a hierarchical significance, for it seems a natural assumption that Jovius enjoyed a unique connection to the supreme deity.¹⁰² Moreover, in official documents throughout the empire, the eastern emperor was named first and retained a higher iteration of tribunician power, consulships and *cognomina deuictarum gentium*.¹⁰³

This alternation between messages of equality and hierarchy testifies to the fluidity of Tetrarchic self-representation. Diocletian and Maximian on the one hand presented themselves as equal brothers, but on the other alluded to their actual inequality with the names Jovius and Herculus. Likewise, visual depictions could present the Augusti as physically near-identical, while others could acknowledge Diocletian's seniority. In the case of the pilaster representations in Romuliana, the Augusti are simultaneously near-identical, but distinguished from one another by a height difference. In documents, nomenclature indicated the fraternity of the Augusti, and the sharing of victory titles among the rulers suggested their harmony, whereas the order of names and the iteration of honours pointed to Diocletian's seniority.¹⁰⁴ This paradox is inherent within the fraternal symbolism of the Dioscuri. The twins are joined to one another by an eternal bond, but this was by the grace of Pollux. Whereas parity encouraged a sense of imperial unanimity and *concordia*, as the fraternal discourse within the panegyrics demonstrates, depictions of seniority made clear which emperor overruled the others. Certainly, this amounted to a contradictory set of messages, but both presentations encouraged an image of unity,

¹⁰⁰ On the Thessalonica and Luxor examples, see Seston (1946) 252; Laubscher (1975) 69, 72; Pond Rothman (1975) 22, 27; Rees (1993) 183-187; Van Dam (2007) 240-243; cf. Kolb (1987) 98.

¹⁰¹ Srejović (1994c) 145.

¹⁰² Leadbetter (1998a); cf. Kolb (1987) 88-114.

¹⁰³ Titulature: Barnes (1982) 17-20, 25-27, 93; Kolb (1987) 79, 98, 115. On Diocletian's superior rank and its representation, see also Bastien (1972) 87; Corcoran (2000a) 266-274; Kuhoff (2001) 151; Rees (2002) 33 n. 36; Leadbetter (2004) 257-258, 262; Stefan (2005) 334-335; Leadbetter (2009) *passim*; Neri (2013) 662, 664-665.

¹⁰⁴ The sharing of victory titles: Barnes (1976a); (1982) 27; Hebblewhite (2017) 56-57.

regardless of whether that was viewed through the lenses of collegial harmony or Diocletian's leadership.

To recapitulate, the image of fraternity was originally disseminated by the emperors themselves, and in turn was eagerly adopted by panegyrists, for whom brotherhood provided an established and evocative framework with which to envision the relationship of the Augusti. However, in adopting this fraternal presentation themselves, the emperors Diocletian and Maximian appear to have been inspired by their own backgrounds and concerns for stability to employ a presentation of kinship that accorded with military sentiments. Whereas previous emperors had used marriage and adoption as a means of conveying dynastic unity, the Augusti instead employed a metaphor that carried sentimental weight among the military. In this way, the unusual presentation was a testament to political change in the later third century. The armies were more willing to intervene in politics than they had previously been, and military professionals like Diocletian and Maximian now led the empire's armies and served as its emperors. The fraternity of the Augusti was one of the many ways in which emperorship transformed in response to these changes. Furthermore, the Augustan brotherhood, like other fraternities, carried with it a notion of equality. In this way, it accorded with other representations of parity and emphasized the imperial message of collegial *concordia*. The fact that this image of fraternity co-existed and was sometimes even combined with representations of Diocletian's seniority demonstrates how the emperors and their subjects employed diverse and sometimes contradictory images in the promotion of imperial unity.

Conclusions

Let us return to where this study began, on a hill, three miles outside of Nicomedia, where Diocletian addressed an assembly of officers and soldiers, and announced that he was stepping down from his position as Augustus. The abdication of the Augusti in a period of peace was an unprecedented event in Roman history. Tetricus had abdicated in response to Aurelian's invasion of Gaul, and Vitellius and Didius Julianus had similarly offered to abdicate to avert their demise in civil war, but Diocletian and Maximian were not faced with internal strife when they entered upon their retirement.¹ Britain had returned to their control in 295/6, Egypt in 298, and by 299 Diocletian and Galerius had forced the empire's greatest enemy, the Persians, to agree to a humiliating peace treaty.² The Augusti may well have abdicated to fulfil the expectation that the Caesars would become Augusti in turn, and it is plausible that Diocletian also wished to supervise his own succession, controversial as it was.³ As an interventionist ruler, to directly preside over his succession was in character. This was, after all, the same emperor who had transformed the administration, who had ordered the codification of rescripts, and who had issued edicts on taxation, currency, prices and religion.⁴ But in making the decision to abdicate, was Diocletian's background on display? For Diocletian, was the role of *imperator* the final appointment in a military career hinged on promotion and ending in retirement? As Roberto suggests, was Diocletian essentially a soldier retiring to his land to plant cabbages after a lengthy *militia*?⁵

The thought is an enticing one, and it returns us to a theme of this study: the military professional as emperor. As military professionals who had become emperors, Diocletian and his colleagues were the successors of Maximinus Thrax, Postumus, Claudius Gothicus, Aurelian, Probus and Carus. These emperors were men who had climbed the ranks of the army, some of

¹ Kolb (1987) 144.

² Dating the reconquest of Britain: Burnett (1984) 22-24; Casey (1994) 43-45. Dating the Persian war and the revolt of Egypt: Barnes (1976a) 180-186; Thomas (1976); Zuckerman (1994) 65-66, 68-70; Barnes (1996) 543-544; cf. Kolb (1988); (1995) 23-27.

³ To fulfil the expectation: Seeck (1897) 36-37; Mattingly (1939) 340-341; Seston (1946) 185-189; Chastagnol (1985) 104; Williams (1985) 186; Kolb (1987) 87, 145; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 241 n. 73. To supervise the succession: Seeck 36-37; Costa (1920) 62; Leadbetter (2009) 140; Donciu (2012) 52.

⁴ Diocletian as interventionist: Potter (2014) 326-332. Legislation and codification: Corcoran (2000a). Provincial organization: Barnes (1982) 201-225; (1996) 548-550. Economic reforms: Ermatinger (1996).

⁵ Roberto (2014) 233-234.

them from relatively humble backgrounds, to become powerful members of a ruling circle replete with equestrian officers. As in the possible case of the abdications, this demographic change in the imperial leadership would have affected imperial politics and self-representation. It has thus been a partial aim of this study to investigate how their own backgrounds may have influenced the approach of the Tetrarchs to dynastic matters.

But just as more career soldiers became emperors, more career soldiers surrounded the emperors, serving as their advisors and the leaders of their armies. Moreover, contemporary with and related to this transformation, armies and their officers became ever more interventionist in their political interactions. Strikingly, from 235-284 nearly every emperor had been murdered by their soldiers and officers. Surely, one of the greatest achievements of Diocletian and his co-rulers was the fact that they avoided this fate. When the Augusti abdicated, Diocletian had been emperor for over twenty years, and Maximian close to twenty. Galerius died after eighteen years in the imperial college, and Constantius thirteen. In surviving against the military peril over these periods of so many years, the Tetrarchs achieved something that other emperors of the later third century had not, and presumably this should be ascribed to how they, or rather, Diocletian, sought to appeal to and control the army. This study has argued that one must consider the increased threat of military rebellion, the militarization of the upper echelons of power and the closely-related fact of the military backgrounds of the emperors in the study of dynastic politics and dynastic self-representation during the Tetrarchic period. Furthermore, this study has argued that these points of consideration go some way towards explaining the curious and unique aspects of the Tetrarchic dynasty.

In Chapter 1, it was argued that Diocletian and Maximian appointed their Caesars Galerius and Constantius in ceremonies held simultaneously in Sirmium and Milan on 1 March 293. The expansion of the imperial college was thus a well-planned, synchronized and symmetrical event. External threats did not govern the creation of this Tetrarchy. Rather, the rebellion of the Menapian admiral Carausius, the ongoing survival of his British regime and his military successes against Maximian's forces at sea and in Gaul inspired the Augusti to reconsider their strategy for imperial dominion. Carausius' successes not only threatened to encourage disloyalty elsewhere, but they were symptomatic of the third-century problem of regional rebellion, especially regional military rebellion. Prompted by military emergencies, the

armies and aristocracies of the provinces had developed a willingness to raise their own emperors. Diocletian's solution to this problem was the co-option of two Caesars, who would not only be the successors to the Augusti, but who would be empowered with military and administrative responsibilities and be located in places far from where the Augusti were located. This unprecedented combination of four active rulers ruling far apart from one another provided the armies and provinces with proximate rulers, and Maximian also charged Constantius, who had won prior success against Carausius, with the task of defeating the British regime. Such a solution carried with it the risk of further encouraging divisions, and so the regime sought to counter this through a presentation of dynastic unity, through the absence of formal divisions, through the seniority of the Augusti, through the ultimate seniority of Diocletian (which official media in the east and west acknowledged), and through a self-representation of Tetrarchic rule that emphasized imperial unity and the *concordia* of the imperial college.

The same chapter also established the dynastic relations that composed this new form of government. At some point, Galerius married Diocletian's daughter Valeria, and Constantius married Maximian's step-daughter Theodora. The latter union and possibly the former predated the expansion of the imperial college. When the Augusti made their sons-in-law into their Caesars, Diocletian adopted Galerius as his son, and Maximian adopted Constantius. Moreover, as Diocletian and Maximian had done with one another at the beginning of their reign, the Augusti shared nomenclature with their Caesars, further promoting the image of a dynasty. However, the dynastic ascendancy of Constantius and Galerius also seems to have been influenced by a fear of usurpation. Constantius appears to have sided with Diocletian in his war against Carinus, and the Augusti had entrusted these fellow Balkan soldiers with military commands. But apparently there were limits to this trust. Before 293 neither Constantius nor Galerius had enjoyed the consulship, the urban prefecture, nor, at least in Constantius' case, the praetorian prefecture. Constantius' betrayal of Carinus constituted a show of loyalty to Diocletian, but it would have also demonstrated the possibility that he could betray his new benefactors. Moreover, unlike Maximian, Constantius had won military successes against Carausius, which were conspicuous enough to contend with Maximian's own achievements in a panegyric delivered before that emperor. The Augusti thus used marriage alliances to bind Constantius and Galerius to themselves through *pietas*; an understandable move in a period of regular military rebellion. However, by 293 the Augusti had decided to co-opt two adult men

with military experience as their Caesars, and within these parameters, it made sense from a dynastic perspective that they should select their sons-in-law for these roles.

Chapter 2 argued that Lactantius' account of the succession in 305, according to which Galerius pressured Diocletian into abdicating and ignoring the hereditary claims of Maxentius and Constantine, is not to be trusted. Lactantius' portrayal of events accords perfectly with his literary aims, betrays dishonesty, and does not stand up to scrutiny. Rather, the succession event, while favourable to Galerius, must have reflected the will of Diocletian. Diocletian and Galerius repeatedly ignored hereditary norms. The biological sons of the Tetrarchs were overlooked in the succession events of 293, 305 and 308, and in 311 the dying Galerius does not appear to have attempted to replace himself with his son Candidianus. Moreover, Tetrarchic media was in some respects quite non-dynastic. Coins and inscriptions of the First Tetrarchy did not celebrate links of kinship between the rulers, coins and official inscriptions did not acknowledge the biological sons, and the only surviving inscriptions to refer to biological sons consider Maxentius and Romulus to be *clarissimi* and ignore their imperial pedigree (*ILS* 666-667). The fact that Diocletian and Maximian did not enjoy a link of kinship based on marriage or adoption until the last years of their reign shows that, although the Augusti ultimately did establish a dynasty of sorts, building a dynasty had not been a priority.

Diocletian and Galerius tailored the successions in 305 and 308 to allow Galerius to dominate the imperial college as Diocletian had done before, but this alone does not explain what is observed. Rather, recent history did not inspire confidence in blood-based hereditary succession. During the troubles of the later third century, hereditary claims appear to have dramatically diminished as an effective form of legitimacy in the eyes of the soldiery, whereas military expertise became paramount. Soldiers murdered many Caesars and Augusti that had inherited their title, as well as fathers and sons together, killing both adult and child rulers. Especially disastrous were the attempts of Quintillus and Florian at succeeding their brothers Claudius and Tacitus respectively opposite the usurpations of Aurelian and Probus. The most successful ruler of the period to inherit his position was Gallienus, whose reign was associated with multivarious disasters, whereas the great rulers of recent memory, Aurelian and Probus, were successful because of their military credentials and not dynasty. Moreover, Aurelian and Gallienus, who can still be credited with longevity, had both achieved success by surrounding

themselves with career soldiers and not family members. Diocletian's reluctance to follow hereditary norms in the composition of the imperial college reflects this history, and perhaps his own sentiments, having been a soldier during that time. Using adoption, marriage alliances and the sharing of nomenclature, Diocletian, like most emperors before him, wished to present an image of unity and continuity through dynastic bonds, but he prioritized military credentials over ties of blood. However, the success and relative longevity of his regime meant that by 306 the Tetrarchs had gained an aura of legitimacy that was sufficiently great as to pass on to their sons. As a result, in that year, the adult sons Constantine and Maxentius used their political capital to successfully take power. But although Constantine and his dynasty eventually ushered in an age of explicit dynasticism, the idea that military credentials might supersede family ties persisted. The young Candidianus did not receive the imperial power when opportunities presented themselves in 308 and 311, and in 364 a military officer suggested to Valentinian that his brother lacked the credentials to become emperor.

Chapter 3 responded to Jones' idea that soldiers were preconditioned by lower-class and provincial society to support imperial heredity, discussing how military society may have affected views on heredity. It posits that the military's lesser sympathy for hereditary claims during the later third century was influenced by a combination of practical concerns and societal perspective, since it appears that military society less valued marriage and children. A marriage ban existed until well into the third century, and military ideology deemed women to be harmful to camp life. Moreover, soldiers appear to have married and procreated less than civilians, the sons of soldiers were denied the right of *querela inofficiosi testamenti*, and many soldiers may not have inherited much from their own parents. In the later third century, militarily competent emperors were especially desirable, and for the armies, the societal emphasis on loyalties other than familial, and an emphasis on ability over inheritance may have fostered a similar attitude towards the allocation of power elsewhere.

Chapter 4 discussed the careers of imperial sons during the Tetrarchy, focussing on the careers of Maximian's son Maxentius, and Constantius' son Constantine, who was probably of illegitimate birth, prior to their seizures of power in 306. It was argued that Diocletian sought to control the princes and dissuade the assumption that they were to become Caesars. As noted above, coins and official inscriptions did not acknowledge the biological sons, and the only

surviving inscriptions to refer to biological sons ignore their imperial pedigree. Diocletian appears to have kept Constantine under surveillance, and to have denied him an independent military command and a dynastic marriage. Maxentius was in theory bound to Galerius through his marriage to Galerius' daughter Maximilla, and the Augusti may have located him in Rome partly so that he would be far from the legions and could not enjoy a military career. In accordance with centuries of imperial practice, Maximian and Constantius had probably wanted their sons to succeed, in which case Diocletian, a man of exceptional *auctoritas*, persuaded them to agree to his unusual arrangements. But in some respects, Diocletian undermined these efforts. Although Constantius had sent Constantine to the east as a hostage, Diocletian granted him military tribunates and allowed the prince to be seen alongside himself and Galerius. Maxentius' marriage to Maximilla was of course prestigious, and his relationship with Rome, where he served as a representative of the emperors, lent the prince a special kind of *auctoritas* as well as access to a powerful but discontented city. Furthermore, Diocletian permitted the succession of a blood relative; Galerius' nephew Maximinus. The long history of hereditary succession dictated that princes be treated as important, and for a time, Diocletian also may not have been sufficiently transparent about the prospects of the sons. Concerning marriage and role within the regime, the emperors treated Maxentius more favourably than Constantine. Diocletian probably better trusted Maxentius as the son of his long-time ally over that of Constantius, with whom he had less of a relationship. Moreover, he was probably less obliged to favour a Caesar's bastard son. But the emperors evidently still viewed Constantine as being important, which should encourage future studies into the status of illegitimate children within Roman dynasties.

In Chapter 5, it was argued that, from 284 to 308, imperial women were less visible within media and enjoyed a lesser status than their predecessors. The imperial women were not honoured on coins as *Augusta* or *diua*, they did not appear on coins at all until 307, they are absent from the panegyrics that survive from the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, and based on the available titulature, prior to 308 the imperial women were titled *nobilissima femina* rather than the higher-ranking title of *Augusta*. The women were also excluded from depictions of the imperial college and seem to have had a limited public presence. When one compares the Tetrarchic representation of women with that of previous regimes, one must consider the Tetrarchic approach to be deliberate. As with the absence of sons and kinship terms within official media, the Tetrarchic representation of women is best explained by Diocletian's wish to

not defer to hereditary norms. The emperor most likely used his seniority and influence to create and maintain a kinshipless representation of the regime so that he had an ideological basis with which to overlook hereditary claims. Therefore, if the arguments in Chapter 2 hold true, then military politics influenced the unusual approach to women during this time. However, following the abdication of the Augusti, the Tetrarchic version of the *domus diuina* gradually came to an end. Galerius deified Romula, albeit without minting *consecratio* coins, and in 307 Constantine minted a rare silver issue for his new wife Fausta as *nobilissima femina*. Finally, in 308 Galerius made Galeria Valeria Augusta, who subsequently received widespread promotion and honours throughout the empire's east. However, these changes did not return imperial women to their former prominence within imperial self-representation, and one wonders if the absence of Augustae for most of the Tetrarchic period made a lasting impact on imperial custom.

Chapter 6 discussed the fraternal representation of the Augusti, arguing that the presentation had originated with the emperors themselves, and that they had adopted the presentation partly because of its significance to the military. Fraternal sentiment, both biological and metaphorical, was valued highly among the military, and it was believed that shared military service strengthened fraternal bonds. The Augusti may well have been inspired by their own probable friendship (or brotherhood?) as soldiers, and, again, they needed to protect themselves against military rebellion. Therefore, rather than express their relationship to one another through marriage or adoption, forms of kinship that previous unrelated emperors had used to convey their dynastic unity, they instead employed a metaphor that would have appealed to the soldiery. The emperors did not adopt *frater* into their titulature, which accorded with their approach to other kinship terms. Rather, they advertised their fraternity through other means, such as nomenclature, visual similitude, the use of the Dioscuri in art, and, with encouragement from the emperors, panegyrists, for whom the brotherhood provided an established and rich framework with which to envision the relationship of the Augusti. In advertising their relationship, the emperors expressed their close bond to one another and their military background and credentials. The presentation also carried with it the notion of equality, which accorded with other representations of parity, and emphasized the imperial message of collegial *concordia*. The fact that this image of fraternity co-existed and was sometimes even combined with representations of Diocletian's seniority demonstrates the fluidity of images employed by the Tetrarchs and their subjects in promoting imperial unity.

Diocletian and Maximian rose to power at a time when any rational observer would have considered the probable fate of the rulers to be regicide at the hands of one's officers or a rebellious army. These emperors, soldiers themselves, needed to find solutions to this problem, and their college of four and their various other approaches to dynasty appear to reflect this necessity. It thus seems right that, in the sources, the first-ranking Augustus enjoys a reputation as a problem-solver. In a panegyric to Constantius II, Julian avers that Diocletian considered his co-option of Constantius' grandfathers, Maximian and Constantius I, to be his master stroke (*Or.* 1.7):

ἔτυχον μὲν γὰρ ἄμφω τῆς ἀρχῆς δι' ἀρετὴν ἀξίω κριθέντε, γενομένω δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων οὕτω πρὸς τε ἀλλήλους εὐνοϊκῶς ἔσχον καὶ πρὸς τὸν μεταδόντα τῆς βασιλείας εὐσεβῶς, ὥσθ' ὁ μὲν ὠμολόγει μηδὲν τούτου πάποτε κρεῖττον βεβουλεῦσθαι, πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα σωτήρια τοῖς κοινοῖς ἐξευρών, ...

Both of them, having been distinguished and worthy men, obtained the imperial leadership because of their excellence, and having assumed the office, they behaved so well towards one another and so dutifully towards he who had given them a share in the emperorship, that he conceded that, of all the many safeguards he had designed for the realm, he had never devised anything better than this.

Similarly, the author of the *Historia Augusta* characterizes Diocletian as a restless and ambitious, yet disciplined, strategist (*Car.* 13.1):

...uirum insignem, callidum, amantem rei publicae, amantem suorum et ad omnia quae tempus quaesierat temperatum, consilii semper alti, nonnumquam tamen effrontis sed prudentia et nimia peruicacia motus inquieti pectoris comprimentis.

...a remarkable and shrewd man who loved the state and who loved his kin, who was prepared to face whatever the occasion demanded, forming plans that were always deep, though sometimes overbold, but who with prudence and excessive firmness kept his restless spirit in check.

The Tetrarchic dynasty, in all its eccentricity, appears to be a product of the shrewd problem-solving that the author of the *Historia Augusta* describes, and in some respects the Tetrarchic approach to dynasty indeed proved overbold and misguided. In May 305 Diocletian and Maximian abdicated, and the regime began to transform in their wake. Although, prior to the abdications, the Tetrarchs had avoided placing kinship terms within their titulature, from 305

onwards, the metaphorical title *pater Augustorum* and similar terms were included among the titles of the retired Augusti. Kinship remained a useful way to envision the relationships between the Tetrarchs, who were after all bound to one another through ties of marriage and adoption, and by the end of 308, Galerius had given the title *filius Augustorum* to Maximinus and Constantine.⁶ By this time, however, the regime had already changed in more dramatic ways. By the end of 306, Constantine and Maxentius had asserted their perceived right to imperial power. Constantius had supposedly recommended Constantine to his troops, and Maxentius had recalled his father from retirement to aid his own efforts.⁷ The subsequent political struggle hastened the return of dynastic norms, since traditional dynastic credentials proved a useful way of competing with rivals. In 307 Maxentius and Maximian defended their dominion against the counter-efforts of Galerius and Severus, and in the same year, Constantine's mint at Trier issued the first coin to celebrate his new wife, Maximian's daughter Fausta. Meanwhile, a panegyrist in the same city celebrated the Herculian *domus* being forged by Maximian and Constantine. In 308 Galerius had Valeria promoted throughout the east as an Augusta, and by this time he also appears to have deified Romula. In 307/8 Constantine had *consecratio* coins minted for his father, and between 309 and 312, Maxentius had *consecratio* types issued for his son, and eventually also Constantius, Maximian and Galerius.⁸ In 310 an orator delivering a panegyric to Constantine announced that Claudius Gothicus was the emperor's ancestor. Constantine was thus third in a bloodline of emperors and enjoyed a birthright to the throne that placed him above his colleagues. In 311 Galerius died, and with him ended the imperial college of four emperors. Just six years later, Constantine and Licinius appointed their infant sons as Caesars; a political move that in no way accorded with dynastic practice during the First Tetrarchy.⁹

But despite its transformation and collapse, the Tetrarchic regime was not a failure. With Diocletian and Maximian at its helm, the college of four functioned remarkably well. Through their cooperation, and through the cooperation of their subordinate Caesars, decades of political and military instability were gradually brought to a halt, and for a time, a ruling regime had once again achieved a monopoly on the office of emperor. Despite a tendency to ignore dynastic

⁶ Ch. 1.4.

⁷ Ch. 2.7.

⁸ Empresses and *consecratio* coins: Ch. 5.4.

⁹ Claudius Gothicus and the appointments in 317: Ch. 2.7.

norms, the Tetrarchic regime was still a dynasty of sorts; a network of personal relationships based upon adoption, marriage, and most importantly, friendship. Diocletian and Maximian enjoyed a personal bond with one another; a fraternal bond developed through the shared experience of military service, and then solidified when Diocletian shared imperial power with his brother. Many of the Balkan officers who held commands during the later third century must have known each other, and one wonders whether friendship had also previously existed between the Augusti and their Caesars. Regardless, the network of loyalties that formed the Tetrarchy had at its core the brotherhood of Diocletian and Maximian. Diocletian was indeed a problem-solver, and Maximian a loyal brother, and with striking success, the regime that they led succeeded in communicating its legitimacy to the armies and their officers, as well as the other constituents of the empire. Even the most successful emperors of recent history, Aurelian and Probus, had failed to avoid the blades of their own men. And yet Diocletian lived his last years on the Dalmatian coast; a retired man tending to his garden. Maximian could have enjoyed similar if he had not partaken in the political strife that eventually followed.

But the bond of close friendship, strong as it is, is not easily replicated. The relationship of Constantius and Galerius, or Maximian and Galerius, was unlike that of Diocletian and Maximian, and Tetrarchic *concordia* could not be preserved through the artificial replication of a prior friendship. Moreover, even the best of friendships could be tried by the unprecedented arrangement that was the succession in 305. A year and a half after his abdication, and invited to return to power by his son, Maximian chose to end his retirement. In this way, the eccentric dynasty of the Tetrarchs began to collapse, and civil war returned to the empire. But in an ironic way, the curious approach of the Tetrarchs to imperial rule also allowed the ascendancy of one of the empire's most successful dynasties. Again, the longevity and success of the Tetrarchic regime was unlike that of any other regime since the Severans, and this success, advertised to the empire as success shared between four rulers, contributed greatly to the legitimacy of the Tetrarchs and to members of their family. Ironically for Diocletian and his succession plan, for the first time in decades, there were sons who could force their claims to imperial power and survive. One of these sons was Constantine, and his dynasty would last for decades to come.

Appendix: Prosopography of the Imperial Women

The following prosopographical entries document every female family member attested in the sources. Sources are not comprehensively provided for Fausta, Helena and the daughters of Constantius, who maintained relevance after the Tetrarchic period and for whom *PLRE* provides more detailed documentation.

Anastasia: Daughter of Constantius and Theodora, who by 316 was married to the senator Bassianus (*Origo* 5.14; *PLRE* 1 Anastasia 1).

Constantia: Daughter of Constantius and Theodora, who in 313 married Licinius (Lact. *DMP* 43.2, 45.1; Eus. *HE* 10.8.3-4; *PLRE* 1 Constantia 1; Pohlsander (1993)).

Dioclea: The name attributed to Diocletian's mother; probably fictitious. The *Epitome de Caesaribus* names both Diocletian's mother and his birthplace as Dioclea (39.1). Dioclea is a variation on the name of the town of Doclea in Dalmatia, and Diocletian was indeed born in Dalmatia, but the sources that relate Diocletian's Dalmatian origin locate his birth in Salona (Lact. *DMP* 19.6 (implied); Eutr. 9.19; *Epit.* 39.1; Const. Porphyr. *De Them.* 58.1-2 (*CSHB* 18); Zon. 12.32; cf. Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.26 (Illyricum)). It is thus likely that the connection between Diocletian and Doclea is a mistake. The dual claim concerning mother and birthplace perhaps stems from a conflation of historical traditions (see also Syme (1971) 233; Barnes (1982) 31).¹

Eutropia 1: Wife of Maximian, and mother of Theodora, Maxentius and Fausta. She begot Theodora via an earlier marriage, possibly to the praetorian prefect Afranius Hannibalianus (see *Theodora* in this Appendix). She was born in Syria (*Origo* 4.12; Jul. *Or.* 1.6a; *Epit.* 40.12-13), and she was still alive in 325, when she informed Constantine of ceremonies in Palestine (Eus. *VC* 3.52; Soz. 2.4.6).

¹ Cf. Cambi (2004) 38-39, who supports the *Epitome*'s claims since it was normal to name slaves after their place of origin. Eutropius reports that Diocletian was said by most to be the son of a *scriba*, but by others to be himself a freedman of a senator named Anullinus (9.19), and the *Epitome* likewise claims that Diocletian was a freedman of Anullinus (39.1). I find this to be less plausible than the simple explanation that I have given.

Eutropia 2: Daughter of Constantius and Theodora, and mother of Nepotianus, who in 350 usurped as Augustus (Eutr. 10.11; Zos. 2.43.2; *PLRE* 1 Eutropia 2). She was killed by Magnentius (Augustus 350-353) (Athan. *Apol. Const.* 6.5).

Fl. Maxima *Fausta*: Daughter of Maximian and Eutropia; born and raised in Rome (Jul. *Or.* 1.5c). In 307 she married Constantine, and she bore him five children: Constantinus (probably; b. 316), Constantius (b. 317), Constantina, Constans (b. 320 or 323) and Helena. Constantine had her put to death, soon after he had his eldest son Crispus executed in 326 (*Paneg.* 7(6) *passim*; Lact. *DMP* 27.1, 30.2-3; *PLRE* 1 Fausta; Barnes (1982) 9, 43; Drijvers (1992a); Woods (1998)).

Galeria Valeria: Daughter of Diocletian and wife of Galerius (Lact. *DMP* 7.9, 15.1, 35.3, 39-41, 50.1-5, 51; Eutr. 9.22; Amm. 19.11.4; *Chron. Min.* 1.445 (Prosp. *Ep. Chron.*); *Chron. Pasch.* 516; see also *PLRE* 1 Galeria Valeria). Fourth-century epitomes date her marriage to 293, but it may have happened earlier (Ch. 1.4; see also *Theodora* in this Appendix). In 314 she was killed on the orders of Licinius, following his victory over Maximinus (Lact. *DMP* 50.1-5, 51).

Fl. Iulia *Helena*: Mother of Constantine (*PLRE* 1 Helena 3; Drijvers (1992b); Pohlsander (1995)). She was low-born, and it is unlikely that she had ever been married to Constantius (Ch. 2.1; Concubine: Jer. *Chron.* 228.21-25 (but cf. 226.3-4); Oros. 7.25.16 (derived from Jerome); Philost. *HE* 2.16a; *Chron. Min.* 1.447 (Prosp. *Ep. Chron.*) (derived from Jerome); 1.643 (*Chron. Gall.*); Zos. 2.8.2, 9.1-2; *Chron. Pasch.* 516-517; Drijvers (1992b) 15-19; Pohlsander (1995) 13-14; Leadbetter (1998b) 74-85; Kuhoff (2001) 119-120. Wife: *ILS* 708 = *CIL* 10.517; *CIL* 10.1483; *Origo* 1.1; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.25; Eutr. 9.22, 10.2; Jer. *Chron.* 226.3-4; *Epit.* 39.2; *Chron. Min.* 1.445 (Prosp. *Ep. Chron.*) (derived from Jerome); 1.643 (*Chron. Gall.*); Barnes (1982) 36; (2011) 30-35; Potter (2013) 318 n. 14. Zon. 13.1.1 records both traditions.). She died c. 330.

Minervina: Wife of Constantine. The date of marriage is unknown, but it was legitimate and preceded that of Constantine and Fausta (Ch. 4.1; *Paneg.* 7(6).4.1 with Barnes (1982) 42-43; cf. the sources that claim that she was a concubine: *Epit.* 41.4; Zos. 2.20.2; Zon. 13.2.37).

Aurelia *Prisca*: Wife of Diocletian and mother of Galeria Valeria. She was executed alongside her daughter in 314 (Lact. *DMP* 7.9, 15.1, 39.5, 51).

Romula: Mother of Galerius (Lact. *DMP* 9.2, 9, 11.1-2; *Epit.* 40.16). She had crossed the Danube to escape the Carpi (*DMP* 9.2), and she was still alive during the First Tetrarchy, since Lactantius reports that she urged Galerius to persecute the Christians (*DMP* 11.1-2).

Theodora: Wife of Constantius. Epitomes and chronicles refer to Theodora as Maximian's *priuigna* (step-daughter), and the *Epitome de Caesaribus* explicitly distinguishes between Theodora and Maximian's children, stating in the same sentence that Maximian and Eutropia sired Maxentius and Fausta as offspring, and that Maximian married his step-daughter Theodora to Constantius (40.12; see also Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.25; Eutr. 9.22; Jer. *Chron.* 225.26-226.1; *Chron. Min.* 1.445 (Prosp. *Ep. Chron.*); *Chron. Pasch.* 516). In contrast, the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* (1.1) and Philostorgius (*HE* 2.16a) consider Theodora to be Maximian's *filia* (daughter). Barnes ((1982) 33) notes that the latter sources are more reliable, and he suggests that Theodora was Maximian's daughter from an earlier marriage.² But *priuigna* is the *lectio difficilior* and a type of *filia*, and so it is more likely that authors changed *priuigna* to *filia*. Indeed, Galerius' wife Galeria Valeria was Diocletian's daughter. To think Theodora too was the daughter of an Augustus would have been an easy mistake.³ Therefore, Theodora was probably Maximian's step-daughter. Scholars have suggested that Theodora was the daughter of Eutropia via an earlier marriage to the praetorian prefect Afranius Hannibalianus, since Hannibalianus is also the name of a son and grandson of Theodora (*PLRE* 1 Hannibalianus 1; 2; see also Leadbetter (1998b) 83 n. 8), which strongly suggests a familial connection (e.g. Seeck (1900) 1041; Stein (1959) 68, 435; *PLRE* 1 Hannibalianus 3; Theodora 1; Kuhoff (2001) 118-119).⁴

The Latin epitomes date Theodora's marriage to 293 (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.24-25; Eutr. 9.22; Jer. *Chron.* 225.25-226.4; *Epit.* 39.2), but her union probably dates to the late 280s (Ch. 1.4; *Paneg.* 10(2).11.4; *Origo* 1.1; *Chron. Min.* 1.445 (Prosp. *Ep. Chron.*); *Chron. Pasch.* 516; Barnes (1982) 33, 125-126; Nixon & Rodgers (1994) 70-71 n. 38; Leadbetter (1998b) 74-78; Kuhoff (2001)

² Cf. Kuhoff (2001) 118-119, who is convinced that Theodora was a step-daughter since the sources that support this are more numerous.

³ See also *Paneg.* 7(6).13.3-4, in which the orator celebrating the marriage of Constantine and Fausta treats Constantine as if he were Maximian's son and 'more than a son' (*plus... quam filius*) (3). Panegyrists may have applied similar exaggerations to wives.

⁴ Barnes (1982) 33-34, and Leadbetter (1998b) 75-77, think that Maximian had an earlier wife, who was Theodora's mother and of the Hannibaliani.

119; Leadbetter (2009) 60-61, 178). Theodora had six children: Delmatius, Constantius, Hannibalianus, Constantia, Eutropia 2 and Anastasia.

Valeria Maximilla: Daughter of Galerius and wife of Maxentius (*ILS* 666-667, 671; Lact. *DMP* 18.9, 26.1, 26.6, 27.3; *Origo* 3.7; *Epit.* 40.14). She bore Maxentius two sons; Valerius Romulus, who was born by 306 and died in 310 (*ILS* 666-667; *RIC* 6 Rome 247-248, 254-255, Ostia 30-31; *PLRE* 1 Romulus 6), and another son who was alive in 312 (*Paneg.* 12(9).16.5).

It is uncertain whether Maximilla was the daughter of Galerius by Galeria Valeria or an earlier marriage. The latter has been suspected for two reasons. The epitomes date the dynastic marriages of Constantius and Galerius to the establishment of the Tetrarchy in 293 (*Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.24-25; *Eutr.* 9.22; *Jer. Chron.* 225.25-226.4; *Epit.* 39.2), and yet Romulus was alive in 306 (*ILS* 666-667), making it improbable that Maximilla was born in 293/4. Furthermore, Lactantius relates that Galeria Valeria adopted Galerius' illegitimate son Candidianus because of her *sterilitas*, rendering him legitimate (*DMP* 50.2; an earlier marriage: e.g. *PLRE* 1 Galeria Valeria; Maximilla 2; Stemma 1; Barnes (2010) 321-322). But Valeria may have adopted Candidianus because she had not produced a son, and may have been sterile by the time of Candidianus' birth (Barnes (1982) 38; Leadbetter (2009) 78 n. 123). Concerning the date of the marriage, we need not accept that Galerius married Galeria Valeria as late as 293, just as we doubt that Constantius married Theodora at this time (Ch. 1.4; see also *Theodora* in this Appendix). Maximilla's *nomen* Valeria might suggest that she was born to Galerius after he had married into Diocletian's family (Barnes (1982) 38), although Valerius was also a status *nomen*, which Galerius might have taken upon his appointment to an office (*Status nomina*: Hekster (2015) 234). The accounts that date their marriages to 293 claim that Constantius and Galerius repudiated earlier wives in order to marry the daughters of the Augusti. But as previously discussed, this is possibly a Constantinian fiction that establishes Helena as a wife of Constantius (Leadbetter (1998b); Ch. 1.4). It thus remains unclear whether Maximilla was the daughter of Galeria Valeria.⁵

⁵ Barnes (2010) 321-322, favours the view that Maximilla was the daughter of an earlier marriage since he believes that the death of Diocletian, Galeria Valeria's father, predates that of Maxentius. This is because Lactantius, in *DMP*, narrates the former event before the latter (Barnes (1973) 32-35; (2010) 319). An emperor could honour his deceased predecessor as *diuus* (deified man), and on Barnes's reckoning, if Maximilla was not the granddaughter of Diocletian, then this explains why Maxentius did not mint *diuus* coins for the emperor, while doing so for the other

Anonymous 1: Mother of Maximian. The *Epitome de Caesaribus* relates that Maximian's parents had worked wage-earning jobs not far from Sirmium (40.10).

Anonymous 2: Sister of Galerius and mother of Maximinus (*Epit.* 40.1, 18; Zos. 2.8.1). A mausoleum in Šarkamen, Serbia, may have belonged to her (Srejšović, Tomović & Vasić (1996); Popović (2005)).

Anonymous 3: Wife of Maximinus, and probably also a relative of Galerius, perhaps a niece, since Lactantius describes Maximinus as Galerius' *affinis*, a relation by marriage, when narrating the succession in 305 (*DMP* 18.14). Lactantius deliberately ignores Maximinus' blood connection to Galerius, but as noted in Chapter 3.4, Lactantius did not need to invent a marriage to do so, and the establishment of a marriage connection with Galerius would have accorded with the marriages that bound the Augusti and Caesars of the First Tetrarchy (Barnes (1999) 459-460; (2011) 59-60; cf. Mackay (1999) 202-205). Anonymous 2 bore Maximinus a son and a daughter, who in 313 were eight and seven (Lact. *DMP* 50.6). In 313 she was thrown into the Orontes, after Licinius defeated Maximinus (Lact. *DMP* 47.5, 50.6; see also 39.2-4).

Anonymous 4: Daughter of Maximinus and Anonymous 3, who was betrothed to Galerius' son Candidianus. In 313, at the age of seven, she was killed on the orders of Licinius (Lact. *DMP* 47.5, 50.6; see also Eus. *HE* 9.11.7).

deceased Tetrarchs (Maximian, Constantius and Galerius) and his son Romulus. Maxentius advertised on these coins how the deified persons were related to himself, and in Barnes's opinion, although Diocletian was also deceased, he was not related. In contrast, Nakamura (2003) 287-289 argues that Diocletian's absence is evidence that he outlived Maxentius. Barnes's argument that Maxentius outlived Diocletian is unconvincing for the following reasons: 1) Lactantius was not infallible when it came to chronology (e.g. Lactantius claims that Maxentius reigned five years (44.4), and Kolb argues that the dates in 17 were chosen for their polemical use ((1987) 28-32); 2) *CTH* 13.10.2, *Epit.* 39.7 and Soc. *HE* 1.2.10 suggest that Diocletian's death happened after Barnes's proposed date of 311 and, in the case of the *Epitome* and Socrates, closer to the end of 312 or early 313 (Nakamura 286-287, 289); 3) the single chapter on the fall of Maxentius in *DMP* (44) is not a part of the main narrative (Maxentius is not a persecutor), but rather provides the context for the fall of Maximinus (see 43.1, 43.3, 44.10-12), and should thus not be given much weight in terms of chronological sequence. The fact that Maxentius minted for Galerius, who had been his enemy and had incurred the hostility of the Roman people and the praetorians, shows that he was opportunistic in for whom he minted. Even if Diocletian was not Maximilla's grandfather, Maxentius could invoke him as his father's 'brother' and thus his uncle (*patruus*), and as a grandfather by marriage (*auus*), Galerius being Diocletian's adoptive son (see also Nakamura 288-289). Diocletian thus outlived Maxentius, and the lack of Maxentian *diuus* coins for Diocletian does not impede the possible identification of Maximilla as the daughter of Galeria Valeria.

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