

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA'S *ORATION IN PRAISE OF CONSTANTINE*
AS THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHRISTIAN EMPIRE

by

Benjamin David Brandon

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in History

Boise State University

December 2012

©2012

Benjamin David Brandon

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COLLEGE

DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND FINAL READING APPROVALS

of the thesis submitted by

Benjamin David Brandon

Thesis Title: Eusebius of Caesarea's *Oration in Praise of Constantine* as the Political Philosophy of the Christian Empire

Date of Final Oral Examination: 02 November 2012

The following individuals read and discussed the thesis submitted by student Benjamin David Brandon, and they evaluated his presentation and response to questions during the final oral examination. They found that the student passed the final oral examination.

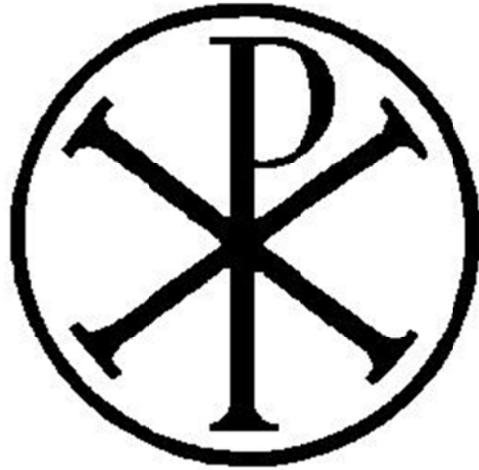
Katherine Huntley, Ph.D. Chair, Supervisory Committee

Lisa McClain, Ph.D. Member, Supervisory Committee

Scott Yenor, Ph.D. Member, Supervisory Committee

The final reading approval of the thesis was granted by Katherine Huntley, Ph.D., Chair of the Supervisory Committee. The thesis was approved for the Graduate College by John R. Pelton, Ph.D., Dean of the Graduate College.

Dedicated to my Mother and Father, who are the best teachers I've ever had.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very thankful to Dr. Odahl for the direction and guidance he has given me over the years. He taught me Latin, the history of Greece, Rome, and the Christian Church, and it was he who first pointed me to sources on the history of ancient political philosophy. I am also thankful to Dr. Yenor for helping me develop the lens of political philosophy through which to interpret history. I am grateful to John Moreland, who not only taught me Greek, but helped me to understand the spirit of the translations. I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Huntley and Dr. McClain for the remarkable effort and energy they put into helping me finish this thesis. Finally, I wish to thank Nathan, Derek, Nick, and Catherine for listening as I talked endlessly about the subjects I love so much.

ABSTRACT

Eusebius of Caesarea delivered a panegyric in the thirtieth year of Constantine's reign, 335 AD, celebrating the piety and faith of the emperor. This panegyric, the *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini*, or *Oration in Praise of Constantine*, provides a political theology for the divine sanction of the Christian monarch by linking the emperor's rule to the rule of God. Much of the *Oratio* is an account of the pious deeds and divine victories of Constantine's reign, suggesting that the emperor had in fact achieved the ideal of a Christian monarch. Through the *Logos* (Word or Reason) of God, the emperor can partake of divine authority by imitating the divine archetype, and thereby manifest on earth a reflection of the kingdom of Heaven. This concept of the *Logos*, though placed in a Christian context, is directly derived from Hellenistic political philosophy. Although other scholars have already established the Hellenistic influence on Eusebius, this thesis will explore the historical process that brought together Greek philosophy and Christian theology into what is known as Christian Platonism. Using this philosophical framework, Eusebius used ideas from the Hellenistic world to develop a Christian response to the pagan conceptions of divine sanction as represented by the Latin panegyrics of the late empire. Eusebius's *Oration in Praise of Constantine* marks the final stage in the progression of the Latin panegyrics, culminating in a political theology that proclaims a monotheistic monarchy for a Christian empire.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: MODERN SCHOLARSHIP ON EUSEBIUS AND PANEGYRIC.....	7
CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL INFLUENCE OF CONSTANTINE'S REIGN.....	18
Military and Political Actions.....	18
Activity in Church Affairs.....	23
Foundation of Constantinople.....	31
CHAPTER 3: THE LATIN PANEGYRICS.....	34
Introduction to Panegyric Tradition.....	34
A Guide to the Latin Panegyrics (Panegyrici Latini).....	37
Tetrarchic System : Panegyrics II (289), III (291), V (297), VI (307).....	39
Hereditary Claim: Panegyrics VII (310), VIII (311).....	44
Proto-Christian: Panegyric IX (313), Panegyric X (321).....	49
CHAPTER 4: PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION.....	58
The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship.....	61
Origins of the Logos.....	68
The Logos in Hellenistic Political Philosophy.....	71

The Logos and Christian Platonism.....	75
CHAPTER 5: EUSEBIUS’S ORATION IN PRAISE OF CONSTANTINE	84
The Logos as Source of Sovereignty	84
The Emperor’s Imitation of the Logos.....	87
The Roles of the Emperor	90
CONCLUSION.....	100
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	103

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Latin Panegyrics	38
---------------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION

After enduring persecutions from the Roman state, the Christians found a champion in the emperor Constantine the Great. The first Christian emperor won the support of the Christian world after defeating pagan emperors in battle, and granting rights to the Church. For the Christians, his reign marked a new era of peace and prosperity after long intervals of suffering under the Roman state. Constantine showed that the immense power of the government that had previously repressed the Christians for so long could now be used to support the Church. Throughout his long reign, he restored property and bestowed legal rights to the Christians, subsidized the building of churches, and even organized Church councils.

One of his greatest achievements and most lasting contributions to western civilization was the founding of a new capital of the empire at Constantinople. In this city, the emperor celebrated his *tricennalia*, the thirtieth year of his reign, the second longest reign of any Roman emperor. To honor the emperor, delegates from all over the known world attended this *tricennalia* celebration and heard a panegyric given in his honor. Constantine chose Eusebius of Caesarea, one of the most learned men in the Roman world and an ardent supporter of Constantine, to compose and deliver the panegyric.

Eusebius's panegyric, *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini*,¹ is a work of political theology that uses conceptions of God to explain the nature of the state.² The central focus of the panegyric is the role of the emperor as Christian monarch who forms his earthly kingdom according to the kingdom of heaven by following the Word (*Logos*) of God. Eusebius portrays this godly kingdom as united with one accord, following the Divine Laws and accepting one God in heaven and one emperor on earth. He explicitly endorses monarchy—and denounces polyarchy and democracy—implying that monotheism is to monarchy as polytheism is to polyarchy. Through his pious deeds, Constantine had overcome the “hostile forces of polytheism”³ and thus acted as a “minister of heaven-sent vengeance.”⁴ In this capacity, Constantine is portrayed as a “delegate of the Supreme,”⁵ and “interpreter of the Word of God.”⁶ Using such terminology, Eusebius ascribes to Constantine a clearly articulated role for the Christian Emperor, and thus formulates a constitution by which the Emperor is expected to abide.

This thesis aims to contribute to an understanding Eusebius as a political-theologian who synthesized Christian beliefs with Greek philosophy. The primary contribution of this thesis will be an examination of the historical process by which the ideas of Greek and Hellenistic political philosophy were transmitted to Christianity, and

¹ *Oration in Praise of Constantine*, abbreviated *LC* hereafter. Although Eusebius wrote the work in Greek, the panegyric is better known by its Latin name, and so will be the name used in the text.

² The term “political theology” is used to describe the branch of political philosophy concerned with the way theology influences political thought.

³ Eusebius of Caesarea's *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini/Tricennatsrede an Constantin* = *Oration in Praise of Constantine*, Greek text edited by I.A. Heikel, In *Eusebius's Werke*, vol. 1. (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1902); English trans. By E.C. Richardson in the NPNF, 2nd Series, vol. 1. (New York, 1890); rept. Grand Rapids, MI, 1986; and by H.A. Drake. *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius's Tricennial Orations* (Berkeley, 1976), 8.

⁴ *LC*, 7. 12

⁵ *LC*, 7. 13

⁶ *LC*, 2. 4

how Eusebius came to use it in his assessment of the Christian Emperor. The examination will show that Eusebius drew upon three sources for his conception of the Christian emperor and Christian empire: the historical deeds of Constantine, the panegyric tradition of the late empire, and a synthesis of Hellenistic and Christian philosophy.⁷ The synthesis of these influences results in, as Norman H. Baynes put it, the first political philosophy of the Christian Empire.⁸

The first chapter explores the way Baynes and other modern scholars have interpreted Eusebius's role as a political theologian. Although Baynes saw Eusebius primarily as a theologian who was the author of the first Christian political philosophy, others have depicted Eusebius as a politically motivated courtier, intriguing in imperial politics. However, the suspicious attitude toward Eusebius has abated in more recent years, and a more holistic approach has led many to again see Eusebius as one of the greatest scholars of the Church.

Chapter 2 explores how the historical events of Constantine's reign directly influenced Eusebius's panegyric. For Eusebius, Constantine's reign provides examples of a godly Monarch as a champion of the Christian Church. Eusebius panegyric is filled with praise for the emperor's personal piety and his patronage of the Church. He knew better than most Constantine's ardent support of the Christian Church, for he wrote the *Life of Constantine*, a detailed biography of Constantine's reign. He records how

⁷ This thesis aims to show how the historical development of political theology shaped his thought, in the context of the period of Constantine's reign. These sources are *in addition* to the Bible—no one would question the influence of the Bible on Eusebius, a topic which has been explored extensively by other works. See the section on Modern Scholarship for an overview of scholarly interpretations of Eusebius and influences on his thought, including the Bible—especially the Book of Isaiah.

⁸ Norman H. Baynes, "Eusebius and the Christian Empire," in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*, (University of London: Athlone Press, 1955), 55.

Constantine's conquest of Rome marked the beginning of the union of the Christian Church and the Roman government, which Eusebius believed to be divinely ordained. He saw the emperor as an agent of the Christian God, serving as a figurehead of the Christian state. This chapter explains the ways in which Constantine's reign provided historical examples for Eusebius to draw upon to portray the emperor as an agent of God, piously defeating paganism and defending the Church. The chapter is divided into three sections: 1) Constantine's patronage of the Church through direct military and political action to defend the Church from persecution, 2) his personal involvement with the clergy in holding councils and establishing churches, and 3) his foundation of a Christian capital at Constantinople.

Chapter 3 analyzes the second influence on Eusebius's work: the panegyric tradition of the late Roman empire, as expressed by the collection of speeches known as the *Panegyrici Latini* (Latin Panegyrics). Although Constantine's reign provided the historical content of Eusebius's panegyric, it was the tradition of the twelve *Panegyrici Latini* (Latin Panegyrics) that provided the problem to be solved: the Latin Panegyrics all sought to legitimize imperial authority, though they disagreed as to the source of ultimate authority. Eusebius's own panegyric is a response to the other claims of authority: he rejects the late empire's division of imperial power between four emperors and affirms the idea of the emperor as the agent of the Supreme Deity. The chapter has three sections; the first deals with the first four panegyrics, which were delivered during the *tetrarchy*, a four-fold division of the empire, established by the emperor Diocletian. In his own panegyric, Eusebius refers to the tetrarchy as *polyarchy* (rule of many), and fervently condemns it for its pagan beliefs. The emperors looked to Jupiter and Hercules

as their divine patrons, so the panegyrics written in this period seek to justify the emperors according to this Jovian-Herculean system, which Eusebius denounces as polytheistic. The second section deals with the panegyrics delivered when the tetrarchy began to collapse, and monarchy began to reemerge. This section explores how the panegyrists proclaim divine heredity as the justification for power as Constantine made a bid for supreme authority. The final section examines how, as Constantine began his patronage of the Church, the last Latin Panegyrics acknowledge his special relationship with the “Supreme Deity” as the source of his authority. The progression from the distant gods of the tetrarchic religion to the personal God of the last panegyric show that Eusebius’s own panegyric was a sort of capstone to an incremental progression from polytheistic polyarchy to a monotheistic monarchy.

To the problem of divine sanction, as posed by the Latin Panegyrics, Eusebius found an answer in the philosophy of the *Logos* derived from Hellenistic political philosophy, which will be examined in Chapter 4. He rejects the notion that emperors could be justified by imitating Jupiter and Hercules, for the true emperor imitates the *Logos*, which is the “Reason” and “Word” of God. The chapter will explore the way in which Eusebius’s conception of the *Logos* is a synthesis of Hellenistic philosophy and Christian theology, resulting in a unique Christian political theology. The first section will examine the use of the concept *Logos* in classical Greek thought, with the intent of showing how it ultimately became compatible with the Christian concept. The chapter will then analyze the Hellenistic period, especially the political philosophy of Hellenistic kingship as represented by several ancient authors, which emphasizes not only the political but spiritual role of the king who imitates the *Logos*. This will be followed by

an examination of the progression of *Logos* philosophy from the Hellenistic age to the Christian age through several scholars, namely Philo Judaeus, and Plutarch of Chaeronea, who prepared the way for Eusebius's Christian political theology of kingship. Finally, it will be shown that the Christianization of the Hellenistic philosophy was done by several scholars who are credited with the development of Christian Platonism: Philo Judaeus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen were the first to bridge the Philosophical and Christian *Logos*.

Finally, the fifth chapter will analyze Eusebius's own oration, the *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini*. Eusebius describes how God, as the ultimate source of authority, invests His Word (*Logos*) with divine authority. The *Logos*, in turn, provides the divine model of imperial rule, a divine "transcript" for the emperor to follow. In following the example of the *Logos*, the emperor conforms his own soul, becoming a model of godly virtue and an agent of the Divine Will. In bringing about the Divine Will in his kingdom, the emperor transforms the earthly kingdom into a reflection of the heavenly kingdom, a kingdom following the *Logos*, acknowledging one God and one emperor, abounding in peace and concord (*Homonoia*).

Before examining the ancient sources, the following chapter will provide a brief overview of the way modern scholars have interpreted Eusebius and his panegyric. The conclusions of these scholars vary from portrayals of Eusebius as an imperial propagandist and ecclesiastical politician, to a saintly scholar and political theologian. The survey of modern scholarship aims at revealing different biases common in those who have studied Eusebius, with the hope of avoiding unnecessary assumptions in this study of his panegyric.

CHAPTER 1: MODERN SCHOLARSHIP ON EUSEBIUS AND PANEGYRIC

Eusebius wrote on many subjects in many fields. His panegyric alone delves into history, theology, and politics; accordingly, there have been many different lenses through which scholars have interpreted Eusebius's *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini*. Of chief importance is Norman H. Baynes, who linked Eusebius's oration to Hellenistic political philosophy, portraying him as the author of the first Christian political philosophy.⁹ This thesis follows Baynes in understanding Eusebius as a political-theologian; accordingly, his panegyric can best be understood as political theology—a theology that synthesizes Christian beliefs with Greek philosophy. However, others who have studied the ideology of Eusebius minimized the significance of the panegyric by discrediting Eusebius himself, portraying him as chiefly motivated by political schemes or heretical beliefs. Such scholars denounced both Eusebius's “heretical” Arian theology and his political philosophy, claiming that the theology corrupted his political philosophy.¹⁰ Such scholarship promoted the perception of Eusebius as a political agent of the empire, and as a result, Eusebius has been cast as a political propagandist,¹¹ a

⁹ Norman H. Baynes, *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (University of London: Athlone Press, 1955).

¹⁰ Meaning that as the Son is subordinated to God, so the emperor is subordinated to the *Logos*. The idea of the Son being *subordinate* to the father conflicts with Catholic teachings of the equality of the Trinity, and is therefore considered Arian heresy.

¹¹ Erik Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem* (Munich: Kosel, 1951), 91, quoted in Michael J. Hollerich, “Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First ‘Court Theologian.’” *Church History* 59, no. 3 (1990): 309.

scheming political advisor,¹² one of the first ecclesiastical politicians,¹³ or merely a courtier of the emperor.¹⁴ These depictions of Eusebius all emphasized his political influence, but failed to integrate Eusebius's devotion to ecclesiastical scholarship. Others have sought to portray a more holistic view of the multifaceted scholar, showing that he had fewer political interactions than the conclusions of earlier scholars would suggest. They conclude that he should be understood primarily as a scholar; a conclusion that supports Baynes's original assertion that Eusebius was likely more interested in political philosophy than political intrigue.

In an article written in 1933, Baynes revealed the philosophical importance of the *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini*, arguing that it had not received the attention it deserved: "here for the first time is clearly stated the political philosophy of the Christian Empire, that philosophy of the state which was consistently maintained throughout the millennium of Byzantine absolutism."¹⁵ Baynes summarized Eusebius's political philosophy as "the conception of the imperial government as a terrestrial copy of the rule of God in Heaven: there is one God and one divine law, therefore there must be on earth but one ruler and a single law. That ruler, the Roman emperor, is the Vicegerent of the Christian God."¹⁶ As Baynes well knew, Eusebius was not so much an original philosopher as a traditional scholar, and so he came to the conclusion that Eusebius's

¹² Arnaldo Momigliano, "Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century," in *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. A. Momigliano (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 85.

¹³ Charles N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 183.

¹⁴ Henri Grégoire, "L'authenticité et l'historicité la Vita Constantini attribuée à Eusébe de Césarée," *Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres* 39 (1953): 462-479, quoted in T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981), 401.

¹⁵ Baynes, *Byzantine Studies*, 168.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

work was inspired by earlier political philosophers. It was Baynes who first linked Eusebius's oration to the Hellenistic philosophy of kingship, especially as put forward by Erwin R. Goodenough's *The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship*.¹⁷ He concludes that "in the Hellenistic philosophy of kingship material lay ready to the hand for Eusebius when he sought to fashion a theory of State for the new Christian Empire."¹⁸ His conclusion has encouraged greater research not only on Eusebius's oration, but on the Hellenistic philosophy of kingship. This thesis aims at further exploring the connection between those two subjects by showing the historical background of the *Logos* in both Hellenistic and Eusebius's political philosophy.

Although Baynes has provided strong evidence for the influence of Hellenistic philosophy on Eusebius, other scholars have seen Eusebius's Arian beliefs as the major determinant of his political philosophy. Arianism, the theology put forward by the Christian priest Arius, eventually became a heresy according to the Catholic Church because it portrayed the Son as subordinate to the Father, which contradicted the teaching of the Trinity, which holds that the Son is co-equal with the Father. Scholars have accordingly linked Eusebius's Arian tendencies to his political theology in an attempt to show that he advocated the Church's subordination to the state because he accepted the Son's subordination to the Father.

The German scholar Erik Peterson wrote one of the most influential works on Eusebius's political theology in the mid twentieth century. An Orthodox Catholic, Erik Peterson criticized Eusebius's semi-Arian theology, and explicitly drew a link between

¹⁷ E.R. Goodenough, "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship," *Yale Classical Studies* 1 (Yale University Press, 1928): 55-102.

¹⁸ Baynes, *Byzantine Studies*, 172.

the Bishop's politics and Arian theology, in which the Son was subordinated to God, and the emperor was subordinated to the Logos. His work, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem*, Peterson portrayed Eusebius as the "political propagandist" who worked to appropriate the Greco-Roman monarchical theory for the Christian religion.

This link between Arianism and political theology was propagated earlier by F.W. Buckler, who looked to Barbarian (Persian) ideas of kingship and suggested that the Arian relationship of the Son to the Father (i.e., *Arian Subordinationism*) was the theological counterpart of the relationship between the Great King and his viceroy or satrap.¹⁹ Thus, the political theology, which proceeds from Arianism, is based upon Oriental modes of thought, and, as Buckler concludes, Constantine used the religio-political thought of the Persian (Sassanid) Empire to provide additional sanctions for the Roman Empire and its rulers. Buckler and Peterson's conclusions did much to popularize the idea of Eusebius as a politically-minded agent of the empire.

It was G.H. Williams who transmitted the ideas of Peterson to the English-speaking world and popularized the views of Buckler. His views are representative of the way in which past scholars have over-simplified the political-theology of Eusebius, and so his key conclusions will be briefly examined. Williams emphasized the idea that the Arians wished to subordinate the Church to the State, while the Catholics fought for its independence. He argued that Eusebius was part of major shift in the Christian perception of the Roman Empire from the pre-Constantinian view of the empire as merely a necessary consequence of the Fall for the punishment of evil, to the post-

¹⁹ F. W. Buckler, "The Re-emergence of the Arian Controversy," *Anglican Theological Review* X, (1927/8): 11 and "Barbarian and Greek, and Church History," *Church History* XI (1942): 3.

Constantinian view that the Empire was “itself a secondary instrument of salvation.”²⁰ Constantine, according to Williams, saw the Christian God as a “proven heavenly sanction for the renewed monarchy,” which led to the initially uncritical submission of the church to imperial supervision.²¹ Williams thus drew the conclusion that the two Christian concepts of Christ, that of the Arian subordination and that of the Catholic consubstantiality, provided the two views of the Church’s relationship to the empire: the Arians believed that the Church should be subordinate to the State, whereas the Catholics championed the independence of the Church.²²

Williams referred to Eusebius as “the Arianizing bishop of Caesarea,” and singled him out as a representative of subordinationism.²³ He simplifies Eusebius’s political theology to a simplistic phrase: salvation came through the might of a godly ruler; Eusebius saw Constantine as coordinate with the 'Logos-Christ,' and in comparing the two, saw the work of a Christian Caesar as more important than the work of Christ, and that Constantine was a second savior.²⁴ For in establishing order and harmony, Constantine was performing the principal role of the Logos. Williams concludes that Eusebius’s proclamation of the Empire as the primary image and reflection of the heavenly Kingdom earned him the title “herald of Byzantinism.”

This tendency to oversimplify Eusebius as a politically motivated agent of the empire has been criticized by more recent scholarship, which has slowly drawn away

²⁰ G. H. Williams, "Christology and Church-State Relations in the Fourth Century," *Church History* 20, 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1951): 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

²² *Ibid.*, 10.

²³ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

from the oversimplifications of the aforementioned scholars. One of the most popular modern scholars, Robert M. Grant, in his *Eusebius as Church Historian*, avoided the traditional critical view and suggested that Eusebius should be seen "as a human being, neither a saint nor intentionally a scoundrel."²⁵ F. Cranz recognized that Eusebius held a unique perspective in Christian thought, for earlier Christians were never in a position to "justify a Christian society which is to transform the Roman Empire and which will become the new world civilization."²⁶ Cranz argues that Early Christians expected Rome to remain pagan, and even later Christians allowed the issue of government to become peripheral, leaving Eusebius with no successor as a "political theologian."²⁷

Michael J. Hollerich has done much to develop a new lens in which to interpret the "political theologian." He argues that much of the older scholarship confused modern notions of church-state relationships, and anachronistically depicted Eusebius in a political role.²⁸ He suggests "the standard assessment has exaggerated the importance of political themes and political motives in Eusebius's life as a scholar."²⁹ By delving into Eusebius's more theological works, such as his *Commentary on Isaiah*, Hollerich wished to show the influence of the Bible on Eusebius's ideology. He concluded that Eusebius's attitude toward God's involvement in history was fundamentally shaped by the Bible,

²⁵ R. M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 266.

²⁶ F. Edward Cranz, "Kingdom and Polity in Eusebius of Caesarea," *The Harvard Theological Review* 45, no. 1 (1952): 47.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Michael J. Hollerich, "Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First 'Court Theologian.'" *Church History* 59, no. 3 (1990): 312.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 310.

noting that it was not the Roman Empire but the church that was called the "the godly polity" (*theosebes politeuma*) and "the city of God" (*polis tou theou*).³⁰

Christine Smith also minimizes Eusebius's political role by emphasizing his capacity as a rhetorician. She acknowledges that "Eusebius had been trained above all as a biblical scholar," but so much attention has been given to Eusebius as a scholar, "very little attention has been given to Eusebius the rhetor."³¹ She suggests that "public speaking must have been one of his most frequent and important activities,"³² quoting the formal eloquence of the opening lines of Eusebius's *LC* to make her point.

W.H.C. Frend, in his widely influential work, *The Rise of Christianity*, characterized Eusebius as an immensely able propagandist of the Christian church, a historian in the tradition of Josephus, and a bishop who developed a political theology that guided the successors of Constantine for centuries. Frend clearly shows that Eusebius was not politically motivated, but saw that "Church and empire were designed to work in harmony" and accordingly he "founded the political philosophy of the Constantinian state, based on the unity of the church and the empire under the providence of God."³³ This role, rather than politically motivated, can only be described as theologically motivated.

Claudia Rapp emphasizes the Bible as a primary influence on Eusebius, stating that he was a "biblical scholar long before he became a historian, biographer, and

³⁰ *Ibid.* 313.

³¹ Christine Smith. "Christian Rhetoric in Eusebius's Panegyric at Tyre," *Vigiliae Christianae*, 43, no. 3 (1989): 227.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 479.

panegyrist.”³⁴ She believes that Eusebius found a precedent for Constantine in the Bible, but not in Jesus. Eusebius did not declare the emperor to be a Christ-like messiah, Rapp argues, but rather showed “Constantine to be an imitator of Moses with all that that entailed: military and political leadership as well as spiritual authority in a role comparable to that of a bishop.”³⁵ Her argument helps explain how Eusebius reconciled his loyalty to the Church while still supporting the state, for Eusebius used a biblical idea of a “prototypical leader in whom political and spiritual authority are combined.”³⁶

Eusebius’s political role was also minimized in a work by H.A. Drake, who completed a translation of the *LC* in 1975,³⁷ but instead of citing the Bible as Eusebius’s chief influence as others have done, he pointed out all of the classical Greco-Roman influences in the work of Eusebius, including references to Homer, Neo-Platonism, and some pagan religious symbolism (e.g. Constantine driving a “Sun-chariot”).³⁸ His view invites speculation on just how much pagan teachings could have shaped the views of the Christian scholar.

Timothy Barnes, who became one of the greatest authorities on Eusebius, did much to reassess the portrayal of his relationship with Constantine and his policies. Agreeing with the new direction of scholarship, Barnes showed that above all, Eusebius was a scholar of the church, and was well established in his ecclesiastical position before Constantine came to power. In fact, Barnes argued that, far from being a courtier,

³⁴ Claudia Rapp, “Imperial Ideology in the Making: Eusebius of Caesarea on Constantine as ‘Bishop,’” *Journal of Theological Studies* 49, no. 2 (Oct., 1998): 692.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ H.A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: a Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius’s Tricennial Orations*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

³⁸ H.A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine*, 47-56.

Eusebius had rarely had contact with the emperor.³⁹ This conclusion has forced scholars to rethink the role of Eusebius, and, not surprisingly, most have begun to depict the scholar in a new light that minimizes his political role.

Although much recent scholarship has helped exonerate Eusebius of political intrigue, other scholars have taken the other extreme by rejecting altogether the political significance of Eusebius's panegyric. B.H. Warmington, in an article on the panegyrics of Constantine's reign, described the panegyrics as "ephemeral formalities."⁴⁰ However, S. MacCormack argues that the panegyrics, though rhetorical in nature, represented current political ideas. She states that "the delivery of a panegyric on an imperial occasion and in a formal ceremonial setting was not merely a method of making propaganda; it was also a token of legitimate rule and a form of popular consent, demonstrated by the presence of an audience."⁴¹ The importance of the panegyric as a portrayal of imperial policy seems evident, both in Eusebius's *Oration of Constantine* and in the *Latin Panegyrics*.

A fairly recent and highly relevant study of Eusebius's political philosophy was published in 2003 by Dominic J. O'Meara, the first major study on the content of the *LC* since that of Barnes in 1981.⁴² One possible reason for this lack of recent scholarship on the *LC* may be that most historians are drawn to his larger, more widely known works,

³⁹ Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 186.

⁴⁰ B.H. Warmington, "Aspects of Constantinian Propaganda in the Panegyrici Latini," *TAPA* 104 (1974): 372.

⁴¹ Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 9.

⁴² Dominic J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). This study is perhaps the most recent to deal at length with the *LC* directly, as opposed to discussion of Eusebius's work. The most recent work O'Meara cites on the contents of the speech is Barnes's *Constantine*. O'Meara also refers to the content studies of the *LC* by Drake (1975) and Cranz (1952), referred to in this chapter.

namely the *History of the Church and Life of Constantine*, not to mention his major philosophical work *Preparation for the Gospel*. Such works provide wide-ranging historical insight on Constantine and the growth of the Christian Church that cannot be found elsewhere. In contrast, the *LC* is more obscure and abstract and deals with more limited subject matter, thus it is easy to see why the panegyric receives less attention.

In his analysis of the *LC*, O'Meara rejects the notion that Eusebius's panegyric was mere imperial propaganda, but suggests it was "an acceptable interpretation and justification of the emperor's long rule."⁴³ His summary of Eusebius's political philosophy is similar to that of Baynes: "Constantine is thus the true king to the extent that he images the transcendent intelligible rulership of God's *Logos*, Christ."⁴⁴

O'Meara's work emphasizes Eusebius's dependence on Platonism, particularly his use of the Archetypal Form (*ἀρχέτυπον ιδέαν*). He asserts that an "obvious and major source for Eusebius is Plato's *Republic*," and draws parallels between Plato's philosopher-king and Eusebius's ideal monarch.⁴⁵ He is more skeptical, however, of Eusebius's dependence on the Hellenistic political philosophers, suggesting that their ideas "are fairly banal."⁴⁶ This conclusion only admits of the influence of the Hellenistic political-philosophy, and O'Meara does suggest that Eusebius may have further developed the fundamentals of the Hellenistic philosophy into a metaphysical system in which the *Logos* rules over the material world.⁴⁷ Finally, he suggests that the *LC* may be a response to current pagan

⁴³ Ibid., 145.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 146.

⁴⁵ O'Meara, *Platonism*, 148.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 149.

philosophy, using language remarkably similar to his contemporary, Iamblichus.⁴⁸

O'Meara's study is useful in confirming what Baynes had posited so many decades earlier. Though shifting the emphasis from Hellenistic theories of Kingship to Platonic Metaphysics, O'Meara maintains that Eusebius's panegyric essentially represents a political philosophy of Christian kingship, for what was most important to Eusebius was his theological commitment to the triumph of Christianity over paganism."⁴⁹

The extensive scholarship on Eusebius reveals that there is no consensus on the complicated role of the fourth century bishop. Some more recent studies, such as the ones done by Drake and Smith, have focused on subtler aspects of Eusebius's writings, such as the tropes used in his works, but little has been done in recent years on the political philosophy of Eusebius's oration. This thesis aims to contribute to understanding Eusebius as a political-theologian in the tradition of Baynes. Although Baynes suggested the idea that Eusebius developed a theology that synthesizes Christian beliefs with Greek philosophy, it still remains to be shown *how* the ideas of Greek and Hellenistic political philosophy were transmitted to Christianity, and how Eusebius came to use it in his assessment of the Christian Emperor.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 150. Though O'Meara admits that there is no direct evidence of Eusebius being aware of Iamblichus's ideas.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 151.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL INFLUENCE OF CONSTANTINE'S REIGN

Constantine's conquest of Rome marked the beginning of the union of the Christian Church and the Roman government. The period of patronage under Constantine seemed promising for a harmonious union of church and state, with the emperor as a godly figurehead. The emperor's personal piety and his patronage of the Church prompted Christian scholars to praise the emperor's divine role in the Church, setting the foundations for Eusebius's concept of the emperor as an agent of God. Thus, Eusebius's panegyric is largely an account of the extraordinary ways in which Constantine had supported the Christian Church, at least institutionally. Constantine's reign will thus be analyzed according to three major themes of support for the Church: 1) direct military and political action to defend the Church from persecution, 2) personal involvement with the clergy in holding councils and establishing churches, and eventually 3) the foundation of a Christian capital at Constantinople.

Military and Political Actions

Eusebius praises Constantine's military and political intervention throughout his *Life of Constantine*, and in his panegyric he portrays Constantine as a "Minister of Heaven sent vengeance."⁵⁰ Eusebius does not only praise Constantine's defense of the Church, but also extols the emperor's active persecution of pagans, as well as his violent

⁵⁰ LC, 7.12 Literally: "invincible champion" (*ἀπλίτην ἄμαχον*).

wars against the “hostile forces of polytheism.” Constantine is an agent who utterly destroyed his adversaries in a stroke of Divine wrath.⁵¹ Eusebius saw Constantine’s fulfillment of this military role in his divinely inspired campaign against Maximian in Rome and the “Holy War” against Licinius in the East. The emperor is also the agent of God who brings about a government of “reason and lawful customs,” who established Christianity as a legal religion of the Empire.⁵² In this role as a restorer of government, Eusebius labels the emperor as the “chancellor” of God.⁵³

Eusebius tells us in his *Life of Constantine* that Constantine had a vision that led to his conversion while he was on campaign to Italy.⁵⁴ As the tetrarchic empire erupted into civil war with the usurpation of Maxentius, Constantine was leading his men to retake Italy when the vision appeared. Like his father, Constantine offered prayers to the "Highest Deity" (*Deus Summus*),⁵⁵ and when doing so on the Italian campaign, he suddenly "saw with his own eyes in the heavens a trophy of the cross arising from the light of the sun, carrying the message, Conquer By This" (*Hoc Signo Victor Eris*).⁵⁶ That night Eusebius tells us that "the Christ of God" appeared to Constantine in a dream with the same sign he had seen in the heavens, and commanded him to make a likeness of that

⁵¹ *LC*, 7.11.

⁵² *LC*, 7.13

⁵³ *Ibid.*, “Chancellor” (*ὑπαρχος*).

⁵⁴ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, *LC*, L, English tr. by E.C. Richardson in the *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, 2nd Series, vol. 1. (New York: 1890; rept. Grand Rapids, MI, 1986).

⁵⁵ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I.27. See Charles Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire*. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 105ff.

⁵⁶ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I.28. See Odahl, *Constantine*, 105 for translation. In Greek, the phrase was: *TOUTO NIKA*.

sign which he had seen in the heavens, and to use it as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies."⁵⁷

Constantine took this advice and applied it as literally as he could: he had a spear constructed, overlaid with gold, formed in the figure of a cross by means of a transverse bar laid over it.⁵⁸ This symbol is the *Chi-Rho*, the first two Greek letters (*XP*) of the word Christ (*XPICTOΣ* or *Χριστός*). In a miraculous victory, Constantine defeated and killed Maxentius in the battle of Mulvian Bridge in 312, and then "sung his praises to God, the Ruler of all and the Author of Victory."⁵⁹

The emperor soon ensured that the whole empire, both east and west, would recognize the new standing of the Church. The year following the Battle of Mulvian Bridge, Constantine, along with his eastern co-emperor, Licinius, issued the *Edict of Milan* (313). The Edict granted Christianity legal status and forbid the persecution of religion and declared the right of freedom of worship throughout the Empire. The edict granted "both to the Christians and to all people the uninhibited power of following the religion which each one wished."⁶⁰ Odahl explains that "the 'Edict of Milan' formally established the Christian cult as a *religio licita* [legal religion] within the Roman Empire, the Christian *ecclesiae* [churches] as corporate entities with the jurisdiction to hold communal property under Roman law, and the Christian *fideles* [believers] as a protected religious group with the unhindered right to worship their God in Roman society."⁶¹ To fulfill the requirements of the edict, Constantine began the restitution of Church property

⁵⁷ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, I. 29.

⁵⁸ Ibid., I. 31.

⁵⁹ Ibid., I. 37.

⁶⁰ Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persuictorum*, 48, in Odahl, *Early Christian Latin Literature*, 103-5.

⁶¹ Odahl, *Constantine*, 119.

that had been lost during the age of persecutions. In a letter to the proconsul of Africa, Constantine ordered that "anything which belonged to the Catholic Church of the Christians. . . you are to have it restored immediately."⁶² The *Edict of Milan* marked the point at which Christianity became a recognized political force in the Roman empire; the *de facto* protection with which Constantine had defended the Church now acquired the force of law throughout the empire.

Constantine would soon make use of Christian soldiers as political tension eventually led to war with his eastern co-emperor Licinius. Eusebius explains how the eastern emperor, although he had co-issued the *Edict of Milan* with Constantine, eventually began to persecute the Christians in his domains. He forbade bishops to assemble at Episcopal councils, mandated segregation of the sexes in Christian churches, refused to allow churches to assemble within city limits, and demanded Christian public officials to perform pagan sacrifices, dismissing, exiling, or executing those who refused.⁶³ The political tension, which had grown between the two emperors, quickly intensified into religious holy war.

Disagreement over religious policy lit the spark that began the war. In 323, Constantine demanded that Licinius penalize any officials who mandated pagan sacrifices. Licinius refused to comply on the grounds that Constantine had no jurisdiction in eastern domains. Constantine rapidly recruited an enormous army—well over 100,000

⁶² Odahl, *Constantine*, 114. See Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History = Church History*, Loeb Classical Library, vols. 1 and 2, ed. and trans. by Kirsopp Lake and J.E.L. (Oulton. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972) X. 5. 15-17, for a copy of "The First Epistle of Constantine to Anullinus."

⁶³ Eusebius, *Vita Const* II. 1,2, Odahl, *Constantine*, 174.

men according to one source.⁶⁴ Eusebius indicates the importance of religion in the war, writing "the symbol of salutary passion preceded both the emperor himself and his whole army."⁶⁵ His army bore the Christogram on their shields, and Catholic clergy conducted religious services on the campaign.⁶⁶ Licinius assembled an even larger force; it was accompanied by pagan priests, who performed sacrifices to the old gods. The war between the two armies represented not only a clash between east and west, but, as Odahl has put it, "a 'holy war' between classical paganism and the Christian religion."⁶⁷

After a series of major battles throughout the Balkan peninsula, Constantine emerged victorious against his pagan rival. Constantine's defeat of Licinius marked an enormous step towards a single, unified religion in the Roman Empire. Eusebius rejoices in the implications of Constantine's victory: "And now with the impious defeated and the gloomy cloud of tyrannic power dispersed, the sun once more shone brightly. Each separate portion of the Roman domain was blended with the rest; the eastern regions were united with those of the west, and the whole body of the Roman Empire was graced as it were at its head in the person of a single and supreme ruler, whose sole authority pervaded the whole. . . All united in celebrating the praises of the victorious *principes*, and avowed their recognition of his preserver as the only true God."⁶⁸ In the eyes of Eusebius, Constantine had now proven his role as the defender of the Christian faith both on and off the battlefield.

⁶⁴ *Origo Constantini Imperatoris (Anonymus Valesianus, Pars Prior) = The Lineage of the Emperor Constantine*, English tr. by J.C. Rolph in *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. 3, in the Loeb Classical Library (London, 1964), pp. 506-531; *First Part*, 5. 24.

⁶⁵ Eusebius, *Vita Const* II. IV.

⁶⁶ Odahl, *Constantine*, 174, Eusebius, *Vita* II. 3-12.

⁶⁷ Odahl, *Constantine*, 177.

⁶⁸ Eusebius, *Vita Const* II. 19.

In a letter to the province of Palestine, Constantine confirmed the notion that his victory was due to his role as the agent, or instrument, of God. He wrote, "[A]nd with such a mass of impiety oppressing the human race, and with the commonwealth in danger of being utterly destroyed, . . . what was the remedy which the Divinity devised for these evils? . . . I myself, therefore, was the instrument whose services He chose, and esteemed suited for the accomplishment of His will." In words that echoed his letter to Africa, he explained his intentions: "I banished and utterly removed every form of evil which prevailed, in the hope that humanity, enlightened through my instrumentality, might be recalled to a due observance of the holy laws of God, and at the same time our most blessed faith might prosper under the guidance of His almighty hand. . ." Believing that God had chosen himself to perform "this most excellent service," Constantine refers to himself as "a prince who is the servant of God. (ὁ θεράπων τοῦ θεοῦ)."⁶⁹ The emperor took his mission to "remove evil" seriously, and took earnest steps to recall due observance to God; soon after his victory, he forbade the governors of provinces to offer pagan sacrifices, and used money from the imperial coffers to construct churches.⁷⁰ Constantine had no doubt about the imperial role: he was the agent of God, His servant, His instrument, and he would accomplish His will on the earth.

Activity in Church Affairs

Eusebius devotes much of his *Life of Constantine* to the ways in which Constantine became personally involved in Church affairs. The emperor funded the construction of new Church buildings, called major Church councils, and even

⁶⁹ Eusebius, *Vita Const* II. 24-29.

⁷⁰ Eusebius, *Vita Const* II. 44.

deliberated with the bishops at the councils. For all of these reasons, Eusebius portrays Constantine in his panegyric as an instructor of the true faith and a “Good Shepherd,” one who both teaches and provides for his flock.

After his military victory at Rome, Constantine broadened his support of the Church beyond politics and military campaigns, and began to play an active part in Church doctrinal affairs. Eusebius describes Constantine exercising peculiar care over the church of God at this time; in addition to overseeing the construction of Christian places of worship, the emperor exempted clergy from public service, and discussed church affairs with the clergy. Eusebius explains that Constantine “like some general bishop constituted by God, convened synods of his ministers.”⁷¹ The emperor not only called synods, but sat with the bishops in their assemblies. Constantine even “bore a share in their deliberations,”⁷² and once told the bishops that they were bishops in the church, and “I am also a bishop, ordained by God to overlook whatever is external to the Church.”⁷³ This distinction between the external and internal affairs reflects the notion of earthly and heavenly spheres: Constantine believed that God had given into his care the “management of all earthly affairs,”⁷⁴ which implies that spiritual matters would be left to the clergy. Some scholars have interpreted this to mean that Constantine thought he “held from God a temporal commission for ecclesiastical government, the bishops retaining control of dogma, ethics and discipline.”⁷⁵ The distinction between priestly and worldly leadership was not always clear, however, and his involvement in Church affairs

⁷¹ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, I. 54.

⁷² Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, I. 54.

⁷³ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, IV. 24., in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 546.

⁷⁴ Charles, Odahl, “Constantine the Great and Christian Imperial Theocracy,” *Connections: European Studies Annual Review* 3 (2007): 94.

⁷⁵ See W. Seston, “Constantine as a ‘Bishop,’” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 37, no. 1 (1947): 127.

would deepen as his reign progressed. Over the next few decades he would commission the construction of a number of churches and oversee the first great councils of the Christian church. His decisions undoubtedly influenced the creation of church doctrine and policy, and suggest a more intimate role between the emperor and the Church than simply an “external bishop.”

Constantine's victory at Mulvian bridge (A.D. 312) marks the beginning of the emperor's patronage to the church. Instead of offering sacrifices at the Temple of Jupiter, or even ascending the Capitoline Hill where the pagan temples stood, as was customary for triumphant Romans to do, he rather chose to ascend the Palatine hill and give thanks to God in the imperial palace.⁷⁶ Shortly thereafter, he had a statue erected in the center of the city of himself holding a cross, which had an inscription carved into it saying that "the salutary symbol was the safeguard of the Roman government and of the entire empire."⁷⁷ While in Rome, Eusebius tells us that Constantine "gave from his own private resources gifts to the churches of God, both enlarging and heightening the sacred edifices, and embellishing the august sanctuaries of the church with abundant offerings."⁷⁸ The emperor, following the belief that the Pope was the successor of Peter, the "Prince of the Apostles," and the head of the Catholic Church, ordered the construction of the Lateran Palace for Bishop Miltiades of Rome.⁷⁹ From this point forward, the Lateran Palace would be occupied by the Bishop of Rome, which helped establish the Pope as the pre-eminent Christian authority in the Roman world. In addition to the palace, over half a

⁷⁶ *Panegyric IX (XII)*. 19. translated in C.E.V Nixon and Barbara Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 323-324.

⁷⁷ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, I. 40.

⁷⁸ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, I. 42.

⁷⁹ Odahl, *Constantine*, 113.

dozen grand churches were eventually built around the city during this period. In the long term, these imperial subsidies would greatly increase the prestige and influence of the Church in Roman society, although at the same time such patronage increased the emperor's influence within the Church.

While organizing affairs in Rome, Constantine called together a major council in response to division within the Church. A dispute had broken out in the North African Church between two rival bishops, Caecilian and Donatus, for control of the see. Bishop Miltiades convened a synod at Rome, which ruled in favor of Caecilian, but Donatus rejected the ruling and appealed directly to emperor. Constantine's responded by summoning major bishops and clergy to a council in the city of Arles in 314.⁸⁰

In a letter to Bishop Miltiades, Constantine affirmed his own position of authority in the dispute, stating that "the Divine Providence has freely entrusted to my Majesty [the North African provinces]. . ."81 He accordingly dispatched letters to Christian bishops throughout the empire with the expressed aim of settling the dispute and restoring concord in the Church. Eusebius preserved two such letters, one to the Bishop of Syracuse, and one to a Vicar of Africa. In the latter, Constantine wrote a statement that explicitly shows his acceptance of his role as an agent of God. He wrote that if he ignored the dissension in North Africa, God may be moved to wrath against him, claiming that God, by His "celestial will (*nutu suo caelesti*)" had "committed the management of all earthly affairs (*terrena omnia moderana commisit*)" to Constantine's

⁸⁰ G.W Bowersock, "From Emperor to Bishop: The Self-Conscious Transformation of Power in the Fourth Century A.D.," *Classical Philology* 81, no. 4 (1986): 302. Bowersock believed that Constantine's involvement in church councils was proof that he was asserting himself as "the supreme and ultimate authority both inside and outside the Christendom."

⁸¹ Eusebius, *Church History* X. 5. 18-20. in Odahl, *Constantine*, 125.

care. He ended by declaring that his hope was to see all people "venerating the Most Holy God by means of the proper cult of the Catholic religion with harmonious brotherhood of worship. Amen. (*cum universos sensero debito cultu Catholicae religionis Sanctissimum Deum concordi observantiae fraternitate venerari. Amen.*)"⁸² These letters show—in his own words—that Constantine espoused the idea that God had granted the emperor rule over all the earth for the sake of leading all people to the worship of Him.

Constantine played an active role in the council and must have influenced its final decisions. He sat with the assembly of bishops and even deliberated with them concerning the issues at hand, "working in every way for the peace of God."⁸³ In addition to settling the dispute between the bishops Caecilian and Donatus (in favor of the former), the council issued twenty-two church canons, which established rules for the Catholic Church. Several of these canons reveal the growing intimacy between the Christian Church and state, likely due to the "partnership which was emerging between the emperor and the bishops."⁸⁴ Previously, Christians were discouraged from participation in the government, but several canons of the council explicitly approved of allowing Christians to serve in government positions, including the military. These canons mark a dramatic shift from the times, just a generation before, when Roman soldiers were the ones carrying out the persecutions; now, for the first time, Christians

⁸² *De Schis Donat*, App 3, quoted in Odahl, *Early Christian Latin*, pp. 113-17.

⁸³ Eusebius, *Vita Const* I. 44.

⁸⁴ Odahl, *Constantine*, 136. This unity of religion and state was by no means unique to Constantine's reign. It was customary since the time of Augustus for the emperor to adopt the role of *Pontifex Maximus*, the Chief Priest of the Roman Empire. In this capacity, the emperor served as a model of piety to the people in the public cults, and it was customary for the people to make libations to the emperor's *genius*. According to Lily Ross Taylor, the Emperor thus became the "symbol of the state," and an oath to his *genius* meant loyalty to the state. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, (Middletown: American Philological Association, 1931), 190.

had ecclesiastical sanction for service in the Roman army: Christians could now fight for Constantine.⁸⁵

After the "holy war" with Licinius, Constantine would become more involved than ever in Church affairs by convoking the greatest council the Church had ever yet assembled. In 325, the Council of Nicaea aimed at establishing doctrinal unity within the Church, especially in regards to the Arian controversy, named after the priest who taught it. This priest, Arius, led a congregation in Alexandria, and there taught a view of the Christian Trinity that many found unorthodox. He claimed that the Father was *prior* to the Son; and thus the members of the Trinity were not co-equal, but rather the Son was subordinate to the Father.⁸⁶ This meant that the essence (*οὐσία*, or *substantia*) of the Father differed from that of the Son. Arius's theological position was rooted in a long tradition of Christian Platonism, a merging of Christian theology and Platonic philosophy. Prominent Christians before Arius had taught views similar to his, though the Alexandrian priest expressed his conclusions in more extreme terminology than others had done.

The Bishop of Alexandria, Alexander, who rejected that the Son was posterior and subordinate to the Father, demanded that Arius stop his false teaching. When Arius refused and continued to preach, he was excommunicated from the Church by a synod led by Alexander. Arius, however, had support throughout the eastern provinces. Two of the most influential churchmen of the day, Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea—the author of the church history and Constantine's panegyric—agreed with a

⁸⁵ Odahl, *Constantine*, 136.

⁸⁶ Hence the doctrine of *Subordinationism*, discussed in the Literary Review.

modified version of Arius's teaching; they preferred to say that the Son was "begotten" instead of "created" by the Father.

Constantine sent a letter to the east, which summarized what may be considered his ultimate aims concerning the Christian Church. It is evident from his own writings that Constantine saw the unity of believers as paramount. Constantine explains that he desired to bring the "judgments formed by all nations respecting the Deity to a condition of settled uniformity," and to "restore to health the system of the world."⁸⁷ The first, he states, he intended to accomplish by the "secret eye of thought," the second by the "power of military authority."⁸⁸ He believed success would bring a "common harmony of sentiment among the servants of God."⁸⁹ In regards to the Arian controversy specifically, he explains that he wished for the restoration of mutual harmony among the disputants, especially in light of the fact that he had just waged a war fighting for their freedom to worship. The report of divisions in the Church upset Constantine; he believed such disunity hindered general harmony of sentiment and was "intrinsically trifling and of little moment."⁹⁰ The real problem was the "small and very insignificant questions" of the Arian controversy had "rent into diverse parties" the Church, and ceased to preserve the "unity of the one body."⁹¹ He asks for mutual forgiveness between the parties, and wishes them to join in communion and fellowship.⁹² It is believed that Constantine had a "very imperfect knowledge of the errors of the Arian heresy," for the emperor would later

⁸⁷ Euseb., *Vita Const* II, 65.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 69.

⁹¹ Ibid., 69, 71

⁹² Ibid.

condemn the doctrines.⁹³ Nevertheless, the importance of the letter is that it clearly indicates the emperor's emphasis on unity above any minor disputes, though in the case of the Arian controversy the dispute certainly was not minor.

To settle the dispute, in 325 Constantine called the Council of Nicaea, the first ecumenical council of the Church. Eusebius reports that bishops from all over the Christian world attended: around 300 bishops and perhaps as many as 1,000 clergy congregated to the small town of Nicaea.⁹⁴ The proceedings were started after an introduction from a prominent bishop, probably Eusebius of Caesarea himself, and a grand speech from Constantine.⁹⁵ The emperor acknowledged himself as a "fellow servant," and reminded the bishops of Christ's message of forgiveness. Eusebius explained his role as a moderator of the council, "urging all to a unity of sentiment," until a consensus was reached.⁹⁶ Eusebius recorded that the emperor himself may have provided the key term of agreement for understanding the relationship of Christ the Son to God the Father. Constantine suggested the word *homoousios*, or *consubstantialis* in Latin, to indicate the "one substance" of the Son and Father.⁹⁷ The term is significant not so much for its theological implications, but for its apparent neutrality, for Constantine sought consensus above what he considered nuanced Greek speculation. In this he succeeded; most bishops either found the term acceptable or Constantine intimidating

⁹³ *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, p.517, note 2., for condemnation of doctrines see below.

⁹⁴ The number present is given variously as three hundred, three hundred eighteen, or two hundred seventy, according to Socrates, Athanasius, and Theodoret respectively. See *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* p. 522, note 2.

⁹⁵ Eusebius does not identify himself as the speaker, but Sozomen does, *Ibid.*, p.522, note 1.

⁹⁶ Euseb., *Vita Const* III, 13.

⁹⁷ Odahl, *Constantine*, 197.

enough to vote in favor of the term in a statement of faith that came to be known as the *Nicene Creed*.

Foundation of Constantinople

In the years following the Council of Nicaea, the emperor began a project that would rival the Nicene Creed in its importance for the history of the West. Not far from the city of Nicaea, Constantine took notice of the relatively small Greek town of Byzantium because of its excellent location: situated on a peninsula in the Bosphorus Straight, the town commanded an unrivaled position for trade, and could be defended easily as it was surrounded by the sea on three sides. At this site, Constantine would build his new capital of the Christian empire, Constantinople.

In his work *Byzantine Civilization*, Runciman portrays the foundation of Constantinople as the beginning of a new civilization, which combined Greek, Roman, and Christian culture. He argues that the abandonment of Rome as the capital represented the abandonment of paganism, and the adoption of Constantinople as a new capital represented the adoption of Christianity.⁹⁸ Yet Runciman explains that the division between East and West was not only religious, but cultural as well: the East remained Greek and the West was Latin.⁹⁹ The eastern half of the empire had been inundated by oriental mystery cults, one of which was Christianity, and Runciman sees this as a key motive for the shift eastwards: "the Western men of thought followed the lead of the Greek-speaking world."¹⁰⁰ The Greek-speaking world, at the time of

⁹⁸ Steven Runciman, *Byzantine Civilization*, (London: Arnold, 1948), 16.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

Constantine, was largely Christian, and as the citizens of the empire slowly abandoned the state religion of the tetrarchy, which by now had all but collapsed, they gravitated toward the vibrant new religion of the East. This movement led to the transformation of the old empire into the new, and Runciman writes that the foundation of Constantinople was the final work to complete the process of transformation.¹⁰¹ He believed that Constantinople, of all cities, as an old Greek city on a Greek-speaking coast, allowed the three elements of the reformed society, that of Greece, Rome, and Christianity, to mingle together naturally.¹⁰² Out of this mingling, a new civilization was born, with its capital at Constantinople.

W.H.C. Frend uses similar language to explain the significance of the foundation of Constantinople: he describes the transfer of power from Rome to Constantinople as the final act of the “Constantinian Revolution.”¹⁰³ He believes that the shift from the old city to the new city represented the shift from a Western ruler to an Eastern ruler; thus, the new city represents not only a physical relocation of imperial power, but an intangible shift in mindset: as Constantinople became adorned with gold and silver from the old pagan temples, the imperial diadem became adorned with pearls and jewels.¹⁰⁴ In fact, Constantine seems to have left his old Christian adviser Hosius behind, who was from the west, and welcomed a new adviser to his court, Eusebius of Caesarea, who was from the east. Eusebius, a follower of the Alexandrian Christian tradition, was at home in the Hellenistic language—and philosophy—of the eastern Mediterranean. Frend explains

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 27.

¹⁰² Ibid., 28.

¹⁰³ Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 501.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 502.

that it was this new adviser who first received direct orders from Constantine to organize the building of churches and develop a compilation of the Scriptures of the New Testament.¹⁰⁵ Over the next few years, the emperor, his adviser, and the new imperial court reshaped the policies of the new capital. By 330, Constantine officially forbade the offering of sacrifices in pagan temples and all pagan festivals. The Christian Revolution, writes Frend, had finally been accomplished.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3: THE LATIN PANEGYRICS

Introduction to Panegyric Tradition

Eusebius composed his *Oratio De Laudibus Constantini* in the panegyric tradition of the late empire, and this chapter will aim to show the ways in which this panegyric tradition shaped his oration, both in form and in content.¹⁰⁶ The panegyric tradition is known to us through a collection of twelve panegyrics collectively called the *Panegyrici Latini*, or the “Gallic Corpus” because they were delivered at Trier in Gaul.¹⁰⁷ As will be shown, Eusebius’s panegyric should be understood as part of this tradition as it shares not only the forms of the other panegyrics, but also shares the themes of imperial authority and divine sanction.¹⁰⁸ A careful analysis of the panegyrics reveals the way in which the emperor’s relationship to the gods—or God—is used to justify imperial authority. The implication that underlies all the panegyrics is the conception of the divine is directly related to the form of government. In this context, Eusebius’s panegyric can be understood as a definitive Christian response to the earlier pagan panegyrics. One by one, the panegyrists show a gradual progression from the old political system of the rule

¹⁰⁶ Eusebius may have directly shaped the form of his own panegyric after the panegyrics based on the imperial cult, “deliberately trying to combine typically Christian elements with the technical requirement of high style demanded of imperial panegyric.” Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991): 56.

¹⁰⁷ Only the first eight of these twelve panegyrics will be examined, the last two were delivered after Eusebius’s panegyric and would not have influenced his work.

¹⁰⁸ Sabine MacCormack offers a useful explanation of the Latin Panegyric tradition (*Panegyrici Latini*): “late antique men sought to articulate the modes of contact between the emperor, his subjects, and his invisible but ever-present companions: the god, and later, God.” Sabine MacCormack, “Roma, Constantinopolis, the Emperor, and His Genius,” *The Classical Quarterly* 25, No. 1 (1975): 131-150.

of the four emperors, called the *tetrarchic* system, ruled by the Jovian-Herculean dynasties, to increasingly monotheistic, even Christian terminology. These panegyrics were presented at grand court occasions, and celebrate such themes as imperial anniversaries and birthdays, military victories, marriages, and political developments. Almost all of them were delivered at the imperial court at Trier; if not given in the presence of the emperor himself, they were addressed to him, and certainly heard by prominent imperial court officials. Thus, they must be acknowledged as professing ideas shared by the imperial government, or else their delivery certainly would not have been permitted at the imperial court. Their examination is important not simply for the influence of their language and ideas, but also because they reveal the progression of the political philosophy of the late empire leading up to Eusebius's own panegyric.¹⁰⁹

The eight panegyrics analyzed here were delivered between 289 and 321, a period that witnessed the rise and fall of the tetrarchy and the ascendancy of Constantine the Great. After the Roman Empire suffered through a half-century of near anarchy (235-285) as the central government began to collapse, barbarians invaded and military generals waged ruinous wars in their attempts to usurp imperial power. From 285 to 305, the emperor Diocletian finally brought the empire some stability by dividing rule between four emperors, the *tetrarchy*. Along with the formation of the tetrarchy, Diocletian instituted a new political system, in which the four emperors ruled under the patronage of

¹⁰⁹ Lester K. Born refers to the *Panegyrici Latini* as “the so-called *specula principum*, addressed to kings, princes and emperors, indulging them in a certain amount of praise, but setting forth in theoretical fashion the ideal of princship, good government, the best form of state, the duties and responsibilities of prince and subject alike, the essential uses of education and practice.” In “The Perfect Prince According to the Latin Panegyrists,” *The American Journal of Philology* 55 (1934): 20.

either Jupiter or Hercules; this came to be known the Jovian-Herculean system.¹¹⁰ This system now institutionalized the rule of multiple emperors (polyarchy) in addition to the belief in multiple gods (polytheism). It should be noted that the Roman world had always held religion to be a public matter that served as a bond of society and state, “whether the civil religion of the traditional polytheism of the Olympian gods, or the Oriental sun-god in the Empire ruled by Aurelian.”¹¹¹ Romans feared the fragmentation of the state that, they believed, would result if the private practice of religion usurped the civic cult.¹¹² Eusebius did not oppose the idea of a public religion, but rather the inherent division he saw in a polytheistic and polyarchic system. His refutation of these two ideas will be a major theme of his panegyric.

These eight panegyrics will be analyzed in three groups. The first four (*II, III, V, VI*) belong to the *tetrarchic* period, in which imperial authority rested primarily on the Jovian-Herculean political system. The second group (*VII, VIII*) has transitioned from the tetrarchic system to a more hereditary and monarchical system, in which Constantine is seen as the divinely sanctioned ruler. Finally, the “proto-Christian” panegyrics (*IX, X*) emphasize the emperor’s personal relationship to God, and show a marked shift away from the tetrarchic system to one in which Constantine is depicted as one who follows the counsel of the divine will of the High God. The progression from the distant gods of the tetrarchic religion to the personal God of the last panegyric show that Eusebius’s own

¹¹⁰ Numismatic studies shed light on this system; imperial mints issued gold coins displaying Diocletian’s head on one side, and Jupiter and “*Iovi Conservatt Augg*,” on the other; Maximian’s had Hercules with “*Herculi Conservat*.” For more on the Jovian-Herculean system, see discussion on Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire*, 42-44.

¹¹¹ Herbert A. Deane, “Classical and Christian Political Thought,” *Political Theory* 1, no. 4 (1973): 419-420.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 420.

panegyric was a sort of capstone to an incremental progression from polytheistic polyarchy to a monotheistic monarchy.

A Guide to the Latin Panegyrics (Panegyrici Latini)

Chronological Number and Date Delivered (in parenthesis):

II (289), III (291), V (297), VI (307), VII (310), VIII (311), IX (313), X (321)

Authority of Emperor derived from:

i. *Tetrarchic System:*

(II): Harmony (Concordia), empire shared with Maximian

(III): Unity of Dyarchy, Gods founder of Family

(V): Constantius Sharing, Divine Birth

(VI): Max. and Const: Conferred Power, not Heredity

-Denounces Election, Emperors “*Semper Herculii*”

ii. *Hereditary:* (VII) Constantius, Gothicus as Hereditary Ancestor (2.1, 2.4-5)

(VIII) Reaffirms Dynasty of Gothicus (2.5)

ii. *Monotheistic Sanction*

(IX) Syncretistic Language, Highest God’s Favor

(X) Vision of Constantius (14.1)

-Ruler of All things, Regards us from on High (7.3)

Instead of labeling the Latin panegyrics according to the manuscript number listed below, I have followed Nixon in numbering them chronologically.¹¹³

Table 1: Latin Panegyrics

Orator	Manuscript Order	Date (AD)	Chronological order
Pliny the Younger	I	January 9, 100	1
Pacatus	II	389	12
Claudius Mamertinus	III	January 1, 362	11
Nazarius	IV	March 321	10
Anonymous	V	311	8
Anonymous	VI	310	7
Anonymous	VII	September 307	6
Anonymous	VIII	297	4
Eumenius	IX	298	5
Anonymous	X	289	2
Anonymous	XI	291	3
Anonymous	XII	313	9

¹¹³ Nixon and Rodgers, *The Panegyrici Latini*.

Tetrarchic System : Panegyrics II (289), III (291), V (297), VI (307)

By polytheistic polyarchy, Eusebius was referring to the divided rule of the Roman world, specifically the tetrarchy, which was inherently polytheistic. Diocletian chose two key Roman gods as the guardians of the emperors. For himself, as the senior emperor, Diocletian presented the god Jupiter as his divine father and protector, and Maximian, the junior partner, received Hercules as his patron deity.¹¹⁴ The first four panegyrics II (delivered 289), III (291), V (297), VI (307) are devoted to this Jovian-Herculean theme, with the intention of establishing divine sanction for imperial rule depicting the emperors as representatives of divine power. However, the panegyrists seem to have struggled to make a coherent argument for divine sanction from the polytheistic system, and portray the gods as impersonal and negligent of human affairs; the gods' chief involvement is simply handing over authority to the emperors, but even this interaction is never clearly formulated. It seems that the major conclusion of these "tetrarchic panegyrists" is not so much the imperial relation to the divine, but rather the emperors' *concord* with one another, for the sake of legitimizing shared power.

The first of these later *Panegyrici Latini (II)*¹¹⁵ was delivered in 289 to the emperor Maximian. The panegyrist justifies imperial rule by depicting the emperors as representatives, or imitations, of the Roman gods Jupiter and Hercules. He acknowledges the nature of the Jovian-Herculean political system established in the tetrarchy, with Jupiter as the patron god of the eastern emperor, Diocletian, and Hercules the god of Maximian. Jupiter and Hercules were the supreme creators (*summis auctoribus*), with

¹¹⁴ Odahl, *Constantine*, 43.

¹¹⁵ Denoted by roman numeral II, Pliny's being I.

Jupiter as the ruler of heaven (*rectore caeli*) and Hercules as the pacifier of the earth (*pacatore terrarum*).¹¹⁶ In the same way, Diocletian, as the senior Augustus, is the father of his junior emperor, Maximian.¹¹⁷ The panegyrist acknowledges that the principle of monarchy has been replaced by the division of power in the tetrarchy, stating that “such a great empire is shared between you.”¹¹⁸ Given this division, the panegyric stresses the harmony (*concordia*) between Diocletian and Maximian as the two reigning *Augusti* (senior emperors).

Although the emperors are clearly meant to represent the gods to the subjects of the empire, his language seems to have the emperors usurp the role of the gods. The panegyrist blurs the lines between emperor and god, exalting the former at the expense of the latter. He tells Maximian that “light surrounds your divine head with a shiny orb,” and that the destiny (*fata*) of the whole world (*totius orbis*) rests upon his shoulders.¹¹⁹ He even goes so far as to say “I should say, with apologies to the gods, that not even Jupiter himself . . . [acts] as swiftly and easily as you. . . .”¹²⁰ The panegyrist even obscures the distinction between the earthly limits of the emperor: his command is not confined by earthly boundaries but reaches to the heavens.¹²¹ Jupiter is placed firmly in heaven, Hercules is portrayed as the pacifier of the earth, thereby distinguishing the heavenly and earthly roles. The implication is clear: the western emperor, as Hercules, was to follow the eastern emperor, as Jupiter, thus Maximian was to follow Diocletian.

¹¹⁶ Odahl, *Constantine*, p. 43.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ *Panegyrici Latini*, in Nixon and Rodgers, II, 9.4, (67).

¹¹⁹ *Panegyric* II, 3.2, (58). “*Illa lux divinum uerticem claro orbe complectens.*”

¹²⁰ *Pan.* II, 6.4 (63).

¹²¹ *Pan.* II, 10.1 (68).

The author of *Panegyric II* thus describes the tetrarchic emperors almost as if they were the manifestations of the gods instead of representatives emulating divine will.

*Panegyric III*¹²² asserts that the emperors imitate the gods Jupiter and Hercules. The emperors are said “to imitate (*imitari*) the gods who are your parents.”¹²³ By adopting the Jovian-Herculean titles, the emperors are “born of the gods by their names,” and the gods, as parents of their families, “have given you both name and empire,” (*nomina et imperia triberunt*).¹²⁴ The role of Jupiter is described as a model worthy of emulation: “[Jupiter] governs with uninterrupted care his realm and ever watchful preserves the arrangement and succession of all things.”¹²⁵ The emperors also justify their authority by imitating and ruling in harmony with one other. Due to the *tetrarchic* system, which was based upon shared power of the empire, the panegyrist is compelled to praise both senior emperors, Diocletian and Maximian, for their emulation of each other.¹²⁶ The panegyrist says their reigns complement each other, and show piety by creating harmony of rule with their “brother” emperor.¹²⁷ This maintains the duality of the Jovian-Herculean system, and portrays the emperor as the imitator of the gods, who are the final source of imperial authority.

Panegyric V, delivered around 297, praises a new emperor, Constantius, the father of Constantine the Great; again it uses the concept of imitation to justify imperial rule. The panegyric begins by explaining the emperors’ imitation of the Jovian-Herculean

¹²² Addressed to Maximian on behalf of his anniversary of rule (*genethlicus*) in 291.

¹²³ *Panegyric III*, 3.8. “*parentes deos imitari*”

¹²⁴ *Pan.* III, 3.3.

¹²⁵ *Pan.* III, 3.8.

¹²⁶ *Pan.* III, 7.7.

¹²⁷ *Pan.* III, 6.3.

relationship. The author states that the “kindred majesty of Jupiter and Hercules also required a similarity between the entire world and heavenly affairs in the shape of Jovian and Herculean rulers.”¹²⁸ The author then provides a creative justification for the tetrarchic system by showing the occurrence of the number four (representing the four emperors) in nature and in the heavens: there are four elements, four seasons, four parts of the world, and four horses leading the Sun’s chariot.¹²⁹ The comparisons add certain credibility to an otherwise unusual four-fold division of empire.¹³⁰ The emperors are thus commended for “sharing the guardianship of your world.”¹³¹ Like the panegyrists before him, the author of *Panegyric V* uses imitation to provide a basis for the emperors shared rule. In this instance, the emperors are being compared to the *Kosmos* itself, as opposed to a specific deity.

The author goes on to depict the Constantius as a sort of agent of the divine who establishes authority over the empire, just as Eusebius would say of the son of Constantius later. The emperor is victorious in combat due to the favor from heaven, for the “unanimity of immortal gods which granted you the massacre of all the enemy you engaged.”¹³² The emperor is thus backed by all the gods in his exploits, and even assumes aspects of divinity himself. When reaching the shores of Britain, he appeared as “one who had descended from heaven.”¹³³ In the panegyric, these passages suggest the emperor has taken on aspects of a divine agent, one who brings about the will of the

¹²⁸ *Panegyric V*, 4.1. “*Iouis et Herculis cognata maiestas in Iouio Herculioque principibus totius mundi caelestiumque rerum similitudinem requirebat.*”

¹²⁹ *Pan.* V, 4.2

¹³⁰ The Christian Apologist Irenaeus uses the four winds to justify the four gospels of the New Testament.

¹³¹ *Pan.* V, 3.2 “*participando tutelam.*”

¹³² *Pan.* V, 17.1.

¹³³ *Pan.* V, 19.1. “*...quem ut caelo delapsus intuebantur.*”

gods. In rejoicing in the peace of the consolidated empire, the panegyrist ascribes this to his two conditions of maintaining peace: "There is nowhere in any region of heaven or earth which is not either at peace out of fear or subdued by arms or bound by gratitude."¹³⁴ This is one of the most direct statements of the role of the emperor: just as the gods must subdue heaven, the emperor must subdue his empire, bringing about a similarity between earthly and heavenly affairs.

Panegyric VI also portrays the gods as impersonal, minimizing their direct involvement in worldly affairs. Of course, we have seen the panegyrist speak on behalf of Jupiter in giving eternal *imperium* to Maximian, but this implies that the gods are relinquishing their own role in governing human affairs and leaving the conduct of the world to the emperors. The panegyrist tells Maximian that the gods have shown that "it was by leaning upon you that the State stood firm, since it could not stand without you."¹³⁵ He complains that the gods do not prevent calamities from happening to the people. "Even the gods themselves. . . . neglect human affairs." Disasters happen "not because they [the gods] wish it, but whether because they are looking elsewhere or because the destined course of things compels it."¹³⁶ This panegyric essentially asserts that the emperor, whose authority is derived from the tetrarchic system, assumes the role of a god insofar as he rules the world.

¹³⁴ *Panegyric V*, 20.3. "*Nihil ex omni terrarum caelique regione non aut metu quietum est aut armis domitum aut pietate deuninctum.*"

¹³⁵ *Pan.* V, 10.1.

¹³⁶ *Pan.* V, 9.1. This seems to be a break from the traditional sense that the gods were responsible for the welfare of the people. For example, Mars, much more than a war-god, was responsible for warding off diseases, bad weather, and to granting health to farmers. When Hannibal invaded Italy, Jupiter was appealed to and promised a sacrifice of all the new cattle if he would grant victory to the Romans. H.J. Rose, *Religion in Greece and Rome* (New York :Harper & Row, 1959), 211, 233.

Panegyric VI, given in 307, is the first to deal with the source of Constantine's authority. The basis of Constantine's authority is not from the Divine, but rather from his Senior *Augustus*, Maximian. Constantine only receives authority indirectly through his senior emperor Maximian. Constantine was "elected" as the junior emperor under the patronage of Hercules; the emperors are thus "born of the gods by your names" as *Panegyric III* had stated.¹³⁷ This conclusion rejects hereditary right, and emphasizes imperial election, an explicit endorsement of tetrarchy as the final authority. Maximian's own authority is derived from his adopted title of Hercules, from the imitation of Hercules's *virtus*, and from the proclamation of Jupiter. The panegyrist's ultimate aim is to show that Maximian is given divine authority from the gods; for Maximian has proved his divinity through his *virtus*, matching the prowess of Hercules himself.¹³⁸ Constantine, on the other hand, partakes of his authority only through his imperial adoption by the semi-Divine Maximian. This key tenet of the tetrarchy, however, would be challenged by Constantine's growing power and new religious ideas.

Hereditary Claim: Panegyrics VII (310), VIII (311)

The panegyrics previously discussed, given during the height of the power of the tetrarchy, were composed to justify the authority of the tetrarchic system by depicting the emperors as imitations of Jupiter and Hercules. However, as the tetrarchy began to break down during the reign of Constantine the Great, the panegyrics given in praise of Constantine seek other sources for imperial authority, and move away from the Jovian-Herculean political system. Both panegyrics suggest Constantine's right to rule the entire

¹³⁷ *Panegyric III*, 2.4.

¹³⁸ *Panegyric VI*, 8.3.

Roman Empire, the first allusions to monarchy in the panegyrics.¹³⁹ Hereditary right is soon given pre-eminence over adoption into the college of the emperor, especially in the case of Constantine who can claim two imperial ancestors: his father Constantius and the deified Claudius Gothicus. The proclamations of the tetrarchic division of power gave way to claims for a hereditary, divinely sanctioned monarchy, and ultimately to a monarchy actively supported by God, who has a personal relationship with the emperor and empowers him to achieve victory. The next two panegyrics, *VII* and *VIII*, anticipate Eusebius's own oration as they reject the Jovian-Herculean tetrarchy and advocate of a divinely-sanctioned monarchy.

A dramatic ideological break occurs between Panegyric *VI* and *VII*. *VII* was delivered only a few years later in 310, but much had changed since the time when a panegyrist could praise Constantine and Maximian for being joined in right hands, feelings, thoughts, and hearts. Maximian revolted against Constantine in early 310, and was ultimately executed by the young emperor the same year. Almost all of the ideas given in the former panegyric needed to be altered or abandoned, especially the assertion that Constantine's *imperium* was derived from adoption by Maximian into the tetrarchy. The young emperor needed to reassert his claim to imperial rule. The panegyrist does this by expounding on the emperor's hereditary claim, and shows that the claim was not merely limited to his father, Constantius, but to the great Illyrian soldier-emperor of the third century, Claudius Gothicus. Constantine is portrayed as having an ancestral

¹³⁹ E.g. *Panegyric VIII*, 9.1. Constantine as sole master of the whole world.

relationship (*avita cognatio*) with the "Deified Claudius."¹⁴⁰ Having hereditary links to both Claudius and Constantius, Constantine is portrayed as belonging to a dynasty of emperors.¹⁴¹ No other emperor of the tetrarchy could claim such noble lineage. The hereditary claim trumps former justifications for rule, for "no chance agreement of men (*hominum consensio*), nor some unexpected consequence of favor, made you emperor: it is through your birth that you merited the Empire (*imperium nascendo meruisti*)."¹⁴² Implied in these words is the assertion that it was not the tetrarchs who bestowed *imperium*, for they did not have the sanction of the gods. No longer are the tetrarchs representatives of the divine; they had neither the privilege to bestow power to Constantine nor take it away; it was his inalienable right, even a "gift of the immortal gods" given to him from birth.¹⁴³ Thus, Constantine's official appointment is not done by Maximian; rather, the spirits (*lares*) of his father recognized the new emperor as his legitimate successor (*legitimum successorem*).¹⁴⁴ Deified Constantius is depicted as both "an emperor on earth and a god in heaven,"¹⁴⁵ whom Jupiter himself had received with his right hand.¹⁴⁶ The panegyrist wishes to provide a sort of divine sanction for the new emperor; he explicitly defines him as "a ruler consecrated as a god."¹⁴⁷ Yet he does not limit Constantine's ascension only to his deified father, but to the gods themselves.

¹⁴⁰ *Panegyric VII*, 2.1-3. The first Illyrian emperor who, at the battle of Naissus, stopped the Gothic invasions that threatened to destroy the Roman world.

¹⁴¹ *Pan.* VII, 2.3-5.

¹⁴² *Pan.* VII, 31.

¹⁴³ *Pan.* VII, 3.3.

¹⁴⁴ *Pan.* VII, 3.4

¹⁴⁵ *Pan.* VII, 4.2. "*Imperator in terris et in caelo deus.*"

¹⁴⁶ *Pan.* VII, 7.3. The tradition of deifying deceased emperors was by no means new. Caesar was famously deified after his death when people saw a "comet which people thought indicated that Caesar's soul had been received among the immortal gods." Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (Middletown: American Philological Association, 1931), 91.

¹⁴⁷ *Pan.* VII, 8.3.

Constantine had been manifestly chosen by his father's vote even before his death, thought the election was also was also the opinion of all the gods.¹⁴⁸ The emperor was summoned to the rescue of the state by the votes of the immortals,¹⁴⁹ and sovereignty was offered to him by Jupiter's will.¹⁵⁰

Panegyrist VII, delivered after the tetrarchy began to collapse, ignores the Jovian-Herculean system and instead introduces Apollo as the model for imitation. It gives an account of Constantine's vision of Apollo to further establish the emperor's divine sanction—even justifying his sole rule over the entire empire. He explains that the emperor "saw Apollo. . . the deity made manifest. . . you saw yourself in likeness of him to whom the divine songs. . . prophesized that *rule over the whole world (totius mundi regna)* was due."¹⁵¹ This example of imitation is the first to suggest a monarchy as opposed to the division of power of the tetrarchy.

Panegyric VIII is important for its opposition to the principles of the tetrarchy. It is primarily a justification of hereditary rule, and speaks of the gods bestowing sole rule of the entire empire upon Constantine, emphasizing a monarchy instead of the tetrarchy for it was given in 311 when the tetrarchic system was already failing.¹⁵² During this

¹⁴⁸ *Panegyric VII*, 7.4.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Pan.* VII, 8.5.

¹⁵¹ *Pan.* VII, 21.5. In the vision, Constantine also had a vision of Victory, which offered laurel wreaths each signifying a thirty year reign. This phrase may suggest Constantine's ambition to rule the entire empire himself. This ambition would be fully realized by the time Eusebius gave his panegyric, in which he explored the implications of the rule of one over the whole world (*terraas orbis*).

¹⁵² Maxentius, son of Maximian, had not only rebelled by having himself proclaimed emperor due to hereditary right, but had beaten off two imperial armies sent to retake Rome; Galerius himself, the senior emperor, had personally failed to reestablish his authority against the usurper, and this must have shaken the Roman world's confidence in the tetrarchic system.

period rival emperors began to challenge each other for power; the need for legitimate sanction of imperial authority became more important than ever.

Panegyrist VIII looks to the emperor's divine ancestry to support Constantine's claim for the imperial power. When describing the history of the Gauls, he explains that they alone called upon the deified Claudius (*diuum Claudium*), the ancestor (*parentum*) of Constantine.¹⁵³ Later, when praising the emperor's benevolence, he addresses Constantine as "the emperor of the whole world" (*imperatorem totius orbis*).¹⁵⁴ Although this phrase represents exaggerated praise rather than political reality, it is significant that nowhere does the panegyrist even mention the other emperors, let alone speak of any sharing of power or harmony of rule. Constantine is portrayed as "the master of all cities, of all nations" (*dominus omnium urbium, omnium nationum*). The panegyrist also mentions the divine sanction for Constantine's rule, which is for the benefit of the people: "Thus it is for us above all that the immortal gods have created you Emperor" (*Nobis ero praecipue te principem di immortales creauerunt*).¹⁵⁵ Elsewhere, a comparison is made between Constantine and the divine: the divine mind is defined as that which governs the whole world, immediately putting into effect whatever it has conceived.¹⁵⁶ The comparison is that Constantine acts with similar speed in enforcing his will throughout the empire. The panegyric even suggests that Constantine is *omnipotent*, superior to the very elements that give life and breath.¹⁵⁷ Near the very end of the panegyric, the author makes a reference to one, presumably Apollo, "who is like a comrade and ally of your

¹⁵³ *Panegyric VIII*, 2.5.

¹⁵⁴ *Pan. VIII*, 9.1.

¹⁵⁵ *Pan. VIII*, 13.1.

¹⁵⁶ *Pan. VIII*, 10.2.

¹⁵⁷ *Pan. VIII*, 10.4.

majesty" (*ille quasi maiestatis tuae comes et socius*).¹⁵⁸ Thus, the reference to Claudius, the rule of the "whole world," and the association with Apollo, seem to have become rather commonplace by 311, and likely reflect Constantine's own justification "rule of the whole world" (*imperatorem totius orbis*). This language anticipates the following panegyrics, which are justifications of monarchy in place of the old tetrarchy.

Proto-Christian: Panegyric IX (313), Panegyric X (321)

The panegyrics above show the progression from advocacy of the tetrarchy to asserting hereditary right. The last two panegyrics that will be examined, *IX (313)* and *X (321)*, begin to prepare the way for the monotheistic philosophy of Eusebius's panegyric by attributing the emperor's authority to divine sanction—not in the Herculean-Jovian form—but directly from the 'Supreme God' (*Summas Dei*), ultimately identified in Constantine's reign with the Christian God. The emperor's relationship with God is described in language, which emphasizes a personal connection, and portrays the emperor as uniquely favored, language that prepares the way for Eusebius's conception of the emperor as the agent of God.

Just as a drastic shift had taken place between *Panegyric VI* and *VII*, another shift took place between *VIII* and *IX*: during his Italian campaign against Maxentius, Constantine converted to Christianity. The transition to Christianity must not have been a complicated one, for as Chadwick points out, "Constantine was not aware of any mutual exclusiveness between Christianity and his faith in the Unconquered Sun. The transition from solar monotheism (the most popular form of contemporary paganism) to

¹⁵⁸ *Pan. VII* 14.4. The language is similar to the reference to Apollo in *Panegyric VI.21.5*, where Constantine "saw himself in likeness of him."

Christianity was not difficult.”¹⁵⁹ This conversion presented a unique challenge to the panegyrist who spoke in 313; he himself was undoubtedly a pagan, and was probably not very familiar with the depths of Christian theology, so his panegyric represents a fascinating, though somewhat ambiguous, blend of religious terminology. By 313, Constantine saw the Christian God as the “highest Divinity” (*summa Divinitas*), and attributed his God with his recent victories.¹⁶⁰ This conception of the highest Divinity, however, could be interpreted as the “the *One* of the Neoplatonists, the *Logos* or divine Reason of the Stoics, *Jupiter* of the Olympians, *Mithras* of the mystery cults, or *Sol* the generic Sun god.”¹⁶¹ Thus, the panegyrist had to follow suit and emphasize the divine inspiration that helped Constantine achieve victory.¹⁶²

Nowhere is the name Christ mentioned in the panegyric; the orator was aiming for religiously neutral terminology. Yet, as Odahl has noted, he succeeded in finding points of contact between pagan religion/philosophy and Christian monotheism by acknowledging a *Deus* who was the “highest creator in the universe,” who was the source of the “highest goodness and power.”¹⁶³ This terminology represents the new monotheistic language that was becoming the “official expressions of *la politique imperial*,” and could be accepted by a growing number of pagans and Christians alike.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, (London: Penguin, 1967), 126.

¹⁶⁰ Odahl, “A Pagan’s Reaction to Constantine’s Conversion—Religious References in the Trier Panegyric of A.D. 313,” *The Ancient World*, vol. 21(1990), 45-63.

¹⁶¹ Odahl, *Constantine*, 28.

¹⁶² Roman religion had long maintained that proper devotion to “the gods of the state insured victory in war and prosperity in peace.” Odahl, *Constantine*, 27. This reflects the widespread belief among both Christians and pagans that success was a sign of divine favor; Eusebius’s panegyric is no exception.

¹⁶³ Odahl, “Panegyric of 313,” *The Ancient World*, vol. 21(1990), 51.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

More than any of the panegyrics before it, *IX* focuses on the relationship between the deity and Constantine, particularly how the emperor is empowered by the god because of this special relationship.

Thus, the panegyric is important chiefly for its shift towards the monotheistic language that would be out place in the *tetrarchy* as it focuses on a singular deity and all but ignores other gods. The panegyrist first references the deity by asking "What god?" (*Quisnam deus*), "What presiding majesty (*quae praesens maiestas*) so encouraged you. . .?"¹⁶⁵ The panegyrist then establishes Constantine's unique relationship with the god: "Truly, Constantine, you have some secret communion with the divine mind itself (*illa mens divina*)." This god reveals himself to Constantine alone, delegating to lesser gods (*diis minoribus*) the care of others.¹⁶⁶ Although not purely monotheistic, the panegyrist recognizes that the emperor, and thus the empire, is now in the hands of this god; for it is implied that Constantine has for counsel "the divine will" (*divinum numen*),¹⁶⁷ and is attended by "divine precepts" (*divina praecepta*).¹⁶⁸ Ultimately, this guidance from the god provides a "divinely promised victory" (*promissam divinitus victoriam*).¹⁶⁹

Midway through, the panegyrist names the deity as "that God, creator and master of the world,"¹⁷⁰ though it is not until the end of the oration that he explicitly describes the nature of the god. Even in his attempt to more explicitly describe the god, however, the politically astute orator made sure to incorporate as wide a range of beliefs as

¹⁶⁵ *Panegyric IX*, 2.4.

¹⁶⁶ *Pan.* IX, 2.5.

¹⁶⁷ *Pan.* IX,4.1.

¹⁶⁸ *Pan.* IX,4.4.

¹⁶⁹ *Pan.* IX,3.3.

¹⁷⁰ *Pan.* IX, 13.2

possible. "You supreme creator of things, whose names you wished to be as many as the tongues of nations, for what you yourself wish to be called we cannot know. . ." ¹⁷¹ By claiming that the supreme god is known by many names, the panegyrist avoids excluding any one sect. When describing the nature of the god, he similarly avoids excluding different beliefs by suggesting two possible natures of the deity. He first explains a pantheistic view, describing the god as "some kind of force (*vis*) and divine mind (*mens divina*) spread over the whole world and mingled with all the elements," which moves of his own accord without any outside force acting upon him. ¹⁷² The panegyrist offers another possibility, that of a transcendent god; if not pervading the universe, the god must be "some power above all the heavens who looks down upon the work of his from the higher citadel of nature." ¹⁷³ The panegyrist ends the oration by addressing the god in prayer. He acknowledges that in the deity there is supreme power and goodness (*summa bonitas [et] potestas*), and therefore he ought to want what is just (*iusta*). ¹⁷⁴ The panegyrist then beseeches the god to "make the best thing you have given the human race last eternally," which is the reign of Constantine, who is the greatest emperor of all (*omnium maximus imperator*). ¹⁷⁵ Although the panegyric clearly shows a departure from the tetrarchic system, nowhere mentioning any sharing of power or adoption, it also neglects the topic of the hereditary right to rule. Instead, the intimate relationship between the emperor and the highest god is paramount. The god guides Constantine,

¹⁷¹ *Pan.* IX, 26.1. Cf. Apuleius vision of ISIS.

¹⁷² *Ibid.* (*toto infusa mundo ombibus miscearis elementis*) This terminology essentially represents Stoic beliefs, a philosophy that had long been pre-eminent among the Romans.

¹⁷³ *Pan.* IX 26.2-5. *aliqua supra caelum potestas. . . quae. . . ex altior naturae arce despicias* translated by Charles Odahl, "Panegyric of 313," *The Ancient World*, 21 (Spring, 1990), 50.

¹⁷⁴ *Pan.* IX 26.3.

¹⁷⁵ *Pan.* IX 24.4-5.

grants him victory, and, as the prayer suggests, has the power to bestow upon him eternal rule. The panegyric implies that the emperor's divine relationship is the foundation for Constantine's rule.

Panegyric X was composed in 321 by Nazarius, an accomplished rhetorician who may not have been a Christian, but nevertheless tactfully expounds upon Constantine's relation to the "Supreme Deity." Almost a decade had passed since the last panegyric was given (*IX*, in 313), and much had changed in the Roman world. Constantine had consolidated his rule over the West, and won a war against his co-emperor in the East, Licinius. Nazarius proclaims Constantine's military successes ordained by the "Highest Majesty" (*summa illa maiestas*) just as Eusebius would over a decade later. Although Constantine and Licinius had agreed upon a settlement and continued to rule together, political and religious pressure was leading the two men towards another war that would be fought three years after this panegyric was given. The emperors were becoming increasingly divided over religious issues: Licinius would eventually renew the persecutions against the Christians. The charged religious context of Nazarius's *Panegyric X* makes it especially important in regards to establishing the divine sanction of Constantine. Nazarius focuses on the emperor's close relationship to "the God," and emphasizes his prayerful piety, integrity, and humility, and his support from the Supreme Deity, especially in the form of divinely ordained military success.

Nazarius focuses on one God as "ruler of all," and though his portrayal is not purely monotheistic, it reveals a distinct break from tetrarchic polytheism and uses

language essentially compatible with Christianity.¹⁷⁶ Like Panegyric IX, he focuses on the role of God in the affairs of Constantine who has heaven's favor (*caelestem favorem*).¹⁷⁷ He uses many terms to describe this Supreme Diety, often using almost the exact same terminology as the author of *Panegyric VIII*: “ruler of things who regards us from on high” (*spectat enim nos ex alto rerum arbiter Deus*);¹⁷⁸ that power, that majesty that distinguishes between right and wrong;¹⁷⁹ that highest majesty (*summa illa maiestas*);¹⁸⁰ benign majesty (*benigna maiestas*).¹⁸¹ His preferred term is simply *Deus*,¹⁸² without any modifier, which is the way that Christians had long been referring to their God. Nowhere, however, is the name Christ or Jesus mentioned, so the panegyric is not explicitly Christian. Although he mentions a pagan god, Mars, he explains that contrary to what usually occurs in warfare, "wavering Mars" did not direct the course of the battle, but the battle was won through the God, the "ruler of all things," thereby establishing the relationship of God with Constantine.¹⁸³

Nazarius also follows the panegyrist of 313 by emphasizing the *personal* relationship between God and Constantine. The role of the God, in addition to the ones listed above, is one who both protects (*texit*) the emperor and shatters (*fregit*) his enemies.¹⁸⁴ He is the force that aided Constantine's invincible army (*ill invictum*

¹⁷⁶ Though at 7.1. he does make mention of Mars, but only to show that the old gods have no power.

¹⁷⁷ *Panegyric X*, 2.6.

¹⁷⁸ *Pan. X*, 7.3, using almost the exact same language in Panegyric VIII,

¹⁷⁹ *Pan. X*, 7.4. *Illa vis, illa maiestas fandi ac nefandi discriminatrix.*,

¹⁸⁰ *Pan. X*, 16.1.

¹⁸¹ *Pan. X*, 19.2.

¹⁸² *Pan. X*, 18.4, 26.1, 28.1.

¹⁸³ *Pan. X*, 7.3.

¹⁸⁴ *Pan. X*, 7.4.

exercitum tuum tot victorium),¹⁸⁵ for Maxentius was divinely delivered into the arms of Constantine (*quis debitet divinitus armis tuis deditum*),¹⁸⁶ a phrase that sounds as if it had been taken from the Old Testament. When speaking of Constantine's success, the panegyrist makes a statement that might offend a less impious emperor; he says that Constantine's only strength lay in prayer.¹⁸⁷ This implies that the emperor is wholly dependent upon the will of God, a sharp break from earlier panegyrics that asserted that the virtue of the emperor made him like a god. Nazarius portrays God as that divinity which habitually complies with your undertakings."¹⁸⁸ This suggests that the emperor should not assume divine support, but humbly request aid from God through his prayers.

The aid given to Constantine is explicitly described by Nazarius in his portrayal of the vision of the Italian campaign. He indicates that the story is widely known throughout Gaul that "armies were seen which let it be known that they were divinely sent" (*qui se divinitus missos prae se ferebant*).¹⁸⁹ These armies announced "we seek Constantine, we go to help Constantine."¹⁹⁰ In an attempt to emphasize the favor of the army toward Constantine, Nazarius adds the comment, "the divine armies bragged because they were fighting for you."¹⁹¹ This is certainly not pious Christian language, which would emphasize Constantine's humility and reverence toward God, not indicating that the divine, even in the form of armies, would be reverent (*gloriabantur*) towards

¹⁸⁵ *Pan.* X, 7.4.

¹⁸⁶ *Pan.* X, 12.1.

¹⁸⁷ *Pan.* X, 13.1. (. . .*tu voto quo solo valebas*).

¹⁸⁸ (*illa divinitas obsecundare coeptis tuis solita*). E.g. Panegyric VI, 8.3: Maximian proves divinity by matching the prowess of Hercules.

¹⁸⁹ *Paneg.* X, 14.4

¹⁹⁰ *Paneg.* X 14.4. (*Constantrum petimus, Constantino imus auxillo*) This story is similar to the widely known Christian account of Constantine's vision of the Holy Cross in the Sky with the words "Conquer by this Sign," (*Hoc signo victor eris*).

¹⁹¹ *Pan.* X, 14.5. (*illi divinitus missi gloariabantur, quod tibi militabant*).

Constantine. In fact, instead of making references to Christ, Nazarius instead explains that it was Constantine's father Constantius, "now deified" (*iam diuus*), who led divine expeditions.¹⁹²

The terminology does not seem to be quite Christian, although it approaches the language of the personal monotheism later used by Eusebius. Nazarius concludes his panegyric by re-emphasizing the emperor's unique relationship to the God. Constantine receives great measures of divine help, due to the merit of his integrity (*pro merito integritatis*).¹⁹³ In almost prayer-like language, he tells Constantine that the Roman people "knew by mental conjecture that the supreme majesty which embraces and watches over you supports you in all things," which is attested to by the magnitude of Constantine's accomplishments (*rerum gestarum magnitudo*).¹⁹⁴ As he describes in more detail how Constantine is connected to God, Nazarius delves into a bit of theology, which uses language similar to Gnostic Christian teachings. He explains that the emperor's mind is separate from mortal contact, "entirely pure, utterly sincere, manifests itself everywhere in winning over God."¹⁹⁵ In fact, Constantine's glory has even overstepped human boundaries; this is because the emperor walks through all things relying on God,¹⁹⁶ and a continuous influence of benign majesty streams into him.¹⁹⁷ Of all the expressions used, these last phrases use terminology most similar to that used by Christianity. In emphasizing the emperor's reliance on the Supreme Deity, and the

¹⁹² *Pan. X, 14.6. (duvebat hos. . .Constantinus pater. . . divinas expeditiones iam divus agitabat).*

¹⁹³ *Pan. X, 15.3.*

¹⁹⁴ *Pan. X, 16.1 (adesse tibi in omnibus summam illam maiestam quae te circumplexa tueatur)*

¹⁹⁵ *Pan. X, 16.2. (etenim cum mens tua mortal. . . pura omnis. . . ubique se promerendo deo praestet).*

Gnostic teaching claimed that all matter was evil and corrupted the spiritual creation, and only through pure knowledge (*gnosis*) could man experience the divine.

¹⁹⁶ *Pan. X, 18.4 (dubitare quisquam potest te per omnia subnixum deo vadere?)*

¹⁹⁷ *Pan. X, 19.2 (probatum est perpetuam in te benignae maiestatis opem fluere.)*

empowerment he receives from him, he arrives at two beliefs central to the panegyric given by Eusebius.

The idea of the Supreme Deity intimately involved in the life of Constantine was a marked shift from the earlier panegyrics, which had emphasized the emperor's adoption into the Jovian-Herculean dynasties and had seemingly elevated the emperor to the status of a god. The gods of the tetrarchy, according to several of the panegyrists, were distant gods, often detached from the immediate affairs of the empire. A gradual progression can be seen in the panegyrics, which reveals a clear break away from the tetrarchic position, so that by the last of the panegyrics, monotheistic language pervades, and the emperor is portrayed in an increasingly personal relationship with the god, showing the emperor's piety through prayer. This paves the way for Eusebius's panegyric, which uses Christian theology in the Greek language of the Eastern Hellenistic world, fourteen years after Nazarius delivered his panegyric. During these fourteen years, Constantine intensified his support of the Church, founded a new Christian capital at Constantinople, and held the Council of Nicaea to unify the Christian faith. Eusebius, who delivered his panegyric in the last year of the Emperor's life, praised these achievements of the emperor's reign, using them as examples of how an emperor should conduct his reign, thereby giving expression to the idea of Christian Imperial Theocracy. It is these achievements that will be examined next, to provide the background of the fall of the tetrarchy and the rise of the Christian Roman Empire in which Eusebius gave his panegyric.

CHAPTER 4: PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION

The Latin panegyrics had struggled to show the divine sanction of imperial rule. Some had suggested that the emperor partook of divinity through the imitation of Jupiter and Hercules, yet this led to a polytheism and polyarchy that opposed Christianity. Eusebius's panegyric answers the question of divine sanction with the concept of the *Logos*, based off of a synthesis of Christian theology and Hellenistic Philosophy. This chapter will aim to show how the synthesis occurred, and the sources from which Eusebius drew to formulate his political theology. Eusebius's political theology asserts that the true king is justified insofar as he imitates the *Logos*. The conception of imitating the *Logos* is largely based upon Platonic and Hellenistic ideas, especially the political philosophy of Hellenistic kingship.¹⁹⁸ The importance of Eusebius's work is not so much the originality of its ideas, but rather the harmonious way in which the ideas are woven together, for his panegyric seamlessly blends Hellenistic and Christian thought. His work represents the major phenomenon of the late Roman world: classical philosophy and the Christian faith were uniting to form a new language of ideas. In uniting these two systems, Eusebius developed a coherent political philosophy that could be used to justify the rule of a Christian emperor.

¹⁹⁸ The Hellenistic Era (ca. 300—30BC) refers to the period of Greek culture dispersed throughout the near east.

Key to understanding this synthesis is the idea that, to Eusebius, Hellenistic philosophy was not some foreign system that he superimposed on Christian beliefs. He genuinely saw Hellenistic (especially Platonic) thought and Christianity as harmonious systems—though Greek philosophy was subordinate to Christian theology. To Eusebius, the Greek philosophers had developed ideas that were not only harmonious with Christianity, but even illuminating in the way they explained the role of an earthly king vis-à-vis the Heavenly King. Hellenistic political philosophers aimed at justifying the monarchies, which abounded after the reign of Alexander the Great, using Platonic and Stoic concepts of kingship and divine archetypes to explain the basis of a king's authority. The most important ideas used by these Hellenistic philosophers, and later adapted by Eusebius, is the principle of the *Logos* as the king's connection to the divine, and the principle of imitation (*mimesis*) by which the king participates in the divine *Logos*. Thus, *the true king is justified insofar as he imitates the Logos*.

Baynes did much to show the influence of the political philosophy of Hellenistic kingship thought on Eusebius, so the chapter will begin by establishing this as a theoretical framework from which to analyze the other philosophers. It will be shown how the Hellenistic theories, especially those of Diotogenes, Sthenidas, and Ecphantus, provided many of the principles that Eusebius would use to articulate his concept of the Christian *Logos*. Baynes did not, however, trace the historical development of this philosophical process. This chapter, therefore, will explain how the Hellenistic theory originated, and how it developed into a system that could be directly adopted by Eusebius into a Christian context.

Many of the Hellenistic ideas grew from the classical Greek thought. From its first use as “Reason,” as used by Heraclitus, to the more spiritual use of the word by Plato, the *Logos* eventually came to mean a way in which men can imitate the Divine.¹⁹⁹ After examining the Classical period of Greek thought, this chapter will analyze the Stoic philosophy of the Hellenistic period. The Stoic philosopher Zeno taught that the world monarchy corresponds to the cosmic rulership of Zeus or the Stoic natural law, bringing about a unity of hearts and minds called “*Homonoia*.” Plutarch of Chaeronea would argue that Alexander gave effect to Zeno’s Ideal state, for Alexander was a “Heaven-sent governor” who sought to govern according to the *Logos*. In the age that followed Alexander, Hellenistic political philosophers began describing the *Logos* as the divine guidance of the king, and formed the basis for kingly authority.

Finally, this chapter will show the progression of *Logos* philosophy from the Hellenistic age to the Christian age through several scholars, namely Philo Judaeus, and Plutarch of Chaeronea, who prepared the way for Eusebius’s Christian political theology of kingship. Philo, a Jew, did much to bridge the Greek and Biblical conceptions of the *Logos*, and explained the theory of *ecstasy*: the way man experiences the *Logos*. Finally, it will be shown that the Christianization of the Hellenistic philosophy was done by several Christian scholars—and one Jewish scholar—who are acknowledged to be the key influences on Eusebius’s thought; Philo Judaeus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen were the first to bridge the Philosophical and Christian *Logos*.

¹⁹⁹ *Logos* is a complex and rich word, which could simply mean “word” or “speech” as in the phrase “*logo kai ergo* (by word and by deed),” but Greek philosophers also used *Logos* to mean “Reason,” especially, as is presented here, by Heraclitus. The Judeo-Christian *Logos* as the “Word of God” will be discussed in detail later in the chapter (see fn. 229 & 232).

The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship

Baynes argues that the establishment of Constantinople in the Hellenistic East brought about both a cultural and political transformation. In this context of eastern Hellenistic-Christianity, the language of Eusebius's *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini* becomes clear. Baynes's analysis of the *Nova Roma* examines the way in which Greek thought influenced the political ideology of the Roman Empire. He writes that Constantinople, as a Greek city, existed in a Greek sphere of thought, and "thus in a world to which absolute rule had through the centuries of Hellenistic civilization become second nature."²⁰⁰ This Hellenistic absolutism contrasted with the localism and decentralization of the earlier empire. The foundation of the new city marked a dramatic shift in the way Roman government was organized. The new civilization had "a highly centralized government—a government not merely centralized in administration, but centralized—obviously, unmistakably—in once single city, Constantinople."²⁰¹ Whereas old Rome had famously tolerated a multitude of customs and local laws, the *Nova Roma* of Constantinople stood as a realm governed by a single law that emanated from a single source: the Roman emperor.²⁰² The physical shift of the capital, then, signifies the shift from a western understanding of politics to the eastern; the political philosophy of the East Roman State was developed by Hellenistic thought, and Constantinople was the embodiment of that thought.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Baynes, *Byzantine Studies*, 47.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid..

It was this author, Baynes, who first explicitly showed the connection between the Hellenistic Philosophers and Eusebius's oration. His summary of the Hellenistic philosophy is remarkably similar to that of Eusebius's panegyric:

I have spoken of the monarchy which became the universal form of government in the state built on the ruins of the single empire of Alexander--Ptolemies in Egypt, Seleucids in Asia, Antigonides in the Macedonian Homeland—kings everywhere. Greek thinkers of the classical period had taken the city state as the necessary basis of the political philosophy: now they were faced with monarchy as a *fait accompli* and, as always, the Greek must endeavor to rationalize phenomena (*logon didanao*), he seeks to explain and justify accomplish efface he gives to monarchy a more philosophic foundation than that of military supremacy. The duty of the king is to imitate, to copy God: the well-ordered kingdom is a mimesis, a copy of the order of the universe—the cosmos: the Logos which is the immanent principle of order which pervades the cosmos is the counselor to the true king. The king is thus the agent of supreme power whose is the government of the universe. That theory, formulated by the pagan philosophers of the Hellenistic Age, will be ready to the hand of Eusebius when he for the first time sets for the theory of the Christian Empire: the very wording of the pagan ideal can be taken over in the Christian restatement.²⁰⁴

Baynes summarizes this passage with the words "*The king is thus the agent of supreme power whose is the government of the universe.*" Both the Hellenistic philosophers and Eusebius used that definition to fashion a theory of state. Baynes argues that the Hellenistic theory was "ready to the hand" of Eusebius when he sought to

²⁰⁴ Baynes, *Byzantine Studies*, 171-72.

set forth the theory of the Christian Empire; Eusebius had "baptized" the pagan ideal by presenting it in terms of Christian theology.²⁰⁵

In this passage, Baynes summarized the key ideas from an article written by E. R. Goodenough. Baynes explained that "in a paper published in 1928 Erwin R. Goodenough has studied the Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship, and it was this paper which suggested to me the possible source of the theory of Eusebius."²⁰⁶ Goodenough's purpose in writing his article was to explain how the political philosophers sanctioned "the religious syncretism of the Hellenistic royalty."²⁰⁷ He explains that he had found the political philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship primarily in the writings of three philosophers that can be dated from the Hellenistic Age. Although there has been debate on when the writings were composed, scholarship has gravitated toward the third century BC.²⁰⁸ The Hellenistic theories provide a system of philosophy that put into the Greek language many of the principles that Eusebius would use to articulate his concept of Christian Imperial Theocracy.

Baynes showed the similarity between the language used by these Hellenistic philosophers and Eusebius in his oration, and found several key theories shared by both:

²⁰⁵ Baynes, *Byzantine Studies*, 171-72.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 168-69.

²⁰⁷ Goodenough, 57.

²⁰⁸ A. Delatte claims the language is "*un dialecte dorien bigarré*," a dialect so unusual that he believes it to be artificial and of a late period; "Essai sur la Politique Pythagoricienne," *Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et lettres de L'Université de Liège*. Fascicule XXIX (Liège, Paris, 1922) quoted in Glenn F. Chesnut "The Ruler and the Logos in Neopythagorean, Middle Platonic, and Late Stoic Political Philosophy," in *Principate: Religion*, ed. Wolfgang Haase, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* 16, no. 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978): 1314. Chesnut follows Thesleff's view that the Pythagoreanism in the Hellenistic writings represent a tradition much earlier than the Roman era; and the Doric Greek of the tracts was probably the Vernacular of Tarentum, Italy.

the King as an imitation of God, the earthly kingdom as an imitation of the Heavenly, and the *Logos* as the principle of salvation that guides the king.²⁰⁹

The first of these Hellenistic philosophers, Diotogenes, wrote a tract, “On Kingship,” in which he explains the proper role of the king as an imitator of God. He writes that “It is right for the king to act as does God in his leadership and command of the universe,” and “the king bears the same relation to the kingdom (polis) as God to the world; and the kingdom is in the same ratio as the world as the king is to God.”²¹⁰ The model that the king is to God as the kingdom is to the universe will be taken over directly by Eusebius in his panegyric, who says that the emperor directs the affairs of the world in imitation of God—though Eusebius will substitute the word “heaven” (*ouranos*) for “universe” (*kosmos*).²¹¹

Another idea that Eusebius shares with Diotogenes is the concept of the king as the archetype of the perfect citizen. Eusebius gives great emphasis to the virtue of the emperor in his panegyric, saying that he is “an example of true godliness” (*εὐσεβείᾳς τε ἀληθοῦς ὑπόδειγμα*) to the human race.²¹² Diotogenes uses similar language: the king presents to his kingdom the proper attitudes of the soul, and those who see him ought to conform their souls to his.²¹³ This Hellenistic belief suggests that insofar as the people perceive divinity through him, the king acts as a mediator, or even a representative of

²⁰⁹ See Baynes, *Byzantine Studies*, 47: “I have spoken of the monarchy which became the universal form of government after Alexander. . . a *fait accompli*. . . the Greek must endeavor to rationalize phenomena (*logon didanoa*).”

²¹⁰ Goodenough, “Hellenistic Kingship”, 68.

²¹¹ *LC*, 1.6

²¹² *LC*, 3.3

²¹³ Goodenough, “Hellenistic Kingship”, 72.

God to the people. As Eusebius adapts this role of the king to a Christian perspective, he preserves the notion that the emperor is to care for the souls of his people.²¹⁴

The philosopher Sthenidas of Lokri is believed to have also written a tract on kingship, in which he expresses the same idea of the king as the imitator of God as found in Diotogenes. Sthenidas writes, "The king must be a wise man, for so he will be a copy and imitator of the first God; the one rules in the entire universe, the other upon earth. Indeed he who is both kind and wise will be a lawful imitator and servant of God."²¹⁵

Both Diotogenes and Sthenidas are careful not to assert that the mere role of kingship bestows divine right upon the ruler, but that the "kind," "wise" king will be "lawful," a "servant" of God. All of the qualifications indicate that the Hellenistic belief suggests that the virtuous man will be a good king, as opposed to asserting that any king is automatically virtuous by right of his office. Eusebius will also make the point that the only one who can truly be called a king is he who models his virtue on the heavenly kingdom.²¹⁶

Of the three Hellenistic Philosophers, Ecphantus the Pythagorean has the most to say on the role of the king as the imitator of God, for the king is a copy of the divine archetype. Goodenough argues that Ecphantus aimed to show that the king represented divinity to the people, citing a passage from the philosopher: "In our environment on the earth man has achieved the highest development, while it is the king who is most

²¹⁴ *LC*, 5.1

²¹⁵ Sthenidas in Goodenough, "Hellenistic Kingship", citing Stobaeus, IV, vii 63 (ed. Wachsmuth & Hense, IV, 270).

²¹⁶ *LC*, 5.2.

divine."²¹⁷ Ecphantus continues, saying that although the king is like the rest of mankind in that he is made of the same material, he is “fashioned by the supreme artificer, who in making the king used Himself as the archetype.”²¹⁸ The king is a copy of the higher king, and unique among all creation for he is intimate with the one who made him, while to his subjects he appears in the light of royalty. Just as the god is the model (archetype) for the king, the king is a model to his people, for “in the case of ordinary men, if they sin, their most holy purification is to make themselves like the rulers, whether it be law or king who orders affairs...”²¹⁹ This passage, which discusses “holy purification” and “sin,” is a key to understanding why a fourth century Christian Bishop uses the language of Hellenistic philosophers so fluently. The king has long since transcended a mere political role; both Ecphantus and Eusebius are concerned with the salvation of men's souls, and their political philosophy therefore cannot be divorced from their theology.

As Ecphantus continues, his ideas about salvation seem to anticipate Christian beliefs as he uses a key term of Christian theology: the *Logos*. Baynes explains that the “*Logos* of pagan philosophy underlies the thought both of Eusebius and Ecphantus.”²²⁰ Ecphantus declares that the king can bring about this purification in his subjects if they imitate him, because:

His *Logos*, if it is accepted, strengthens those who have been corrupted by evil nurture as if by drink, and who have fallen into forgetfulness; it heals the sick, drives out this forgetfulness which has settled upon them as a result of their sin, and makes memory live in its place, from which so-called obedience springs.

²¹⁷ Goodenough, “Hellenistic Kingship”, 76.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Baynes, *Byzantine Studies*, p.170.

Taking thus its beginning from seeds of trifling import, this grows up as something excellent, even in an earthly environment, in which the Logos, associating with man, restores what has been lost by sin.²²¹

Thus, it is the *Logos*, associating with man, which brings about salvation. This phrase almost parallels the *Gospel of John* in the New Testament: “And the *Logos* became flesh and dwelt among us. . . .”²²² The Greek word *Logos* is used in the *Septuagint*, the *Gospel of John*, and Eusebius to mean the Word or Reason of God.²²³ In the beginning of his panegyric, Eusebius writes that “He who is in all, before and after all, the only begotten and pre-existent *Logos*, makes intercession with the Father for the salvation of mankind.”²²⁴ Later, Eusebius will say that “The emperor, receiving from the *Logos* of God a transcript of the Divine Sovereignty, in imitation of God himself, directs the administration of the world's affairs.”²²⁵ Thus Hellenistic Philosophy seems to voice a very close approximation of the central Christian message: the *Logos* of God brings about the salvation of mankind. Although it may be argued that the Hellenistic and Christian *Logos* had very different meanings, it is evident that Eusebius felt comfortable to use concepts from Hellenistic political philosophy to phrase his Christian message.

Eusebius came to use these principles—the king as the imitator of God, the earthly kingdom as a copy of Heaven, and the *Logos* as the unifying principle of the universe which guides the king—in his political theology. It remains to be shown why

²²¹ Goodenough, “Hellenistic Kingship,” 77.

²²² Prologue to the *Gospel of John*, 1:14 (ESV).

²²³ The Septuagint used *Logos* in Greek for the word *Dabar* in Hebrew, meaning “Word,” which is associated with creation, providence and revelation. The Latin Vulgate Bible uses the “*Verbum*” (Word) for *Logos*. For the Wisdom of God, see especially the *Book of Wisdom* as an example of Hellenistic-Jewish thought. (For more on Logos, see fn. 206 & 232).

²²⁴ *LC*, 1.6.

²²⁵ *LC*, 1.6

Christians, such as Eusebius, so readily accepted these Greek philosophical ideas. The answer can be found by briefly tracing several key philosophers, both Greek and Christian, through the ages. Such an examination will clarify exactly what terms were shared between Hellenistic and Christian civilizations, and how the tradition of classical Christian philosophy, of which Eusebius was one of the greatest adherents, arose.

Origins of the Logos

In the ancient world, the term most important in bridging Greek philosophy and Christian theology was the word *Logos*. The Greek term is not easy to define given its multiple definitions and the profound nature of its philosophical meaning but it is often translated in philosophy as *Reason* and in Christian theology as “Word.”²²⁶ The word can be understood in Greek philosophy as “the way by which the truth is known.” Or, more broadly, especially in later Stoic thought, the *Logos* was “the underlying principle of the universe.” Heraclitus, ca. 500 BC, gives us its earliest usage of the term in a deeper, philosophical context. He explained that the universe is in flux, yet the *Logos* alone is constant. *Logos* is common to all, and provides all with a common understanding: it is therefore the Law and order to which everyone has to unite himself.²²⁷ These definitions show that the *Logos* emerged as a powerful philosophical

²²⁶ It is important to note that the *Logos* of God in early Judeo-Christian theology meant the Word as the expression of God, not simply in the written form of the Holy Scriptures (*γραφή*). It would be misleading to use Eusebius’s *Logos* in the theological sense to refer to the written “words” of the Bible, as opposed to the transcendental nature of Christ. The concept of the Word (*Logos*) as the Bible would arise in the Reformation era, and should not be anachronistically applied to Eusebius. For example, Jesus says: “He who hears My Word (*Logos*) and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. . . You search the Scriptures (*γραφή*), for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” John 5:24,39-40, NKJV.

²²⁷ Wilhelm Windelband, *History of Philosophy* vol. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), 36.

concept that became central to later Greek (Hellenistic) thought, especially as a sort of law that man must follow.

The most important Christian use of the *Logos* is from the prologue of the *Gospel of John* in the New Testament, in which the apostle declared, “In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”²²⁸ The *Gospel of John* then explains that the *Logos* became flesh and dwelt among men in the person of Jesus Christ, though Christian philosophy began to distinguish the abstracted *Logos* from the manifestation of Jesus. In Christian philosophy, the *Logos* was often identified with the Son as the second person of the Trinity. Yet the Biblical use of *Logos* predates Christianity, for the Old Testament was translated into Greek in the third century BC in the form of the *Septuagint*. In this Greek version of the Old Testament, the word *Logos* is used for the Hebrew *Dabar*, usually translated in English as the “Word” of God. Eusebius, by the fourth century AD, could draw from both the Greek and Christian philosophers who developed harmonious ideas of the *Logos* as the way by which man can know and experience the Divine.

Much of Christian philosophy is indebted to Plato, who wrote around 400 BC. Long before Christianity arose, Plato’s ideas fused with Jewish theology during the Hellenistic era. According to Moses Hadas, “It would appear that the prime vehicle for disseminating Greek doctrine among all the peoples of the Near East, including the Hebrews, was Plato.”²²⁹ He greatly expanded upon the idea of the *Logos*, giving it divine qualities. He portrays the *Logos* as the order to which man should conform

²²⁸ John 1:1 (ESV).

²²⁹ Moses Hadas, “Plato in Hellenistic Fusion,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 19, no. 1 (1958), 1.

himself, and explains that the wise *man is to imitate the order of the Logos*. He writes in book VI of the *Republic*:

“He whose mind is fixed upon true being, his eye is ever directed towards things fixed and immutable. . . all in order moving according to reason (*Logos*); these he imitates (*μιμεῖσθαι*), and to these he will, as far as he can, conform himself. Can a man help imitating that with which he holds reverential converse? . . . And the philosopher holding converse with the divine order, becomes orderly and divine, as far as the nature of man allows.”²³⁰

He goes on further to say that just as man ought to imitate the divine order, so too should the state, for “no state can be happy (*εὐδαιμονήσειε*) which is not designed by artists who imitate the heavenly pattern (*θείῳ παραδείγματι*)?”²³¹ Plato explains that this state can be brought about if men look to the “form and likeness of God” (*θεοειδές τε καὶ θεοείκελον*) among men, “until they have made the ways of men, as far as possible, agreeable to the ways of God.”²³² Like the best soul, the best state is brought about by conformity to God.

To answer the question of what it means to look to the “form and likeness of God,” Plato explains that in order to realize the ideal state, the king must be divinely inspired by a love for wisdom.²³³ The best man is “ruled by divine wisdom dwelling within him.”²³⁴ This language merges the realms of human and divine; it suggests that through divine wisdom, an earthly kingdom can achieve an ideal, heavenly state. Here is

²³⁰ Plato, *Republic*, Vi, 500d, in *The Dialogues of Plato*, translated by Benjamin Jowett, (New York: Random House, 1952), 122.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, Vi, 500e.

²³² *Ibid.*, 501b.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 499.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 590.

the precedent for the idea of the earthly kingdom being a copy of the Heavenly kingdom that became prevalent in Hellenistic thought.

The Logos in Hellenistic Political Philosophy

As the classical age of Greek thought drew to a close after the time of Plato, the Hellenistic age began with Alexander the Great, an age that brought about important ideas of divine kingship, and new interpretations of the *Logos*. Rejecting the narrowness of the city-state, Alexander believed in a universal state, in which all men were united in *Homonoia*, “unity of hearts and minds.” A philosophical shift mirrored the political shift, and the newly arisen school of Stoic philosophy articulated nascent forms of a universal religion, “the brotherhood of mankind.” This philosophical shift led men to seek a universal law, which governed all men, and the Stoics, particularly Zeno, believed this law to be the *Logos*. Zeno would write of a world state, governed by the *Logos*, in which men lived in *Homonoia*.²³⁵ A brief examination of the philosophical shift that occurred in Alexander’s reign will shed light on the formation of the Stoic philosophy, which propagated the *Logos* as a sort of universal law. This belief would lead Plutarch to depict Alexander as an agent of the Stoic *Logos*—just as Eusebius would proclaim Constantine the agent of the Christian *Logos*.

Hellenistic political philosophy begins with the reign of Alexander the Great. However, in the generation before Alexander, the political philosopher Isocrates wrote his famous *Phillipics* entreating King Philip of Macedon to unite the Greeks and bring

²³⁵ See H.C. Baldry, “Zeno’s Ideal State,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 79 (1959): 8. Baldry summarizes Zeno’s principle: “goodness and concord are the guarantees of lasting happiness in a community. We shall see that this emphasis on *homonoia*. . . underlies all the features of the *Politeia*.”

about *Homonoia*—unity of hearts and minds—in all of Hellas. When Alexander came to the throne, he took this idea of *Homonoia* and sought to unite not only the Hellenes, but all people of the known world. His reign marks the transition from the Classical Greek world to the Hellenistic age, the age in which the ideas of *Homonoia* and the universal law of the *Logos* flourished.

Both Alexander's desire for *Homonoia* in his universal empire and his preoccupation with divine governance are illustrated during his stay in Egypt when he spoke with the philosophers there. One, named Psammon, declared to Alexander: “All men are governed by God, because in everything, that which is chief and commands is Divine.”²³⁶ Alexander greatly approved of this, though he added, “God is the common father of us all, but more particularly of the best of us.”²³⁷ This phrase has been interpreted by some historians as Alexander's quest to establish a world empire bound by the “brotherhood of mankind.”²³⁸

One of Alexander's last acts certainly gives proof of his desire to have an empire built upon the notion of *Homonoia*: “the unity of hearts and minds,” which would be a key element in not only the Hellenistic political philosophers, but in Constantine's vision for his Christian empire. After many years of campaigning, Alexander commemorated peace with a vast banquet, said to have 9,000 guests. W.W. Tarn explains how Macedonians sat with Persians and others from every nation of the empire, who all drank symbolically from a huge silver bowl, which would later be referred to as a “loving cup

²³⁶ Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, XXVII.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ See W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 400.

of the nations.”²³⁹ The banquet culminated with Alexander’s prayer. He prayed for peace, and that everyone of the empire might come together in fellowship in the commonwealth. Above all, he hoped for people to live together in unity of heart and mind. This ideal of *Homonoia* had been preached by Isocrates a generation before, though he had only called for *Homonoia* among the Greek people. Alexander was thus transcending the narrow Greek view espoused by Isocrates and Aristotle, who had taught him to treat foreigners as animals, and instead proclaimed God as the common father of all men.²⁴⁰

Alexander’s reign thus proved to be, as Tarn said it, “one of the supreme fertilizing forces of history.”²⁴¹ Scholars such as Tarn promoted an idealistic view of the Hellenistic age as a time when narrow views of particularism had given way to universalism, and people of all nations began to search for a common unity in religion that had been divided by national barriers. They concluded that once the borders between nations had been removed, borders between various cults faded as well.

At the dawn of the Hellenistic age, the great Stoic philosopher Zeno would articulate the vision of *Homonoia* in his *Republic*. He wrote of citizens of one world state, without distinction of race or institutions, subject only to harmony with the Common Law immanent in the universe, and united in one social way of life through love. A fundamental tenet of Stoicism that developed from this is the “world monarchy, which corresponds to the cosmic rulership of Zeus or the Stoic natural law.”²⁴² This

²³⁹ Ibid., 400 ff.

²⁴⁰ Plutarch, *Alexander*, XXVII.

²⁴¹ Tarn, *Alexander*, 400 ff.

²⁴² Baynes, *Byzantine Studies*, 168.

correlation between the heavenly and worldly monarchies is the basis for Hellenistic political philosophy, and, later, Eusebius's panegyric.

Plutarch attributed to Alexander the same role that Eusebius would to Constantine: a monarch who brings about the world monarchy, which corresponds to the heavenly. Plutarch wrote that it was Alexander who realized Zeno's ideal state, "where all inhabitants of the world would share a common life and order common to everyone."²⁴³ Plutarch wrote that Alexander "believed he came as a Heaven-sent governor (*θεόθεν ἀρμοστής*)²⁴⁴ to all, a mediator (*διαλλακτής*) for the whole world. He brought together into one body all men everywhere, uniting a mixing in one great loving-cup." Plutarch explained that Alexander believed in a world society based on the fellowship of the *good* and *virtuous* that transcended ethnicity, bound by a manner of life common to all. This world-state would not only be bound by ethics and manners, but by a universal law:

Alexander desired to render all upon earth subject to one law of *Reason* (*Logos*) and one form of government and to reveal all men as one people, and to this purpose he made himself conform. But if the deity had not recalled him so quickly, *one law would govern mankind*, and they all would look toward one rule of justice as though toward a common source of light...that part of the world which has not looked upon Alexander has remained without sunlight.²⁴⁵

The significance of Plutarch's interpretation of Alexander is immediately apparent. Writing in the Christian era, Plutarch exalts the life of Alexander as that of a

²⁴³ Plutarch, *On the Fortune of Alexander*, 329.

²⁴⁴ *ἀρμοστής* literally: "one who arranges."

²⁴⁵ Plutarch, *On the Fortune of Alexander*, 329C.

“heaven-sent governor,” a “mediator” to mankind who could bring about *Homonoia* by having all submit to one government and one law, the *Logos*. This formulation is in essence the same as Eusebius’s formulation; both Plutarch and Eusebius draw from the Hellenistic philosophers for the conception of the *Logos* as the law that governs all mankind, the latter substituting Constantine for Alexander as the monarch who serves as the agent of the *Divine*.²⁴⁶

The Logos and Christian Platonism

The principles of Hellenistic philosophy were adapted to Judeo-Christian thought by several scholars who were the first to bridge the philosophical and Christian *Logos*. Goodenough challenged conventional thought when he suggested that Christian-Platonism was rooted in a tradition of Hellenistic-Judaism, which had incorporated “a very specific and unified adaptation of certain aspects of Greek thought for their own use.”²⁴⁷ Specifically, Goodenough looked to Philo Judaeus (ca. 20 BC – 50 AD), who can be credited with successfully synthesizing Jewish theology and Greek philosophy during the first century of the Christian era. Hadas writes, “Philo is the principal mediator between Plato and the Christian tradition . . . the entire system of patristic philosophy, even on themes like the Trinity and the Incarnation which are not touched by Philo, is built upon the framework of the Philonian system.”²⁴⁸ He formulated his beliefs

²⁴⁶ See Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1966), 270-273. Dvornik concludes that “Plutarch’s notions of kingship are in all essentials identical to the description we found in the most important Hellenistic fragments.”

²⁴⁷ Goodenough, “New Light on Hellenistic Judaism,” *Journal of Bible and Religion* 5 (1937): 21. In the article, Goodenough highlights Philo’s use of the *Logos* manifested in the Patriarchs of the Old Testament, such as Abraham and Moses.

²⁴⁸ Hadas, “Plato in Hellenistic Fusion,” 8. Here Hadas is following H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956). See especially vii ff.

sometime before the ministry of Jesus in the city of Alexandria, which would become the center of Hellenistic-Christian thought. The great Christian scholars that followed him in this Alexandrian tradition, namely Clement, Origen, and Eusebius of Caesarea, would be heavily influenced by his writings, for it was he who first taught that the *Logos* was both the *Word* of God and the *Reason* of the Greek Philosophers.

Philo's great influence over later scholars was due to his mastery of Hebrew scriptures as well as Platonic philosophy, a philosophy that would be an important interpreter of the Christian faith. W.H.C. Frend argues that as Christianity defended itself from the attacks of Greek philosophy, it made the ideas of that philosophy its own, in order thereby to clearly express its belief system.²⁴⁹ This is nowhere more obvious than in Alexandria, where an enormous population of pagan scholars studying at the Library of Alexandria lived together with perhaps the largest population of Jews in the Roman Empire outside of Judea. The syncretistic Alexandrian philosophy that Philo developed was thus a religious development of Platonism—Philo remarked that Plato was the Greek Moses.

Philo's direct influence on Eusebius is apparent when comparing their writings on the *Logos*. Philo developed his theology to answer one of the most difficult questions of Hellenistic-Judean theology: If God is utterly transcendent, so far above all, ineffable, how can man know Him? Philo explained that the *Logos* was the Divine Activity in the world, a "coming-forth" of the Deity (*λόγος προφορικός*), or literally "Expressed Reason." It was Philo, a Hellenistic Jew, who taught that this expressed *Logos* of God

²⁴⁹ Frend, *Christianity*, 369, 370.

was the “Second, Son of God.”²⁵⁰ Through Him, God formed the World, and Philo believed that the *Logos* assumed role of the High Priest, for His intercession creates and preserves Relations between man and the Deity. Thus, through the *Logos*, God is Knowable. This declaration that the *Logos* was the Son of God was perhaps the most important bridge between Platonic Greek philosophy and Early Christian theology, and Eusebius was certainly intimately familiar with it because it was he who preserved the passage for posterity in his book, *Preparation for the Gospel*.²⁵¹ This conception of the *Logos* served as a bridge between Judeo-Christian theology and Greek Philosophy, and was continued by Christian philosophers such as Justin Martyr, Clement, and Origen.

Philo also contributed another idea found in Eusebius’s panegyric. Eusebius believed that the emperor partook of the *Logos* by conforming his soul; it was not merely a mental process but an intimately personal one.²⁵² Philo uses similar language with his concept of *ecstasy* (*ἐκστασις*), which taught the Divine Spirit dwells in Man. Thus inspired, man can achieve communion with God. He believed that man's virtue can arise and continue only through the working of the divine *Logos* within him, and that the knowledge of God consists only in the renunciation of self, in giving up individuality and becoming merged in the "Divine Being."²⁵³ His language is similar to that of Plato; a relationship with the "Supreme Being" is dependent upon the conformation of the soul.

²⁵⁰ Philo in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, (Preparation for the Gospel). Tr. E.H. Gifford (1903) VII, 13, 1. “All these things then God the Shepherd and King guides according to justice, having set over them as a law His own right Word (*Logos*) and First-born Son, who is to receive the charge of this sacred flock, as a lieutenant of a great king.”

²⁵¹ Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.*, Tr. E.H. Gifford (1903) 7,13.

²⁵² *LC*, 5.2.

²⁵³ *Phil. Leg. All. (Allegorical Interpretation)* 48 e., 55 D., 57 B. (53-63 M.), quoted in Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, 227. Knowledge of the Supreme Being is unity of life with Him, immediate

Finally, Philo's influence on Eusebius can be seen in his political theology, which rejects *polyarchy*, equating it with discord (*στάσις*). On his essay *On the Embassy to Gaius*, he extols the emperor Augustus, "the first, and greatest, and universal benefactor, having, instead of the multitude of governors who existed before, entrusted the common vessel of the state to himself as one pilot of admirable skill in the science of government to steer and govern. For the verse: 'The government of many is not Good,' is very properly expressed, since a multitude of votes is the cause of every variety of evil; but also because the whole of the rest of the habitable world had decreed him honors equal to those of the Olympian gods.²⁵⁴ Thus, the "multitude of rulers," ("*πολυαρχίας*," or *polyarchy*) leads to "the rule of many," (*πολυκοιρανίη*, literally "a multitude of votes"),²⁵⁵ which is the cause of every variety of evil. Eusebius will use the same terminology in his oration, stating that the opposite of monarchy is polyarchy, which Eusebius equates with anarchy and discord (*στάσις*).²⁵⁶ He argues that polyarchy is evil because it lead to a state of disorder and confusion;²⁵⁷ wars spread throughout the known world, so that "nearly the whole race of mankind would have been destroyed by mutual slaughter and made utterly to disappear, if it had not been for one man and leader, Augustus, by whose means they were brought to a better state, and therefore we may justly call him the averter of evil."²⁵⁸

Philo extols the emperor Augustus as quasi-messianic, a savior who "calmed the storms which were raging in every direction, who healed the common diseases which

contact. The Soul's relation to Divine is totally passive and receptive. The mind that wishes to behold God must itself become God: *αποθεωθῆναι*, *θεούθαι* = *deificatio*.

²⁵⁴ Philo, *Embassy to Gaius*, 21.149, quoting Homer, (*Iliad*, 2:204), using translation of C. D. Yonge (London, H. G. Bohn, 1890).

²⁵⁵ *πολυκοιρανίη*, from *πολυ-ψηφία*, ἢ, "number or diversity of votes."

²⁵⁶ *LC*, 3.6.

²⁵⁷ "τεταραγμένοις καὶ συγκεχυμένοις," *Embassy*, 21.143.

²⁵⁸ *Embassy*, 21.144.

were afflicting both Greeks and barbarians, descended from the south and from the east, and ran on and penetrated as far as the north and the west, who brought disorder into order,²⁵⁹ who civilized and made obedient and harmonious, nations which before his time were unsociable, hostile, and brutal.”²⁶⁰ Finally, Philo praises the character of Augustus, a ruler who “exceeded the common race of human nature in every virtue, who, by reason of the greatness of his absolute power and his own excellence, was the first man to be called Augustus.”²⁶¹ As Eusebius would later do with Constantine, Philo praises the emperor insofar as he overcame the polyarchy of his age and brought about monarchy.

The Christian philosophers at Alexandria, especially Clement and Origen, helped complete the synthesis between the Hellenistic and Johannine *Logos* that Philo had begun. By the late second century, Christianity had spread throughout most of the Mediterranean, and had come into contact with the educated classes of society. To be influential with educated classes, especially in the Greek-speaking east, Christians began to express their ideas in terms of Platonic philosophy. Frend explains that, “as in Philo's time, the concept of the *Logos* would prove the most hopeful means of establishing common ground between Greek and biblical ideas of the universe. To succeed in Alexandria and indeed in much of the Greek-speaking world, Christianity would have to be articulated in Platonic terms.”²⁶² Clement of Alexandria and Origen were arguably the most influential Christian philosophers of the age in building the bridge between scripture and Greek philosophy. Although not all Christians would be convinced of the merits of

²⁵⁹ “ἀταξίαν εἰ ἐτ εἰν.”

²⁶⁰ Philo, *Embassy*, 21.147

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 21.143.

²⁶² Frend, *Christianity*, 369.

this union, these two scholars provided a framework that Eusebius would use to develop his conception of "Christian Imperial Theocracy."

Clement of Alexandria, arguably the most erudite scholar of his age—with an encyclopedic, if unsystematic, knowledge of the classics—taught that the writings of poets and philosophers could be used to explain the profound truths of Christianity in a language that even the most well-educated pagans could accept. Clement aimed at revealing the ultimate harmony between Holy Scripture and Classical philosophy, arguing that God reveals Himself to all people. Thus, the Greek philosophers, touching on some of the profound truths of God, helped to prepare the way for the coming of Christianity.²⁶³ This acceptance of Classical thought was certainly not shared by all Christians, especially in the Latin west. Clement criticized the “so-called Orthodox,” who, out of ignorance, “are afraid of Greek philosophy as they are of actors' masks, fearing it would lead them astray.”²⁶⁴ The theologian Tertullian, writing in North Africa around AD 200, famously asked, “What has Jerusalem to do with Athens?”²⁶⁵ At about the same time, Clement of Alexandria would follow Philo in asking, “What is Plato but Moses in Attic Greek?”²⁶⁶ In fact, Clement would assert that Moses provided the essentials of Plato's Ideas, and the best of Greek philosophy was an elucidation of Judeo-Christian theology. Clement drew a connection between the Platonic archetype and the Kingdom of Heaven saying, "The City of Plato a copy of that Found in Heaven."²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Frend, *Christianity*, 370.

²⁶⁴ Clement, *Miscellanies*, I.45.6, quoted in Frend, *Christianity*, 388.

²⁶⁵ Tertullian, *De praescriptione*, vii. in Odahl, *Early Christian Latin Literature*.

²⁶⁶ Tertullian, *Misc.* I.22.150.4 in Odahl, *Early Christian Latin Literature*.

²⁶⁷ Tertullian, *Misc.* IV.26.172 in Odahl, *Early Christian Latin Literature*.

Eusebius follows this tradition in his oration, referring to Heaven as the divine “archetype” (*ἀρχέτυπον ἰδέαν*) for the earthy kingdom.²⁶⁸

Origen was the other great contributor to the union of Platonic philosophy with Christianity. He is known to have had the complete works of Plato as well as a wide range of later philosophers, including Philo Judaeus.²⁶⁹ Frend asserts that “his was the decisive influence that brought Greek philosophy and Christianity together. . .”²⁷⁰

Although Origen did not explicitly affirm Plato in his writings, he nevertheless absorbed Platonic philosophy and tried to “interpret Christian beliefs from a recognizably Platonic angle.”²⁷¹ In fact, according to Barnes, Origen “achieved a far more detailed synthesis of Platonism and Christianity than any earlier Christian thinker. In doing so, he established much of the fundamental language of Christian philosophy, which would be adopted by the theologians of the fourth century, Eusebius in particular.

An example of Origen's influence upon Eusebius can be found in his great philosophical work, *On First Principles*, which aimed at synthesizing the revelations of scripture within a Platonic framework. In the *Principles*, Origen used scripture to justify his philosophical claims: the Son is the Word of God, a second God, mediator between God and the created order.

Christ is to be understood in spiritual and divine terms: “By nature Christ is divine, but we being able only to grasp truths concerning him in material terms, regard

²⁶⁸ *LC*, 3.5

²⁶⁹ Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 94.

²⁷⁰ Frend, *Christianity*, 374.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

him as man...”²⁷² Eusebius would follow Origen's tradition of minimizing the human nature of Christ in order to focus on the “higher” (i.e., spiritual) meaning of Christ. Eusebius also followed Origen's teaching that all rational beings participate in Christ because Christ is *Reason*.²⁷³ This understanding of Christ's abstract nature helps explain why Eusebius never mentions the name of the man Jesus in his panegyric, though he devotes considerable space to explain Christ as the *Logos* of God.

Eusebius regarded himself as an intellectual heir of Origen, and continually appealed to him as a divinely inspired interpreter of scripture.²⁷⁴ He dedicated his life to following his tradition of scholarship, and worked closely with one of Origen's students, Pamphilus, who wrote the *Apology for Origen*.²⁷⁵ Together they wrote the *Defense of Origen*, a work in which they loyally defended his teachings. Eusebius continued Origen's tradition of synthesizing philosophy and scripture, most notably in his works *Preparation for the Gospel* and *Proof of the Gospel*. These books were written to guide believers from an elementary understanding of the Gospel to the higher, spiritual truths. Like Origen, Eusebius acknowledged Christianity's fulfillment of revealed prophecies as well as the supreme rationality of his faith. It is from Origen that Eusebius learned to express the Christian view of man and God in Platonic terminology.²⁷⁶

However, Eusebius did not limit himself to theological speculation but also wished to portray the truth of Christianity in its historical entirety. He sought to write a history of his Faith from the creation to his own time to show that Christianity, far from

²⁷² Origen, *Commentary on John* I.20, quoted in Frend, *Christianity*, 389.

²⁷³ Barnes, *Eusebius*, 88.

²⁷⁴ Barnes, *Eusebius*, 94.

²⁷⁵ Barnes, *Eusebius*, 94. Frend, *Christianity*, 478.

²⁷⁶ Barnes, *Eusebius*, 100.

being a new religion, was the one true religion of mankind from the beginning. He wished to tie Christianity to this ancient theological tradition, for as one historian put it, many Roman religions sought “the prestige of immemorial antiquity,” to legitimize the correctness of belief—and Christianity was no exception.²⁷⁷ To the ancient mind, immemorial antiquity could represent a stronger claim to the truth, grounded in the most ancient of customs. Eusebius’s history further helped synthesize the arguments of the great apologists who preceded him by declaring that the manifestation of the holy *Logos* coincided exactly with the unification of the Mediterranean world and the beginning of the Roman Empire.²⁷⁸ It was evident, according to this historical argument, that both Church and Empire were divinely ordained to coincide. With such a view of history, it is no wonder that Eusebius developed the political philosophy of the Constantinian state based on the unity of the church and empire under the providence of God.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Rose, *Religion in Greece and Rome*, 284. “Christians were interested to prove that the Hebrew religion was the oldest in the world. In this attempt, they studied the Greek chronologers with great diligence, and so it comes about that much of our knowledge of indispensable dates for ancient history is derived from material preserved by Eusebius the ecclesiastical historian and his translator and supplementor, St. Jerome.”

²⁷⁸ Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel*, VII.2, cited in Frend, *Christianity*, 479.

²⁷⁹ Frend, *Christianity*, 479.

CHAPTER 5: EUSEBIUS'S ORATION IN PRAISE OF CONSTANTINE

The Logos as Source of Sovereignty

Eusebius's ultimate aim in the panegyric is to explain how God's sovereignty justifies Constantine's imperial authority. His answer takes the form of political theology in which he defines God as the source of all authority, and the *Logos* of God as the mediator, which allows the emperor to partake of the authority of God. The emperor can partake of the authority of God if he conforms to the *Logos*, for the *Logos* provides an archetype for imperial rule. By conforming his soul to the *Logos*, the emperor partakes of "Royal Virtues," and models himself after the divine original. Becoming a godly model himself, he serves as the agent of God and the interpreter of the *Logos*. Thus, the emperor himself becomes a sort of mediator between the *Logos* and the subjects of his kingdom by performing various roles: the emperor serves God as a shepherd, instructor, true philosopher, law-giver, chancellor, and even military commander. The emperor, by uniting with the *Logos* through conformity of his soul, brings about the model of heaven on earth. Eusebius portrays this heavenly kingdom as united in *Homonoia*, a harmonious universal empire, which follows the divine laws, and accepts one god in heaven and one emperor on earth.

To begin his oration (the *LC*), Eusebius claims that through the inspiration of divine truth he will instruct in the mysteries of sovereignty. He begins by explaining the source of all authority: He who is the supreme sovereign of all is the "model of

imperial power” (*βασιλικού παραδείγματος*).²⁸⁰ Here Eusebius defines God's dominion as the paradigm, or model, of imperial power; imitation of God's dominion is the foundation of his political theology; much of the rest of his panegyric is an explanation of the way by which the emperor imitates this divine paradigm through the *Logos*.

The chief problem of the Latin panegyrics was finding a legitimate justification for imperial authority. Eusebius plainly stated that “the emperor derives the source of his imperial authority (*βασιλικαίς*) from above.”²⁸¹ He next aimed at explaining *how* that authority is derived. Many of the panegyrics justified the emperor's authority by proclaiming his imitation of the divine, though they struggled to show how he imitated the gods (or god). Eusebius's solution to the problem was the *Logos*. He explained that the emperor imitates the divine by way of the *Logos*, which provides the bond between the supreme sovereign and the emperor. Through the *Logos*, the emperor conforms his own soul after the heavenly model, and becomes himself a model of the divine archetype.

His conception of the *Logos* is very Platonic, even Neo-Platonic, in its use of light imagery: The Father is referred to as the “all-radiant sun” (*παμφαής ήλιος*)²⁸², whereas the *Logos* is the light (*φώς*), which streams from the deity who illumines with a “radiance of wisdom bright beyond the splendor of the sun.”²⁸³ Here, Eusebius equates the Platonic *Logos* with the Christian *Word* (the two terms will be used interchangeably in this chapter) proclaiming that “He who is in all, before and after all, the only begotten and

²⁸⁰ *LC*, Prologue, 4.

²⁸¹ *LC*, 2.1.

²⁸² *LC*, 1.5.

²⁸³ *LC*, 1.6.

pre-existent *Word*, makes intercession with the Father for the salvation of mankind.”²⁸⁴

This statement summarizes the core message of Christian theology: the Word of God is the savior of humanity. However, it should be noted that nowhere in his panegyric does Eusebius say the word “Jesus” or “Christ.” This, however, is not because of any ambiguity in Eusebius’s Christology; in his *History of the Church*, he devotes an entire chapter to explaining the different names of Jesus, culminating with the idea that Jesus Christ is the “*Logos* of God who was in the beginning with God and who was called the Son of Man because of his final appearance in the flesh.”²⁸⁵ In the *LC*, he does use titles, in addition to the *Logos*, commonly associated with Jesus, such as the Savior (*σωτήρ*), the Good Shepherd (*ποιμένας αγαθου*), the only Begotten Son, and the High Priest.²⁸⁶ Eusebius says that the Royal Word is ruler and chief, acting as Regent (*υπαρχος*) of the Supreme Sovereign.²⁸⁷

It is to His Word that the Supreme Sovereign (i.e., God the Father) commits the guidance of all creation, yielding the reins of universal power.²⁸⁸ The *Logos* unites the heavens and creation in one harmonious whole, and directs their uniform course, holding “supreme dominion over the whole world” (*συμπαντος καθηγεμωνος κοσμου*).²⁸⁹ Eusebius has made two important claims about the nature of sovereignty: supreme dominion

²⁸⁴ *LC*, 1.6. Cf. Prologue of the Gospel of John.

²⁸⁵ Eusebius, *Church History*, I.2, 26-27.

²⁸⁶ *LC*, 2.3. In his *History of the Church*, Eusebius devotes an entire chapter to explaining the different names of Jesus. *Church History*, I.2, 26-27.

²⁸⁷ *LC*, 3.7

²⁸⁸ *LC*, 6.9. Cf. HE, I.2, 4,5: He [Moses] declares that the maker of the world and the creator of all things yielded to Christ himself, and to none other than his own clearly divine and first-born Word, the making of inferior things, and communed with him respecting the creation of man. . . Here introduced the Father and Maker as Ruler of all, commanding with a kingly nod, and second to him the divine Word, none other than the one who is proclaimed by us, as carrying out the Father’s commands.” Trans. Arthur Cushman McGiffert in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*.

²⁸⁹ *LC*, 1.6. Richardson’s translation in the NPNF: “mighty Governor, even his only begotten Word, to whom, as the Preserver of all creation, he yielded the reins of universal power.”

belongs to the Word (*Logos*) of God, and the Supreme Sovereign is the model (*paradigm*) of imperial power.

The Emperor's Imitation of the Logos

Having established the ultimate source of authority as the *Logos*, who is invested with power by the Supreme Sovereign, Eusebius now explains how the emperor can partake of this authority by conforming himself to the *Logos* through imitation. Eusebius asks, “whence came the idea of legitimate sovereignty and imperial power to man, how does man know the ideas which are invisible and undefined, how does he know the incorporeal essence that has no external form? No corporeal eye can see that unseen kingdom which governs all things.” He answers that there is one interpreter (*ἐρμηνεύς*)²⁹⁰ for these things, which is the *Logos* of God; for the *Logos* of God is the interpreter, which allows man the knowledge of “all that is great and good,” even “apprehension of God Himself.” For centuries the Greek philosophers and pagan religions had wrestled with the issue of how humans could possibly apprehend a transcendent God; Eusebius, following the Platonic tradition of Philo Judaeus, proclaims that the *Logos* allows man to know God. And it is through the *Logos* that the emperor partakes of the divine authority: “The emperor, receiving from the *Logos* of God a transcript (*εἶκον*) of the Divine Sovereignty, in imitation of God himself, directs the administration of the world's affairs.”²⁹¹ The “transcript” is an *εἶκον*, a representation or image, of God's authority, and the emperor rules “in imitation” (*μίμησιν*) of this Divine

²⁹⁰ *ἐρμηνεύς*: from which “hermeneutic” is derived.

²⁹¹ *LC*, 1.6, Drake's translation, *In Praise of Constantine*, 83: “And this selfsame One would be the Governor of this entire cosmos, the all-pervasive *Logos* of God, from whom and through whom bearing the image of the higher kingdom, the sovereign dear to God, in imitation of the Higher Power, directs the helm and sets straight all things on earth.”

example. Thus, the *Logos* communicates the idea of true sovereignty to the emperor, and by following the divine model, the emperor imitates the Supreme Sovereign.

His position is chiefly one of *conformity* as his authority is based upon his imitation of the *Logos*. Eusebius's explanation of how the emperor imitates the divine uses the Platonic notion of an archetype stamping an image (*eikon*) onto the soul. Imitation of the divine is therefore achieved through the conformity of the soul, for "truly may he deserve the imperial title, who has formed (*μίμημα*) his soul to royal virtues (*βασιλικαῖς ἀρεταῖς*), according to the standard of that celestial kingdom."²⁹² The true monarch, then, is he who submits to God by allowing God to change his soul—Eusebius rejects the notion that the emperor, solely by his right of office, has divine sanction to be emperor. As a Christian bishop who had lived through the persecutions of Diocletian, Galerius, and Licinius, he knew that many who had assumed the imperial throne failed to fulfill the role of a true Emperor. He explains that those who deny the Sovereign of the universe, who owe no allegiance to the heavenly Father, who defy God, who do not have the virtues that become an emperor, but one whose soul is morally deformed (*ἀμορφία*) and ugly (*αἴσχος*), "one abandoned to such vices as these, however he may be deemed powerful through despotic violence has not true title to the name of Emperor."²⁹³ The true emperor is not dominated by passions, but rather "is above the thirst of wealth, superior to sexual desire, controlling, not controlled by, anger and passion," for "he is indeed an emperor who has gained a victory over those passions which overmasters the

²⁹² *LC*, 5.2. (*μίμημα βασιλικαῖς ἀρεταῖς ψυχὴ μεμορφωμένος*). Drake, 89: "For he who would bear the title of sovereign with true reason has patterned regal virtues in his soul after the model of that distant kingdom."

²⁹³ *LC*, 5.2.

rest of men and whose character is formed after the Divine Original.”²⁹⁴ These assertions make clear that Eusebius is not merely praising the emperor Constantine, but rather setting the standard of what the emperor *ought* to be. Far from giving the emperor an uncritical affirmation, he calls the emperor to emulate the highest model of kingship, for only by serving as the agent of God is the emperor justified in his rule.

Through the conformation of his own soul, Eusebius exalts him as “an example of true godliness” (*εὐσεβείᾳς τε ἀληθούς ὑπόδειγμα*) to the human race.²⁹⁵ Eusebius has moved on from saying that Constantine simply follows a model, to stating that Constantine serves as a model (*ὑπόδειγμα*) himself. Earlier, Eusebius compared God to the radiant sun,²⁹⁶ but now Eusebius says that the emperor is like the radiant sun, illuminating the empire through his sons, the Caesars, who reflect the light, which proceeds from himself.²⁹⁷ The emperor illuminates his realm by “openly proclaiming his Savior’s name to all,” so that “the souls of men were no longer enveloped in thick darkness, but enlightened by the rays of true godliness.”²⁹⁸ The analogy suggests that just as the Word proceeds from God the Father, so the authority of the emperor proceeds to his sons from Constantine the father. Eusebius even goes so far to say that the emperor is thus extended (*διασκοπούμενος*) throughout the world, directing the course of the empire

²⁹⁴ *LC*, 5.3,4. The emperor partakes in the hope of the Heavenly Kingdom, gifted as he is by God with divine favor; he is thus wise, good, just, virtuous and valiant. (5.1)

²⁹⁵ *LC*, 3.3.

²⁹⁶ *LC*, 1.5.

²⁹⁷ *LC*, 3.4.

²⁹⁸ *LC*, 8.8.

with harmony (*συμφωνίας*) and concord (*ὁμονοίας*).²⁹⁹ Serving as a model of godliness, the emperor himself illuminates his empire with divine authority.

The Roles of the Emperor

As a representation and agent of God, the emperor is called to perform a number of godly roles. He is to teach true religion, fight spiritual enemies, and serve as a chancellor who proclaims divine law and restores lawful government. In all of these roles, he is to rule in accordance with the will of the Father by bringing them to the *Word*, thus rendering them fit subjects for the Kingdom.³⁰⁰ Operating in accordance with the will of God, the emperor is both God's "friend" (*φίλος*) and interpreter (*ὑποφήτης*) of the Word of God.³⁰¹ This language may seem to depict the emperor in a messianic role, though Eusebius states that the emperor does not interpret God himself, but he interprets the *Word* who interprets God. The emperor is not usurping the role of the Christ-*Logos*, he is only imitating the role of the *Logos* vis-à-vis the Earthly Kingdom. Thus, Constantine is to the *Logos* what the *Logos* is to God, in both cases the former is the interpreter, or representative, of the latter.

The emperor's roles reflect a very personal, inward, and spiritual conformity to the Word. Eusebius claims that the emperor, in an act of thanksgiving for three decennial periods, dedicates his own soul and mind as a sacrifice.³⁰² The emperor dedicates his soul to God by having a purified mind and purified thoughts, and praising God with piety

²⁹⁹ *LC*, 3.4

³⁰⁰ *LC*, 2.2. He explains that the Word reigns eternally as the co-ruler of his Father's kingdom (*συνβασιλεύων*).

³⁰¹ *LC*, 2.4 Drake, 85: "His friend, supplied from above by royal streams and confirmed in the name of a divine calling."

³⁰² *LC*, 2.5

built upon truthful doctrines.³⁰³ Eusebius restates Constantine's role at the end of this passage, stating that just as Constantine seeks to offer his soul to God, so his role is to offer the souls of the flock under his care, whom he leads to the knowledge and pious worship of God. Eusebius has expanded upon the original statement of Constantine's role; before he stated that Constantine, in imitation of God himself, “directs the administration of the world's affairs,” and now that direction is clarified: the aim of his administration is to lead souls to the *knowledge* and *worship* of God.³⁰⁴ Here Constantine is portrayed as a “Good-Shepherd,” who cares for the souls of his flock.

The emperor, in his capacity as an interpreter of God, also assumes the role of a religious teacher and philosopher to his people, “recalling the whole human race to the knowledge of God.”³⁰⁵ Eusebius says that the emperor became the instructor (*διδάσκαλος*) of his army in their religious exercises, teaching them to pray pious prayers in accordance with the divine commands, with their hands uplifted towards heaven. The emperor is to teach his subjects to raise their mental vision beyond himself to the King of heaven.³⁰⁶ He himself honors his Savior “by performing devotions in accordance with divine commands, storing his mind with instruction through the hearing of the sacred Word.”³⁰⁷ In his role as interpreter, Eusebius says, the emperor directs attention to the Divine rather than himself, for he acknowledges that all blessings come from heaven. With such devotion to God, the emperor is even a “true philosopher.”³⁰⁸ Thus, those

³⁰³ *LC*, 2.6

³⁰⁴ *LC*, 2.6

³⁰⁵ *LC*, 2.4.

³⁰⁶ *LC*, 9.10

³⁰⁷ *LC*, 9.11

³⁰⁸ *LC*, 5.4

closest to him “found in their emperor an instructor (*διδάσκαλος*) in the practice of a godly life.”³⁰⁹

Having established Constantine’s more personal, inward conformity to the *Logos*, Eusebius proceeds to explain the emperor as an agent of God active in the world’s affairs. He ascribes to the Emperor the role of a military champion and a chancellor of heaven, roles that emphasize the historical successes of Constantine’s reign, which serve as proof of God’s providence. Constantine had achieved great renown for his military victories over his pagan rivals, namely Maxentius in Rome and Licinius in the East. Eusebius aims to show the spiritual importance of these military victories, for in his prologue he declared that he refuses to deliver a panegyric in the vulgar tradition, one that merely focuses on human merits and accomplishments; instead he prefers to speak of the virtues of the emperor that Heaven itself approves (*ἀρετάς φικλοθέους*) and his pious actions (*φιλοθέους τε πράξεις*). So instead of praising the military victories for their secular glory, he explores their spiritual implications. Eusebius explains that just as there are two kingdoms, there are two kinds of barbarous enemies: one attacks with bodily force, the other attacks the soul itself.³¹⁰ The first of these are the “visible barbarians” (*ὄρατοί βάρβαροι*): the enemies of Constantine that had threatened the Roman Empire. But far worse than the visible enemies are the “soul-destroying demons” (*ψυχοφθόροι δαίμονες*), who through polytheism, brought humanity to the “atheistic error” (*ἄθεον πλάνον*).³¹¹ This polytheism arose when men began to declare that natural phenomena were gods. Soon, the ruling powers of those times were enslaved by the force of error, and

³⁰⁹ *LC*, 9.11

³¹⁰ *LC*, 7.1

³¹¹ *LC*, 7.2

throughout the world monuments were erected to “false religion” (*ψευδωνύμου θεολογίας*).³¹² This led to a holy war in which the defenders of truth were struck down or tortured in numerous ways; Eusebius himself had lived through the worst persecutions of Christians under Diocletian and Galerius.³¹³ No doubt the polytheistic nature of the *tetrarchy* further convinced Eusebius of the threat that such a system posed to his faith, and certainly supported his idealistic notion of Constantine as a sort of savior. He must have seen the regime of the tetrarchy as diametrically opposed to the welfare of the Christian Church. Eusebius sees the downfall of the pagans as divinely ordained, for the Supreme Sovereign soon “outstretched his arm in judgment on the adversaries, and utterly destroyed them with the stroke of Divine wrath.”³¹⁴ The judgment was carried out by an “invincible champion” (*όπλίτην άμαχον*); the word for champion, *όπλίτην* (“hoplite”) refers specifically to a heavily armed soldier.³¹⁵ Eusebius says that this champion is the “attendant” or “comrade in arms” (*θεράποντα*) of divine vengeance. Homer uses the same word (*θεράποντα*) to describe the relationship between Patroclus and Achilles: Patroclus is the *θεράπαν* of Achilles. Thus, in his military role, Constantine is an appointed representation (*εικον*) of the Almighty Sovereign (*παμβασιλεύς*, “absolute monarch”). Eusebius provides an example of this role when he mentions Constantine using the “hand of military force” to destroy the pagan temple of Venus.³¹⁶ Eusebius is careful not to portray the emperor as a mere warlord, but rather depicts him as an imitation of his Savior (*σωτήρα μιμούμενος*), who saves the lives of the impious by

³¹² *LC*, 7.5

³¹³ *LC*, 7.7

³¹⁴ *LC*, 7.11

³¹⁵ *LC*, 7.12

³¹⁶ *LC*, 8.7

instructing them in godliness.³¹⁷ Eusebius declares that the Emperor Constantine, having achieved victory over both enemies, visible and invisible, is truly worthy of the name Victor (*νικητής*). In all his roles, Constantine is successful insofar as he leads his realm to the Divine.

Having achieved success as a military champion, the emperor then reclaimed the barbarians from a “lawless and brutal life” (*άνόμου καί θηριώδους βίου*) to the governance of “reason and lawful customs” (*λογικόν καί νόμιμον*).³¹⁸ In this role as a restorer of government, Eusebius labels the emperor as a “chancellor” (*ὑπαρχος*) of God.³¹⁹ In ancient Rome, a *ὑπαρχος* was an emperor's chief aide and a chief civil minister of the state, also known as a praetorian prefect. Earlier, Eusebius had declared that the Royal Word (*βασιλικός Logos*) is ruler and chief, acting as *Regent* (*ὑπαρχος*) and commander-in-chief (*ἀρχιστράτηγος*) of the Supreme Sovereign.³²⁰ Now we see Constantine as the *ὑπαρχος* for the *Logos*. Constantine performed this role as a chancellor by *promulgating Godly law*, opening a pathway to the truth for the ignorant multitudes. As the interpreter of the Word, the emperor is a law-giver, proclaiming to all “true and pious laws” (*ἀληθοῦς εὐσεβίας νόμος*).³²¹ His godly laws oppose pagan practices, and promote Christian rights. Eusebius explains how, by imperial edict, he abolished a “school of wickedness” dedicated to “the foul demon known by the name of

³¹⁷ *LC*, 7.12

³¹⁸ *LC*, 7.13, cf. Plutarch on Alexander: “Alexander desired to render all upon earth subject to one law of *Reason (Logos)* and one form of government and to reveal all men as one people, and to this purpose he made himself conform.” *On the Fortune of Alexander*, 329C.

³¹⁹ *LC*, 7.13

³²⁰ *LC*, 3.7

³²¹ *LC*, 2.4.

Venus.”³²² He protected the Christian Church through imperial laws, such as the Edict of Milan (313), which legalized Christianity under Roman law and restored property to persecuted Christians.³²³ Constantine also supported the Christian church by “erecting memorials, raising temples and churches on a scale of royal costliness, and commanding all to construct the sacred houses of prayer.”³²⁴ In this capacity, Constantine merged imperial and divine law, bringing about true and lawful government, so that his entire kingdom will imitate the kingdom of Heaven.

Eusebius implies that Constantine, in his fulfillment of his godly roles, becomes a model for his kingdom, and brings about a reflection of the kingdom of Heaven on earth. Just as the emperor’s soul conforms to the divine original, so too is his kingdom conformed. Preceding Augustine's contrast between the City of Man and the City of God by a century, Eusebius asserts that the true emperor fixes his desires on the Kingdom of Heaven, the incorruptible and incorporeal Kingdom of God and sees earthly sovereignty to be but a petty and fleeting dominion over a mortal and temporary life.³²⁵ For the emperor, invested with a “semblance of heavenly sovereignty,” directs his gaze above, and “frames his earthly government according to the pattern of that Divine original (*ἀρχέτυπον ιδέαν*), feeling strength in its conformity to the monarchy of God (*μονάρχου μοναρχία*).”³²⁶ Eusebius asserts that because the true religion is monotheism, the true government must be monarchy, for the Supreme Sovereign decrees that “all

³²² *LC*, 8.6-7.

³²³ See chapter 3 for specific laws that Constantine passed to benefit Christianity.

³²⁴ *LC*, 9.12

³²⁵ *LC*, 5.5

³²⁶ *LC*, 3.5, Drake (4.3) page 88: “By an indescribable force He keeps filling with his message all that the sun oversees. He has modeled (*ektupoumenos*) the kingdom on earth into a likeness (*mimhmati*) of the one in heaven, toward which He urges all mankind to strive, holding forth to them this fair hope.”

should be subject to the *rule of one* (*μίαν αρχήν*).”³²⁷ The emperor should thus assume the monarchic role that corresponds to monotheism. He continues, “there is one Sovereign, and his Word (*Logos*) and Royal Law are one (*τούτου και νόμος βασιλικός εἷς*), a Law not expressed in syllables and words, not written. . . but living and self-subsisting Word.”³²⁸ Eusebius’s declaration of one sovereign and one law opposes *polyarchy*, the rule of many. He states that monarchy transcends every other constitution (*συστασεώς*) and government administration (*διοικήσεως*). The opposite of monarchy is *polyarchy*, which Eusebius equates with anarchy and discord (*στάσις*).³²⁹ Polytheism and polyarchy are thus rejected together, and monotheism and monarchy are proclaimed as the true religion and government, bringing about an imitation of the kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Eusebius sees the victory over polytheistic forces, and the proclamation of the true God, as the dawning of a new age of peace and concord. He says, “the mighty God, through the emperor’s agency, utterly removed every enemy; henceforward peace extended her reign throughout the world, wars were no more for the gods were not.”³³⁰ The source of human strife had been the false religions, but now, with the souls of men free from darkness and enlightened by the rays of true godliness, no more did seditious discord distress mankind when idolatry prevailed.³³¹ As Eusebius draws his panegyric to a close in the tenth chapter, he celebrates how the earthly kingdom has successfully imitated the divine model. Instead of polytheistic strife, peaceful concord prevails, as

³²⁷ *LC*, 3.5

³²⁸ *LC*, 3.6.

³²⁹ *LC*, 3.6.

³³⁰ *LC*, 8.9

³³¹ *LC*, 8.8-9.

“the nations of the East and West are instructed at the same moment in his precepts, the people of the Northern and Southern regions unite with one accord, under the same principles and laws, in the pursuit of a godly life, in praising the one Supreme God, in acknowledging his only begotten Son their Savior as the source of every blessing, and our emperor as the one ruler on the earth.”³³² Eusebius believes that the earthly kingdom has followed the pattern of the heavenly archetype, having become united by the law of the *Logos*, which acknowledges one God in heaven and one emperor on earth.

This language is remarkably similar to Plutarch’s description of Alexander who “desired to render all upon earth subject to one law of *Reason (Logos)* and one form of government and to reveal all men as one people, and to this purpose he made himself conform. But if the deity had not recalled him so quickly, *one law would govern mankind*, and they all would look toward one rule of justice as though toward a common source of light.”³³³ Although Plutarch admits that Alexander died before he could establish one law of the *Logos*, Eusebius believed that Constantine had succeeded, and was fulfilling God’s divinely ordained plan of establishing an empire united in peaceful concord.

Eusebius’s understanding of God’s plan for concord seems to have been strongly influenced by the notion of *Homonoia*, a unity of hearts and minds, the so called “brotherhood of mankind.” The central idea is that polytheism and polyarchy divided men, but Christian monotheism and Roman monarchy unite men into one “harmonious whole.” Eusebius gives us insight into his vision of *Homonoia* in a section, that follows

³³² *LC*, 10.7

³³³ Plutarch, *On the Fortune of Alexander*, 329C.

the tenth chapter of his published oration.³³⁴ He contrasts the anarchic state of the world torn by polytheistic strife to the realm united by the *Logos*. He explains that all the nations of the world were inflicted with stasis, that the human family was irreconcilably divided against itself, that in every corner of the earth men stood opposed to each other on issues of law (*νόμοις*) and government (*πολιτείας*).³³⁵ This variety of governments, including the tyrannies and democracies, “may be justly ascribed to the delusion of polytheistic error.”³³⁶ But the polytheistic powers of darkness were destroyed when one God was proclaimed to mankind, and, at the same time, one universal power arose, the Roman empire.³³⁷ The implacable hatred of nation against nation was ended by the knowledge of one God and the doctrine of Christ, while at the same time the Roman empire became the sole power of government, so that a profound peace reigned throughout the whole world. “And thus, by the express appointment of the same God, two roots of blessing, the Roman empire, and the doctrine of Christian piety, sprang up together for the benefit of men.”³³⁸ For the Roman empire, ruled by a single sovereign, and the Christian religion, subdued and reconciled these contending elements.³³⁹

Eusebius believes that Christ’s victory in the spiritual realm led to the victorious conquest of Rome; for “the Savior’s mighty power destroyed the many governments (*πολυαρχίας*) and many gods, proclaiming the sole sovereignty of God himself,” so that the Roman empire “effected an easy conquest” of the nations, “its object being to unite (*ἔνωσις*) all

³³⁴ The second section which was probably not delivered with the first ten chapters of the *LC* which have been analyzed above. See Drake, *Oration*, 30.

³³⁵ *LC*, 13.9 Mankind was divided into provincial (*ἐπαρχίας*), national (*ἐθναρχίας*), and local (*τοπαρχίας*) governments. *LC*, 16.2

³³⁶ *LC*, 16.3

³³⁷ *LC*, 16.3-4.

³³⁸ *LC*, 16.4

³³⁹ *LC*, 16.5

nations in one harmonious whole (*μίαν συμφωνία*).³⁴⁰ This symphony of nations, controlled by the power of peace and concord, became a universal empire. The whole human race received each other as brethren as children of one God and Father, religion being their true Mother, so that the whole world appeared like one well-ordered family.³⁴¹ And so “the extension of the Savior’s doctrine,” brought about “the mutual concord and harmony (*Homonoia*) of all nations.”³⁴² The universal empire, united in *Homonoia*, is the imitation of the divine kingdom.

Plato had asserted that “no state can be happy (*εὐδαιμονήσειε*) which is not designed by artists who imitate the heavenly pattern (*θείῳ παραδείγματι*).”³⁴³ Eusebius’s panegyric suggests that Constantine had imitated the heavenly pattern, and thus brought about a state of *Homonoia*. In order to design the state, Constantine had to first imitate the pattern he received through the *Logos* as a “divine transcript.” Through the *Logos*, he “formed his soul to royal virtues according to the standard of that celestial kingdom.”³⁴⁴ Having been conformed, Constantine served as a model to his kingdom, acting as an agent of God to call them to the true religion and divine law. The emperor assumed a number of roles to overcome the errors of polytheism and polyarchy, bringing about a monotheistic monarchy that united all nations into a harmonious whole, allowing all people to live in *Homonoia*, with one God in heaven, one law of the *Logos*, and one emperor on earth.

³⁴⁰ *LC*, 16.6

³⁴¹ *LC*, 16.7

³⁴² *LC*, 17.12

³⁴³ Plato, *Republic*, Vi, 500e.

³⁴⁴ *LC*, 5.2. (*μίμημα βασιλικαῖς ἀρεταῖς ψυχῇ μεμορφωμένος*). Drake’s translation reads: “For he who would bear the title of sovereign with true reason has patterned regal virtues in his soul after the model of that distant kingdom.” (89).

CONCLUSION

Eusebius presents a vision of the Christian Roman empire united in unity and concord, having overcome the strife and division of the pagan religions. This harmonious universal state is dependent upon the emperor's conformity to the divine *Logos*, a conformity, which allows the emperor to partake of divine authority and rule his empire with the sanction of God. By conforming his soul to the *Logos*, the emperor partakes of heavenly virtues and becomes a representative of the divine. In this role, he is the mediator between the *Logos* and the people, just as the *Logos* is the mediator between God and himself. In this capacity of mediator, the emperor achieves the ideal of the Christian monarch, calling his people to the one true faith of the one true God under one true government. Thus, the earthly kingdom became a mimesis of the kingdom of Heaven.

Eusebius's theory is largely based on the events of Constantine's life. Eusebius, who composed the famous biography *The Life of Constantine (Vita Constantini)*, had extensive knowledge of the reign of Constantine, especially the ways in which he supported the Church. Of course, the Christian scholar had an idealistic conception of the emperor, and he was undoubtedly influenced by living through the reigns of persecuting emperors. Yet his panegyric is not a merely an abstract work of political philosophy seeking to praise Constantine, but an argument that an emperor had in fact achieved the ideal of a Christian monarch. Much of the *Oratio* is an account of the pious deeds and

divine victories of Constantine's reign, though these events are placed in an overarching theoretical framework of the *Logos* political philosophy.

This philosophy, as has been shown, is a Christian response to the former conception of divine sanction as represented by the Latin panegyrics, delivered before Constantine had achieved complete dominion over the Roman empire. His panegyric marks the final stage in the progression of the Latin panegyrics, from the divided tetrarchy of the first work, to the monotheistic monarchy in the last. Although following the panegyric tradition that had preceded him, Eusebius decisively rejects many of their conclusions about the four-fold division of the tetrarchy, the sanction of the pagan gods, and hereditary right. Instead, he presents the *Logos* as the answer to the problem of divine sanction.

This conception of the *Logos*, though placed in a Christian context, is directly derived from Hellenistic political philosophy. As the research of Baynes had indicated, the Hellenistic philosophers developed a system of divine kinship, which asserted that the king partook of divinity through conformity to the *Logos*, thus bringing about a copy on earth of the divine kingdom. Adopting Greek philosophy to articulate his own Christian political philosophy was no obstacle for Eusebius, who was perhaps one of the greatest classical scholars of his age, because the way had been prepared for him by the Christian-Platonist tradition. Philo Judaeus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen bridged Philosophical and Christian *Logos* in the generations before Eusebius composed his panegyric.

The *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini* is thus a harmonious integration of Hellenistic and Christian thought, providing a political philosophy for the Christian

empire. His work represents the pinnacle of a tradition that had been developing at least since the second century. Eusebius's political philosophy would influence the generations that followed him, for he delivered it at a turning point in history. Constantine's reign marked the end of the pagan Roman state and the beginning of the Christian Roman empire. For over a hundred years after Eusebius gave his panegyric, the empire patronized the Christian church, continuing Constantine's legacy of building churches, holding councils, and even suppressing paganism. The *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini* was not merely praise of one emperor's reign, but rather an ideal of the Christian monarch for succeeding emperors to emulate. And so it may be that Eusebius "for the first time clearly stated. . . the political philosophy of the Christian Empire, that philosophy of the State which was consistently maintained throughout the millennium of Byzantine absolutism."³⁴⁵ Eusebius may have been the first to articulate the theory for the theocratic Byzantine state that outlived Eusebius by a thousand years.

³⁴⁵ Baynes, *Byzantine Studies*, 168.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Aristotle. *The Politics*. Loeb Classical Library, ed. and trans. by H. Rackham. London & New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1932.

Eusebius of Caesarea. *Ecclesiastical History = Church History*. Loeb Classical Library, vols. 1 and 2, ed. and trans. by Kirsopp Lake and J.E.L. Oulton. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972.

------. *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini/Tricennatsrede an Constantin = Oration in Praise of Constantine*. Greek text ed. by I.A. Heikel. In *Eusebius's Werke*, vol. 1. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1902; English tr. by E.C. Richardson in the *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series*, vol. 1. New York, 1890; rept. Grand Rapids, MI, 1986; and by H.A. Drake. *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius's Tricennial Orations*. Berkeley, 1976.

------. *Praeparatio Evangelica = Preparation for the Gospel*. Translated by E.H. Gifford, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903.

------. *Vita Constantini*. Greek text ed. by I.A. Heikel. In *Eusebius's Werke*, vol.1. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1902; English tr. by E.C. Richardson in the *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series*, vol. 1. New York, 1890; rept. Grand Rapids, MI, 1986.

- Isocrates. *Panegyricus*. English tr. by George Norlin in the *Loeb Classical Library*, volume 1. Harvard University Press, 1966.
- Lactantius. *Divinae Institutiones = The Divine Institutes*. Latin text ed. By S. Brandt and G. Laubmann in the CSEL, vol. 19. Vienna, 1890; English trs. By W. Fletcher in the ANF, vol. 7. New York, 1886; rept. Grand Rapids, MI, 1970; and by Sr. M.F. McDonald in the FC, vol. 49. Washington D.C., 1964.
- Lactantius. *Liber de Mortibus Persecutorum = A Book on the Deaths of the Persecutors*. Latin text ed. By S. Brandt and G. Laubmann in the CSEL, vol. 27, Fas. 2. Vienna, 1987; Latin text and English tr. By J.L. Creed in the OECT. Oxford, 1989; English trans. also by W. Fletcher in the ANF, vol. 7. New York, 1886.
- Origo Constantini Imperatoris (Anonymus Valesianus, Pars Prior) = The Lineage of the Emperor Constantine (Anonymus Valesianus, First Part)*. Latin text and English tr. By J.C. Rolph in Ammianus Marcellinus, vol. 3, in the *Loeb Classical Library*. London, 1964, pp. 506-531; Latin text and German commentary by Ingemar König.
- Panegyrici Latini*. In Nixon, C.E.V., and Barbara Rodgers. *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Philo Judaeus. *Embassy to Gaius*. Translated by C. D. Yonge. London: H. G. Bohn, 1890.

Plato. *The Republic in The Dialogues of Plato*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. New York: Random House, 1952.

Pliny. *Panegyricus*. Loeb Classical Library, ed. and trans. by Betty Radice. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969.

Plutarch. *Moralia*. Loeb Classical Library, ed. and trans. by Edward N. O'Neil. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.

------. *The Life of Alexander*. Loeb Classical Library, translated by Bernadotte Perrin, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Zosimus. *Historia Nova* = New History. Greek text ed. By L. Mendelssohn. Leipzig, 1887; English trans. By J.J. Buchanan and H.T. Davis. San Antonio, 1967; and R.T. Ridley. Melbourne, 1982.

Secondary Sources

Baldry, H.C. "Zeno's Ideal State," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 79 (1959), 3-15.

Barnes, Timothy David. *Constantine and Eusebius*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Baynes, Norman Hepburn. *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*. University of London: Athlone Press, 1955.

------. *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church*. London, 1929; rept. New York, 1975.

Born, Lester K. "The Perfect Prince According to the Latin Panegyrists," *The American Journal of Philology*, vol. 55, 1 (1934), 20-35.

- Bowersock, G.W. "From Emperor to Bishop: The Self-Conscious Transformation of Power in the Fourth Century A.D.," *Classical Philology* vol. 81, 4 (Oct., 1986), 298-307.
- Buckler, F. W. "The Re-emergence of the Arian Controversy," *Anglican Theological Review*, X. 1927/8.
- . "Barbarian and Greek, and Church History," *Church History*, XI, 1942.
- Cameron, Averil. *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Chadwick, Henry. *The Early Church*. Penguin: London, 1967.
- Chesnut, Glenn F. "The Ruler and the Logos in Neopythagorean, Middle Platonic, and Late Stoic Political Philosophy," in *Principate: Religion*. ed. Wolfgang Haase. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II 16 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 1310-1332.
- Cochrane, Charles N. *Christianity and Classical Culture*. Oxford University Press, 1966.
- Cranz, F. Edward. "Kingdom and Polity in Eusebius of Caesarea," *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 45, 1 (Jan., 1952), 47-66.
- Deane, Herbert A. "Classical and Christian Political Thought," *Political Theory*, vol. 1, 4 (Nov., 1973), 415-425.
- Delatte, A. "Essai sur la Politique Pythagoricienne," *Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et lettres de L'Université de Liège*. Fascicule XXIX. Liege, Paris, 1922.

- Drake, H.A. *In Praise of Constantine: a Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius's Tricennial Orations*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.
- Dvornik, Francis. *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1966.
- Frend, W.H.C. *The Rise of Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.
- Goodenough, Erwin R. "New Light on Hellenistic Judaism," *Journal of Bible and Religion*, vol. 5, 1 (1937), 18-28.
- . "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship," *Yale Classical Studies*, vol. 1 (1929), 55-102.
- Grant, R. M. *Eusebius as Church Historian*. Oxford, 1980.
- Grégoire, Henri. "*L'authenticité et l'historicité la Vita Constantini attribuée à Eusébe de Césarée*," *Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres*, 39 (1953): 462-479.
- Hadas, Moses. "Plato in Hellenistic Fusion," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 19, 1 (1958), 3-13.
- Hollerich, Michael J. "Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First 'Court Theologian.'" *Church History*, vol. 59, 3 (Sep., 1990), 309-325.
- MacCormack, Sabine. *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.
- . "Roma, Constantinopolis, the Emperor, and His Genius," *The Classical Quarterly* 25, No. 1 (1975), 131-150.

Momigliano, Arnaldo. "Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century," in *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. A. Momigliano. Oxford, 1963.

Nixon, C.E.V., and Barbara Rodgers. *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Odahl, Charles. "God and Constantine: Divine Sanction for Imperial Rule in the First Christian Emperor's Early Letters and Art," *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 81, 3 (July, 1995), 327-352.

----- . *Constantine and the Christian Empire*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

----- . "A Pagan's Reaction to Constantine's Conversion—Religious References in the Trier Panegyric of A.D. 313," *The Ancient World*, vol. 21 (Spring, 1990), 45-63.

----- . "Constantine the Great and Christian Imperial Theocracy," *Connections: European Studies Annual Review*, vol. 3 (2007), 89-113.

----- . *Early Christian Latin Literature*. Chicago, IL: Ares, 1993.

O'Meara, Dominic J. *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*. Oxford University Press, 2003.

Peterson, Erik. *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem*. Munich: Kosel, 1951.

Quoted in Michael J. Hollerich, "Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First 'Court Theologian.'" *Church History* 59, no. 3 (1990): 309.

- Rapp, Claudia. "Imperial Ideology in the Making: Eusebius of Caesarea on Constantine as 'Bishop,'" *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. 49, 2 (Oct., 1998), 685-695.
- Rose, H.J. *Religion in Greece and Rome*. New York: Harper & Row, 1959.
- Runciman, Steven. *Byzantine Civilization*. London: Arnold, 1948.
- Seston, W. "Constantine as a 'Bishop.'" *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 37, 1 (1947), 127-131.
- Smith, Christine. "Christian Rhetoric in Eusebius's Panegyric at Tyre," *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. 43, 3 (1989), 226-247.
- Tarn, W.W. *Alexander the Great, Vol.2*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948.
- Taylor, Lily Ross. *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*. Middletown: American Philological Association, 1931.
- Warmington, B.H. "Aspects of Constantinian Propaganda in the Panegyrici Latini," *TAPA*, vol. 104 (1974).
- Williams, G. H. "Christology and Church-State Relations in the Fourth Century," *Church History* 20, 3, 1951.
- Windelband, Wilhelm. *History of Philosophy v.1*. New York: Dover Publications, 1958.
- Wolfson, H.A. *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956.