THE EMPEROR AS A 'MAN OF GOD': THE IMPACT OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT'S

Conversion on Roman Ideas of Kingship*

O Imperador como "homem de Deus": O impacto de Constantino, o Grande
Conversão nas ideias romanas sobre o reinado

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ABSTRACT

In numerous ways, the first Christian emperor, Constantine I (r. 306-337) indicated that he saw parallels between himself and St. Paul. These include his story of divine intervention (the vision of the Cross) and his decision to be buried amid markers for the twelve Apostles. But his biographer, Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, chooses to liken Constantine instead to Moses, who led the Israelites out of captivity. By focusing on the different connotation of "Man of God" (Constantine's preferred label for himself) and "Friend of God" (the phrase Eusebius used), this article suggests that the reason for this difference lay in Eusebius's concern to prevent Constantine – and by extension all future emperors – from asserting priority over Christian bishops.

Keywords: Christianity; conversion; Constantine I the Great; political theology; Athanasius of Alexandria; Eusebius of Caesarea; Edict of Milan; St Paul; Moses.

RESUMO

De várias maneiras, o primeiro imperador cristão, Constantino I (306-337), indicou as semelhanças que ele via entre si e São Paulo. Nessas semelhanças, ele incluiu a sua história de intervenção divina (a visão da Cruz) e a sua decisão de ser enterrado em meio as marcas para os doze Apóstolos. Seu biógrafo, porém, o Bispo Eusébio de Cesaréia, escolhe comparar Constantino, ao invés de São Paulo, com Moisés, que liderou os israelitas na saída do cativeiro. Focando sobre as diferentes conotações de "Homem de Deus" (como Constantino preferiu se definir) e "Amigo de Deus" (termo usado por Eusébio), este artigo sugere que a razão para essas diferenças estava na preocupação de Eusébio em evitar que Constantino – e por extensão todos os futuros imperadores – se declarasse melhor que os outros bispos cristãos.

Palavras-chave: Cristianismo; conversão; Constantino I, o Grande; teologia política; Atanásio de Alexandria; Eusébio de Cesareia; Édito de Milão; São Paulo; Moisés.

I n an oft-quoted comment, the Christian apologist Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225) pointed out that "Christians are made, not born". Tertullian's intent was to convince those who hated his faith that Christians were not some kind of alien creatures. "We are the same as you", he wrote, "we used to laugh" at the idea that there really was only one god, not many.[1] For us, Tertullian's observation has an additional point. Unlike the civic cults that one was born into, Christianity was an acquired taste. Hence, his remark is a useful reminder of an easily overlooked demographic reality of these early Christian centuries: to have achieved even the 10 per cent population level that is usually bandied about for the early fourth century, the majority of Christians in any given generation (though not necessarily in any given area) would have to have been adult converts (HOPKINS, 1998, p. 201).

These converts had to learn how to be Christians. The church had a relatively rigorous program for this purpose – several years of supervised instruction and socialization, culminating in an intensive Lenten program of day-long instruction conducted by the local bishop before baptism.[2] But as Tertullian's statement also reminds us, these new Christians had grown up as Romans. Although they now believed in one god instead of many, they continued to be Romans in every other way. As Ramsay MacMullen once explained it, "It was rather their general instinct, I suppose, as it is generally everybody's instinct, to make the least possible tear in the fabric of already held beliefs, when obliged to admit some urgent novelty" (MACMULLEN, 1984, p. 21; Cf. JACOBS, 2014, p. 192-219; SANDWELL, 2007, 34-59). That is to say, they still held the social, cultural, and political views that they had grown up with. To give but one example, even the steadfast Athanasius of Alexandria thought nothing of using the portraits of the emperor to explain how the Christian Son could be honored without loss of the Father's sovereignty (ATHANASIUS, 3.5). In the same way, new Christians continued to think the same way about slavery, patriarchy, and aristocracy. And, especially important for present purposes, they continued to think of the emperor as a sacrosanct individual – not exactly a god, but holier than the rest of us. "The king on earth is the last of gods but first of men", as the goddess Isis explained it to her son Horus in a Hermetic tract.[3] In many instances, it was the church that adjusted to the needs of converts and not vice versa. Nowhere was this more true than when aristocrats started to convert in sizeable numbers during the fourth century.[4]

What holds true for the typical convert is doubly true for imperial converts, especially for the first one, Constantine the Great (r. 306-337). Yet in too many instances scholars fail to take into account the extent to which imperial ideology influenced his actions and instead choose to measure the sincerity of his conversion by an artificial and arbitrary standard. In this paper, I would like to put imperial ideology in the foreground, and discuss its impact on both Constantine himself and the Christian bishops who needed to figure out how to react to the novelty of an emperor who was also a Christian.

Oddly enough, the best place to begin is with a famous encounter during the last years of Constantine's reign.

In November of 335, Alexandria's quarrelsome young bishop, Athanasius, had an explosive encounter with Constantine in his new eponymous city of Constantinople. The meeting came about as part of the fallout from the Council of Tyre, which began meeting in the summer of that year to hear charges of misconduct against Athanasius. The specific issues do not need to concern us here. Suffice it to say that, after despairing of his chances, Athanasius fled Tyre, probably in late September, and made his way to Constantinople, where he made a dramatic appeal to Constantine to protect him from his enemies.[5] Constantine had done so several times in recent years, but this time he insisted on first hearing the decision of the council. According to Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis, writing about forty years later, Athanasius was stunned by this decision. "Angry as the emperor was", Epiphanius reports, "Pope Athanasius spoke painful words to him: 'The Lord will judge between me and you, since you yourself agree with those who calumniate your humble servant'" (EPIPHANIUS, 1990). Constantine's reaction was swift: Athanasius was bundled aboard a freighter and sent to Gaul for the first of several exiles he would endure during his long career.

This confrontation raises questions about the behavior of both Athanasius and Constantine. Epiphanius was a strong supporter of Alexandria's bishop, and it is clear that he admired Athanasius for standing up to the emperor. But his brief account does little to explain either why Athanasius committed such a breach of imperial protocol or why Constantine reacted with such fury. It was once popular to use theology to explain Athanasius' behavior. Arianism, the argument went, facilitated obedience because of its subordinationist theology. But a true Nicene like Athanasius could not condone imperial interference in the affairs of the Church. But that argument is no longer credible,[6] and even Epiphanius describes the scene in such a way as to suggest that his hero might have been a bit foolhardy. Something more than theology had to have been involved.

Constantine's behavior is even more puzzling. In his case, the obvious answer is his famous temper, but such a solution trivializes the issue by making it no more than an insult to imperial majesty. Athanasius unquestionably had violated court protocol, but Constantine had learned to endure far greater provocation during more than two decades of dealing with Christian bishops. It should have taken something more than rude behavior to make him react so vehemently.

The explanation for his response lies in imperial ideology. When Athanasius claimed that God would judge between himself and the emperor, he effectively asserted a right to appeal. The notion of appealing to a Higher Power is so well established in our cultural tradition that it is hard for us now to see that such an appeal at this time was not merely an affront; it was something that undermined centuries of Roman legal tradition. According to that tradition, the emperor was the final authority for anything that happened in the empire. There was none of our distinction between "religious" and "secular" realms. If something needed to be negotiated with a Higher Power, the emperor was the only one who could make that decision, and only he, as *pontifex maximus*, would conduct the negotiation. Yet

Athanasius had not only questioned the emperor's judgment and authority, but even more, in saying that God would judge between the two of them he had asserted an unprecedented right to equality in the divine tribunal.

How could Athanasius have been so reckless? It might be said that Constantine had no one but himself to blame. Ever since he assumed control of the Western empire in 312, Constantine had made a point of showing deference to the authority of Christian bishops. In a famous letter to bishops meeting at the Council of Arles in 314, for instance, he had scored the recalcitrant Donatists for appealing to him when "I myself await Christ's judgment", then went on to say that "the judgment of the priests should be regarded as if God himself were in the judge's seat" (OPTATUS, 1989, v.1, p. 169; OPTATUS, 1997, p. 190). Many years later, while hosting a dinner party for bishops, he described himself as one of their number: "You are bishops of those within the Church, but I am perhaps a bishop appointed by God over those outside" (EUSEBIUS, 1999, p. 161). It could be said, therefore, that Athanasius had simply taken Constantine at his word.

Constantine's reaction, however, suggests we should not make the same mistake. Instead, the part of that famous sentence to which we should pay attention is the phrase "appointed by God" (ὑπὸ θεοῦ καθεσταμένος). It is not the first time Constantine had made such a claim. At roughly the same time that he was humbling himself to the bishops at Arles, Constantine wrote to his vicar in North Africa, Aelafius. In this letter, Constantine referred to himself as the person to whom "the Highest Divinity" (*summa divinitate*) "has committed by his divine nod the government of all earthly things" (*cuius curae nutu suo caelesti terrena omnia moderanda commisit*).[7] In both of these statements, Constantine showed that he did not think adopting Christianity took anything away from the special relationship late Roman emperors were expected to have with divinity.

But how could he have been equally sincere in professing deference and at the same time asserting his priority? Here, the answer lies in an earlier period of Roman history. When the first of the emperors, Caesar's heir Octavian, took sole control of the empire, he successfully smoothed the transition by constructing a role for the Roman Senate in his system of governance. By posing as nothing more than the "first man" (*princeps*) of that body, the first Augustus maintained the fiction of Senatorial control while at the same time gaining for himself a pool of seasoned administrators to help him run the empire. Let us suppose that, in labeling himself a "fellow bishop", Constantine aimed to replicate this system of governance in an age when religious authority outranked Senatorial prestige.

Like Augustus, Constantine can be called a hypocrite or a political genius, but either way we could then explain his reaction to Athanasius. Like Augustus's Principate, Constantine's new Christian empire depended on a tacit set of understandings, in which the emperor confirmed the prestige of the corporate body – in this case, the bishops rather than the senators – in return for voluntary restraints that bishops or senators placed on their own behavior. When Athanasius, like the occasional misguided Senator in the Principate,

failed to distinguish between courtesy and power, Constantine had no choice but to act. As G.E.M. de Ste. Croix once observed of the Principate, "It was very necessary for the emperors to repress *individuals* who greatly overstepped the mark and indulged in acts which, if allowed to continue and spread, might disturb and endanger the whole system" (SAINT CROIX, 1981, p. 383).

Now, however, Athanasius was not only claiming the right to appeal but also implying that he and the emperor would be on equal footing in that supreme venue. That, in a nutshell, is the revolutionary difference brought about by Constantine's empowerment of the Christian clergy. This encounter at the end of his reign brings into stark relief the challenges Constantine faced in trying to forge a leadership role for himself in the Christian hierarchy. Given the requirements of late Roman imperial ideology, his role would have to be one that maintained the emperor's special relationship with divinity in a way that everyone in the empire could acknowledge – the *consensus omnium* that was considered essential for that relationship to be effective.[8]

But Constantine also needed to adapt this ideology to conform to the unique requirements of Christian leadership if he was going to be able to assert his right to supervise their activities. The most famous event of his reign – the Vision of the Cross that he experienced prior to his success at the Milvian Bridge in 312 – needs to be read in this context.

The vision story was as much a foundational event for Constantine's regime as the Battle of Actium had been for Augustus, and so far as I can tell Constantine never tired of talking about it.[9] A huge body of scholarship has been devoted to this one, admittedly fascinating, event in Constantine's long reign, but for present purposes it is only necessary to consider how the vision story helped establish Constantine's credentials in a Christian context. Its function was to provide a segue by means of which he could transfer the charismatic qualities of his office into his new religion. It shows that Constantine's intent was lay claim to an epithet that had been claimed by the recipient of a similarly famous vision, St. Paul (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Like Paul, Constantine aimed to become the new "Man of God" (ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος), a term that in Christian usage signified a person so completely attuned to the divine will that he functioned as an instrument of and intermediary for supernatural power.[10]

Nor is this the only echo of Paul in Constantine's narrative. Like the Thirteenth Apostle, Constantine's conversion came through a vision experienced on a journey, as a result of which, like Paul, he could claim to have received instruction at no human hands, but instead to have been taught directly by God.[11] Even his claim to be "bishop of those outside" could be read as part of this narrative, for just as Paul claimed to be "Apostle to the Gentiles" so Constantine now claimed to be the apostle to "those outside" the Church. His planning even extended to his burial, for in placing himself in the center of markers for the Twelve Apostles, Constantine created a physical space for himself in their number.[12] His intentions were realized in the posthumous title of *Isapostolos*, "equal of the Apostles". The vision

story thus is indicative of the means Constantine had devised to make his authority palatable to the church. His goal evidently was to do so by becoming the Man of God.

To the late William Frend, Constantine's gambit was completely successful. "The transformation from Roman *Pontifex Maximus* to the Equal of the Apostles was smooth", he wrote. "Indeed, if one regards the Emperor as now ruling by something like the grace of God, there was no break between Aurelian and Diocletian on the one hand, and Constantine on the other" (FREND, 1967, p. 402). Frend was not wrong in terms of the ultimate standing Constantine achieved in both Christian and Byzantine history. But one reason I chose to begin with the encounter between Athanasius and Constantine was to suggest that the transition, while possibly smooth, was not as seamless as Frend's comment would have us believe.

Confirmation comes from an unlikely direction. Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea's *Life of Constantine* (*de vita Constantine*, hereafter *VC*), completed shortly after Constantine's death in 337, is the single most important written source for that emperor's actions and intentions. It is heavily panegyrical in its approach, intent on portraying Constantine as the ideal Christian emperor.[13] If anyplace, we should expect to find the parallels between Constantine and Paul in this work, and they indeed may be found in several places.[14] But they are never more than implicit: Eusebius himself never overtly made this connection, even though it is in the first book of this work that we find the most obvious parallel – Eusebius' account of Constantine's miracle (*VC* 1.28). How should we explain this omission?

Eusebius has been the subject of intense study, especially in recent decades, as a result of which he has emerged as a far more subtle thinker, but overall a less influential figure than once believed. In the *VC* he cast himself so effectively as Constantine's spokesman that for centuries his statements about Constantine's policies and intentions were considered authoritative, identical to Constantine himself. But scholars no longer take seriously his pretensions to such intimacy,[15] and as a result special care must be taken to distinguish Constantine's own agenda from the hermeneutic shell in which Eusebius encased it.

We have known for a long time that Eusebius' preferred habit to deal with material he found unpleasant was by omission or silence – the Abbé Duchesne once described the *Life of Constantine* as "le triomphe de la réticence et de la circonlocution" (DUCHESNE, 1910, p. 191). For this reason, Eusebius' decision not to pursue Constantine's very obvious interest in comparison with St. Paul indicates that he had some difficulty with it. If so, then looking at his writings on Constantine with this problem in mind can provide a way to separate the agendas of the emperor from that of his biographer. It will also show that Eusebius developed an alternative to Athanasius' confrontational style that in the long run might have been a more effective means of curbing imperial pretensions.

A good place to begin is with two of Eusebius' orations that he added as appendices to the *VC*. He delivered both in Constantinople, one the same week of November, 335 in which Athanasius was sent into exile, the other about eight months later, during the closing

ceremonies of Constantine's Thirtieth Jubilee year.[16] In both, his praise of Constantine was lavish. At the start of the first, for instance, he seems to endorse the emperor's claim to have been taught directly by God, and even alludes to Paul's claim that his knowledge came "not by men nor through men".[17] In the second, which was the more official of the two, he repeatedly referred to Constantine as God's "friend" (φίλος), in a way that is particularly relevant to the present question (*LC* 1.6, 2.1-4, 5.1, 5.4).

In this oration, "In Praise of Constantine" (*Laus Constantini*, hereafter *LC*), Eusebius uses the phrase "friend of God" (θεῷ φίλος), several times to indicate Constantine's close relationship with deity. The phrase immediately calls to mind the "divine companion" (*comes*) with whom emperors needed to demonstrate a particular relationship.[18] But elsewhere Eusebius uses this phrase for the Hebrew patriarchs who, in his view, mediated with God by means of a natural affinity for the true religion. Eusebius also uses this phrase in the *VC*.[19]

All this might make his failure to use the specific Pauline epithet of "Man of God" (ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος) seem unimportant, especially since one of Eusebius' patriarchal friends of God was none other than Moses, and he explicitly compares Constantine to the great prophet in the *VC*. Like Moses, Eusebius writes, Constantine grew to adulthood in the house of an enemy (Diocletian, rather than Pharaoh), and just as Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea so Constantine's opponent, Maxentius, drowned in the Tiber at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312. There is a further implied analogy in Book II of the *Life*, where Eusebius depicts Constantine retiring to a tabernacle and praying (like Moses) before every battle.[20]

The difference, however, while subtle, is important. Like Constantine, Eusebius was adept at blending imperial ideology with Christian usage, and also at using words to side-step tricky issues. So there is every likelihood that he intended "friend of God" to signal a different relationship than "man of God" would denote. The difference, therefore, is worth pursuing.

One place to begin is with Eusebius's account of Constantine's vision of the Cross in Book One. Scholars have often commented on the way Eusebius hesitates before telling the story. If anyone else had told him, Eusebius admits, he would have found it hard to believe; but in this case he had it from the emperor himself. Gilbert Dagron has taken such hesitations in the *Life* as signs that Eusebius was uncomfortable with Constantine's apostolic claims (DAGRON, 2003, p. 148). Another such indicator is the way Eusebius continues this story. Puzzled about what his vision might mean, Eusebius writes, Constantine had to send for Christian priests to explain it to him, and thereafter undertook instruction at their hands.[21] This is a very different scenario from Constantine's own claim that no human hand had participated in his knowledge of God, a claim Eusebius supported when speaking in Constantine's presence.[22] It exposes one glaring difference between Constantine had his biographer.

Eusebius' concept of the office of bishop explains how he could harbor such reservations about the use of Pauline imagery and yet compare Constantine so readily with Moses.

As Claudia Rapp has pointed out, Moses "served in particular as the model of the perfect bishop" (RAPP, 1998b, p. 687). Evidently, Eusebius could accept Constantine's claim to be another bishop – he liked it enough not only to quote it in Book Four of the *Life*, but even to use it himself at the beginning of that work, where he described Constantine as acting "like a universal bishop appointed by God".[23]

The claim to Paul's apostolic title, "Man of God" was simply a bridge too far, and not just for Eusebius. Athanasius applied the phrase to a very different kind of holy man – Antony, the paradigmatic monk – and a cursory search of the online *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* uncovered about 200 instances of its use, almost all of which followed Athanasius' lead and applied the phrase only to monks or bishops.[24] Conversely, as Rapp has noted, it would be three centuries before an emperor would once again be described as being, like Moses, a "mediator with God" (RAPP, 1998, p. 691).

It would seem, then, that the phrase "Man of God" might be one way to pry open the hermeneutic shell that Eusebius built around Constantine.

It is fairly clear that Constantine's aim was to create a state religion that would be broadly based and inclusive, built around a vaguely defined monotheistic deity.[25] In the *LC*, delivered on a state occasion, Eusebius had to walk a careful line, and here he supported Constantine's position, emphasizing that the emperor wanted to persuade, not coerce, and describing all inhabitants of the empire as innately focused on worship of a Supreme deity. But in doing so, the bishop relied heavily on his skill at blending imperial and Christian terminology.

In this case, Eusebius devoted the entire oration to the most generic member of the Christian Trinity, God the Father, a choice that allowed him to make easy connections between his faith and the comfortably familiar monotheism of pagan philosophy.[26] Because he only used such phrases as the Supreme Sovereign (ὁ μέγας βασιλεύς), Eusebius was able to describe Constantine's deity as one whom "the entire species of mankind [...], though divided in their opinions on other matters, agree on this alone, calling on the One and Only God with an inbred logic, a self-taught and self-learned knowledge".[27]

Vague terminology also allowed Eusebius to take subversive positions that undermined the emperor's program. In one, which must surely rank among the greatest sleight-of-hand tricks of all time, the bishop exploited Constantine's own preference for vague language to use the terms "monotheism" and "polytheism" to identify the one with monarchy and the other with anarchy. "Monarchy", he declares, "excels all other kinds of constitution and government. For rather do anarchy and civil war result from the alternative, a polyarchy based on equality".[28] Right down to the present, unwary readers have unconsciously replaced Eusebius' own words with "Christianity" and "paganism".[29] Undoubtedly, Eusebius intended his words to be taken in this sense, but the subtlety of his wording is lost by such careless reading. I have argued elsewhere that Constantine's aim was to create a new state religion built around a vaguely defined monotheistic deity whose agency could be supported by Chris-

tians and pagans alike. In modern terms, he wanted a "big tent" religion that would provide the *consensus omnium* needed for effective imperial rule.[30] Vague terminology was critical to his plan, since the use of generalities allowed for creation of a large consensus much more easily than more exclusive wording. By using these terms as he did, Eusebius deftly usurped the common religious ground on which Constantine's own program depended.

None of this should be taken to mean that Constantine was not a "sincere" Christian or a genuine convert. Eusebius's other oration, which I have not discussed, was in fact devoted to the second person in the Christian trinity, and Eusebius records that Constantine listened to it with great pleasure (*VC* 4.33). But it does seem clear that the first Christian emperor drew a distinction between what might be called the private conditions of his faith and what was needed for a public allegiance. He said as much in the widely misunderstood letter that he sent to Bishop Alexander of Alexandria and his recalcitrant priest, Arius, in an effort to bring an end to their dispute. Mocked for its theological naiveté, the letter is a perfectly coherent statement of Constantine's political goals. "With disputes of this kind", he wrote,

> *which no necessity of any law demands*, but are promoted by argument in unprofitable idleness, even if they take place as some sort of gymnastic exercise, still it is our duty to shut them up inside the mind and not casually produce them in public synods, nor uncautiously commit them to the hearing of the laity (my emphasis) (EUSEBIUS, VC, 1999, 2. 69. 2).

Particularly subversive is the way Eusebius discusses the emperor's piety (εὐσεβεία). Piety, the Latin *pietas*, was a traditional Roman virtue – in the *Aeneid*, it is Vergil's most common epithet for his archetypal Roman hero: "*pius* Aeneas". It is also one of the so--called "cardinal virtues" of a Roman emperor, going all the way back to the golden shield that the Senate voted for Augustus, with the inscription "*virtutis clementiaeque iustitiae et pietatis causa*".[31] So it comes as no surprise that Eusebius devoted a significant portion of his speech to celebrating this virtue in Constantine. Εὐσεβεία is a high-frequency word in the oration, one that Eusebius uses twenty-two times.[32] But Latin *pietas* basically meant ful-filling one's obligations to family and state (including the state's deities). It often amounted to little more than "duty" or "loyalty". In this speech, Eusebius deployed the term in a significantly different way, one that was much closer to our modern meaning of divine worship.

Similarly, Eusebius took another traditional characteristic of the good king in an entirely new direction. In pseudo-Pythagorean kingship treatises probably crafted between the first and third centuries, the ideal king was one who served as a model to his subjects of the Highest King, but also one who undertook to educate his subjects to see and appreciate that higher kingdom. In line with this tradition, Eusebius says Constantine "summons the whole human race to knowledge of the Higher Power, calling in a great voice that all can hear and proclaiming for everyone on earth the laws of genuine piety".[33] But Eusebius then elaborates on this activity in an unprecedented way, claiming that Constantine "has clean-sed all the filth of godless error from the kingdom on earth".[34]

This phrase is a prime example of the danger inherent in the use of ambiguous language. Who can be opposed to either "atheism" or "error"? Certainly not Constantine. But what exactly was the "godless error" that Eusebius condemned so vehemently? "Godless" (ἄθεος) is another high-frequency word in this oration, one that Eusebius deploys eleven times. In every case, he applies it either to pagan gods, demons, or persecutors.[35] So we may feel certain that Eusebius meant polytheistic religions. Calling such religions "godless" might seem strange; if anything, the pagan problem was that they had too many gods. Indeed, in earlier centuries it was Christians who were called atheists because of their refusal to recognize the gods. But this is simply another way in which Christians had learned to turn such charges on their head. As Eusebius puts it in a later chapter, "strictly speaking, belief in many gods is godless".[36]

Despite any hesitation Eusebius might have had, Constantine won the battle over his memory, at least in part. Buried amid memorials of the twelve apostles, he quickly became counted among their number, and came to be known as "Isapostolos", the equal to the apostles, and even as the Man of God. But at the same time, it could be said that he lost the war, for, as Gilbert Dagron observed, "Constantine was made a saint so as to avoid making him a model of kingship" (DAGRON, 2003, p. 143). Significantly, three centuries would pass before one of Constantine's successors also was hailed in this way, and that emperor was Heraclius (r. 610-641), whose war to recover relics of the True Cross from the Persians took on all the colors of a crusade (RAPP, 1998b, p. 691).

Moreover, because Constantine became held up as a model in the way Eusebius intended, his successors found themselves held to his standard, with important implications for the broader parts of Constantine's program. For, if the emperor must be the Man of God, then anyone who opposed him necessarily became demonized, literally – cast in a cosmic battle on the side of the demons.[37] Perhaps even more important was an unforeseen consequence of Eusebius' flatteries. It was simply this: the power to bestow a title implies the power to deny it. Before the century was out, a crop of aggressive bishops – none more so than Ambrose of Milan – routinely demanded conformity to their criteria for orthodox Christian behavior in a way that doomed the more inclusive religion that Constantine had envisioned.

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1962, p. 187-243.

Notas

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1   Apol. 18.4: *Haec et nos risimus aliquando. De vestris sumus. Fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani*.

2   For a vivid depiction of pre-baptismal instruction, see G. Wills (2012, p. 105-133).

3   KORE KOSMU, 1946-1960, 4:53. On this topic, see further: IOSSIF; CHANKOWSKY; LORBER, 2011.

4   For examples of the way bishops adjusted their sermons to accommodate aristocratic values, see: SALZMAN, 2002; BROWN, 2012; SESSA, 2014.

5   For a review of the events, see: DRAKE, 1987, p. 193-204.

6   It was once popular to say that Arianism facilitated obedience because of its subordinationist theology, whereas a true Nicene like Athanasius could not condone imperial interference in the affairs of the Church. That argument is no longer credible. See: SINGH, 2015, p. 29-54, esp. p. 87. For an example of the earlier argument: WILLIAMS, 1951a, p. 3-33; WILLIAMS, 1951b, p. 3-26.

7   OPTATUS, 1989, v.1, p. 157. For the date: OPTATUS, 1989, v.1, p. 153.

8   For the growing importance of consensus, see: LIM, 1995, esp. p. 217-29. But see also: VAN NUFFELEN, 2014, p. 149-172.

9   Eusebius of Caesarea, who included the most famous version of the vision in his *Life of Constantine*, says that the emperor himself told him the story many years (μακροῖς ὕστερον χρόναις) after the event: EUSEBIUS, VC, 1999, 1.28. The earliest possible time would have been subsequent to Constantine's defeat of the eastern emperor, Licinius, in 324; a later date, in 335 or 336, is even more likely. See: VAN DAM, 2003, p. 127-151.

10 Constantine twice refers to himself as θεοῦ ἄνθρωπον in a letter to the priest Arius: ATHANASIUS' WERKE, III:1, 1934. See: Urk. 34, p. 74.

11 As he did in his *Oration to the Saints*, 11.2: "We, however, have received no aid from human instruction" (ἡμῖν δὲ παιδεία μὲν ἡ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων οὐδεμία πώποτε συνήρατο). For Paul, cf. Galatians 1:1.

12 Eusebius tells us that Constantine kept his plan secret until very late in his reign: *VC*, 1999, 4.60. Just what he intended by this symbolism is still debated. To Cyril Mango (1990, p. 58), Constantine meant to indicate "that he was the equal of Christ". To others, he was merely seeking their protection. Whatever his intentions, they were undoubtedly controversial, since the mausoleum was relocated during the reign of his son, Constantius II. See: WEINREICH, 1916, p. 3-14. M. WILLIAMS (2008, p. 44) points to parallels with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. See further: KRAUTHEIMER, 1983, p. 56-60; ANGELOVA, 2015, p. 133 ("more like Christ than like the apostles").

13 The bibliography on this work is immense. Doubts about its authenticity were cleared up by A. H. M. Jones and T. C. Skeat (1954, p. 194-200); WINKELMANN, 1961, p. 405-412; WINKELMANN, 1962, p. 187-243. More recent scholarship has focused on Eusebius's methods and goals. See esp.: CAMERON, 1983, p. 71-88; CAMERON, 1997, p. 145-174. See further n. 15 below.

14 For a detailed comparison, see: BHOLA, 2015, p. 168-191; STAATS, 2008, p. 334-170, is more cautious. See also: MONTGOMERY, 1968, p. 84-109.

15 For recent examples, see SINGH, 2015, p. 129-154; ANGELOVA, 2015, p. 111: Eusebius is "one source among many; forceful and informative, but deeply flawed". See also the thoughtful papers in: INOWLOCKI; ZAMAGNI, 2011; JOHNSON; SCHOTT, 2013. For a re-evaluation of Eusebius's influence on Constantine, see: BARNES, 1981, p. 266. For earlier views, D. M. WEBB (1981, p. 85-102).

16 For the dates, see: DRAKE, 1975, p. 345-356. The first oration, "On Christ's Sepulchre" (de *sepulchro* Christi, hereafter *SC*) survives as the second half of the *LC*, chs. 11-18). All translations of these orations are from H. Drake, 1976.

17 *SC* 11.1, "not intended to initiate you, who have been instructed by God, nor to lay bare secrets for you, to whom well before our account God Himself, 'not by men nor through men' but by means of the Common Savior Himself and frequent enlightening visions of His Divinity". The quotation is from Gal. 1:1.

18 NOCK, 1947, p. 102-116. See further n. 33 below.

19 *VC* 1.52.1, 3.1.1, 4.46. At *VC* 1.13, Eusebius states that, during the time of the Tetrarchy, Constantine was the only ruler who "shared friendship with the God of All" (τὴν πρὸς τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸν φιλίαν ἐσπένδετο). For his application of this phrase to Hebrew patriarchs, see *Preparation Evangelica* 1.1.6.

20 *VC* 2.12. For explicit comparison, see: *VC* 1.12, 1.20, 1.38-39. On Constantine as Moses, see: BECKER, 1910, p. 161-171; HOLLERICH, 1989, p. 80-85; RAPP, 1998, p. 277-298; DAMGAARD, 2013, p. 115-149.

21 *VC* 1.32. In: SESTON, 1947, p.129-130, W. Seston observed that Eusebius never compared Constantine to a bishop in the *LC* because to do so would have made the emperor equal to the bishops and dependent of their

decisions.

22 *OC* 11.2: "We, however, have received no aid from human instruction" (NPNF tr.). Cf. Eusebius, *SC* 11.1, his speech is "not intended to initiate you, who have been instructed by God, nor to lay bare secrets for you, to whom well before our account God Himself, 'not by men nor through men' but by means of the Common Savior Himself and frequent enlightening visions of His Divinity revealed and uncovered the secrets of the holy rites". Taught by God is also a phrase for holy men and prophets. See: Is 54:13, Jer 31:33-34, Jn 6:45; 1 Thes 4:9; Athanasius, *Life of Antony* 66.2.

23 *VC* 1.44.1-2. Constantine is quoted at *VC* 4.24.

24 The online TLG may be accessed at: stephanus.tlg.uci.edu. s.v. θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος. For he significance of the phrase. See: STEIDLE, 1956, p. 148-200.

25 I argued this position in: DRAKE, 2014, p. 61-76; DRAKE, 2000, esp. p. 35-72. See also n. 30 below.

26 The Greek philosophical concept of a single deity stretches back to Plato. For "pagan monotheism" in Late Antiquity, see: ATHANASSIADI; FREDE, 1999; EDWARDS, 2004, p. 211-234. For a more nuanced understanding, see: MITCHELL; VAN NUFFELEN, 2010.

27 *LC* 1.3.

28 *LC* 3.6: μοναρχία δὲ τῆς πάντων ὑπέρκειται συστάσεως τε καῖ διοικήσεως·ἀναρχία γὰρ μᾶλλον καὶ στὰσις ἡ ἐξ ἰσοτιμίας ἀντιπαρεξαγομένη πολυαρχία. For a list of binary opposites set up by Eusebius see: MARTIN, 2004, p. 221.

29 See, e.g.: BARNES, 1981, p. 254-255, where he cites as proof of the oration's "aggressively Christian content" the fact that Eusebius claims, "In place of polytheism, Constantine has established monotheism".

30 DRAKE, 2000, esp. p. 35-72. See also n. 25 above.

31 *Res Gestae* 34. On the "four cardinal virtues", see: WALLACE-HADRILL, 1981, p. 298-323; NOREÑA, 2001, p. 146-168.

32 Prol. 4, 2.4, 2.5 (x2), 3.3, 5.6, 5.8, 6.9, 6.20, 6.21, 7.7, 7.10 (x2), 7.12, 8.3, 9.2, 9.5, 9.8, 9.18, 9.19, 10.3, 10.5.

33 *LC* 2.5. Cf. *VC* 4. 29. 1, where Eusebius praises Constantine for seeking "to govern his subjects by appealing to their reason, and to secure in all respects a rational obedience to his authority". on Pseudo-Pythagorean, see: THESLEFF, 1965. More generally: HAHM, 2000, p. 457-476; VAN NUFFELEN, 2011; SWAIN, 2013.

34 *LC* 2.5: πάντα ῥύπον ἀθέου πλάνης τῆς κατὰ γῆν βασιλείας ἀποκαθηράμενος χορούς.

35 *LC* 2.5 (x2), 3.6, 6.21, 7.2, 7.6, 7.12 (x2), 9.8, 9.13, 10.5.

36 *LC* 3.6: ἀκριβῶς γὰρ ἄθεον τὸ πολυθεον.

37 For the importance of the cosmic relationship, see: VAN NUFFELEN, 2011, p. 112. Eusebius presented Constantine in this way in the *LC* 2.3: "Again, our common Universal Savior, by invisible and divine power, keeps the rebellious powers – all those who used to fly through the earth's air and infect men's souls – at a distance, just as a good shepherd keeps wild beasts from his flock. And His friend. armed against his enemies with standards from Him above, subdues and chastises the visible opponents of truth by the law of combat". At *SC* 16.6, he draws the same connection between the Savior and the Roman empire: "For while the power of Our Savior destroyed the polyarchy and polytheism of the demons and heralded the one kingdom of God to Greeks and barbarians and all men to the farthest extent of the earth, the Roman Empire, now that the causes of the manifold governments had been abolished, subdued the visible governments, in order to merge the entire race into one unity and concord".

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