

ROME'S ROLE IN IMPERIAL PROPAGANDA AND POLICY, 293-324 CE

ROMA, AUCTRIX IMPERII?

ROME'S ROLE IN IMPERIAL PROPAGANDA AND POLICY FROM 293 CE UNTIL 324
CE

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Abstract

By the early fourth century Rome was more than a thousand years old and the historical *caput mundi* was, accordingly, steeped in long established traditions. It was these historical traditions and memories that served as paradigms for understanding present circumstances. One such paradigm was the relationship between Rome and her emperors. Traditionally, monarchical power was the antithesis of the Roman Republican model, yet Augustus uniquely altered this model and established a new acceptable paradigm wherein the emperor was the *princeps civitatis* and the patron to all Romans. This imperial patronage was characterized primarily by the commissioning of public buildings in the *Urbs* and the maintenance of Rome's cults and traditions. Therefore, Rome was inextricably intertwined with the legitimacy, success (or failure), and longevity of an emperor's reign. Throughout the third century, however, Rome was plagued by manifold crises and the paradigmatic relationship between Rome and her rulers began to break down, such that some scholars have suggested that from 293 CE and the establishment of the tetrarchy Rome became increasingly manifest wherever the emperors were, with the city itself becoming nothing more than a peripheral concern. The former line of argumentation, however, is often advanced with the belief that Rome's diminishing importance was uninterrupted and invariable, often disregarding the evidence within the city itself and focusing on monumental evidence outside of Rome and across the empire. This thesis, then, by examining the evidence within the city of Rome and that pertaining to it, demonstrates that between 293 and 324 CE Rome's marginalization was anything but consistent and that the city, with all its symbolic and actual power, was integral to Maxentius' and Constantine's legitimization policies. Moreover, this thesis also elucidates how Rome functioned in imperial thought for each regime, with old paradigms becoming malleable to accommodate new imperial policy.

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Introduction

Throughout the first two centuries of Rome's imperial history, without exception, emperors resided in Rome and spent the majority of their time in the Eternal City. They engaged in a long standing system of patronage, wherein the emperor was the patron of all Romans and was lauded for his *liberalitas* and *munificentia* toward the *populus Romanus*. This generosity and munificence was characterized primarily by the commissioning of public buildings and the maintenance of Rome's cults and traditions. The formula was simple: by how much the better an emperor made Rome, that much the greater he would be perceived. Therefore, Rome was inextricably intertwined with the legitimacy, success (or failure), and longevity of an emperor's reign. This all changed in the third century. During this period, Rome, the erstwhile *caput mundi*, went through a process whereby the Eternal City gradually became a peripheral capital, no longer functioning as the seat of a resident emperor. In the midst of what has become known as the "third-century crisis" the empire witnessed a succession of emperors who, having been elevated by their army far off from Rome, sought to rule without reaffirmation from the Eternal City or its preeminent bodies of power. A corollary effect of this state of affairs was that few emperors saw as pertinent the traditional form of imperial munificence. As a result, Rome was thrust into major political, religious, demographic, and economic transformations, which became reflected in subsequent imperial policies and on the pavement of the city itself.

Between 284 and 305 CE Rome's diminution was, seemingly, exacerbated. The glut of usurpers which had marked the preceding period gave way to the rule of Diocletian. The recent internal instability and the constant external pressure forced him to institute major military, economic, and political reforms, perhaps most important of which was the establishment of the tetrarchy in 293 CE. With this quadruple division of the empire, economic and civil

administration and military conveyance were more easily achieved, while in the process the diminishing importance of Rome began to take hold. All the members of the tetrarchic college were born outside of Rome, they established their capitals in new imperial cities, and the senior Augustus did not lay eyes on the Eternal City for almost the full twenty years of his reign. The new arrangement caused Rome to be reduced to but one of many capitals; this was not unintentional. Diocletian envisioned a new imperial model for the tetrarchy, one predicated on *concordia* among the body of emperors (here on out referred to as the *concordia imperatorum*) and in implementing this new system of government Rome's individual power was superseded by empire wide unity, in which Rome was subsumed into a group of other imperial capitals. These other capitals, however, were lavished with imperial palaces and the consistent presence of the emperors, something Rome, so used to and now bereft of, lamented.¹ This particular pattern has taken hold of scholars of Late Antiquity, with its strongest proponent, Emanuel Mayer, advancing a model of Late Antique history based on Herodian's formula, "where the Emperor is, Rome is."²

Despite the concerted effort of the tetrarchy to nullify the power of the *Urbs*, they were ultimately unsuccessful. Rome still maintained symbolic power that would prove to be convertible into real power if harnessed correctly. This very reality was not lost on Rome and its *populus* as made evident in this panegyric delivered to Maximian in 307 CE,

"Rome herself even acted against the majesty of her own name when she demonstrated that she was able to command even emperors, She withdrew her own armies and returned them to you and when you had brought the authority of a private *princeps* to quiet their spirits, reaching out her hands to you as a suppliant or rather to complain she exclaimed: 'For how long, Maximian, will I endure myself to

¹ *Pan. Lat.* 11.12.1-2 & *Pan. Lat.* 10.14.5.

² Herodian 1.6.5. This view is advanced most prolifically by Mayer, E. *Rom ist dort, wo der Kaiser ist. Untersuchungen zu den Staatsdenkmälern des dezentralisierten Reiches von Diocletian bis zu Theodosius II.* Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums 53, 2002.

be battered, and you to remain quiet, for my liberty to be deprived...Before you ruled called by your brother, now rule again ordered by your mother.”³

Rome still recognized its ability to make emperors and in the years following 306 CE the tetrarchic belief that Rome was where the emperor resided was proven to be a fallacy. This thesis explores imperial propaganda relating to the city of Rome, manifest on coinage, stone, and on its very pavement in monumental architecture, between the periods of 293 CE and 324 CE in order to elucidate how space within the city and the city itself were manipulated to acquire and demonstrate power.

Recently, studies have been undertaken on the monumental topography of Rome under individual emperors in this very period. Elisha Dumser carried out a comprehensive examination of Maxentian architecture in a 2005 dissertation on the matter.⁴ In it, she pursues a thesis that calls for “a move beyond the *conservator urbis suae* interpretative paradigm” that she argues has taken hold of studies on Maxentius’ building in Rome. In her attempt to achieve this, she offers the first extended study of the three Maxentian buildings on the Velia, furnishing a comprehensive analysis of each buildings’ architecture. She seeks answers to questions pertaining to each of these buildings’ patron, original design, and function, primarily to achieve a better understanding of the structures in their own right. In answering her call, however, she concludes that from a study of each of the buildings’ architecture and urban setting, claims of a unified ideological program need to be curtailed and instead need to be considered as a single potentiality in the vast body of narratives generated by the Velian structures. In a dissertation

³ Pan. Lat. 7.10.5-11.4, “Fecit enim Roma ipsa pro maiestate nominis sui ut ostenderet posse se etiam imperatoribus imperare. Abduxit exercitus suos ac tibi reddidit et, cum ad sedandos animos auctoritatem privati principis attulisses, supplices tibi manus tendens vel potius queribunda clamavit: ‘Quousque hoc, Maximiane, patiar me quati, te quiescere; mihi libertatem adimi, te usurpare tibi illicitam missionem?...Imperasti pridem rogatus a fratre, rursus impera issus a matre.’”

⁴ Dumser, E. *The Architecture of Maxentius: A Study in Architectural Design and Urban Planning Early Fourth- Century Rome*, PhD Diss. 2005

published a year prior to Dumser's, Elizabeth Marlowe examined public image on coins, monuments, and portraits in an attempt to better understand power relations and consensus in Constantinian Rome.⁵ She argued that Constantine's monumental contributions to the *Urbs* should be understood within a framework of negotiation between local and imperial models of authority and that the monuments themselves, such as the Arch of Constantine, were not altogether familiar to Rome as they recalled honorific dedications such as the like found in provincial cities. In advancing her thesis, she supports Mayer's argument that advocates for the interpretation of Rome's transferability. Although she acknowledges Maxentius and the tetrarchy before him, the breadth of her work is dedicated to Constantine and examines the transition of Rome into a provincial capital as evidenced in the city's own architecture.

Also included in this body of recent work on this particular epoch are the historical studies of Mats Cullhed and John Curran.⁶ Cullhed's study represents the best interpretive account of Maxentian Rome. He advocates for the paradigm which spurred Dumser's call for a more extended study on Maxentius' building programme. Through numismatic, textual, and architectural analyses, Cullhed establishes Maxentius as a legitimate and independent ruler who manipulated Rome by propagating his *romanitas*. His work serves as the first riposte to the general opinion of modern contemporary sources that Maxentius was a usurper and aspiring tetrarch. Curran, on the other hand, provides a synthetic account of fourth-century Rome in seeking to identify and chart the major topographic, social, and religious change that contributed to the Christianization of Rome. He gives considerable space to Constantinian architecture, being

⁵ Marlowe, E. *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome*, PhD Diss. 2004.

⁶ Cullhed, M *Conservator Urbis Suae, Studies in the Politics and Propaganda of the Emperor Maxentius*, 1994; Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital, Rome in the Fourth Century*, 2000.

the first scholar to recognize the propagandistic value of Constantine's architectural programme in erasing Maxentius' memory.

From consultation of just these recent works, a number of questions arise about the period from 293 until 324 CE: What was the propagandistic value of Rome to the tetrarchy and, subsequently, to Maxentius and Constantine? Was the pavement in the *Forum Romanum* and on the streets of the *Urbs* actually exploited to help facilitate these emperors' policies? And if so, how? How did each emperor respond to the policies, which were more or less inherently contradictory, of the previous emperor(s)? And, ultimately, does the evidence of public imperial image on coins, monuments, stone, and in panegyric really support the thesis that the tetrarchy succeeded in implementing an irreversible process that irrefutably established Rome as a peripheral capital?

It is this thesis' aim, then, to examine these questions and seek answers to them. This work represents the first synthesis of the period in question that charts change and development in the city of Rome with these particular goals in mind. The chief goal of this work, then, will be seen to demonstrate the primary position that Rome still possessed even when the nature of the empire had completely changed.

The thesis begins with an examination of the tetrarchic period as an understanding of the political position of Rome in this period dictates all subsequent imperial intervention and interaction with the city until the death of Constantine. It will be argued that the tetrarchs attempted to reduce Rome into a peripheral capital in three ways: by residing in new frontier imperial capitals, by initiating a policy of empire wide unity and *concordia*, and by creating a new ecumenical view of *romanitas*, a virtue intrinsically tied to the city itself. With this new, co-ordinated imperial system Rome's superiority was suppressed by the person of the emperor,

making new cities, wherever an emperor was present, equally or more influential. Chapter two then elucidates how misguided the tetrarchs were in their disregard of Rome's supremacy. The reign of Maxentius will be examined to elucidate that simply by controlling Rome he was able to persist as a "legitimate" ruler for six years. It will be seen that Maxentius achieved this through architecture and coinage, fashioning himself the "*conservator urbis suae*" and manipulating the hearts of the *populus Romanus* with appeals to *romanitas* and the *mos maiorum*. Maxentius began an extensive building program in the city's heart and expanded his architectural ambitions to almost every corner of the city and beyond, forever altering the topography of the Eternal City and, by doing so, harkening back to the golden age of the empire when Rome was the imperial seat with a resident emperor.

The final chapter follows Maxentius' legacy, or rather Constantine's reaction to it and the role Rome played in its attempted erasure. Constantine fashioned Maxentius as a tyrant and himself as the "*liberator urbis suae*." This process is reflected in the numismatic record, the epigraphic record, the literary record and, most importantly, in the architectural and topographical record of the city of Rome. Constantine was aware where the tetrarchy failed and Maxentius had succeeded, thus, this chapter will also demonstrate how Constantine adeptly manipulated the pride of the *Urbs*. Although he too was consistently absent, Rome's potential to make emperors was harnessed by Constantine as he continued to act as her benefactor in a traditional manner almost up until his death. Ultimately, in examining imperial policy in regard to Rome from 293 CE through to the reign of Constantine it is argued that Rome consistently possessed the power to create emperors even in the fractured Late Antique empire and this power needed to be harnessed in order to quell it. It will be shown that the only way to harness this

power was through traditional forms of imperial munificence that appealed to the *mos maiorum* and Rome's perseverance.

Chapter One:

Rome on the Periphery: Tetrarchic Representation and Ideology

Introduction

The city of Rome was, for nearly the entire period of Roman history, considered the *caput mundi*—the head of the world.⁷ Yet, throughout the third and into the early fourth century CE, Rome underwent a process whereby the Eternal City gradually became a peripheral capital, no longer functioning as the seat of a resident emperor. Rome, therefore, was thrust into major political, religious, demographic, and economic transformations, which became reflected in the topography of the city. Yet, even in the midst of the third-century crisis,⁸ emperors still sought legitimization from Rome. Some, like Aurelian, even resided in the city for short periods and initiated public works, but the criteria for an emperor changed and the demand of constant invasion and usurpation forced emperors away from Rome, traversing the empire to defend its boundaries. This constant external pressure exacerbated the process of Rome's diminution, as with the creation of tetrarchy capitals were made outside of Rome in the strategic and preferred locations of Nicomedia, Trier, Milan and Thessalonica. Moreover, the Senate, the Praetorian Guard, and Rome were no longer the deciding body as to who would wear the imperial purple; this now lay vested in the army.

⁷ That this was Rome's perceived position from its foundation is evidenced in Liv. 1.55.6, where he retells of the foundation of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline stating, "*quae visa species haud per ambages arcem eam imperii caputque rerum fore portendebat...*" ("this sight when seen unambiguously foretold that this citadel would be the head of the empire and of the world"). That this belief was held until the 3rd century CE may be suggested as when Septimius Severus constructed his arch he also placed the *Umbilicus Urbis Romae* in the *Forum Romanum* demarcating it as the center of the world.

⁸ This crisis was, namely, a crisis of emperor and army, brought on by military emergencies: the rise of Sassanid Persia and the German coalitions across the Rhine and Danube. The military crisis was exacerbated by economic and social crisis, however, these demographic changes are harder to chart given the paucity of evidence during this period. Yet, it can be said, without overstating their effect, that coinage debasement, inflation, and depopulation had some impact. The empire was no longer sustainable and as greater pressures were exerted upon it from external enemies, internally it began to collapse.

Initiated in 235 CE with the murder of Severus Alexander, the period from 235 until 284 CE saw no fewer than twenty emperors and began a period that witnessed the slow decrease in the city of Rome's importance.⁹ Maximinus Thrax was the first soldier, not yet a Senator, to be declared emperor by the soldiery. He was elevated to emperor by the soldiers of the Pannonian legions, reigning for three years and never seeking legitimization of his position from Rome.¹⁰ Such began a pattern that saw the majority of the third-century emperors elevated by their army far off from Rome and ruling without reaffirmation from Rome, the Senate, or the Praetorian Guard.¹¹ A corollary effect of this state of affairs was that few emperors saw as pertinent the traditional form of imperial munificence with Rome being considered less and less the *auctrix* of their *imperium*. Some emperors, however, attempted to prove the exception. In 248 CE Philip celebrated the one thousandth birthday of Rome with spectacular secular games. His lasting imprint on the topography of the city, however, was minimal. His successor, Decius, was slightly more ambitious. He built and dedicated a bath complex on the Aventine that proved to be largest and, perhaps, the only imperial building in Rome until 270 CE.¹² At this time Aurelian came to be emperor, and under him the city of Rome received more attention than under any previous emperor since the Severan dynasty. Between constant outbreaks of war Aurelian managed to return to Rome, residing there and adorning the city with lasting displays of his *imperium*. He dedicated a temple to Sol in the Campus Martius located east of the modern Via del Corso across

⁹These include: Maximinus Thrax (235-238), Gordian I, Gordian II, Balbinus, and Pupienus all in 238, Gordian III 238-244, Philippus "the Arab" 244-249, Decius 249-251, Trebonianus Gallus and Volusianus 251-253, Aemelianus 253, Valerian 253-260, Gallienus 253-268, Claudius II "Gothicus" 268-270, Aurelian 270-275, Tacitus 275-276, Probus 276-282, Carus 282-283, Carinus 283-285, Numerian 283-284.

¹⁰ SHA, *Max. Duo*, 8.1.

¹¹ Notable exceptions include Balbinus, Pupienus, and Gordian III who were all elevated by the Praetorian Guard.

¹² Aur. Vic. *De Caes.* 28.1. Philip also commemorated his achievements on coinage. For Decius' baths see *Chron.* 354, 147M.

the ancient Via Lata from a veritable treasure trove of Augustan monuments.¹³ More impactful, however, on Rome, its topography and psyche, and more illuminating of the vicissitudes of the time was his construction of massive fortification walls. After suffering a defeat in Placentia at the hands of a coalition of German tribes making incursions into northern Italy, Aurelian turned to securing Rome.¹⁴ He enclosed the city with a thirteen mile circuit of walls, the effect of which was best stated by Curran. He writes:

“It is difficult to exaggerate the physical and psychological impact of the wall of Aurelian...the city of Rome which had not looked to its own defence on such a scale in over seven hundred years now took on the aspect of a frontier settlement, a vulnerable community in an insecure countryside.”

It speaks volumes that the wall of Aurelian was the most lasting and significant contribution to the topography of Rome after the Severans and before the tetrarchs; it indicated that the city of Rome, along with the empire, had suffered significantly throughout the third century. The constant state of flux that characterized the Roman Empire throughout the third century and allowed for the continuous proclamations and usurpations of new emperors put Rome in a precarious position. Rome was now more akin to a frontier city, and would never fully recover even though the empire found stabilization with the accession of Diocletian and the tetrarchy.

In November 284 CE, Numerian, then emperor, died mysteriously and on the 20th of the same month the army elevated Diocles, the commander of the bodyguard, as emperor.¹⁵ By spring 285 Diocles, having changed his name to Diocletianus, had become the sole ruler of the empire and, in 286 CE, Diocletian made his loyal comrade, Maximian, his ruling partner. Such an arrangement was not unattested in the historical record, yet, it is the decision made on March

¹³ SHA, *Aur.* 25.6.

¹⁴ SHA, *Aur.* 21.1; *Aur. Vic. Epit.* 35.2.

¹⁵ On Diocletian's accession see, Lac. *DMP* 17.1; For modern sources and discussion see Corcoran, S. *The Empire of the Tetrarchs* (1996); “Before Constantine,” in *the Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, 43 (2006); Barnes, T. *Constantine: Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire*, 46-60 (2011).

1, 293 CE that should be seen as innovative and, consequently, dictated all political manoeuvrings of the pre-Constantinian period. On this day, Diocletian appointed two more rulers with the lesser rank of Caesar, Galerius and Constantius; they were to serve under each Augustus and, inevitably, would succeed them. With this, the tetrarchy was born.¹⁶

Between 293 and 305 major military, economic, and political reforms were undertaken and, most importantly, Rome was reduced to but one of many capitals. Diocletian recognized that military surveillance and conveyance, and economic and civil administration would be better accomplished through this quadruple division by eliminating the *caput mundi* as a residence and establishing multiple imperial cities closer to the boundaries of the empire. For this reason he made his capital in Nicomedia, Maximian made his in Milan, Galerius in Thessalonica, and Constantius in Trier, while Antioch, Arles, and Sirmium all also gained importance, furnishing imperial residences of their own. In fact, Diocletian did not visit Rome until November 303 CE for the celebration of the tetrarchy's *decennalia*,¹⁷ and even this visit was short lived.¹⁸ The diminished importance of Rome was no secret; all the members of the tetrarchic college were born outside of Rome, they established their capitals in new imperial cities, and the senior Augustus did not lay eyes on the Eternal City for almost the full twenty years of his reign. In fact, according to Lactantius, Galerius, Diocletian's Caesar, went as far as desiring that the empire no longer be called Roman, but Dacian.¹⁹ With Rome a peripheral concern the tetrarchs

¹⁶ For the tetrarchy, its creation and administration see Corcoran, S. *The Empire of the Tetrarchs* (1996); "Before Constantine," in the *Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, 43 (2006); Barnes, T.D. *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (1982). For the accession of Galerius and Constantius see Lac. *DMP* 35.4.

¹⁷ Van Dam, *The Roman Revolution of Constantine*, 40. He notes that after defeating Carinus in 285 CE it was likely that Diocletian visited Rome. However, such a possibility is tenuous and, therefore, it is best to accept that 303 CE was Diocletian's first visit to the city.

¹⁸ See Lac. *DMP* 17.2-3. It seems that not able to endure the *libertas* of the *populus Romanus*, he departed, promptly arriving in Ravenna in January 304.

¹⁹ Lac. *DMP* 27. 8, "*cuius titulum immutari volebat, ut non Romanum imperium, sed Dacicum cognominaretur.*" On the problem of using Lactantius as a credible source on the character of the tetrarchs see Cullhed, M. *Conservator Urbis Suae*, 19-23.

established a new system of government grounded in the ideology of unity and *concordia*. The tetrarchs stressed the *concordia imperatorum*, something that was more of an ideal than reality since they were rarely in one another's company.²⁰ Through their ruling ideology and as a result of the sociopolitical conditions of the empire, the tetrarchs created a new empire, one characterized by collegiality and unity among the rulers and, conversely, by separation of the emperors from the *populus* on account of their divine associations. In this new empire Rome was given a new position, reduced from the once magnificent seat of the empire into a peripheral concern. This new order is discernible in the archaeological record as new artistic forms demonstrate the unity of the emperors, while new motifs allude to Rome's diminished position.

Unity of the Tetrarchy and of the Empire: Artistic Representations of Rome and the Imperial College 293-305 C.E.

The Imperial College 293-305 C.E.

An important aspect of tetrarchic governing policy was *concordia*, and the tetrarchy went to great lengths to portray this in art and architecture. This is best displayed in the famous tetrarchic porphyry groups in Venice and the Vatican (fig.1a & b). Both groups depict the emperors embracing in pairs with their right arms extended to reach the left shoulder of their partner. Differentiation in appearance is hardly discernible, as each are depicted with a similar countenance and style. It is this feature, coined *similitudo*, that is a defining characteristic of tetrarchic art since it stresses the importance of the college and not of individual members,

²⁰ The phrase "*concordia imperatorum*" appears as a modern construct used by historians and art historians in relation to tetrarchic art and policy. However, the concept of *concordia* among the emperors was strongly propagated in antiquity. In Mamertinus' *Pan. Lat.* 10.11.1 -3 to Maximian he explicitly acknowledges the *concordia* between Maximian and Diocletian and the concept *concordia imperatorum* is all but explicitly stated, "Your concord does this...for you rule the state with one mind...governing, as if with your right hands joined." Moreover, the phrase *Multiiugum imperium*, literally "the many yoked command," is present at *Pan. Lat.* 6. 15.5, and elucidates the importance of tetrarchic collegiality.

therefore, illustrating the ideal of *concordia imperatorum*.²¹ Consequently, modern attempts to identify individual emperors within tetrarchic art are problematic and, often, when identifications are made, they are tenuous at best.²² Moreover, attempts to identify the individual emperors may unnecessarily challenge the tetrarchic ideology. *Similitudo* was fundamental in establishing a concept of unity and harmony, and the tetrarchs went to great lengths to visually represent this *concordia imperatorum*, being frequently represented as an imperial college, indistinguishable from one another.

Beyond the aforementioned famous porphyry groups, a programme of frescoes datable to 300 CE found in a room in the temple of Ammon at Luxor, which only survive to us in the form of J.G. Wilkinson's nineteenth century sketches, depict the ruling body of the tetrarchy together (fig. 2). Directly across from the entrance and in the center of the south wall an apse flanked by two Corinthian columns dominates the room.²³ A fresco of four figures, depicted in full length, nimbate, and adorned in the imperial purple is painted in the apse. The two central figures are slightly larger than those that flank them and they each hold an *orbis* in their left hands. The central figure to the left also holds a sceptre in his right hand; this has led to the identification of the group as the first tetrarchic college with the two central figures identified as the *Augusti*, Diocletian and Maximian, and those as flanking as the *Caesares*, Galerius and Constantius. It has been suggested that due to his possession of a sceptre, the left central figure is the senior

²¹ For discussion on *similitudo* see Rees, "Images and Image: A Re-Examination of Tetrarchic Iconography," *Greece & Rome* Vol. 40, 2 (1993), 181-200 and Smith, R.R.R. "The Public Image of Licinius I: Portrait Sculpture and Imperial Ideology in the Early Fourth Century," *JRS* 87 (1997), 170-202.

²² Despite this, the identification of the group from Constantinople, now residing in Venice, is generally accepted as Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius and Constantius, While Berenson (plates 60 & 61) cites the two pairs in the Vatican as Diocletian and Maximian and Galerius and Constantius respectively.

²³ For discussions on the room, its frescoes and function, see Elsner, *J Art and the Roman Viewer* (1995), 173-176. Monneret de Villard, "The Temple of the Imperial Cult at Luxor," *Archaeologia* 95 (1953), 85-105; Deckers, J.G. "Die Wandmalerei des tetrarchischen Lagerheiligtums im Ammon-Tempel von Luxor," *Römische Quartalschrift* 68 (1973), 1-34; Kalareizou-Maxeiner, I. "The Imperial Chamber at Luxor," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 29 (1975), 225-251. Both Monneret and Decker agree that the room functioned as a cult-room, but Maxeiner sees the room as an imperial reception hall for when Diocletian was in Egypt in the 290s and interprets the frescoes as an *adventus* scene, following the Greek tradition of *komasiai*.

Augustus, Diocletian.²⁴ To the left of this central apse there is a fresco that depicts two enthroned individuals seated atop a podium, the identification of these men is slightly more difficult. Rees argues that the individual to the left is Diocletian, since he is noticeably larger than his seated comrade, and suggests that the smaller of the two could be either Maximian or Galerius.²⁵ According to principles of symmetry and aesthetic, Elsner posits that this image may have been repeated on the right side;²⁶ if this is the case then the identification of the second individual on the left side may prove inconsequential, as the remaining two tetrarchs would be depicted on the replicated side. Moreover, the homogeneity of such a compositional arrangement would complement the image in the central apse of the four tetrarchs and strengthen the tetrarchic ideology of *concordia*, something which was already established by the presence of the fresco in the central apse.²⁷

The *concordia imperatorum*, which was the basis of the tetrarchic system, is manifest at Luxor in a second location. Excavations in the early 1900s turned up four statue bases, likely supporting columns,²⁸ in a tetrastyle arrangement at the junction of a north-south road leading to the northern entrance of the Roman *castrum*, which was built there, and an east-west road that ran into the courtyard of Ramses II, which precedes the entrance halls into the temple of Ammon (fig. 3). Latin inscriptions were identified on each base, two dedicated to the *Caesares* and two to the *Augusti*.²⁹ Though the honorands are not preserved, a possible date and identification for the

²⁴ Rees, "Images and Image," 187.

²⁵ Rees, "Images and Image," 186.

²⁶ Elsner, J. *Art and the Roman Viewer*, 173.

²⁷ Rees, "Images and Image," 183. He argues that the notion of *concordia imperatorum* is further strengthened by the fact that the room is in a temple in Egypt, a province of Diocletian, and, therefore, the presence of the entire college speaks to the intent of representing all the emperors together.

²⁸ Maxiener, "The Imperial Chamber at Luxor," 228. He reports that the excavation records note that fragments of columns with incised laurel wreaths and fragments of acanthus capitals were found in close proximity.

²⁹ *AE* 1934, 9, --- / *nobilissimum Caesarem / pont(ificem) max(imum), trib(unicia) pot(estate) X, co(n)s(ulem) III / Aurel(ius) Reginus v(ir) p(er)fectissimus praes(es) provinc(iae) / Thebaid(os) n(umini) m(aiestati)q(ue) eius semper / dicatissimus*. Lacau, P., "Inscriptions latines du temple de Louxor," *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 34, 1934, 17-46, 29-33 fig. 9 no. C, [---] / [-- *Ca*]e[sarem --] / [--] *pot(estate)* [--

tetrastyle dedications can be extrapolated from *AE* 1934, 9. It states that the dedicator, Aurelius Reginus, *praeses* of the province of Thebais,³⁰ erected the monument for the noblest Caesar, *nobilissimum Caesarem*, who had *tribunicia potestas* for the tenth time and had been consul three times.³¹ Based on the iteration of the *tribunica potestas* the monument is datable to 302 CE, and the honorand must be Constantius I or Galerius. This would mean that the four bases each supported a column with a statue, one for each of the tetrarchs. This, when coupled with the fresco programme in the inner chamber, demonstrates the collegiality and *concordia* between the emperors, a message they intended to propagate.

Monuments of similar nature to the tetrastyle columns at Luxor were found all over the empire. At Diocletian's palace in Spilt the *concordia imperatorum* was likely displayed on the *Porta Aurea*. Here, four statues bases, one for each emperor and possibly a fifth for Jupiter, Diocletian's patron deity, sat on top of the gate.³² At Ephesus three statue bases with inscriptions to three members of the first tetrarchic college, Diocletian, Galerius, and Constantius I, were found together in front of the temple of Artemis. A fourth, bearing an inscription with Theodosius as the honorand, was also found. It has been suggested that this base must have been set up for Maximian and eventually appropriated by Theodosius since Maximian had suffered

[, / *Aur(elius) R[e]ginus, v(ir) p(erfectissimus), praes(es) prov(inciae) / Theb(aidos), n(umini) m(aiestati)q(ue) eius semper / dicatissimus*. Lacau, P., "Inscriptions latines du temple de Louxor," fig. 10 no. B, [---] / [---] / [---] / [*Aur]el(ius) Reginus v(ir) p(erfectissimus) [praes](es) pro[v](inciae) / (5) [-- ei]u[s--] / [dicatiss]im[us]*.

³⁰ *PLRE* I, 762, Aurel. Reginus.

³¹ *AE* 1934, 9.

³² Pond-Rothman, "Thematic Organization of the Panel Relief on the Arch of Galerius" *AJA* 81 (1977), 429, n. 9. She suggests a similar presence of the tetrarchs' effigies on the facade of the Arch of Galerius, citing the *Porta Aurea* as an example. McNalley, S., *The Architectural Ornament of Diocletian's Palace in Spilt* (1996), 25. She notes that there are four pedestals above the gate that are now bricked in by a modern wall. She indicates that these pedestals may be out of original alignment and that from this, Kähler has suggested that there had originally been five pedestals, not four. Ready *comparanda* are found at Rome, where the four emperors are depicted with Jupiter at the center. Although McNalley does not outright reject this arrangement, she is reluctant to confirm this reconstruction or posit her own due to the lack of substantive evidence. She does, however, concede that there must have been some free standing sculpture on the gate,

damnatio memoriae.³³ But none of these are more conspicuous than the five-column monument at Rome.

Built in 303 CE for Diocletian's *vicennalia* and the tetrarchy's *decennalia*, the five column monument is known to us from a relief panel on the arch on Constantine, first identified by L'Orange (fig. 4). On the north face of the arch, directly above the lateral passageway on the left pier an *adlocutio* is depicted on the frieze. In it, Constantine stands on the rostra in the *Forum Romanum* and addresses the *populus Romanus*, five columns are visible towering beyond him. Four of columns supported one statue for each of the tetrarchs and the fifth, the one in the middle, supported an image of Juppiter.³⁴ In 1547 a base was found near to the arch of Septimius Severus with *Caesarum/Decennalia/Feliciter* inscribed on a *clipeus* flanked by two winged-victories on the base's front (fig. 5).³⁵ L'Orange identified this base as one belonging to the five-column monument of the tetrarchy originally set up on or behind the Augustan rostra and visible on the frieze from the arch of Constantine.³⁶ Closer inspection of the frieze reveals the same *similitudo* in the appearance of the effigies that once stood on top of the columns as is found in the famous porphyry groups. Each emperor is clad in a classical toga and holds a sceptre in the right hand. This monument, with all the emperors represented together as a college and indistinguishable by means of physiognomy and style, underlines the concept of *concordia*

³³ Bauer, F.A. *Stadt, Platz und Denkmal in der Spätantike* (1996), 424.

³⁴ L'Orange, "Ein tetrarchisches Ehrendenkmal auf dem Forum Romanum," in *Likeness and Icon* (1973), 153.

³⁵ *CIL* VI, 1203. For a comprehensive discussion on the iconography of the relief sculpture on all sides of the base see L'Orange, "Ein tetrarchisches Ehrendenkmal auf dem Forum Romanum," in *Likeness and Icon* (1973), 131-157.

³⁶ Maxeiner (1975) follows a theory put forth by Kähler (1964) that the five-column monument's position beyond the rostra was intentional not only for its conspicuous placement, but also because of the close spatial proximity to the Temple of Concordia. Although this was highly conjectural, it was appealing as such an association would strengthen the ideal message of *concordia imperatorum*. More recent archaeological work in the Forum shows that the five column monument was, in fact, set up on the back on the rostra itself and was part of an entire restructuring of the Augustan rostra and *Forum Romanum* (see discussion below on tetrarchic building in Rome).

among the emperors and, being in the most conspicuous place in the Eternal City, was an omnipresent reminder of the tetrarchy's governance.

The numismatic record, after Diocletian's monetary reform, reflects the basis of tetrarchic ideology, as the concept of *concordia imperatorum* is highly discernible. Sundry arguments on the date of this reform have been proposed with Sutherland's hypothesis that the reform occurred in 294 CE most suitable.³⁷ In this year or shortly after, three mints were opened that previously did not exist: Aquileia in the west and Nicomedia and Thessalonica in the East.³⁸ A survey of the gold and silver coinage issued between 294 and 305 CE from these mints, and that at Trier,³⁹ provides confirmation that supports the vigorous presentation of *concordia imperatorum* by the tetrarchs.⁴⁰

At Trier, a mint which was established likely just before the reform of 294 CE, an early issue of *aurei* were minted with the legend DIOCLETIANVS AVG ET MAXIMIANVS C with two busts, both laureate and wearing the imperial mantle, one facing left and the other facing to the right, on the obverse (fig. 6). The same portraits were on the reverse with the alternative legend MAXIMIANVS AVG ET CONSTANTIVS C. All four busts on this issue lack any distinguishing features and, thus, emphasize the concept of *similitudo* that is highly conspicuous in many tetrarchic statue groups. This issue was followed with issues of *aurei* that bear the reverse legends CONSERVATORES AVGG ET CAESS NN and IOVI CONSERVAT AVGG ET CAESS NN issued for each of the tetrarchs. Sutherland argues that these types are included in a group of "tetrarchic types" that appear frequently across the empire.⁴¹ This set of *aurei*, with the inclusion of "tetrarchic types" and the representation of all four emperors together support

³⁷ For a full, and convincing, discussion on the reform and its date see *RIC* VI.

³⁸ *RIC* VI, 6.

³⁹ As with Trier's inclusion the survey will evaluate one mint in each of the tetrarchs' domain.

⁴⁰ Due to the predominant appearance of the legend GENIO POPULI ROMANI on the *aes* issues for this period, they will be explored in a subsequent section.

⁴¹ *RIC* VI, 56.

the established ideology of *concordia imperatorum* quite aptly. The silver coinage from Trier is no different and, in fact, only strengthens such an evaluation. On the silver coinage from Trier a specific reverse type dominates the majority of issues; all four emperors are depicted making a sacrifice over a tripod before a six or eight turreted gate (fig. 7). This type was issued for all four emperors and was accompanied interchangeably by the two legends: VIRTVS MILITVM and VICTORIA SARMAT. Aside from a series of *vota* issues in 303 for the *decennalia* and *vicennalia*, the representation of all four emperors making a sacrifice dominates the silver coinage from Trier. This depiction of religious unity and harmony serves to strengthen the established tetrarchic ideology and make such a message difficult to refute.

Still in the west, gold coinage from Aquileia is imbued with similar concepts. A series of *aurei* were issued for both Diocletian and Maximian with the reverse legend CONCORDIA AVGG ET CAESS NNNN. Concordia is depicted on the reverse seated facing left and holding a *patera* and *cornucopia* in her right and left hand, respectively. With this, no longer was the tetrarchic ideology only discernible but it was made explicit through the legend and type. This was accompanied by issues of the standard IOVI CONSERVATORI “tetrarchic type” and a new reverse type featuring the dioscursi, the Roman paradigm of brotherly harmony, accompanied by the legend COMITES AVGG ET CAESS NNNN. Silver was less abundant, nevertheless, it was issued for all four members of the tetrarchic college. As a whole, the coinage from Aquileia vigorously presents the tetrarchy as a harmonious college, and enforces it with similar propagandistic features as found on coinage from Trier.

In the east, many of the messages remain consistent. Gold minted and issued from Thessalonica keeps, predominately, to the “tetrarchic type” of IOVI CONSERVATORI, however, issued only for Diocletian. Whereas at Nicomedia, the IOVI CONSERVATORI type is

still dominant on *aurei*, yet issues were struck for all four tetrarchs. In silver coinage, legends similar to those from Trier and Aquileia of VIRTVS (VIRTVTI) MILITVM and VICTORIAE SAMATICAЕ, a variation of the western VICTORIA SARMAT, appear on issues from both Thessalonica and Nicomedia for all emperors. From the latter, the reverse type with the four emperors sacrificing over a tripod before a six-turreted gate accompanies both legends. While at the former, a four-turreted camp gate with its doors flung open and no emperors is substituted as the reverse type, but the legend CONCORDIA MILITVM is added to the issues. In the east, it appears that types become less diverse and more homogeneity is discernible in the distribution of accompanying legends. Yet the consistent appearance of the aforementioned “tetrarchic types”, actually in more regularity than in the west and issued for all emperors, supports the notion of *concordia imperatorum* that the tetrarchs sought to propagate.

In sum, the extant artistic and architectural record from the establishment of the first tetrarchy, in 293 CE, until Diocletian's and Maximian's abdication, in 305 CE, strongly supports the notion that unity and *concordia* were paramount in the new tetrarchic system of government. In most artistic and architectural undertakings of the period the emperors were displayed together as a college, while individual portraiture is only tenuously identifiable as one tetrarch or another. Both aspects, consistent group representation and lack of a defining physiognomy, support the hypothesis that the *concordia imperatorum* was a defining and important characteristic of the tetrarchic period. This is discernible in the numismatic record as well. Coinage was issued with standard “tetrarchic types” empire wide that reflected the artistic standards of the period with emperors depicted together, as in the case of the imperial college sacrifice reverse type, and when portraiture was juxtaposed individual physiognomy was indistinguishable, such as on the issue of gold *aurei* from Trier. Diocletian and the tetrarchy worked hard to vigorously represent

themselves in this manner and, consequently, this becomes of paramount importance when discussing Maxentian policy post-305 CE as he makes conspicuous breaks from this propagandistic artistic and architectural program. But before this is discussed, it will be of service to examine the visual representation of Rome's position during the tetrarchic period.

Artistic Representations of Rome 293-305 CE

In 1960, J.P. Callu carried out an examination of the *Genio Populi Romani* type in the numismatic record between 295 and 316 CE. He came to the conclusion that during the tetrarchic period the *Genius Populi Romani* was used to depict the ecumenical nature of the reformed Roman Empire.⁴² No longer was the *Genius Populi Romani* reserved alone for the city of Rome but instead was applied broadly to the entire empire, signifying the harmony of all Roman people, or rather citizens,⁴³ under the rule of the tetrarchy. A survey of the *aes* coinage issued between 294 and 305 from all the mints across the empire effectively demonstrates this. Most notably, Lyon and Londinium in the west and Serdica, Thessalonica, Nicomedia in the east, without exception, only issued *aes* coinage with the reverse legend GENIO POPVLI ROMANI. The legend was invariably accompanied by the reverse type of the Genius facing left with a *modius* on his head, holding a *patera* in his right hand and a *cornucopia* in his left (fig. 8). At Aquileia the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI reverse legend and type is the only *aes* coinage issued until the appearance of the reverse legend SACRA MONET AVGG ET CAESS NOSTR, which must coincide with the passing of Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices in 301 CE. At Ticinum, Siscia, Heraclea, Cyzicus, Antioch, and Alexandria, the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI type was occasionally accompanied by equally homogeneous types such as: CONCORDIA MILTVM and

⁴² Callu, J.P., *Genio Populi Romani, contribution a une histoire numismatique de la tétrarchie*, 1960. In particular see pg. 85 where he states, "...Augustus Maximus reprend le vieux thème de l'oecuménicité du monde romain incarné par le genius."

⁴³ With the passing of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* in 212 CE by M. Aurelius Antoninus Caracalla all inhabitants of the Roman Empire received citizenship.

VTILITAS PVBLICA. Even with these additional types, before it was usurped by the SACRA MONET AVGG ET CAESS NOSTR legend of 301 CE, it comprised approximately 72% of all known *aes* coinage issued from these mints between 294 and 301 CE.⁴⁴ At Rome and Carthage the picture is slightly different. The latter is the only mint not to issue any *aes* coinage with the legend GENIO POPVLI ROMANI, while at Rome the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI type was still predominant but it was accompanied by a greater variation of issues with alternative legends and types. The evidence from this survey is quite convincing, it suggests that Callu was not erring in attributing a new “ecumenical” significance to the *Genius Populi Romani*. The consistency with which it was minted and the homogeneity in its type all across the empire suggest that the tetrarchic view of *romanitas* was no longer best characterized by the Eternal City itself.

Romanitas as a virtue was inherently yoked to the city of Rome and, thus, the city was integral to its growth and perpetuation.⁴⁵ But this new ecumenical view of *romanitas*, alone, does not fully demonstrate the extent of Rome's diminution. More striking evidence to the position of the city itself is also evident in the numismatic record and may be best observed through a conspicuous absence. Of all coinage minted across the empire between 294 and 305 CE *Dea Roma* does not appear on a single issue, not as an obverse or reverse type, nor is any explicit mention made of Roma in a legend. At first this would seem inconsequential; however, since Roma embodied the ideal of the city as ruler and, previously, it was regular, if not expected, to

⁴⁴ 257 series of *aes* coinage were issued, of which only 71 were not struck with the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI type.

⁴⁵ Cullhed (pg. 45-46) writes, “it signifies devotion, both the *urbs Roma* or the *Dea Roma* and the wider complex of ideas surrounding the *renovatio imperii*, the rebirth of the glory and power of Rome... *romanitas* in this sense can be traced back to Augustus. It received fresh attention during the reign of Hadrian...the idea was associated with *Roma Aeterna*, the *urbs sacra*.” Cullhed's description is a modern interpretation of *Romanitas*, as the word, itself, only appears once in the extant record in Tertullian's *De Pallio* 4.1, where it is satirical in nature. However, in the previous section (3.7.3) Marcus Porcius Cato is used in the same satirical way to demonstrate the Romans' adoption of Greek culture. Therefore, just as Cato was the paradigm for the *mos maiorum*, in Tertullian, *Romanitas* can be understood as a particularly Roman “virtue.”

mint coins that included *Dea Roma* as a type,⁴⁶ her complete absence on post-reform tetrarchic coinage is all the more conspicuous and helps to demonstrate the declining importance of Roma as a protectress of the empire and its emperors.

An equally telling example of Rome's new position in the empire is evident on the Arch of Galerius in Thessalonica. The extant sculptural programme on this arch is the most extensive sculptural record of the tetrarchic era preserved for posterity. It was dedicated in 303 CE to celebrate the victory of Galerius, and thus the entire tetrarchy, over Narses and the Sassanid Persians.⁴⁷ Originally, an octopyle triumphal arch, all that remains now is two major piers on the north-east side, facing towards Galerius' palace, and a third lateral pier on the same facade. The two major piers are covered in relief panels, the majority of which are severely abraded. As a whole, the reliefs commemorate and represent Galerius' Persian campaign, yet of more importance for our purpose, Roma is depicted in two places.

First, on the east face of the south pier a delegation is depicted being received by Galerius. Rothman suggests that this panel records the meeting of Galerius and Narses' emissary, Apharban, to discuss terms for the return of Narses' harem, which Galerius had seized.⁴⁸ In the center of the panel five Persian suppliants are depicted kneeling, they are flanked by Galerius and Roma on the left and right side, respectively (fig. 9a). Galerius is surrounded by what looks to be his body guard, while four female figures surround Roma. The four female figures have been identified as personifications of major cities in the empire and may even represent the

⁴⁶ Vermeule, C. *The Goddess Roma in Art of the Roman Empire* (1959), 31-45. He demonstrates that *Roma* appears as a regular numismatic type in the imperial period from the first century until Tacitus (275-276), and again from 306 CE onward.

⁴⁷ For a complete discussion on the monument and its sculptural programme see Pond Rothman, M. "The Thematic Organization of the Panel Reliefs on the Arch of Galerius," *AJA* vol. 81, 4 (1977), 427-454.

⁴⁸ Pond Rothman, "The Thematic Organization of the Panel Reliefs on the Arch of Galerius," 439.

capitals of the tetrarchs.⁴⁹ Rees argues that the compositional arrangement, with Roma in the forefront and the four personifications of the other cities beyond, represents *Dea Roma*'s new function; that is, Roma herself ceased to be the personification of the city and rather a representation of the superiority of the whole Roman Empire.⁵⁰ Rees is correct to suggest that the compositional arrangement is significant, but he appears to have overlooked that this depiction also reflects the city of Rome's new position in the empire. Just as Roma stands beside the Persian suppliants, the four other personifications flank a figure crouched in the right corner, which Laubscher has identified as *Persia devicta*.⁵¹ If this is correct, it would suggest a subordination of Rome's unitary power to that of the entire empire. Rome, to the tetrarchy, was just one of the empire's capitals, still symbolic enough to be included in a depiction of the reception of a delegation outside of Rome, but no longer the seat of the imperial household. For this reason the additional city personifications were added to reflect the new collegial nature of the empire.

Second, on the west face of the south pier, though heavily abraded, the chisel lines of a seated figure possessing a sceptre in its right hand and a larger circular attribute on its left side are visible in the center of the panel (fig.9b). Enough remains to identify this figure as *Dea Roma* enthroned, she holds a sceptre in her right hand and a zodiacal circle or shield leans on her left leg.⁵² She sits within a niche of an arcuated facade, it appears that the arcuated space continues to

⁴⁹ Ibid, 440; Laubscher, H.P. *Der Reliefschmuck des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki* (1975), 52. On the latter suggestion, there is no iconographic evidence that would suggest this but Laubscher makes the supposition based on the number of tetrarchs, adding that the full ensemble may be representative of all the cities of the empire. The fact that all four emperors are depicted together on the arch strengthens this interpretation. For the panel that depicts all four emperors, see M. Pond Rothman, "The Panel of the Emperors Enthroned on the Arch of Galerius," *Byzantine Studies/Etudes Byzantines* 2,1 (1975) 19-40.

⁵⁰ Rees, "Image and Images, 196; Hekster, O., "The city of Rome in late imperial ideology: The Tetrarchs, Maxentius, and Constantine," *MedAnt*, 2 (1999), 1-31.

⁵¹ Laubscher, H.P. *Der Reliefschmuck des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki*, 52.

⁵² Laubscher, H.P. *Der Reliefschmuck des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki*, 87. He states that Kinch (1890) rightly identifies that *Roma* is depicted with the same attribute on the extant base of the five column monument. Moreover, the faint outline of a helmet as well as the possible indication of the globe on top of the sceptre all point

her left and right and comprises of four additional niches, two on each side. There are figures inside each niche. Rothman follows Laubscher, who bases his argument on 19th century sketches, in suggesting these four figures are *Victoriae*.⁵³ It may also be suggested, however, that these four figures, much like those on the panel depicting the reception of the Persian delegation, are personifications of Roman imperial cities. This finds support in a later representation. A bronze relief panel found in Croatia datable to the early 350s CE depicts Roma enthroned, holding a sceptre in her right hand, flanked on either side by the personifications of imperial cities (fig. 10).⁵⁴ Each city is identifiable by an inscription above their head. On Roma's left is Carthage and Constantinople and on her right is Siscia and Nicomedia. Although datable to a period half a century after the dedication of the Arch of Galerius, the bronze panel demonstrates that there may have been precedent in Late Roman art to depict the imperial ensemble of cities in this manner. If this is the case, the Arch of Galerius, already having depicted Rome with her sister cities on the opposite side of the pier, may have set this precedent. Thus, Roma is again depicted as a city within an ensemble of other imperial cities. Her position in the middle may reflect Rees' argument that Roma no longer represents just the Eternal City itself but the superiority of the entire Roman Empire. Moreover, Rome is once again depicted with diminished importance. In the tetrarchic period Rome was no longer the unitary city of the empire, but a peripheral capital that is forced to accept the equal stature of the new imperial residences.

to an identification as *Roma*. Contrary to Laubscher, the zodiacal circle may, in fact, be a shield. Vermeule, C. *The Goddess Roma in Art of the Roman Empire* (1959), 37 points out that in the second century *Roma*'s shield was depicted with figures in relief between the rim and the boss. This being the case, such a depiction may easily be confused with a zodiacal circle. Nevertheless, the identification of the image as *Dea Roma* remains unchanged.

⁵³ Pond-Rothman, 447; Laubscher, 86. The latter relies entirely on a sketch made by Kinch in 1890 which includes a faint outline of wings on the figure left of *Roma*. Laubscher, however, displays some hesitation in accepting this entirely by repeatedly claiming that details can only be guessed due to the poor preservation of the relief, 86 & 88.

⁵⁴ Toynbee, J. "Roma and Constantinopolis in Late Antique Art from 312-365," *JRS*, 37 (1947), 142, pl. 7.

Tetrarchic Building in Rome's Center

Through tetrarchic ideology and representation, Rome was made, simply, into a peripheral capital in the vast empire. Despite this, the tetrarchs initiated a major building program in Rome not attested since the early third century. This extensive program included numerous public works for the *populus Romanus*.⁵⁵ Their largest contribution to the topography of Rome, however, proved to be a reminder to the *populus Romanus* of the ever diminishing importance of the Eternal City.

The tetrarchs undertook a massive rebuilding of the *Forum Romanum* that was precipitated by a devastating fire in 283 CE. The *Chronograph of 354* provides a list of some the buildings that were reconstructed by the tetrarchs in the *Forum Romanum*, which included the *Basilica Julia* and the *Curia*.⁵⁶ Machado argues that most of the restoration that took place followed the earlier architectural designs of the buildings and, therefore, these were rather traditional interventions.⁵⁷ More imposing, however, was the tetrarchy's intervention in the central square of the *Forum Romanum*.⁵⁸

The tetrarchy's imposition on this space re-orientated the central square. Included in this reconstruction is the aforementioned five-column monument. Although its arrangement and tetrarchic ideological function have been touched upon, the location in and reception by Rome remains to be discussed. Kähler undertook excavations behind the Augustan rostra, and in his

⁵⁵ Their works are detailed by the *Chronograph of 354* and included but were not limited to: the Baths of Diocletian, the *Iseum* and *Serapeum*, Diocletian's *Arcus Novus*, two porticoes and numerous *nymphaea*.

⁵⁶ *Chron.* 354, 148M. The repair and reconstruction did not end here. The same chronographer also cites repairs that were required and carried out in the Forum of Caesar, Theatre of Pompey, and two temples, one which may have been the Temple of *Concordia* in the *Forum Romanum*. For this see La Rocca, E., "La nuova imagine dei fori Imperiali. Appunti in margine agli scavi," *RomMitt* 108 (2001), 171-214; Machado, C. "Monuments and Memory in the *forum Romanum*," in Luke Lavan (ed.) *Social and Political Life in Late Antiquity* (2006), 164. He suggests, following Plattner and Ashby (1929), 136, that the entire area in front of the *Curia* was repaved, adorned with statues, and a marble fountain.

⁵⁷ Machado, C. *Monuments and Memory in the forum Romanum*, 167.

⁵⁸ For a detailed archaeological evaluation and discussion see Guiliani and Verducci, *L'area central del foro Romano*, 1987.

subsequent publication of the findings he provided a reconstruction for the position of the five-column monument.⁵⁹ He argued, having found what he thought to be the foundations of the monument, that it must have been situated just behind the Augustan rostra.⁶⁰ Subsequent excavations, however, provide a reappraisal to this position. Giuliani and Verduchi, who studied the topography of the *Forum Romanum* in a series of excavations in the 1970s and 1980s, argue that there was neither space nor suitable structural conditions behind the Augustan rostra to have built the five-column monument there.⁶¹ Instead, the remains of a second, later rostra on the eastern end of the forum in front of the Temple of Julius Caesar were examined and provide a appealing hypothesis for the appearance of that on the west. In their excavations, they observed a course of bipedales that they determined to be the top course of a large spine that would have bisected the rostra, and from this they posited that the spine was put in place to support the plinths of columns.⁶² This was largely confirmed by the presence of incisions cut into these bipedales on the northern side of the rostra.⁶³ They argued that the extant archaeological evidence indicated the presence of columns atop the newly constructed rostra and, given the size of the spine and location of the incisions on the bipedales, that five columns would have been placed here. While a date for the construction of the spine and, thus, the new rostra was established in the tetrarchic period by the presence of Diocletianic brickstamps.⁶⁴

On the west end, they observed that perimeter walls visibly different to those constructed in the Augustan age document that the rostra was extended toward the north at this time.⁶⁵ Moreover, they suggest that the foundation observed by Kähler may, in fact, be the paving

⁵⁹ Kähler, H. *Das Fünfsäulendenkmal für die Tetrarchen auf dem Forum Romanum*, 1964.

⁶⁰ Kähler, H., *Das Fünfsäulendenkmal für die Tetrarchen auf dem Forum Romanum* (1964), 29.

⁶¹ Giuliani, C. & Verduchi P., *L'area central del Foro Romano* (1987), 156.

⁶² Giuliani, C. & Verduchi P., *L'area central del Foro Romano*, 156.

⁶³ Giuliani, C. & Verduchi P., *L'area central del Foro Romano*, 156, fig. 220,221.

⁶⁴ *CIL* XV, 1650; see Giuliani & Verduchi, *L'area centrale del Foro Romano*, 166-173 for discussion.

⁶⁵ Giuliani, C. & Verduchi P., *L'area centrale del Foro Romano*, 155.

course of a similar spine to that constructed on the east end. From this, they posited a symmetrical layout of the eastern and western ends of the forum, which included a revised placement of the five-column monument atop the Augustan rostra, instead of behind as was previously thought. Archaeological evidence also suggests that the tetrarchs intervened on the south side of the *Forum Romanum*. Bases built with tetrarchic bricks demonstrate that, along the entire length of the *Basilica Julia*'s facade, the tetrarchs erected seven columns delimiting the southern end of the forum, east and west between the two rostra and to the north of the *Basilica Julia* and the road that ran in front of it.⁶⁶

This demonstrates that the tetrarchs imposed heavy-handed interventions in the center of the forum. On the west end of the *Forum Romanum*, the extant archaeological remains suggest that the tetrarchs extended the Augustan rostra and placed atop it their five-column monument. On the opposite end, they constructed an identical rostra ornamented with five similar columns, while they delimited the entire central space with a row of seven columns to the south. That this program was a unitary undertaking, consigned to the same period, is debated, yet the symmetrical layout that imposed a new form of order and an axial nature to the center of the forum suggests otherwise.⁶⁷ In fact, Coarelli envisioned it as a complex unitary program that resulted in the creation of a closed space, representing the centralised and unified power of the tetrarchs.⁶⁸ Marlowe agrees that this program was conceived as a single program but provides a slightly more critical judgement. She argues that in reframing the central area of *Forum Romanum* with monuments that commemorated the tetrarchy, they appropriated the area of the

⁶⁶ These columns are dated to the tetrarchic period based on brickstamps, see *CIL* XV, 1569a, 1643b.

⁶⁷ Claridge, A. *Rome. An Oxford Archaeological Guide* (1998), 89. She suggests that the presence of Diocletianic brickstamps need not preclude that the tetrarchy erected the seven columns, and that Constantine and Maxentius may have used Diocletianic brickstamps. See Dumser (PhD diss. 2005) for discussions on dating monuments by the presence of brickstamps alone.

⁶⁸ Coarelli, F. "L'edilizia pubblica a Roma in eta tetrarchica," in W. Harris (ed.) *The Transformations of the Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity* (1999), 30.

forum subordinating its “complex historical resonances” with tetrarchic ideology.⁶⁹ At the center of this subordination was, of course, the five-column monument. This monument, in the middle of the most public place in the Eternal City, along with the continued subordination of Rome by the absent emperors, was an omnipresent reminder of the growing tension between Rome and the tetrarchy.

Conclusion

With the creation of the tetrarchy, which was necessitated by the socioeconomic conditions of an overburdened empire, Rome's position in the empire was significantly altered. No longer was it the *caput mundi* but, instead, just one of many imperial capitals. This diminution of the once awe inspiring Eternal City was facilitated by a new tetrarchic ideology, one that expressed *concordia imperatorum* and empire wide unity. The tetrarchs vigorously sought to represent themselves as a college and this was made apparent in all forms of art and architecture. Across the empire, the tetrarchs were depicted together, often arranged in a group of four on top of dedicatory columns. Collegial harmony was also reflected on coinage through the empire wide homogeneity in type and message that is observable in the numismatic record. Thus, the *concordia imperatorum* visibly formed the basis of the new governmental system, and a new conception of *romanitas* followed with it; *Romanitas* was no longer comingled with the city of Rome itself. Now, *romanitas* was characterized by an outward view of Rome, becoming an ecumenical virtue and helping to establish a new perspective of the entire Roman Empire. This position was visually represented by the empire wide minting of *aes* coinage with the *Genius Populi Romani* as a type. Moreover, Rome itself was depicted differently in art. On the arch of Galerius in Thessalonica, *Roma* is depicted in two places, both times accompanied by

⁶⁹ Marlowe, E. *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome*, (PhD Diss. 2004), 16.

personifications of other imperial cities. This representation elucidates Rome's revised position as but one of many cities in the empire.

Tetrarchic building in Rome conveyed a similar message. Although they reinvigorated imperial munificence in the city to a degree not seen since the Severans, their most significant contributions appear to have subordinated the city to tetrarchic ideology. The tetrarchy reoriented the central area of the *Forum Romanum*, imposing an order on the space that previously would not have been imagined. And looming over this new ordered, axial layout were five columns, with each emperor taking his place on one with Jupiter in the middle. The five-column monument was imbued with an imposing message, an omnipresent reminder of the supreme authority of the tetrarchs over Rome and the entire empire. All of this, when coupled with the tetrarchs' obvious disregard for the city, as is attested by the fact that they saw no need to visit the city to pay homage to its authority, let alone live there,⁷⁰ confirm Rome's diminished importance. Rome was not the Rome of old; it no longer carried the same message, no longer held the same position, and, certainly, was no longer the center of the empire. The tetrarchs uniquely demonstrated this, and in doing so they exacerbated Rome's diminution. But also in the process they laid open the city for another to manipulate, possibly undervaluing the importance the city of Rome still possessed, or at least the power that was perceived by the city's elite. This was made evident in 306 CE when Maxentius, son of Maximian, seized an opportunity. He was acclaimed emperor by Rome and, through his munificence and propagandistic policies, he fashioned himself the preserver of the (his) city. In doing so, he effectively controlled the Eternal City along with Italy and North Africa for the subsequent six years.

⁷⁰ The first time the senior Augustus, Diocletian, visited Rome was in 303 CE, while Maximian, Augustus in the west, resided predominantly in Milan. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that the two *Caesares* ever visited the city. In fact, the first time Galerius saw the city may be when he attempted to besiege Maxentius there in 307 CE.

Chapter Two:

From the Absent Rule of Four to Maxentius, *Conservator Urbis Suae*

Introduction

“But that day will shine forth very soon when Rome may see you the victors and your son (Maxentius) eager under your right hand, whom, having been born with every good innate quality for the most honourable arts, some lucky teacher awaits, for whom it will be done with no labour to incite his divine and immortal progeny for the desire of glory.”⁷¹

This panegyric, delivered to the emperor Maximian on the *dies natalis* of Rome in 289 CE by Claudius Mamertinus in Trier, elucidates that Maxentius was indeed thought to be a viable, if not certain, choice to succeed as emperor. At this point, the tetrarchic form of meritocratic succession had yet to be established and the young son of Maximian, Maxentius, was the obvious eventual choice as his hereditary successor.⁷² Born in the late 270s or early 280s as Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maxentius little is known of his early life.⁷³ We do know, however, that in 293 CE, with the formation of the first tetrarchy, Maxentius was overlooked. As a mere boy his inexperience would have undermined the effectiveness of Diocletian's military division.⁷⁴ At the time Carausius' rebellion in Britain threatened Gaul and Northern Italy, and the Persians were mounting an offensive in the east; no longer could Diocletian and Maximian alone maintain the empire.⁷⁵ It seemed, therefore, with the empire constantly threatened along its

⁷¹ *Pan. Lat.* 10.14.1-2, “*Sed profecto mature ille inlucescet dies, cum vos videat Roma victores et alacrem sub dextra filium, quem ad honestissimas artes omnibus ingenii bonis natum felix aliquis praeceptor exspectat, cui nullo labore constabit divinam immortalemque progeniem ad stadium laudis hortari.*”

⁷² This is alluded to with the unabashed use of the epithets *divinam* and *immortalem*. Cullhed argues that such epithets may have said more about Maximian to the audience than Maxentius, nevertheless, it is not likely that such a phrase would be applied to someone not assumed fit to become emperor.

⁷³ Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 16; Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (1982), 34. He suggests that Maxentius was born in 283, a date coinciding with Maximian's visit to Syria.

⁷⁴ For Maxentius' potential age in 293 CE see Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (1982), 34. He suggests that Maxentius was yet to have reached his seventh birthday in 289 CE. If this is accepted, then he would have been no more than eleven in 293 CE.

⁷⁵ Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (1981), 7-10 provides a detailed account of the movements of Carausius.

borders that the elevation of two grizzled generals to the rank of *Caesares* was the most effective way to maintain the peace and stability obtained by Diocletian. Thus, the foundations of meritocratic succession were laid. It is possible, however, that there may still have been imperial expectations for Maxentius. He was married to the daughter of Galerius, Valeria Maximilla, and such a familial tie may have signalled to Maxentius (and Maximian) that he was set to succeed Galerius as Caesar in the future, since Galerius himself was wed to Diocletian's daughter and Constantius to Maximian's.⁷⁶ The same imperial expectations for Maxentius are implicitly stated by Lactantius, who recorded a peculiar episode that was said to have occurred during a meeting between Diocletian and Galerius in 305 CE. In it, after Lactantius' own harsh judgement of Maxentius' character, the two eastern rulers discuss the formation of the second tetrarchy and the future *Caesares*:

“(Lactantius) There was, however, a son, Maxentius, to Maximianus, the son-in-law of Galerius Maximianus himself, a man of a ruinous and evil disposition, insolent and haughty to such a degree that it was neither accustom for him to honour his father nor his father-in-law, and on that account, he was hated by both...”

“(Galerius to Diocletian)What, therefore, is to be done? That man (Maxentius) is not worthy, he said, for he, as a private citizen, disdained me. What would he do when he receives *imperium*.”⁷⁷

Whether or not one can trust the veracity of this conversation, Lactantius seems to be suggesting, much like Claudius Mamertinus, that to the late antique mind Maxentius was an obvious and traditional selection to become an emperor. Yet, for the second time in 305 CE Maxentius was overlooked and the second tetrarchy was formed with Constantius I and Galerius as *Augusti*, and

⁷⁶ Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (1982), 37f. He argues that Galerius and Constantine were married to Diocletian and Maximian's daughters before 293 CE. If this is the case, there would be no reason to think that the same arrangement would not lead to the same result for Maxentius.

⁷⁷ Lac. *DMP* 18.9-11, “*Erat autem Maximiano Maxentius, huius ipsius Maximiani gener, homo perniciosae ac malae mentis, adeo superbus et contumax, ut neque patrem neque socerum solitus sit adorare, et idcirco utrique invisus fuit... Quid ergo fiat? Ille, inquit, dignus non est. Qui enim me privatus contempsit, quid faciet, cum imperium acceperit?*”

Maximinus Daia and Severus as *Caesares*. Given Roman customs and the ubiquitous expectations that Maxentius would, at some point, take up the imperial mantle, this additional oversight would have presumably chafed Maxentius. Such a statement is, admittedly, hypothetical since just as in his early years little is known about Maxentius after the decisions of 305 CE. What is made clear by the literary and epigraphic record, however, is that after this he took up residence close to Rome.

Aurelius Victor writes that Maxentius, when acclaimed emperor, lived in a villa on the Via Labicana, six miles from Rome, while Eutropius concurs, however, calling his residence a “*villa publica*.”⁷⁸ Two inscriptions were found along the Via Labicana just outside of Rome both dedicated by Romulus, one to his most benevolent father, Valerius Maxentius, and the other to his dearest mother, Valeria Maximilla.⁷⁹ Dessau argues that these two inscriptions are datable between 305 and 306 CE due to the titles, *vir clarissimus* and *nobilissima femina*, assigned to Maxentius and Maximilla respectively. He reasons that the titles are indicative of the position of the couple's fathers; Maximilla is titled *nobilissima femina* because Galerius was Augustus at this time, while Maxentius was simply a *vir clarissimus* because Maximian had abdicated.⁸⁰ More important than this discernible status distinction between Maxentius and his wife is the political implications of the title *vir clarissimus*. This title, literally meaning “most illustrious man,” was a distinction for those in the senatorial class, indicating Maxentius was, at least in name, a high status individual.⁸¹ Moreover, Cullhed makes much of Eutropius' statement that Maxentius lived on *villa publica*. He argues, contrary to Galerius' statement in the above

⁷⁸ Aur. Vic. Epit. 40.2, “*Maxentius imperator in villa sex milibus ab urbe discreta, itinere Lavicano...*”; Eutrop. Brev. 10.2.3, “*Romae interea praetoriani excito tumultu Maxentium, Herculi filium, qui haud procul ab urbe in villa publica morabatur...*”

⁷⁹ ILS 666, *Domino patri/ M Val Maxentio/viro claris/ Val Romulus c p/ pro amore/caritatis eius/patri benignissimo*; ILS 667, *Domino matri/ Val Maximillae/nob fem/ Val Romulus c p/ pro amore/adfectionis eius/matri carissimae*.

⁸⁰ Dessau, ILS 666-667.

⁸¹ Brill's New Pauly Vol. 15, p.450.

mentioned passage from Lactantius that Maxentius was a mere *privatus*, that by taking up residence in a *villa publica*, Maxentius must have held a status, at least in Rome, beyond that of a *privatus*.⁸²

Regardless of this distinction, Maxentius, the son of the former Augustus, Maximian, was living very close to Rome eager to seize control if given the opportunity. This would come in July of 306 CE. Constantius I, then Augustus in the west, died while at York and his son, Constantine, who was with him, was acclaimed emperor by the troops. The sources are divided as to how Constantine originally fashioned himself. Eusebius and Lactantius record that he sought recognition as an Augustus, while Zosimus reports it was as Caesar that he first sought entrance into the tetrarchy.⁸³ Whether we are to believe Eusebius and Lactantius or Zosimus proves inconsequential as shortly thereafter Constantine was officially recognized by Galerius as a Caesar and Severus was promoted to Augustus in the west.⁸⁴ If the second time Maxentius was disregarded for a position in the imperial college did not chafe him, as was argued above, Constantine's elevation certainly did. Zosimus records that Maxentius thought it intolerable (οὐκ ἄνσχετός) that Constantine be able to rule while he was deprived of this hereditary right.⁸⁵ His disapproval must have been known by those in Rome as later in the same year, when Galerius decided to abolish Rome's age old tax immunity and reduce the number of the Praetorian Guard, the Eternal city and her populace sought a candidate in whom they might find some reprieve, and no one was more conspicuous than Maxentius, the *vir clarissimus* with hereditary right to the imperial mantle.

⁸²Cullhed, M, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 32, fn.113. Other references to a *villa publica* in or near Rome are found in Liv. 4.22.7;30.21.12;Cic. Att. 4.17.7; Var. Rust. 3.2.1; V. Max. 9.2.1. All of which reference a building located in the Campus Martius built for the housing of foreign ambassadors. If this is the case, then, the Maxentian *villa publica* on the Via Labicana bears little to no significance on his status as a *privatus*.

⁸³Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.13.14; Lac. *DMP* 24.9; Zosimus 2.9.1.

⁸⁴Lac. *DMP* 25.5.

⁸⁵Zosimus 2.9.2.

Lactantius records the decision made by Galerius and the subsequent unrest that ensued which resulted in the acclamation of Maxentius:

“When he (Galerius) had fixed, with censuses having been instituted, to devour the whole of the earth, he leapt so eagerly uninterrupted into this folly, that he did not wish that even the Roman populous be exempt from this bondage. Now censors were appointed, who when sent to Rome made a list of the populous. At about the same time he also reduced the Praetorian camps. Thus, a few soldiers, who had been left in the camps at Rome, having seized the opportunity, after killing certain magistrates and with the people willing, who had been incited, they draped the purple on Maxentius.”⁸⁶

It was in this climate and with this opportunity that Maxentius came to don the imperial purple on October 28, 306 CE. Immediately, Maxentius reinvigorated ancient institutions that demonstrated his Romaphilia.⁸⁷ He initially fashioned himself *princeps invictus*, a title that is generally believed to have demonstrated his deference to Galerius and his attempt not to agitate tetrarchic stability,⁸⁸ but was eventually proclaimed Augustus in 307 CE. Subsequently, Maxentius enjoyed six rather fortuitous years in Rome, initiating a massive building programme unattested since the Severans and parallel in scale to the great efforts of the second century CE emperors. Nevertheless, the support that Maxentius received in Rome is difficult to assess through the damning lens of Constantinian sources. The fact remains that Maxentius was the last emperor to make his imperial residence in the city and he exploited this quite effectively to promote his cause. Maxentius fashioned himself the *Conservator Urbis Suae*; he issued coins

⁸⁶ Lac. *DMP* 26.2-3, “Cum statuisset censibus institutis orbem terrae devorare, ad hanc usque prosiluit insaniam, ut ab hac captivitate ne populum quidem Romanum fieri vellet immunem. Ordinabantur iam censitores qui Romam missi describerent plebem. Eodem fere tempore castra quoque praetoria sustulerat. Itaque milites pauci, qui Romae in castris relictis erant, opportunitatem nanci occisis quibusdam iudicibus non invito populo, qui erat concitatus, Maxentium purpuram induerant.”

⁸⁷ Word first used by Marlowe, E. *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome*, (PhD Diss. 2004).

⁸⁸ This is the predominant view, see Groag, “Maxentius,” *RE XIV* (1930), 2424-2426; Callu, J.P. *Genio Populi Romani (295-316) Contribution à une histoire numismatique de la Tétrarchie* (1960), 65f; Barnes, T.D. *Constantine and Eusebius* (1981), 30; Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital. Rome in the Fourth Century* (2000), 53. More recently, however, Cullhed (1994) argues, convincingly, that the title was taken as one of the many ways, and indeed the first, with which Maxentius distanced himself from the tetrarchic college. See further discussion below.

with this legend and with the characteristic types of Mars and Roma; he made this legend manifest in erecting a trio on buildings on the Sacra Via, both innovative and traditional in their architectural form; and he separated himself through language and statuary from the *concordia* that characterized the tetrarchy. Maxentius shrewdly manipulated the feeling expressed by Rome in a panegyric delivered to Maximian and Diocletian at Milan in 291 CE that the Eternal City, deeply displeased by the absence of the emperors, longed for their return:

“Rome herself, the mistress of nations, moved with excessive joy at your proximity and having attempted to look upon you from the summits of her own hills, upon which she filled herself with your countenance, approached as close as she was able to gaze upon you.”⁸⁹

In demonstrating his Romaphilia, Maxentius seemingly won great popular support in the Eternal City and caused subsequent emperors to reevaluate what now appeared to be a tetrarchic fallacy, namely, that Rome was where the emperor was.⁹⁰

Until recently, Maxentius was only summarily studied; his most influential biography still being Groag's entry in *Pauly-Wissowa* from 1930. New contributions have opened the door to reconsider Maxentius, his rule, and his influence in Rome. By examining his coinage and architectural programme, this chapter sets out to contribute to the only now increasing body of scholarship on Maxentius. It is evident that he was able, simply by controlling Rome, to endure

⁸⁹ *Pan. Lat.* 11.12.1-2, “*Ipsa etiam gentium domina Roma immodico propinquitatis vestrae elata gaudio vosque e speculis suorum montium prospicere conata, quo se vultibus vestris propius expleret, ad intuendum cominus quantum potuit accessit.*” It is explicitly stated in the panegyric delivered to Maximian at Trier in 289 CE, *Pan. Lat.* 10.14.5.

⁹⁰ Herodian who composed his history in the 3rd century CE employed this phrase said to be made in a speech to Commodus, “For the rest of your life you will have the enjoyment of things at home; and for that matter, where the emperor is, Rome is.” (1.6.5) trans. R. Pearse. For its ideological connection to the tetrarchy see Mayer, E. *Rom ist dort, wo der Kaiser ist. Untersuchungen zu den Staatsdenkmälern des dezentralisierten Reiches von Diocletian bis zu Theodosius II.* Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums 53, (2002). The sentiment above has been expressed in a similar fashion by both Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 64 & Marlowe, E. “*Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius*,” in *The Emperor and Rome. Space, Representation, and Ritual* (2010), 215.

as a “legitimate” ruler for six years.⁹¹ He controlled the space in the center of the city to demonstrate and consolidate his authority, and this policy proved to be so effective that his successor, Constantine, was immediately forced to systematically appropriate and erase Maxentian memory from the topography of the city. Maxentius was able to demonstrate that his self-proclaimed title of preserver of his city was not assigned in name alone and he deftly answered the call from Rome for an emperor to return to the Eternal City. In doing so, he turned tetrarchic ideology on its head functioning as a sole ruler in the assumed defunct imperial capital.⁹²

Conservator Urbis Suae: Propaganda and Politics

The Coinage of Maxentius

From his accession to emperor to his eventual defeat at the Milvian Bridge, Maxentius issued coinage that explicitly demonstrated his Romaphilia and his break from tetrarchic representation and policies. This is nowhere more conspicuous than in the preferential use of the reverse legend *Conservator Urbis Suae*. This legend, oft accompanied with the numismatic representation of the tetrastyle or hexastyle Temple of Venus and Roma and of Roma handing

⁹¹ Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 13. He states that in an evaluation of Maxentian politics the question of legitimacy is crucial. That is, if Maxentius was an illegitimate ruler it would have a negative effect on the fundamental qualities of his reign. That said, he argues that legitimacy is seen as a relationship between the governing and the governed that is predicated on a mutual recognition by both parties of certain criteria that give right to exercise power. In this regard, Maxentius should be construed as a legitimate ruler.

⁹² *Pan. Lat.* 7.10.5-11.4, “Rome herself even acted against the majesty of her own name that she demonstrated that even she was able to command emperors, She lead away her own armies and returned them to you and when you had brought the authority of a private princeps to quiet her spirit, reaching out her hands to you as a suppliant or rather to complain she exclaimed: ‘For how long, Maximian, will I endure myself to be battered, and you to remain quiet, for my liberty to be deprived, and you to obtain an unlawful discharge?...Before you ruled called by your brother, now rule again ordered by your mother.” “*Fecit enim Roma ipsa pro maiestate nominis sui ut ostenderet posse se etiam imperatoribus imperare. Abduxit exercitus suos ac tibi reddidit et, cum ad sedandos animos auctoritatem privati principis attulisses, supplices tibi manus tendens vel potius queribunda clamavit: ‘Quousque hoc, Maximiane, patiar me quati, te quiescere; mihi libertatem adimi, te usurpare tibi inlicitam missionem?...Imperasti pridem rogatus a fratre, rursus impera issus a matre.*” Marlowe (2004), 38 suggests that this panegyric delivered to Maximian in 307 CE reflects Rome’s rightful return to “king-maker.” It is this same call, marshalling the city’s military, financial, and symbolic resources, that Maxentius answered in 306 CE.

Maxentius a globe, is found on issues of coins from all of the central western mints save from Carthage, where it is replaced by a local variant. Its meaning cannot be misinterpreted, Rome alone was Maxentius' city and he would be the one to preserve its ancient glory and restore it, once again, to the center of the empire. This message, however, was not conveyed singularly with the *Conservator Urbis Suae* legend but with coordinated, yet varied, types and legends across all metals and denominations. This variation in type and legend over time allows for Maxentian political ideology to be chronologically charted and tracked. An examination of early gold issues from Rome followed by a comparative examination of all denominations post-308 CE best demonstrates this. The results will elucidate that throughout his reign Maxentius sought to demonstrate his Romaphilia by utilizing particularly "Roman" types that appealed to the concepts of *romanitas* and the *mos maiorum*. Yet, what has heretofore been unrecognized is that Maxentius' coinage reflects the adept changes he made to his political agenda on numerous occasions, each time in response to some extraneous factor, all the while repackaging his Romaphilia so as to keep Rome central in his propaganda.

Coinage at Rome 306-308 CE

At Rome, Maxentius immediately began to mint gold coinage. He issued *aurei* in his own name with the reverse legends HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAESS NN, MARTI CONSERV(tori) AVGG ET CAESS NN, and CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE.⁹³ On the obverse of all these issues he took the title of PRINC(eps) or alternatively PRINC(eps) INVICT(us). Included in these early *aurei* were issues struck for both Maximian and Constantine. The former was styled SEN P F AVG in obverse legends with CONCORD(ia) MILIT(um) FELIC(itas) ROMANOR(um) and FELIX INGRESS(us) SEN AVG used as reverse

⁹³ RIC VI, Roma 135, 137, 138, & 140.

legends.⁹⁴ While for Constantine two legends were also used, PRINCIPI IVVENTVT(is) and HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAESS NN, and they were accompanied by a single obverse legend, CONSTANTINVS NOB C.⁹⁵ These, when compared to the more personal legends of Maximian and Maxentius seem more tetrarchic in nature as they continue to implement the herculean formulae of the first and second tetrarchy.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, immediately striking are the distinctions in titulature and associated obverse legend and types. All but one legend are distinctly associated with only one of the emperors and each type is, seemingly, coordinated to elucidate the political importance of each man to Maxentius' regime.

For Maximian, his association with the Roman army is immediately discernible. The legend CONCORD(ia) MILIT(um) FELIC(itas) ROMANOR(um) was a shrewd inclusion by Maxentius. He knew that he would require unwavering military support if he were to hold his position, this was only reinforced by the soon present threat of Severus in early 307 CE. Maxentius, by associating his father with the concord of the military, was able to strengthen his military support and avoid any future resistance. This fact is recorded by Lactantius,

“Maxentius, aware of the degree of his crime, granted that he would be able to win over to himself his father's troop by hereditary right, nevertheless thinking that it would be possible that his father-in-law Galerius, fearing this very thing, would leave Severus in Illyricum and would himself come with his own army to fight against him, he sought to what point he might fortify himself from the impending danger. He sent the imperial purple to his father...”⁹⁷

With the issue of this early coinage, then, Maxentius was proclaiming the military *concordia* that was achieved through the reinstatement of the former Augustus, his father, Maximian. On the other hand, the legend FELIX INGRESS(us) SEN AVG with the accompanying type of Roma

⁹⁴ RIC VI, Roma 134 & 136.

⁹⁵ RIC VI, Roma 139 & 141.

⁹⁶ King, “The Maxentian Mints,” NC 19 (1959), 68.

⁹⁷ Lac. DMP 26.6-7.

seated holding a shield inscribed VOT XXX seems to recall the same sentiment that was expressed in the aforementioned panegyric delivered to Maximian and Diocletian at Milan in 291; that is, displeasure at the previous absence of the emperors and the fulfillment of the great desire to have the emperor return to Rome.⁹⁸ Moreover, it reinforces the message that it was Rome's rightful position to accept and make emperors, which later was expressed in the panegyric delivered to Maximian in early 307 CE.⁹⁹

It is Maximian's title on this coinage that provides a chronological indicator for the production of these early *aurei*. Upon retirement, both Diocletian and Maximian became *Seniores Augusti*, or retired *Augusti*, and this new position is reflected in the numismatic record with Maximian's portrait accompanied by the obverse legend SEN(ior) P(ius) F(elix) AVG(ustus). These *aurei*, then, had to have been issued before Maximian reassumed the title of Augustus. On this subject Lactantius writes, "*Patri suo post depositum imperium in Campania moranti purpuram mittit et bis Augustum nominat...sed occurrebat iam resumpto imperio Maximianus, cuius adventu Ravennam confugit.*"¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, it seems that Maximian took the title of Augustus again when Maxentius required support to break Severus' siege of Rome, and this campaign against Maxentius could not have been earlier than late February or early March 307 CE, near the end of winter and the start of campaigning season. There are some discrepancies in the sources, however, as to when Maximian really came out of retirement. Anonymus Valesianus and Zosimus write contrary to Lactantius, both recording that Maximian was called to Rome to resume the imperial mantle only after Severus was expelled and fled to

⁹⁸ *Pan. Lat.* 11.12.1-2, see above, n. 89.

⁹⁹ *Pan. Lat.* 7.10.5-11.4, see above, n. 92.

¹⁰⁰ Lac. *DMP* 26.7-9 "He (Maxentius) sent the imperial purple to his father, living in Campania since he put down imperium and he called him Augustus for a second time...But Maximian now having taken up imperium again met him (Severus), at whose arrival Severus fled to Ravenna."

Ravenna.¹⁰¹ Since the discrepancy in chronology is minute, it can be left aside for the moment and it can be ascertained that the first issue of *aurei* from Rome must have been minted from October 306 to no later than April 307 CE.

Considering this, the reverse legends associated with Constantine in these early issues would also appear to reflect Maxentius' intended relationship with him and Constantine's perceived position within the Maxentian hierarchy. Chronologically, although included in the first issue of *aurei*, Constantinian *aurei* must not have been minted until after the defeat of Severus. It was only at this point that Maximian traveled north to Gaul and secured Constantine's support.¹⁰² Therefore, his inclusion in the early *aurei* from the same series is unlikely unless Maxentius had made some previous, now unknown and otherwise unattested, arrangement with Constantine. The rarity of early gold coins minted for Constantine would seem to provide support for his late inclusion in the first issue of *aurei* struck at Rome. Coinage struck for him in this series and the subsequent series of *aurei* until his removal from Maxentian coinage in 308 CE all have the reverse legends PRINCIPI IVVENTVT(is) or HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAESS N. The latter was seemingly employed to suggest Constantine's amicability to the present situation, and that he may have favourably accepted the return of Maximian Hercules to power. The presence of the two *Augusti* and *Caesares* honoured in this issue is complicating as early on Maxentius does not appear to recognize a second Caesar or Augustus, as Maximian is senior Augustus and Constantine, Caesar. When examining these *aurei* comparatively with coinage from Trier, the answer is immediately apparent. Maxentius simply replicated tetrarchic legends employed by Constantine himself.¹⁰³ First, the PRINCIPI IVVENTVT(is), which Constantine first issued when he was recognized as Caesar, and then the HERCVLI COMITI

¹⁰¹ Anon. Val. 4 and Zosimus 2.10.

¹⁰² Lac. *DMP* 27.1-28.

¹⁰³ *RIC* VI, Treveri 615 & 620a

AVGG ET CAESS NN, which he issued after he was elevated to the rank of Augustus shortly after the death of Severus. Therefore, although not conceived by Maxentius, he chose the legends most suitable to his propaganda and previously sanctioned by Constantine himself, since they were present on his own coinage from Trier. Moreover, if it is accepted that these Constantinian *aurei* were minted at Rome after Severus' death then Constantine's position relative to Maxentius is immediately made clear. Constantine should have been recognized as an Augustus but Maxentius chose instead to position him as an amicable ally and a junior to Maximian and, as will be discussed, to Maxentius himself.

The early issues of *aurei* in Maxentius' name immediately reflect a policy that he would continue for the duration of his reign. First, the most conspicuous reminder of Maxentius' deference for Rome, the obverse legend CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE accompanied by the reverse type of Roma seated holding a victory in her right hand and a sceptre in her left needs little explanation. Maxentius was fashioning himself the "preserver of his city," the preserver of the previously cast down and now resurgent Rome. Second, the obverse legend MARTI CONSERV(atori) AVGG ET CAESS NN, stated Maxentius' intention to break from tetrarchic patterns and once again display his deference for Rome and her tradition. During the preceding two decades the tetrarchy rarely employed Mars as a type in favour of their patron deities Jupiter and Hercules. His inclusion on Maxentius' first issue of *aurei* initiated a trend that saw a marked increase of Mars' presence in Maxentian coinage and overall propaganda. His iconographic presence would rightly recall Rome's foundation and when coupled with the CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE legend would strengthen Maxentius' claim as preserver of Rome, now "re-founded" as the imperial seat. Lastly, the obverse legend HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAESS NN conveys a message different to that of the *aurei* issued for Constantine with the

same legend. For Maxentius, this legend represents a resurgence of the Herculan line, with restoration of his father's *imperium* and Maxentius' own assumption of his hereditary right to rule.

This alone leaves the anomalous obverse legend of Maxentius to be discussed. His use of the title *princeps* has caused considerable debate among scholars. Sutherland, Beranger and Cullhed all argue against the common opinion that Maxentius took this title in deference to Galerius while awaiting his recognition.¹⁰⁴ Both Sutherland and Beranger are hesitant to suggest that Maxentius, by assuming this title, was unconcerned with the tetrarchy, nevertheless, each realize that the title demonstrates Maxentius' desire to manoeuvre outside tetrarchic obligations.¹⁰⁵ Cullhed is more assertive in suggesting that Maxentius never sought recognition from the tetrarchs at all, but instead that this title was his first step away from tetrarchic designs and a display of filial piety before reinstating his father as an Augustus.¹⁰⁶ He cites the absence of Galerius from any and all Maxentian coinage pre-311 CE as evidence and reasons that, in taking up this title, Maxentius was instead showing deference to his father based on obligations of *pietas* and hoping, in turn, that Maximian's authority would lend credence to his own power. Although it is easily accepted that Galerius' absence from coinage should cast doubt on the argument that Maxentius was seeking his recognition, Cullhed's argument that Maxentius took the title of *princeps* to demonstrate his *pietas* and to allow for his father to be his *auctor imperii* is slightly more difficult to sustain.

Cullhed's argument hinges upon the belief that Maxentius was relying on Maximian to be his *auctor imperii*. This cannot be accepted, however, as Maxentius already received the support

¹⁰⁴ See above, fn. 88 for scholars who share this common opinion.

¹⁰⁵ Sutherland, "Some Political Notions in Coin Types Between 294-313," in *JRS* 53 (1963), 18-20; Beranger, J., *Recherches sur l'aspect ideologique du principat* (1953), 39.

¹⁰⁶ Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 39-44.

of Rome, and it was in Rome's approval alone that Maxentius retained power. This fact is made explicit on an eight-*aurei* multiple issued, presumably, in the late summer or early autumn of 307 CE. A bust of Maxentius with the legend IMP C M VAL MAXENTIVS P F AVG is on the obverse of this issue while Roma seated, facing to her right, holding out a globe in her right hand that is received by Maxentius, who is togate and standing on the left, is on the reverse.¹⁰⁷ The legend reads ROMAE AETERNAE AVCTRICI AVG N (fig. 11a). The message is once again clear; Roma is the originator and author of Maxentius' power. This multiple, issued before Maximian's break from Rome and Maxentius, demonstrates that from the beginning it was Rome's approval which Maxentius required and not Maximian's. The question still remains as to why Maxentius chose the title *princeps* when the likes of Caesar and imperator were available and more common.

Although it is difficult to assign the same importance to Maximian that Cullhed has in relation to Maxentius' assumption of the title of *princeps*, it is hard to deny his astute awareness to see this title as the first of many ways in which Maxentius separated himself from tetrarchic institutions. As displayed by an examination of his first issues of gold *aurei* from Rome, Maxentius was shrewd in implementing and developing imperial propaganda. Rome was placed ahead of all things, and his assumption of the title of *princeps* was no different. By taking up this designation, Maxentius recalled the emperors of the first and second century and, in particular, Augustus himself. This was not unintentional; under these men Rome had flourished, the city still displayed their *fora*, temples, and arches, and very soon Maxentius, the *conservator* and *princeps invictus*, would add to Rome's ancient glory. Moreover, by conjuring up memories of Augustus in using this title, Maxentius effectively undermined the tetrarchic construction of emperor by referring to himself as the first among citizens, *princeps*, rather than the untouchable

¹⁰⁷ RIC VI, Roma 173.

tetrarchic ruler, holding earthly authority from the gods. As *princeps*, Maxentius was elevated outside of the rank and file of the tetrarchy, while Constantine, although part of the entente, was considered Maxentius' junior, and Maximian, although the *maximus augustus*, was unable to vie with the authority of the *princeps* in Rome, as in fact Maximian would learn for himself in 308 CE.

Aurei issued until early 308 CE do little to detract from this message, in fact, they only strengthen it. Many of the same types and legends remain with two rather important additions. First, Maximinus Daia is added to the ranks of the recognized *principes iuventutes*, as *aurei* were minted for him with the obverse legend MAXIMINVS NOB CAES and the same reverse legend as those earlier *aurei* minted for Constantine, PRINCIPI IVVENTVTI.¹⁰⁸ His addition is hard to explain; it would seem to suggest some sort of feigned attempt at establishing a tetrarchic arrangement, but such an assessment is contrary to the overwhelming evidence that Maxentius was not at all interested in such an arrangement. Its appearance must not be overlooked, but that this was the only issue for Maximinus and that its issuing seems to be exceedingly short lived must also be considered. This issue likely coincided with Galerius' march on Rome in the late spring, early summer of 307 CE and, thus, by minting coins in Maximinus' name he was then perceived, along with Constantine to the North, as amicable to Maxentius' position. Such a notion would reinforce Rome's confidence in Maxentius as he defended its walls against Galerius, his now lone foe. Second, and most significant, *aurei* were minted with the same mint mark as the rest of the second issue with the bust of Maxentius on the obverse, facing left and for the first time depicted cuirassed, with the legend MAXENTIVS P F INVIC AVG (fig. 11b). Here, for the first time in the numismatic record Maxentius is seen taking the title Augustus, no

¹⁰⁸ RIC VI, Roma 150.

longer *princeps*.¹⁰⁹ This, therefore, must indicate the culmination of his ambition and his official break from the tetrarchy. Moreover, the reverse type and legend may help suggest a date for this conversion from *princeps* to full-fledged Augustus. On it, Victory is standing right and offering a globe to Maxentius who is seated in military dress with a helmet and shield by his side. This type is accompanied by the unmistakable legend VICTORIA AETERNA AVG N. This issue, then, must have been minted after the defeat of Galerius at which time Maxentius was, at the same time, celebrating his defence of Rome and declaring himself Augustus. Therefore, the date of Galerius' retreat to Illyricum from Rome should be seen as the date at which Maxentius finally took the title of Augustus.¹¹⁰

It is particularly vexing to attempt to pinpoint an exact time at which this occurred, but Lactantius may help to provide some insight when he writes of Maximian,

“Maximian, then, when he knew the outrage of Galerius, began to think that he inflamed with anger having heard of Severus' death and with hostilities taken up would come with an army perhaps having been joined by Maximinus and with double the troops, against which he would in no way be able to resist, both with the city having been fortified and with all other things diligently arranged he set out to Gaul so that he might win Constantine to his own side by a marriage with his youngest daughter...(28) After his (Galerius') flight the other Maximianus (Maximian) returned from Gaul, and he held imperium in common with his son.”¹¹¹

Therefore, if we accept that Severus did not conduct his campaign until the closing months of winter, in late February or early March 307 CE, as was posited above, then Galerius' campaign cannot be placed earlier than late April 307 CE since enough time would have been required in

¹⁰⁹ *RIC* VI, Roma 152.

¹¹⁰ Curran, J., *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 53. He suggests that Maxentius took up this more familiar appellation on October 28, 306 CE but this claim is not supported by the numismatic record.

¹¹¹ Lac. *DMP* 27.1, 28. 1, “*Herculus vero cum Maximiani nosset insaniam, cogitare coepit illum audita nece Severi inflammatum ira susceptis inimicitiis cum exercitu esse venturum et fortasse adiuncto Maximino ac duplicatis copiis, quibus resisti nullo modo posset, <et> urbe munita et rebus <omnibus> dili genter instructa proficiscitur in Galliam, ut Constantinum partibus suis conciliaret suae minoris filiae nuptiis. 2 Ille interea coacto exercitu invadit Italiam...* (28) *Post huius fugam cum se Maximianus alter e Gallia recepisset, habebat imperium commune cum filio.*

the intervening period for Maximian to have fortified Rome and traveled north to Gaul. The confusion in consular records for 307 CE supports this, with Galerius removed from the consulship at the beginning of April and replaced by the phrase *ex mense factum est Aprili post sextum consulatum*.¹¹² As of April Galerius' machinations against Rome would have been known and soon after he would be present at her walls. But Maxentius did not immediately take up the title of Augustus, as testified in the numismatic record, waiting until after Galerius' retreat. It can be surmised, then, that his assumption of this title must have happened no earlier than May; therefore, sometime in early to mid-summer seems most likely for Maxentius to finally have taken up the appellation of Augustus.

Maxentian aes Coinage at Rome 306-308 CE

¹¹² Chr. 354 *praef*; On the issue of consular dating see Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 34-35 and Bagnall *et. al.*, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire* (1987), 148-149. In Rome at the beginning of 307 CE the Chronographer of 354 lists both Galerius, for the seventh time, and Maximinus as consuls. This is supported by a coin minted in Serdica in 307 with the obverse legend GAL MAXIMIANVS AVG VII CONSS (In fact, Sutherland dates the whole subsequent series of issues incorrectly based on the correction that Galerius was not consul for the seventh time until 308 CE). By April, however, their appointments were replaced by the phrase *post sextum consulatum*. Cullhed suggests that their removal can be explained by seeing it as Maximian asserting his reclaimed authority, as it was only the *maximus augustus* who could appoint consuls, and now that Galerius no longer held this position his consular appointments were repealed. This is reflected in the phrase *post sextum consulatum*, suggesting that Galerius' seventh appointment was unrecognized. No consuls were named in Rome into 308 CE, but a new phrase, *consules quos iusserint dd nn augg*, usurped the last. Maxentius and his son Valerius Romulus finally appear in the record as consuls on April 20, 308 CE. This sequence of events fits Cullhed's suggestion neatly; Maximian was recalled, he subsequently repealed Galerius' consular appointments and, then, not until Maximian's break with Maxentius and his departure from Rome do we see Maxentius appoint himself as consul. Although appealing, this explanation negates the intervening year when Maximian could have simply appointed himself consul in Rome. Therefore, a much more likely sequence of events is as follows. Initially, in 307 CE, Galerius appointed Severus and Maximinus as consuls to be recognized throughout most of the empire. In Rome, however, given that Maxentius was a "usurper" in Severus' territory Rome could not very well recognize the latter as consul, therefore, Galerius was substituted for Severus, knowing that Severus was planning to invade Rome and that Maxentius' position was still uncertain. Yet, after Severus was defeated and Galerius marched on Rome the consular appointments were repealed and Galerius' seventh appointment, during which time he planned to march on Rome, went unrecognized, and instead the phrase *post sextum consulatum* was added. The latter decision was likely Maxentius', he elected not to be appointed until 308 CE and chose that this happen the day before the *dies natalis* of Rome rather than the traditional day at the beginning of the year, that this coincided with his rift with Maximian was merely coincidental. The evidence from the consular dating should be interpreted as reflecting the political situation early in the year of 307 CE when Maxentius was far too consumed with securing his position. Once this period passed, however, Maxentius astutely turned to priorities. He opted to delay the conferral of the consulship until the *dies natalis* of the Eternal City to once again display his deference for the ancient capital and to signify his own deep ties with the city.

The production of *aes* at Rome lends support to the conclusions reached from the study of Maxentius' early issues of *aurei*. The first issues of *aes* come rather late in early Maxentian chronology and are unique as Maxentius is completely absent from them. They were minted at 8 to 10 grams for Constantine and Maximian with the reverse legend SAC(ra) MON(eta) VRB(is) AVGG ET CAESS NN and Moneta standing holding scales and a *cornucopiae* as the accompanying type.¹¹³ For Constantine they were minted with the obverse legend CONSTANTINVS NOB CAES with his bust laureate and facing right, while they were minted for Maximian with the legend IMP C MAXIMIANVS P F AVG and his own bust similar to that of Constantine. Based on Constantine's inclusion and Maximian's title of active Augustus, this issue must have been minted after Severus' defeat and Constantine's addition to the "Herculian" entente. This suggests that originally Maxentius did not mint *aes* as gold and silver were his immediate concern. Additionally, this reinforces Constantine's diminished status in the Maxentian hierarchy, as at this point he would have already been elevated to Augustus, a title which Maxentius does not recognize in the *aes* or gold. This issue was followed by another of reduced weight. Issued at 6 to 7 grams, a weight that would remain consistent throughout the rest of Maxentius' reign, *aes* of this series was struck for Maxentius, Maximian, and Constantine. All coins bore the reverse legend CONSERVATORES VRB SVAE, with Maximian still recognized as Augustus and Constantine still as Caesar.¹¹⁴ Maxentius, however, is first introduced on *aes* at Rome as Augustus, which suggests that this series was struck first in the summer of 307 CE after

¹¹³ *RIC* VI, Rome 160 & 161.

¹¹⁴ Roma seated in a hexastyle temple holding a globe in her right hand and a sceptre in her left accompanied this legend. It was the first time this type was used in conjunction with this legend and would remain associated with it for the duration of Maxentius' reign. This has been used by some to suggest that at this time, in 307 CE, Maxentius began to restore the *Templum Romae* and that the reverse type and legend commemorated this. For a detailed discussion on the appearance on the reverse type and its association with a date for the beginning of restoration work on the temple see Dumser, E. *The Architecture of Maxentius: A Study in Architectural Design and Urban Planning Early Fourth-Century Rome* (PhD Diss. 2005), 209-215.

the defeat of Galerius, but surely no sooner. Therefore, with the *aes* we see a delay in its first issue, initially suggesting the escalated importance of gold and silver. When it is struck, however, the message it conveys reflects that of the earlier gold. Constantine, although Augustus in his own territory, possessed a diminished status in the Maxentian hierarchy, while Rome maintained its privileged status featuring as the only reverse type after the first issue.

Coinage from 308-312 CE

By early 309 CE it appears that the only remaining active mint established under the tetrarchs in Maxentian territory was Rome. Evidence from both Ticinum and Aquileia suggest that there was an interruption in minting at both locations until Maxentius' defeat in 312 CE,¹¹⁵ while in 308 CE the mint at Carthage ceased to mint coinage for Maxentius as late in that year Africa revolted and declared Domitius Alexander as emperor. It appears that after Carthage's closure, however, Maxentius decided to open a new mint at Ostia. This new Ostian mint must have been opened after the spring of 308 CE when Maxentius broke with Maximian and Constantine, as coinage is not minted for either, and before the death of Romulus in 309 CE, with enough time intervening for the issuing of a rather abundant variety of gold, silver, and *aes* coinage. Carson and Kent posited long ago that it was the upheaval in North Africa that forced the establishment of the new Ostian mint and that Maxentius removed the staff from Carthage and relocated them to his mint at Ostia.¹¹⁶ Since then, however, their position has been revised. Albertson demonstrated through an analysis of die engraving technique, module size, and artistic rendering of obverse portraiture that the coinage from Ostia is much closer in appearance to that

¹¹⁵ King, "The Maxentian Mints," *NC* 19 (1959), 55-58. The lack of reference to Maxentius' third consulship and commemorative coins suggest this.

¹¹⁶ Carson and Kent, "Constantinian Hoards and other Studies in Late Roman Bronze Coinage," *NC* 16 (1956), 116.

from Rome and, thus, the personnel must have been transferred from Rome and not Carthage.¹¹⁷ Regardless of the origin of the personnel, Albertson is also hesitant to accept that the mint was opened solely to accommodate the absence of coinage from Carthage and rather, through the evaluation of hoards, he determined that coinage from the Ostian mint followed the same circulation patterns as that from Rome.¹¹⁸ In light of this, he posits that Maxentius' foundation of the mint at Ostia, when coupled with the cessation in minting at Ticinum and Aquileia from 309 CE on, three full years before Constantine's invasion into Italy, represents a break from the tetrarchic policy, which had required areas to be supplied by regional mints.¹¹⁹ Instead, Maxentius attempted to centralize mint production and distribution, establishing Ostia to supplement production at Rome.

The iconography on coinage both from Rome and Ostia after the separation of Maxentius from Maximian and Constantine becomes increasingly "Rome-centric." An early *aureus* from Ostia bears the familiar legend, CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE, with the commonly associated type of Roma, although at Ostia the tetra- or hexastyle temple facade is omitted. This, however, is the only appearance of this legend at Ostia, instead this reverse legend is replaced by the overwhelming preponderance of types and legends that emphasized Rome's mythical past. The most common coin to be issued at Ostia, minted in the first issue of *aes* and continued through to the last, bore the legend AETERNITAS AVG N. This legend was invariably accompanied by the reverse type of the *dioscuri* standing and facing one another (fig. 11c). On some issues in the same series and with the same legend, the *lupa romana* and the suckling twins, Romulus and Remus, were added between the *dioscuri*. This legend and type, including its variation with the

¹¹⁷ Albertson, "Maxentian Hoards and the Mint at Ostia" *ANSMN* 30 (1985), 125-128. In fact, Albertson goes as far as to identify and argue that the same engraver cut dies for two Maxentian *aurei* from Ostia and one *aureus* from Rome with the obverse legend MAXENTIVS P F INV AVG with PR in the exergue.

¹¹⁸ Albertson, "Maxentian Hoards and the Mint at Ostia" *ANSMN* 30 (1985), 129-132.

¹¹⁹ Albertson, "Maxentian Hoards and the Mint at Ostia" *ANSMN* 30 (1985), 133.

inclusion of the *lupa* and the twins, was commonly minted at Ostia for Maxentius until its seizure by Constantine. This common type was supplemented by another, as *aes* was minted in a later series with the legend SAECULI FELICITAS AVG N and this legend was accompanied by the *lupa romana* and the twins as a type. The same type is present on two issues of silver bearing the slightly different legend TEMPORVM FELICITAS AVG N. A marked increase and almost unwavering preference to mint coins with iconography that celebrate Rome and its symbols is discernible in Maxentian coinage from Ostia. Cullhed argues that the *lupa romana* was first used in the Republic in connection with consular elections and was continually used through to the mid-third century CE when it became associated with the secular games of Philip the Arab in 248 CE.¹²⁰ Therefore, its mere presence proclaimed Maxentius' *romantias* and highlighted his Romaphilia. As for the *dioscuri*, they were often associated with the *penates* of Rome and, therefore, their presence is argued to have insured Rome's safety and perseverance. That they were so prominent on Maxentius' coinage from Ostia should, therefore, only strengthen the argument that Maxentius sought to propagate the preservation of Rome and her revival as the center of the empire.¹²¹

The same message is observable at Rome. After 308 CE and the opening of the mint at Ostia, gold and silver ceased to be minted there and *aes* was minted in abundance. Initially, before the break with Maximian and Constantine, *aes* was minted for all three with the legend CONSERVATORES VRB SVAE. They featured the accompanying type of Roma seated to the left in a hexastyle temple holding a spear in her left hand, sometimes depicted with a shield at her side. After the break with his father, the legend was shortened to CONSERV VRB SVAE and it was minted through to 312 CE for Maxentius alone (fig. 11d). The overwhelming presence

¹²⁰ Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 49.

¹²¹ Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 49.

of *Dea Roma* in the coinage is in direct contrast to Maxentius' predecessors. As discussed in chapter one, on all coinage minted across the empire between 294 and 305 CE Roma does not appear on a single issue, not as an obverse or reverse type, nor is any explicit mention made of Roma in a legend. It is clear that Maxentius saw this as an opportunity as Roma became the most characteristic god/goddess on Maxentian coinage, and was almost invariably associated with the reverse legend CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE. Not only does this further demonstrate Maxentius' break from the tetrarchy and its representations but, more importantly, it once again indicates Maxentius' deference for Rome. Maxentius renewed the use of the goddess as a regular numismatic type, highlighting her conspicuous absence from his predecessors' coinage and, in the process, demonstrating his own reverence of the Eternal city.

Outside of Roma, however, the *dioscuri* and the twins are both divinely inspired types that Maxentius chose to use to demonstrate his Romaphilia, but these were not the only divine entities that featured on his coinage. Hercules, of course, factored prominently, but surprisingly Cullhed points out that the second most prevalent god on Maxentian coinage was Mars and not Hercules as might be expected.¹²² In fact, the increase in the use of Mars as a type or incorporated into the legend follows an informative chronological pattern that has been recently recognized.¹²³ Not only is Mars the most prominent deity other than Roma, but after Maximian's break with Maxentius, Hercules no longer factors as a type nor is he incorporated into the legends. At Rome, before 308 CE, seventeen different issues across all denominations featured Hercules either in the type, incorporated into the legend, or with his iconographic attributes on

¹²² Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 49. An examination of the issues present in *RIC* VI show that Roma factors as a type on sixty-eight issues across Maxentius' reign, Mars on twenty-seven, and Hercules only on seventeen. In fact, even the *dioscuri* factor more prominently than Hercules, featuring on twenty-one issues as a main type, but all from Ostia.

¹²³ See Hekster, O., "The City of Rome in Late Imperial Ideology: The Tetrarchs, Maxentius, and Constantine," *MedAnt* 2 (1999), 15.

the obverse bust of the emperor.¹²⁴ On the contrary, only five issues featured Mars as the central type, two *aurei* with the reverse legend MARTI CONSERV AVGG ET CAESS NN, an additional two with the reverse legend PRINCIPI IMPERII ROMANI, and one issue of silver with the reverse legend MARTI PROPA IMP AVG N.¹²⁵ This pattern would seem to suggest that prior to his break with Maximian, Maxentius actively sought to associate himself with the Herculian line and his father, Maximian, by choosing Hercules as his *comes*. This pattern, and Maxentian ideology along with it, changed exponentially after the events of May 308 CE and this is reflected in the numismatic record. Remaining at Rome, twelve *aes* issues, as gold and silver ceased to be minted there, post-Maximian featured Mars as the main type.¹²⁶ Each issue was struck for Maxentius alone. At Ostia a similar picture emerges, Hercules does not appear on one coin in any denomination, instead, as outlined above, the *dioscuroi* factor prominently and their preferential use is supplemented by ten issues that feature Mars.¹²⁷ It seems, therefore, that Maxentius adapted his propaganda to meet the political climate of the period. Originally, he

¹²⁴ *RIC* VI Roma 137, 138, 139, 147, 170, 171, & 181-184 all feature some derivation of the HERCVLI COMITI legend; *RIC* VI Roma, 214 features Hercules on the reverse strangling a lion with the legend CONSERVATORI AVG N. While *RIC* VI Roma 134, 175 & 176 features as their type Concordia, standing facing right and leaning on a sceptre, extending her right hand to Hercules, who is standing facing left and leaning on a club. They are accompanied by the reverse legend CONCORD MILIT FELIC ROMANOR. Finally, *RIC* VI Roma 166-168 are gold multiples, one with the reverse legend CONSERVATOR VRB SVAE (166) and two with FELIX PROCESS CONSVLAT AVG N (167 & 168) feature the bust of Maxentius draped in the lion's skin of Hercules. They obviously date near to the break with Maximian as two celebrate Maxentius' first consulship in April 308 CE. *RIC* VI, 166 is contemporary as its obverse die is linked to that of *RIC* VI, 168.

¹²⁵ *RIC* VI, Roma 140 & 148 for the *aurei* with the legend MARTI CONSERV AVGG ET CAESS NN. *RIC* VI Roma 172 & 186 for the *aurei* with the reverse legend PRINCIPI IMPERII ROMANI, and *RIC* VI, Roma 189 for the silver. The latter features Mars extending his right hand to a woman, possibly *Roma*, with the *lupa romana* and twins between them. This type is important as it may also be depicted on top of a statue base dedicated by Maxentius to Mars and Romulus and Remus in the Roman Forum. See below in section on Maxentian epigraphic representation pg. 55-57.

¹²⁶ *RIC* VI, Roma 218-221, 222 issued from two *officinae*, 266-270, & 277.

¹²⁷ *RIC* VI, Ostia 3 & 6 in Gold, the former has the reverse legend MARTI VICTORI AVG and is possibly linked to the obverse die of *RIC* VI, Ostia 9, which has the reverse legend VICTORIA AETERNA AVG N. Both likely commemorate Maxentius' victory over Domitius Alexander. *RIC* VI, Ostia 6 seems to commemorate the same event as between the Mars and Maxentius there is a prostrate figure who is likely Africa; she appears to be wearing an elephant skin on her head and holding grain in her right hand and a *patera* in her left. *RIC* VI, Ostia 11 minted in the first sequence of mint marks from one *officina* and the second sequence from three *officinae* & *RIC* VI, Ostia 12 in silver. *RIC* VI, Ostia 48-50 in *aes* with MARTI COMITI AVG N as the reverse legend and *RIC* VI, Ostia 55 with Mars handing a globe to Maxentius on the reverse.

sought to be recognized in a harmonious entente with his father and Constantine, and this was propagated on coinage. After the break, however, Hercules is conspicuously absent from all Maxentian coinage and, instead, Maxentius favoured particularly Roman types, such as the *dioscuri*, the *lupa romana*, and Roma herself. More significantly, Maxentius now adopted Mars as his *comes*. This was done in obvious rejection to tetrarchic ideology, as instead of the traditional *comites*, Jupiter and Hercules, Maxentius adeptly chose a deity that was not previously honoured by the tetrarchs and that was deeply engrained in Roman tradition. Mars was the father of the founder of Rome and, thus, suited Maxentian ideology as he continued to fashion himself *conservator* of his Rome.

From the outset, Maxentius made visible his intentions. His first issues of *aurei* from Rome demonstrate this. Initially he minted three types for himself and two for Maximian, followed up with two additional issues for Constantine. The reverse legends and types all propagated Maxentian ideology. Among these initial *aurei*, by minting for himself an issue with the reverse legend CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE accompanied by Roma as the main type, Maxentius fashioned himself preserver of Rome, his own city. Maxentius adeptly continued this preferential treatment of Rome throughout his entire reign. Roma was, disproportionately, the main deity on all Maxentian coinage, most regularly associated with the reverse legend *conservator urbis suae*.¹²⁸ This preferential use of Roma was made all the more conspicuous by her complete absence on Maxentius' predecessors' coinage. Maxentius did not limit himself to Roma in displaying his commitment to and deference for the Eternal City. When the mint was opened at Ostia, a decision that has already been shown as a move away from tetrarchic policies, Maxentius implemented the use of particularly Roman types such as the *dioscuri*, the *lupa*

¹²⁸ See above fn. 122 for distribution of deities among types. Roma was used as a type on forty-one more issues than Mars, who was used second only to Roma.

romana, and Romulus and Remus. These types reflected deeply engrained Roman traditions and spoke to Rome's appeal to the *mos maiorum*. Also included in his first issue of *aurei* from Rome were the reverse legends HERCVLI COMITI AVGG ET CAESS NN and MARTI CONSERV AVGG ET CAESS NN. These, too, were part of continual propagandistic programme that Maxentius implemented. The former represented Maxentius' attempt to position himself in an alliance with his father, and to propagate a resurgence of the Herculian line. It seems that this was done initially to gain military support, as both reverse legends associated with the first issue of *aurei* struck for Maximian demonstrate this point. Maxentius used his father's military experience and appeal with the army to achieve harmony with the troops in Italy. Once this was complete and the relationship between Maxentius and his father soured, Maxentius sought to establish another deity as his *comes*. He did not have to look far, as from his first issue, Maxentius associated himself with Mars. This association was so natural given Mars' deep connection with Rome that when Maxentius finally broke with Maximian, Mars became the predominant deity, represented as Maxentius' *comes*, and Hercules disappeared from the Maxentian numismatic record.

Through an examination of the numismatic evidence it becomes apparent that Maxentius saw Rome as the author of his power and envisioned it, once again, as the center of the empire. He ordered the implementation of types and associated legends that demonstrated his *romanitas*. Moreover, Maxentius' coinage demonstrates his shrewd ability to react in an ad hoc manner to the political ebbs and flows of his time. He continually expressed the same ideological message, that of Rome's pre-eminence, and he did so by repackaging his Romaphilia to meet the political demands that faced him. By keeping *Dea Roma*, Rome, and its traditional symbols at the center

of his numismatic programme, Maxentius visually displayed his self-proclaimed title of “preserver of his city.”

“Marti Invicto Patri:” Maxentius in the Epigraphic Record at Rome

A marble statue base inscribed on all sides stood, until recently, often unnoticed or disregarded where it was found in 1899 near to the Lapis Niger in the *Forum Romanum* (fig. 12a). This base has on its front an inscription that offers a glimpse into Maxentius’ ideological programme. It reads:

*Marti Invicto Patri
et Aeternae Urbis Suae
Conditoribus
Dominus Noster
[[Imp(erator) Maxentius P(ius) F(elix)]]
Invictus Aug(ustus)*¹²⁹

By dedicating this statue and sanctioning its message, Maxentius made a potent statement. Just as on his coinage, he aligned himself with Mars and the founders of Rome, positioning himself as the founder of a new Rome, “his own eternal city.” This message was not only discernible but must have been rather striking as this statue base, with its accompanying statue, was situated across the Sacra Via north of the imposing and, likely, begrudged tetrarchic five-column monument. This inscription indicates two things. First, that Maxentius sought to propagate a message similar to that on his coinage—that he was the preserver and *conditor* of a restored Rome—and, second, that Maxentius carried this political programme out on multiple mediums in a coordinated and formulaic manner. A second inscription, in very close proximity, and possibly date, provides insight into Maxentius’ relationship with the *populus* and the senate, which generally has been thought to be less than amicable due to Maxentius’ subsequent

¹²⁹ *CIL* VI, 33856, “To Unconquered Mars, the father, and the founders of his own eternal city, Imperator Maxentius Pius Felix, unconquered Augustus (dedicated this).”

representation as a *tyrannus*. While a further inscription demonstrates that Maxentian political language, which was initially consigned to imperial usage, began to be disseminated and created a new, or rather renewed, standard formula when commemorating the emperor in Rome. In evaluating the epigraphic record, although limited in its content due to Maxentius' posthumous subjection to *damnatio memoriae*, a clearer picture of Maxentius' reign comes into view.

Maxentius built a political policy based on an ideology of the *renovatio Romae* and he presented this on all types of visual mediums, making his Romaphilia omnipresent. Yet, he did so with the support of Rome, not only the Praetorian Guard but also the *populus* and the senate; Rome was his *auctor imperii* and he, her preserver.

The inscription cited above pays direct homage not only to Mars but also to Roma in a way other than already discussed. The base boasts an additional inscription on its right side that can be associated with the Maxentian inscription on its front (fig. 12b). At top of the base, directly below a chiseled out line from an earlier inscription, it reads:

*Dedicata die(s) XI kal(endas) Maias
per Furium Octavianum v(irim) c(larissimum)
cur(atorem) aed(ium) sacr(arum)*¹³⁰

This records for posterity what must have been a strategically planned day of dedication, eleven days before the *kalends* of May or April 21, the *dies natalis* of Rome. Maxentius, already envisioned as a *conditor* of a renewed Rome because of the inscription on the front, strengthened his message by having it dedicated on the *dies natalis urbis*. Moreover, he continued a pattern that he began when he delayed until April 20, 308 CE to take up his first consulship.¹³¹ In

¹³⁰ CIL VI 33856, "Dedicated on the eleventh day before the *kalends* of May by Furius Octavianus, of *clarissimus* rank, curator of sacred buildings." It should be noted that the first line which dates to an earlier monument reads *[[magistri quinq(uennales) co[l]l(egium) f[a]bru[m]]*.

¹³¹ See above fn.112 for problem with consular dating in 307/308 and the explanation and significance of Maxentius' delay in taking the consulship.

associating all things with Rome, from assuming his initial consulship one day before the *dies natalis* to imperially sanctioned dedications, Maxentius embodied the austere and ancient *pietas* that the city was longing for in their emperor. This very trait was honoured by an adjacent dedication from the Senate to Maxentius on the south side of the five-column monument in the *Forum Romanum*.

A marble statue base, damaged and partially re-cut for re-use, measuring fifty-five centimetres high and seventy centimetres wide still sits near where it was originally found in the *Basilica Iulia*. The text is cut into the front face of the base with capitals in *scriptura monumentalis*. The lines of text are all fashioned at the same height and appear to be relatively centered in the middle of the campus, although the third line is offset to the right (fig. 13). The final line of the text is cut through by a break in the block so that it reads:

*Censurae veteris
(P)ietatisque singularis
Domino nostr(o)
[[[M]axenti[o]]]*¹³²

Cullhed and Curran are both quick to associate this inscription with Maxentius' abolishment of Galerius' tax. The former translates the text "for his conduct in regard to taxation and his extraordinary *pietas*," and claims that his action "clearly testifies his *romanitas*."¹³³ While the latter is more reserved, offering no translation but simply stating, "it is possible that Maxentius' overturning of Diocletian and Galerius' tax policies in Rome was commemorated but equally the suspension of some emergency measure might be indicated."¹³⁴

Both are justified to assume *censura* is associated with some tax measure as the word was regularly used in the Principate to refer to the office of the censor or to a censorship, and

¹³² *CIL* VI 31394 = 33857, "to our Lord Maxentius for his ancient austerity and extraordinary piety."

¹³³ Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 61.

¹³⁴ Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 61.

Galerius had just recently attempted to abolish Rome's age old tax immunity.¹³⁵ They, however, overlook its use in the late antique epigraphic record in Italy and abroad. At Rome, *censura* is found in two later inscriptions; one awarded by Constantine I and his sons to the *praefectus urbis* of Rome, Amnius Anicius Paulinus, "for his nobility, eloquence, justice, and austerity (*censurae*)."¹³⁶ The other was awarded by Theodosius II and Valentinian III to Flavius Olbrius Auxentius Draucus "on account the distinguished merits of his administrations, which were strengthened by integrity, moderation, and austerity (*censura*)."¹³⁷ From these two inscriptions it would appear *censura* began, in the fourth century and through to the fifth, to be grouped in with particular qualities or virtues that were deemed desirable by the senatorial class in Rome. Moreover, two further inscriptions dedicated to the emperor Julian outside of Rome demonstrate that *censura* as a virtue also entered into imperial language in the fourth century. In both, *censura* is paired with *dignitas* and both are qualified by the adjective *antiquus*. The pairing in both inscriptions is formulaic and praises Julian's restitution of the republic with ancient

¹³⁵ For this particular usage see Liv. 4.8.2, "*idem hic annus **censurae** initium fuit, rei a parva origine ortae, quae deinde tanto incremento aucta est, ut morum disciplinaeque Romanae penes eam regimen, in senatu equitumque centuriis decoris dedecorisque discrimen sub ditione eius magistratus, ius publicorum privatorumque locorum, vectigalia populi Romani sub nutu atque arbitrio essent;*" and 4.24.3 "*tum dictator, ne nequiquam creatus esset, materia quaerendae bello gloriae adempta, in pace aliquid operis edere quod monumentum esset dictaturae cupiens, **censuram** minuere parat, seu nimiam potestatem ratus seu non tam magnitudine honoris quam diuturnitate offensus.*"

¹³⁶ CIL VI, 1683, Amnii Iun(ioris). / Anicio Paulino Iun(iori), c(larissimo) v(iro), / proco(n)s(uli) Asiae et Hellesponti, / consuli ordinario, praef(ecto) urbi / vice sacra iudicanti. **Ob / meritum nobilitatis, eloquii, / iustitiae atq(ue) censurae**, qui/bus privatim ac publice / clarus est, petitu populi R(omani), / testimonio senatus, iudicio / dd(ominorum) nn(ostrorum) triumphatoris Aug(usti) / Caesarumq(ue) florentium, / statuam secundam auro / superfusam locari sumptu / (15) publico placuit; The Chr. 354 lists Anicius Paulinus as *praefectus urbi* in 334 CE.

¹³⁷ CIL VI, 1725, Fl(avi) Olbi Auxenti Drauc[i]. / Fl(avio) Olbio Auxentio Drauco, v(iro) c(larissimo) et inl(ustrissimo), patriciae familiae / viro, senatus munis prompta devotione perfuncto, / comiti ordinis primi et vicario urbis Romae, comiti / sacri consistorii, praefecto urbis Romae. **Ob egregia / eius administrationum merita, quae integritate, / censura et moderatione ita vigerunt, ut submissi/mae potestatis reverentiam honorifica eius aucto/ritas custodiret, et humanitatem amabilis censura** / servaret, petitu senatus amplissimi, qui est iustus / arbiter dignitatum, excellentibus et magnificis / viris legatione mandata, ut inpetratorum digni/tas cresceret, quae paribus studiis amore iustitiae / et providentiae desiderabantur, dd(omini) nn(ostri) Fl(avii) / Theodosius et Placidus Valentinianus, invicti / ac triumphatores principes, semper Augusti, / ad remunerationem titulosque virtutum, quib(us) / circa rem publicam eximia semper probitas / invitatur, statuam auro fulgentem erigi conlocarique iusserunt.

austerity and dignity.¹³⁸ Its late antique association with imperial virtue is largely confirmed by an earlier passage in the *Historia Augusta*. Written in the late fourth century, the author assigns this very virtue to Marcus Aurelius when he records, “He repressed disturbances among the Sequani with his authority and severity (*censura*).”¹³⁹ It would appear, then, that based on the use of *censura* in the epigraphic record that both Cullhed and Curran are incorrect in suggesting that our Maxentian inscription is associated with taxation in any way. Its use on the statue base of Maxentius, therefore, is better envisaged as similar to that on the inscriptions dedicated to Auxentius Draucus and Anicius Paulinus. That is, as the Senate and people of Rome lauding Maxentius for his “ancient austerity and extraordinary *pietas*.”¹⁴⁰

To suggest that this would indicate anything other than an amicable relationship between Maxentius and the Senate would be hard to support. The two bases and their accompanying statues, then, both the one awarded by Maxentius and dedicated to Mars and the other to Maxentius because of his ancient and revered virtues, form a coherent pair; erected on either side of the western end of the *Forum Romanum* they provide a clear manifestation of Maxentian propaganda and ideology. They demonstrate Maxentius’ *romanitas*, his reverence for Rome and his affiliation with Mars, and, at the same time, they demonstrate that to the Senate, Maxentius embodied a new set of virtues that developed in late antiquity and that reflected the ubiquitous desire of the *mos maiorum*.

¹³⁸ AE 1992, 1510[Im]p(eratori) Caes(ari) [d(omino) n(ostro) Flavio Clau]dio Iuliano Pio Felici [victori] / venerabili ac triumphatori / semper Augusto pontifici / maximo German(ico) maximo / Alaman(nico) maximo Franc(ico) / maximo Sarmat(ico) maximo / imperatori S[ic] consuli III / patri patriae proconsuli / recuperata re publica [[[---]]] / [[[-----]]] / in antiquam ce(n) suram dignita/temque revocavit. and ILJug 1460, Imperat[ori] Caesa[ri] Fl[avio] / [C]l[aud]io Iu[liano] F[e]l[i]ci victori / venerabil[i] ac triumph[ato]ri semper [Augusto] p[ontifici] maximo [Francic]o maximo / Alaman(n)i[co] maximo Germani/co maxim[o] / impera[tori] VII] consuli / ter patri pa[triae] pro[consul]i re[cuperata] re pu[blica] / [--- in antiquam ce(n)/suram [dignit]atem(que) / r[evocavit].

¹³⁹ SHA, M. Aur. 22.10, “Res etiam in Sequanis turbatas censura et auctoritate repressit.”

¹⁴⁰ It should be noted that my inclusion of the dedicator as the Senate and the people of Rome is conjectural as the bottom of the base is no longer extant. It is highly probable that it was the Senate and the people of Rome given the appeal of these qualities to the Senate as expressed by CIL VI 1683 & 1725. However, Huelsen suggests it could have also been the *praefectus urbis*.

In her recent dissertation, Marlowe gives space to these two inscriptions in a short discussion on Maxentius and presents a new argument that supports the notion of their ideological contribution to Maxentian propaganda.¹⁴¹ She draws attention to the earlier inscriptions found on both statue blocks. On left side of the base dedicated to Mars there is a long inscription that lists magistrates dedicated under Lucius Verus (as an inscription on the back attests). Neither the inscription on the left nor that on the back show any attempt of erasure from when this marble was chosen for re-use. This is striking as both the face with the Maxentian inscription and the right side that mentions Furius Octavianus as the dedicator have signs of erasure.¹⁴² In light of this, Marlowe envisioned the inscription on the left side as possessing some ideological significance. This conclusion seems to be borne out on the adjacent statue base dedicated to Maxentius from the Senate. On its right side, although damaged by its later re-cutting, is a similar list. In the longest discussion on these inscriptions, Huelsen observes that one magistrate, a T. Manlius Ennianus, appears in common on both lists.¹⁴³ Moreover, he finds five magistrates on the base dedicated to Maxentius that are listed on a third, no longer extant, base.¹⁴⁴ This statue base was dedicated to Septimius Severus from the *collegium fabrii tignarii*, and this led Huelsen to the conclusion that all three bases made up a series of singular monuments that were grouped together and that honoured the *decuriones fabrii tignarii*. From this, Marlowe suggests that the mere presence of a list of older magistrates placed Maxentius'

¹⁴¹ Marlowe, E. *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome*, (PhD Diss. 2004), 39-57.

¹⁴² *CIL* VI, 33856. The first line at the top of the inscription on the left side was chiseled out but has been reconstructed, *[[magistri quinq(uennales) co[l]l(egium) f[a]bru[m]]*.

¹⁴³ *CIL* VI, 33856.

¹⁴⁴ *CIL* VI, 33856. The magistrates in question, M. Gellius Secundinus, P. Pomponius Papianus, C. Thoranius Honoratus, Annaeus Philetus, and Apuleius Philumenus, are all also listed on *CIL* VI, 33858.

image in the framework of names from Rome's venerable past and, thus, their preservation on his statue bases was a conscious choice that enhanced his relationship with the Eternal City.¹⁴⁵

It is difficult to assign the same ideological importance to the magisterial list that Marlowe does, since the *fabrii tignarii* do not seem to have any particular association with Maxentius nor is there proof of their persistence in to the fourth century. What these lists do provide, however, is insight into the possibility that both statues were conceived and erected contemporaneously.¹⁴⁶ Hueslen writes that the third, no longer extant, statue base was found in the gardens of Cardinal Carpi, which were located in the area of the *Horti Salustiani* between the Pincian and Quirinal hills, while both of the Maxentian inscriptions were found in the *Forum Romanum*.¹⁴⁷ If all three bases were originally arranged in a group and erected together, as seems likely, this would have required the removal of both bases, the two that were re-used, in the early fourth century from their original locus. That two bases were used and the third, presumably, was left alone, would suggest that both the dedication to Mars and that to Maxentius were conceived together. It appears that when these statues were commissioned suitable bases of a similar size were sought for their pedestals, and these were found in the group of three bases dedicated by the *fabrii tignarii* in the second century CE.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Marlowe, E. *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome*, (PhD Diss. 2004), 57.

¹⁴⁶ A precise date for this is impossible to discern as there are no indications on either inscription. It is possible that both were dedicated on April 21, 308 CE when Maxentius and his son took up their first consulship, but given Maxentius' chronological association with Mars, recognized through the above examination of the numismatic record, it seems more likely that these statues were dedicated in 309 CE or later after Maxentius' break with Maximian.

¹⁴⁷ *CIL* VI, 33858= *CIL* VI, 1060, "*reperta in hortis carpensibus*." For the location of the gardens of Cardinal Rodolfo Pio da Carpi see Capanni, F., *Rodolfo Pio da Carpi (1500-1564): diplomatico cardinal collezionista : appunti bio-bibliografici* (Medola, 2001).

¹⁴⁸ They may have even been pulled from one of the many marble yards in Rome in late antiquity. On marble yards see Dodge, H. and Ward-Perkins (eds.) *Marble in Antiquity: Collected papers of J.B. Ward Perkins* (1992). If this is the case, then, the bases would likely be divested of their ideological significance since their association with "revered antiquity" might not be legible removed from their original *locus* and grouping. On the latter point see, Coates-Stephens, R. "Attitudes toward spolia in some late antique texts," in *Theory and Practice in Late Antiquity* (2003), 341-342.

As it appears, it is likely that these two bases were contemporaneous dedications and, therefore, the statues and their placement on either side of the *Forum Romanum* with the five-column monument between must have had a particular effect. On the one hand, it demonstrated a conscious effort on Maxentius' behalf to simultaneously propagate his *romanitas* and his possession of imperial virtues venerated by Rome and her populace. On the other hand, both were a visual manifestation of Maxentius' position outside the tetrarchy. He was given individual recognition in a scale more appropriate to his advertised *pietas* and, as such, this would appear in strong contradiction to the singular identity of the tetrarchic college looming high above.¹⁴⁹

Outside the forum, on the Quirinal, Maxentius' imprint on the epigraphic landscape of the city may also be observed. A fragmentary marble plaque found there from the base of a statue measuring seventeen inches tall, nineteen inches wide, and twenty-five inches thick with the honorand no longer legible is attributable to either Maxentius or Maximian. The inscription reads:

*Propagatori im[perii ---]
reique Roman[ae --- domino]
nostro M(arco) Aur(elio) V[al(erio) Maxentio]
Pio Felici Invi[cto --- Aug(usto) pont(ifici)]
[ma]x(imo) trib(unicia) p[ot(estate) ---]
-----¹⁵⁰.*

The language, and in particular the title *propagator*, is found more commonly associated with Maxentius than Maximian. This association is made apparent in the numismatic record. From 294 through to 305 CE the appellation *propagator* does not appear on a single tetrarchic coin,

¹⁴⁹ A visual impact that was recognized and posited by Marlowe, E. *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome*, (PhD Diss. 2004), 55.

¹⁵⁰ *CIL* VI 31385b = 40725, "To the extender of the Roman empire and state, our lord Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maxentius (?), pious, fortunate, unconquered Augustus, *pontifex maximus* holding tribunician power." Alföldi has proposed that the inscription is datable between February 307 CE and October 312 CE.

whereas the title is almost immediately manifested in Rome on Maxentian coinage. Included in his first issue of silver is a coin with the reverse legend MARTI PROPAG(atori) IMP AVG N accompanied by Mars standing and extending his right hand to a woman with the twins and the *lupa romana* in between as its reverse type. Interestingly enough, this same image has been posited to have sat atop the inscription dedicated to Mars and sanctioned by Maxentius in the *Forum Romanum*. More importantly, however, is the appellation *propagator*; it is continuously used in association with Mars throughout Maxentius' reign on coins minted only for him. The word commonly means "extender," "enlarger," or perhaps even "enhancer" and it is often accompanied by phrases such as "*orbis terrarum*" or "*rei Romae Publicae*," therefore, its relation to Mars as an epithet is obvious. For Maxentius, the epithet is equally as effective; tying into the propaganda of Maxentius the conservator of his city, by preserving Rome's traditions Maxentius was also seen as "extending" and "enhancing" the Roman state. In the epigraphic record, however, the title is virtually unattested since its use in association with the Severans in the early third century.¹⁵¹ Therefore, since the numismatic record demonstrates that the appellation appears to be more commonly associated with Maxentius and virtually absent during the tetrarchic period, it is likely that the honorand of the above fragmentary plaque was indeed Maxentius. If this is accepted, the plaque demonstrates the origin of an important trend that witnessed the resurrection of a common second and early third century imperial appellation.

During the Severan period *propagator imperii* or *propagator orbis terrarum* appears on no less than thirteen inscriptions dedicated to the imperial family, while the latter, *propagator orbis terrarum*, appears on two further inscriptions from Rome in the early second century

¹⁵¹ CIL VI, 36947 an inscription on a statue base from the *Forum Romanum* may prove to be the exception. The base with this appellation has been assigned to Maximian, however, this association is not entirely certain. The base was reused as building material in the middle ages and the campus is badly weathered, therefore, the inscription itself is heavily abraded and the text cannot be restored with confidence. The letters M and X are visible and this has led to the dedicatee being identified with Maximian, but given the uncertainty over almost every line there is no reason not to suggest that the honorand may instead be Maxentius.

dedicated to Trajan.¹⁵² Subsequently, after an almost one hundred year hiatus the appellation appears again in Rome on the above mentioned fragmentary plaque dedicated to Maxentius. From its reintroduction under Maxentius, the appellation then became more frequently used by the Constantinian dynasty in Rome.¹⁵³ This evidence suggests that Maxentius reinvigorated a second and, predominantly, third century imperial appellation by propagating it on his coinage and in association with his imperial titulature. Subsequently, it diffused into the epigraphic habit and throughout the fourth century was again made a common imperial appellation. Such a *renovatio* not only demonstrates Maxentius' *romanitas* by reinvigorating and recalling the last emperors who actually resided in Rome, but it also elucidates the effectiveness of Maxentian propaganda. Just as Constantine succeeded in creating a fictive narrative with Maxentius as a *tyrannus*, Maxentius through the coordinated use of language across mediums reintroduced imperial appellations that with him began to be associated with the person of the emperor and remained to be so throughout the fourth century.¹⁵⁴

A review of the epigraphic evidence, despite its paucity, proves to be insightful when evaluating Maxentian propaganda in Rome. Just as on his coinage Maxentius vigorously propagated his *romanitas*. He undertook a coordinated political and ideological programme that centred on the *renovatio* of the *urbis Romae*. He demonstrated this in a number of ways. Most strikingly, by associating himself with the symbols of Rome and by presenting Mars as his *comes*, but also more subtly by reintroducing long defunct imperial appellations that recalled

¹⁵² For Septimius Severus and the Severans: *AE* 1969/70, 697-699; *AE* 1968, 602; *AE* 1967, 567 = *CIL* VIII, 18256; *AE* 1989, 900; *AE* 1942/43, 11 = *ILAlg* 2, 3591; *AE* 1995, 1790; *AE* 1917/18, 45; *CIL* VIII, 6048; *CIL* VIII, 19693 = *ILAlg* 2, 2093; *CIL* VIII, 19679 = *ILAlg* 2, 3393; *ILAlg* 2, 3394; *CIL* VI, 1080 = 40638. For Trajan: *CIL* VI, 958 = 40500 & *CIL* VI, 40501.

¹⁵³ *CIL* VI, 31395, *propagatori imperii Romani*; *CIL* VI, 40768a, *propagatori orbis sui*; *CIL* VI, 40764a, *propagatori pacis auctorique*. *CIL* VI, 40820 may also be a fourth, however, the honorand and majority of the inscription is lost so that it could also be attributed to Maxentius.

¹⁵⁴ For the longevity of the renewed appellation see Reynolds, J.M. and J. B. Ward-Perkins, *The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania* (1952), 477 for an inscription to Theodosius I with the appellation *propagatori Romani orbis*.

Rome's last resident emperors. Moreover, he appealed to the Roman desire for the *mos maiorum* by embodying a new set of virtues that recalled the piety and austerity of the past. In doing this, Maxentius seems, contrary to what has been the predominant belief, to have endeared himself with the people and the Senate of Rome. Lastly, it would appear that the epigraphic record supports the notion that Maxentius sought to distance himself from his tetrarchic predecessors and contemporaries. He had statues erected for him that not only iconographically demonstrated his Romaphilia, something the tetrarchs avoided, but the placement in the *Forum Romanum* of the two above mentioned statue bases and their now lost accompanying statues must have provided viewers with a potent message—Maxentius was not a member of the imperial college but Rome's own emperor who represented himself in due measure to his lauded ancient virtues. This image proved to be in strong opposition to that of the tetrarchs, whose subordination of the *Forum Romanum* was visibly manifest in the axial reorientation of the space bookended by the looming and omnipresent five-column monuments. What remains of the epigraphic evidence elucidates that Maxentius systematically proclaimed for himself the self-aggrandizing title of the “preserver of his city” and that he took this even further, also fashioning himself as the founder of a revived Rome, all the while receiving popular support from within “his own eternal city.”

The Maxentian Building Program

In his six years as emperor of Rome, Maxentius initiated an impressive building program in the center of the city. He rebuilt the monumental Hadrianic temple of Venus and Roma, appropriated the space once occupied by the Flavian *horrea piperataria* to build his *Basilica Nova*, and farther west he built his Sacra Via Rotunda. In doing so, he completely reoriented the space along the north side of the Sacra Via. Lately there has been a renewed interest in examining Maxentius' topographical impact on Rome, yet most has been concerned

independently with its architectural design, patronage, or political implications.¹⁵⁵ His building program as a whole has only been examined summarily as part of a larger urban setting. Most recently, Dumser's contribution to the growing body of scholarship on Maxentian architecture has brought to light strong new evidence that helps to reshape our thinking about Maxentian architecture. However, she minimizes the social and historical implications of her findings. The goal of this section, then, is multifaceted. First, it is to re-evaluate Maxentius' architectural contributions in Rome's center in light of the new architectural and archaeological evidence to demonstrate that Maxentius' "Sacra Via Trio" were not only the physical manifestation of his appellation, *conservator urbis suae*, but the main avenue of his propaganda. Second, it is to examine how the Maxentian ensemble functioned in the dense urban setting of the center of Rome. It considers how he manipulated space, altering a highly conspicuous area of Rome and reorienting major east-west and north-south routes that, in turn, created an altogether new experience for spectators. Moreover, recent reappraisals of archaeological evidence suggest that Maxentius' contribution to the center of Rome may be greater than realized. This section, lastly, then will also address this issue in reconstructing the vistas and vignettes that spectators must have experienced entering a veritable "Maxentian Forum." It will be shown that Maxentius manipulated monumental public space to demonstrate and secure his power in the Eternal City, but did so in a way that suited the already established urban fabric.

The "Sacra Via Trio"

On the Sacra Via, just east of the center of the *Forum Romanum*, Maxentius elected to build (or re-build) three monumental edifices. These buildings mark the first imperial

¹⁵⁵ Cullhed (1994), in his monumental study on Maxentian *romanitas*, provides a summary of Maxentius' architectural contributions and sets their value as forms of 'traditional and ordinary' imperial propaganda; Curran (2000) chooses to favour evidence that suits the trajectory of his argument of topographical, social, and religious change in fourth century Rome often leaving unchallenged untenable theses; while Dumser (2005) contributes to the catalogue of new work on Maxentian Rome by focusing entirely on architectural form, design, and patronage.

intervention in this space since Hadrian's building of the imposing Temple of Venus and Rome in the second century CE.¹⁵⁶ It is natural, therefore, that any study of Maxentian architecture and patronage in Rome's center should focus on the "Sacra Via Trio" of the Rotunda, the Basilica Nova, and the *Templum Romae*. The buildings' topographical homogeneity and conspicuousness represent a concerted effort by Maxentius to harness the propagandistic power of the area surrounding the *Forum Romanum* through forms of "traditional" imperial munificence and, thus, also provide an ideal locale to study urban planning and spatial demonstrations of power.¹⁵⁷ The Sacra Via Rotunda, a name that is preferred here to the "so-called Temple of Romulus," as its function as a temple is difficult to sustain, is a suitable place to begin since its projecting side apsidal aisles and center rotunda joined by a concave facade stand sentry as one moved along the Sacra Via in to the Colosseum Valley passing the impressive Maxentian trio.

The Sacra Via Rotunda

As alluded to, the Sacra Via Rotunda's architectural form is unique; it is visually defined by a domed rotunda with two flanking side aisles. The aisles project forward from the rotunda and are joined to the drum by a concave facade (fig. 14). Behind, it is joined by a large rectangular apsidal hall that is shifted eastward out of alignment with both the Sacra Via and the rotunda by about twenty-two degrees.¹⁵⁸ The Sacra Via Rotunda is located on the north side of the Sacra Via with the Temple of Antoninus Pius and Faustina to the west and the Basilica Nova towering to the east. Its facade lay opposite to the *Atrium Vestae*, while its rear, joined to the aforementioned apsidal hall, comprises the southwest corner of precinct of the Flavian *Templum*

¹⁵⁶ The temple was dedicated in 135 CE.

¹⁵⁷ See above, fn. 155, Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 60 calls Maxentius' building program "an example of ordinary attitude of *liberalitas* towards the population of Rome..." and therefore demonstrated that "Maxentius was working in a traditional vein of propaganda." I agree with Cullhed that indeed Maxentius was exploiting a traditional role of the emperor in Rome, however, it is its unconventional rather than its "ordinary" nature given the tenor of imperial attitude toward Rome after the Severans that made it so effective.

¹⁵⁸ Dumser, E. *The Architecture of Maxentius: A Study in Architectural Design and Urban Planning Early Fourth- Century Rome* (PhD Diss. 2005), 118.

Pacis. Thus, the Rotunda was built on a site restricted on all sides by the pre-existing and dense urban fabric that characterized Rome by the fourth century CE.

Resplendent in marble, highlighted by spoliated porphyry and cipollino columns and proconnesian marble revetment,¹⁵⁹ the Sacra Via Rotunda has almost ubiquitously been considered as an isolated rotunda with its flanking aisles, detached from the rear rectangular *aula*. As a result of this oversight, and in conjunction with a dubious reading of the placement of certain other monuments and the numismatic evidence, the complex came to bear the erroneous and misleading name, “the Temple of Romulus.”¹⁶⁰ This theory and the corresponding name are championed by Coarelli, who also argues that the complex served contemporaneously as a dynastic shrine and as the temple of the *penates* in Rome.¹⁶¹ The architectural design of the Sacra Via Rotunda precludes its function as a temple and, therefore, the appellation, “the Temple of Romulus” cannot be accepted.¹⁶² The complex’s design, however, does suggest another function.

¹⁵⁹ The most comprehensive discussions on the buildings decoration and design can be found in Cima, M., “Decorazione architettonica,” in *Il “Tempio di Romolo” al Foro Romano* (1981), 103-120 & Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (PhD diss. 2005), 116-132.

¹⁶⁰ Coarelli, “L’urbs e il suburbio,” in *Società Romana e impero tardoantico* (1986), 19-20. He suggests that the western apse of the Maxentian Basilica Nova was built in the area of the *domus* of the P. Valerius Poplicola, the first consul of Rome in 509 BCE and M. A. Valerius Maxentius’ gentilicial relative. Moreover, he posits that the Temple of the Penates said to be on the Velia near the short street to the *Carinae* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1.68.1) was also displaced by the construction of the Basilica. Because of this, he sees the Rotunda Complex as a dynastic shrine or a cenotaph of the *Valerii* with the flanking aisles holding the statues of the Penates and, thus, having a secondary function as a new temple of the Penates. He supports both suppositions with numismatic evidence, arguing that the *Aeternae Memoriae* coins minted for Romulus, Galerius, Maximian, and Constantius I depict this building and, when coupled with P. Valerius Poplicola’s association with the Velia, confirm its function as a dynastic monument. While he identifies two inter-columnar statues depicted on one of the many variations of the rotunda reverse types as the Dioscuri and with this also, dubiously, associates the Rotunda Complex with the Temple of the Penates. Dumser refutes both of these lines of argumentation effectively and demonstrates that there is no evidence, numismatic, archaeological, literary, or otherwise, that substantiate Coarelli’s hypothetical and widely accepted reconstruction.

¹⁶¹ See above, fn. 160 above and for the full arguments Coarelli, *Guida Archeologia di Roma* (1974), 94; and for the same argument with revision that includes the complex’s location as the original location of the Temple of Jupiter Stator see Coarelli, “L’urbs e il suburbio,” in *Società Romana e impero tardoantico* (1986), 8-20; see Cullhed, *Conservator Urbis Suae* (1994), 55 and Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 61, as both accept Coarelli’s interpretation; For a strong rebuttal see Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 155, fn. 102.

¹⁶² Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 156-157. She was the first to advance this thesis but a quick survey of Roman temples easily proves it. Two circular temples enter into the catalogue of Roman temples,

As stated, the facade of the Rotunda faces the Sacra Via and is defined by two projecting side aisles that protrude from a central drum. The drum is enlivened by the green patina of the bronze doors and, once inside, measures 14.70 meters in diameter.¹⁶³ The dome of the rotunda is pierced by an oculus, the sole source of light for the front of the complex.¹⁶⁴ Four doorways are cut through the walls of the drum: the main entrance, one doorway to each side aisle, and a door to the rectangular *aula* behind. None of the doors are axially aligned; the back door is shifted twenty-two degrees to the east, axially arrayed with the rear rectangular *aula*, while the doorway to the eastern flanking aisle is shifted four degrees forward from that into the western aisle.¹⁶⁵ Each side aisle terminated to the north in an apse and was covered by a cross-vaulted roof. The side aisles are connected to the rotunda by a curved facade. The arrangement of the facade, however, has been a subject of much debate. It has largely been accepted that the original facade was flat, and that the concave facade was a later addition.¹⁶⁶ Dumser proposes that the flat facade was a feature of the original design, which included the four windows in the drum, that was never realized in completion. Consequently, she argues that the concave facade should be viewed as an in construction design change and that its genesis should be associated with the original patron and not as a distinct later building phase.¹⁶⁷ Unfortunately, the upper reaches of the facade

the Pantheon variety and *tholoi*. The Sacra Via Rotunda has neither a columnar porch with pediment or a surrounding peristyle, thus it does not fit into any category of temple architecture.

¹⁶³ Fiore, F.P. "L'impianto architettonico antico," in *Il "Tempio di Romolo" al Foro Romano* (1981), 67. Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 118, calls it 50 Roman feet.

¹⁶⁴ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 118-119 and Fiore, "L'impianto architettonico antico" (1981), 71 state that the original design included four windows that pierced the drum but Dumser recognizes that before the building's completion these windows were in filled, leaving the oculus as the only source of light.

¹⁶⁵ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 118-120. Dumser also notes that the western aisle is 15 cm narrower than that on the east, while the vaults of the eastern hall spring at a higher elevation than those on the west. She suggests that these differences may be a result of adaptations in the design process based on the demands of the space.

¹⁶⁶ Fiore, "L'impianto architettonico antico," (1981), 74-81; Ward-Perkins, B. "Latin Pagan Architecture in Rome and in the Provinces," in *Etruscan and Roman Architecture* (1970), 505; Marlowe, E. "Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius," in *The Emperor and Rome. Space, Representation, and Ritual* (2010), 213-215.

¹⁶⁷ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 129-130.

can only be hypothetically reconstructed as the extant remains do not reach the height of the entablature. The fourth and final door opened from the rotunda into a large rectangular *aula* of the *Templum Pacis* where an apse was constructed that bisected the northeast end of the hall. The walls of the hall were altered from their original Flavian form, heightened by 2.6 meters.¹⁶⁸ Examination of the brickwork elucidates that the renovations to the *Templum Pacis*' rear rectangular hall must have been carried out at a similar date to the construction of the rotunda.¹⁶⁹ This was confirmed in the 1970s when the rear doorway's threshold block was found *in situ* embedded in the fourth-century fabric of the rotunda, demonstrating that these two spaces communicated from the outset.¹⁷⁰ Despite this, Fiore, in the only monograph on the architectural layout of the Rotunda, ignores the significance of the unity of the rectangular hall and the Sacra Via Rotunda, considering the Rotunda and flanking aisles in isolation. This has resulted in subsequent errors in the scholarship such as Coarelli's, who attributes the rectangular hall's renovation to later in the fourth century.¹⁷¹

Understanding that the two spaces, the rotunda with its flanking aisles and the rear rectangular hall, once part of the *Templum Pacis*, are spatially related and were so from the genesis of the building proves to be of the utmost importance. It allows for an unobstructed evaluation of the Sacra Via Rotunda's function from a purely architectural standpoint, which should be accepted as the only secure evidence for its function. It is clear that the rear rectangular hall was part of the complex at its outset, and when assessed within the body of late antique evidence of apsidal halls, it can be surmised that the rear apsidal space served as an audience

¹⁶⁸ Krautheimer, R, *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae I*, 142-143; Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 121.

¹⁶⁹ Krautheimer, R, *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae I*, 142-143.

¹⁷⁰ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 123.

¹⁷¹ Coarelli, *Guida Archeologia di Roma* (1974), 94.

hall.¹⁷² Moreover, the rotunda itself, with its off-axis doors that masked the twenty-two degree variation in alignment of the *Templum Pacis* and the *Forum Romanum*, seems to function as a grand vestibule to the rear rectangular hall. Dumser posits that the four doorways, one which offers direct access to the Sacra Via, indicate that rotunda served as “passage architecture.”¹⁷³ She finds direct comparanda at Diocletian's palace in Split, where a domed vestibule, also pierced with four doors, acts as a link between a courtyard and the private quarters of the complex.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, the concave facade, if seen as a original modification, provides a pseudo-symmetrical architectural entrance to the southwestern end of the imperial *fora* mirroring the concave design of the *Porticus Absidata*, the entrance situated at the farthest northeastern point of the *Forum Transitorium* that navigates the off -axis approach to the imperial *fora* from the Subura.¹⁷⁵ In adhering to this “form follows function” argument it can be more readily substantiated that the Sacra Via Rotunda was, in fact, an audience hall, into which the domed rotunda served as a monumental vestibule and entrance, than a temple since its design precludes any indication that it served as one.¹⁷⁶ Since the architectural form of the Sacra Via Rotunda suggests a function more in line with the monumental apsidal hall, it remains to discuss for whom it served this purpose. For this, a date of construction and its patron must be secured.

For a long time now scholars have confidently associated this complex with Maxentius based on a series of coins which feature a domed rotunda on the reverse. Dumser recently called into question the nature of these architectural images and demonstrated that they functioned

¹⁷² Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 161-163. Apsidal halls became common place in the fourth and fifth century. As audience halls they are evidenced in Trier, in Diocletian's palace in Split, and in Galerius' retirement villa in Romuliana. They are also argued to have proliferated in domestic architecture during this period as a reaction to Late Antique representations of power, one such example is apsidal hall at the Piazza Armerina, for a comprehensive study on this see Bowes, K. *Houses and Society in the Later Roman Empire*, 35-60.

¹⁷³ Dumser *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 161.

¹⁷⁴ Dumser *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 161, fn. 114.

¹⁷⁵ Bauer, H. “Porticus Absidata” *LTUR IV* (1999), 116.

¹⁷⁶ See above fn. 162.

more as a symbolic architectural type that proclaimed Maxentius' dynastic right to rule.¹⁷⁷ She grounds this line of argumentation in the fact that the rotunda type bears too many variations across the *Aeternae Memoriae* series to represent a single building.¹⁷⁸ All of the types include a domed rotunda surmounted by an eagle with the doors ajar; however, some are depicted with no columns and constructed in *opus quadratum* blocks, others with a hexastyle facade, and final variation includes a tetrastyle facade.¹⁷⁹ Dumser acknowledges that the architectural form of the latter may, indeed, correspond to the rotunda on the Sacra Via,¹⁸⁰ and this is supported by the fact that the tetrastyle variation was only minted in Rome. The localization of production might suggest that the die engravers found inspiration for their rotunda depiction in this recently constructed and highly conspicuous monument. The internal evidence provides support. Heres argues that the rotunda is likely of a Maxentian date based on masonry that is characteristic of his construction and similar to that in the Basilica Nova.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, one brick recovered from the rotunda in the nineteenth century bears the same stamp as bricks found in the Basilica Nova, the Palatine Baths, the Baths of Diocletian, and the Baths of Constantine,¹⁸² and a second recovered in the same spot bore a stamp similar to those found in the Baths of Constantine as well as numerous other examples found near to the church of SS. Cosmas e Damian.¹⁸³ The internal evidence, therefore, confirms that the rotunda was built in the late third or early fourth century. While with Dumser's concession that the tetrastyle variation of the rotunda reverse may find inspiration from the Sacra Via monument, when coupled with the localized production of

¹⁷⁷ See Dumser, E "The Maxentian *Aeternae Memoriae* coinage: an issue of symbolic intent," *Imaging Ancient Rome (JRA Suppl)*, 2006; Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 140-150.

¹⁷⁸ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 140-150.

¹⁷⁹ For *opus quadratum* see *RIC VI Rome*, 207, 226, 239-240, 257; *RIC VI Ostia*, 34, 58 & 59. For hexastyle facade see *RIC VI Rome* 250-256; *RIC VI Ostia* 24-33. For tetrastyle facade see *RIC VI Rome* 243-249.

¹⁸⁰ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 152.

¹⁸¹ Heres, T. *Paries. A Proposal for a Dating System of Late-Antique Masonry Structures in Rome and Ostia* (1982), 106.

¹⁸² *CIL XV*, 1622

¹⁸³ *CIL XV*, 1579a; Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 135.

this reverse type in Rome, it can be surmised that the Sacra Via Rotunda was likely built under Maxentius, although this attribution can no longer be accepted without evaluation.

Since it is difficult to attribute the Sacra Via Rotunda to another patron based on the preponderance of internal and external evidence that seems to associate this building with Maxentius the rotunda needs to be viewed as a reception hall for either Maxentius himself or a magistrate in the city of Rome. Its location almost across from the Palatine's imperial palace and adjacent to the Basilica Nova would seem to preclude the smaller and less traditional apsidal hall of the Sacra Via Rotunda as a venue for Maxentius to receive clients and dispense justice and, therefore, it should be considered as a reception hall for a high-ranking official. Scholarship on the topography of fourth-century Rome has sought to locate an office of the *praefectus urbis* in one of Maxentius' buildings; predominately it has been the Basilica Nova, but given that the Sacra Via Rotunda's primary function was that of a reception hall, likely for a high ranking, official this possibility will be explored in relation to the Rotunda.¹⁸⁴

For a long time the *Templum Pacis* has been associated with the *praefectus urbis* since the Severan Marble Plan was mounted on its southeastern wall.¹⁸⁵ In accepting this association, the Marble Plan is perceived to have functioned as an administrative tool aiding the urban prefect in his task of property organization. Dumser rightly points out, however, that this theory contradicts the aesthetic and context of porticus decor in Rome. She cites the world map of Agrippa that hung in the *Porticus Vipsania* as an example, and argues that large scale maps were

¹⁸⁴For a dubious argument on the location of the office of the *praefectus urbis* in the Basilica Nova see Coarelli, "l'urbs e il suburbia," (1986) & below pg. 80-81 for a detailed rebuttal.

¹⁸⁵ Coarelli, "l'urbs e il suburbio," (1986), 23-24 who cites Gatti, G, "Data, scopo e precedent della Pianta," in *La Pianta Marmorea di Roma Antica: Forma Urbis Romae* (1960), 213-218; It is also accepted by Krautheimer, *Rome: A Profile of the City, 312-1308* (1980), 8-9 and Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (1992), 286-287.

used, and should thus be viewed, as demonstrations of Roman dominion and power.¹⁸⁶ Despite the appeal of her argument she persists in thinking that the *praefectus urbis* remains “the leading candidate” who would have used this apsidal hall.¹⁸⁷

Epigraphic evidence would appear to make her conjecture even more difficult to sustain as a number of fifth century inscriptions, whose find spots are attested east of the Via del Colosseo near S. Pietro in Vincoli, attest to the urban prefecture being located near to the Temple of Tellus.¹⁸⁸ Both ancient and modern historians have had much to say about the location of the Temple of Tellus. Of the former, Dionysius of Halicarnassus states that the Temple was located on the street that leads to the *Carinae*, while Suetonius mentions that a freedman of Pompey taught in the *Carinae* near to the Temple of Tellus.¹⁸⁹ It is certain, then, that the Temple of Tellus was located in the *Carinae*, however, the exact limits of this district are debated.¹⁹⁰ Varro, in his description of the Seven Hills of Rome, unintentionally provides loose boundaries for the *Carinae*. He writes that, “Foremost in the area of the Suburana region is the Caelian hill,” that “the *Carinae* is joined with the Caelian,” and that “the Subura is attributed to the same

¹⁸⁶ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 165; This is supported by Najbjerg and Trimble, “Ancient Maps and Mapping in and around Rome,” *JRA* 17(2004), 577-583.

¹⁸⁷ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 168.

¹⁸⁸ *CIL* VI 37114, [salvis] [d] d(omino) n(ostro) n(ostro) Inclytis Semper Augg/ [po]rticu[m] cum scriniis tellurensis/Secretarii tribunalib(us) adherentem/Iunius Valerius Bellicius v(ir) c(larissimus) praef(ectus) urb(is)/ vices sacra iudicans restituto/ specialiter urbanae sedis honore/ perfecit; *CIL* VI 31959[salvis] [d] d(omino) n(ostro) n(ostro) inclytis semper augg/[porticum] cum scriniis tellurensis/[secreta]rii tribunalib(us) adherentem/ [.....]rius bellicius v(ir) c(larissimus) praef(ectus) urb(is)/[vice sac]ra iudicans restituto/[speciali]ter urbanae sedis honore/[pe]rfecit; *AE* 1941, 62, florentib(us) d [d(omino) n(ostro) n(ostro) et/ Theodosio in[clytis] semper augg/ Iunius Valerius [Bellicius v(ir) c(larissimus) praef(ectus) urb(is)/ vice sac(ra) iud(icans) port[icum] scriniis]/ tellurensis secr[etarii] tribunalib(us)]/ adherentem red[integravit] et urbanae/ sedi vetustatis i[n]iuria resacravit]; & *CIL* VI 31893, a edict from the praefectus urbis concerning stopping fraudulent business men in certain areas. *CIL* VI 37114 and 31959 were found near to one another near S. Pietro in Vincoli on a side street off the Via del Fagutale. *CIL* VI 31893 was found at Via della Polveriera, 50 adjacent to S. Pietro in Vincoli.

¹⁸⁹ Dion. Hal., 8.79.3; Suet. *Gram.* 15; Serv. *Ad Aen.* 8. 361 which says, “the *Carinae* are edifices built in the form of keels, which were around the Temple of Tellus.”

¹⁹⁰ For bibliography on the debate by modern scholars see Ziolkowski, A. “Of Streets and Crossroads: The Location of the *Carinae*,” *Memoirs of the American Academy at Rome* Vol. 41 (1996), 121-151.

region.”¹⁹¹ As a result the *Carinae* must have been located in the area stretching from the Colosseum valley north-west between the Velia and the Oppius to the Subura. In a recent article on the matter Ziolkowski examines all the literary evidence in which the *Carinae* is mentioned and the archaeological evidence of ancient street networks in its area in an attempt to narrow Varro's ill-defined boundaries. From this, he posits the extent of the *Carinae* and concludes that the large majority of this district was confined to the saddle between the Velia and Oppius hill, delimited to the south by the *Vicus Compiti Acilii* and actually extending up the western brow of the Oppius.¹⁹² It is within boundaries similar to this that modern historians have attempted to locate the Temple of Tellus.

Coarelli associates the temple with the location of a concrete podium near the *Compitum Acilii* just east of the summit of the Velia, although walls of an unknown Republican structure that underlie this space and that are non-templar in form seem to vitiate his argument.¹⁹³ More recent scholarship has attempted to locate the Temple closer to the locations of the inscriptions pertaining to the *praefectus urbis* near S. Pietro in Vincoli.¹⁹⁴ In a reappraisal of fragments of the Severan Marble Plan, Palombi suggests fragment 577, with the inscription [TEMP]LV[M], should be positioned beside fragments 672abcd.¹⁹⁵ He reconstructs the partial inscription IN TE

¹⁹¹ Varro, *De Ling. Lat.* 5.8 “*In Suburanae regionis parte princeps est Caelius mons a Caele Vibenna, Tusco duce nobili, qui cum sua manu dicitur Romulo venisse auxilio contra Tatium regem. Hinc post Caelis obitum, quod nimis munita loca tenerent neque sine suspicione essent, deducti dicuntur in planum. Ab eis dictus Vicus Tuscus, et ideo ibi Vortumnus stare, quod is deus Etruriae princeps; de Caelianis qui a suspicione liberi essent, traductos in eum locum qui vocatur Caeliolum. Cum Caelio coniunctum Carinae et inter eas quem locum Caeriolensem appellatum apparet, quod primae regionis quartum sacrarium scriptum sic est...Eidem regioni adtributa Subura, quod sub muro terreo Carinarum.*”

¹⁹² Ziolkowski, A. “Of Streets and Crossroads: The Location of the *Carinae*,” *Memoirs of the American Academy at Rome* Vol. 41 (1996), 141.

¹⁹³ Coarelli, “l’urbs e il suburbio,” 25. For the Republican structure see Dumser, “Velia: Building I,” *Mapping Augustan Rome (JRA Suppl.)*, 2002, 254-255.

¹⁹⁴ Palombi, *Tra Palatino ed Esquilino: Velia, Carinae, Fagutal. Storia Urbana di tre quartieri di Roma antica* (1997), 149-159 & Ziolkowski, *The Temples of Mid-Republican Rome and their Historical and Topographical Context* (1992), 156-158. See above fn. 188 for inscriptions.

¹⁹⁵ Palombi, *Tra Palatino ed Esquilino: Velia, Carinae, Fagutal. Storia Urbana di tre quartieri di Roma antica* (1997), 149-153.

[.] [---] on the latter fragment to read IN TEL[LVRE] instead of IN TE[RENTO] as has been largely accepted. With this new reading, he places fragments 672abcd beside fragment 577 based on the similar size and characteristics of the inscriptions, while he situates both along the upper left edge of slab VII-9.¹⁹⁶ In determining the latter positioning, Palombi relies on the smooth backing of the fragments, which is similar to that found on fragment 12 in the adjacent slab VII-8, and on the orientation of the newly filled out inscription (fig. 15). On the back of these findings, he proceeds to identify the Temple of Tellus as one the two temples located on the bottom right corner of fragments 672abcd (fig. 16).¹⁹⁷ This location corresponds with the provenance of the aforementioned inscriptions and should securely place the Temple of Tellus and, along with it, the office of the *praefectus urbis* north east of the Via del Colosseo in the vicinity of the ancient district of the *Carinae* near S. Pietro in Vincoli. Consequently, this evidence makes the *praefectus urbis*'s association with the Sacra Via Rotunda, or with any of the Maxentian "Sacra Via Trio," hard to sustain and leaves the rotunda's coeval apsidal hall bereft of a magistrate.

The new evidence that has been brought to light regarding the rotunda fronting the Sacra Via has elucidated a number of things about the monument and its function. First, as Dumser has suggested, its appellation, "the Temple of Romulus," is no longer tenable and instead the monument must be considered in conjunction with the rear rectangular apsidal *aula* of the *Templum Pacis*. In doing so, adhering to a "form follows function" line of argumentation the rotunda and all its architectural accoutrements are more readily seen as a complex, in which the rotunda acts as a vestibule to the highlighted rear rectangular apsidal reception hall. The Sacra

¹⁹⁶ Palombi, *Tra Palatino ed Esquilino: Velia, Carinae, Fagutal. Storia Urbana di tre quartieri di Roma antica* (1997), 158-159.

¹⁹⁷ Palombi, *Tra Palatino ed Esquilino: Velia, Carinae, Fagutal. Storia Urbana di tre quartieri di Roma antica* (1997), 154-157.

Via Rotunda's main function, then, is a reception hall and not a Temple; the rotunda as 'passage architecture' masks the non-axial alignment of the *Forum Romanum* and the Imperial *Fora* to the north and may mirror the visually similar concave shape of the entrance into the *Forum Transitorium*, the *Porticus Absidata*. Although now identified as a reception hall, no specific magistrate can be assigned to complex. Dumser would like to see the *praefectus urbis* as the likely candidate, just as Coarelli would place him in the Basilica Nova, but a reappraisal of evidence supports an old thesis that the *praefectus urbis*'s office is located closer to the area now surrounding S. Pietro in Vincoli on the western brow of the Oppian. Lastly, though its generally accepted name and function have been successfully challenged, its association with Maxentius is still highly probable. Therefore, even without a specific magistrate, the innovative design of the Sacra Via Rotunda provides a worthy visual introduction to Maxentius' "Sacra Via Trio."

The Basilica Nova

Moving east along the Sacra Via from the entrance to the Rotunda and just past the short street to the *Carinae* one stands dwarfed by the towering facade of the Basilica Nova. The original patron of which would have been lost to posterity if not for the singular statement of Aurelius Victor; he writes, "Furthermore, every work, which he (Maxentius) constructed magnificently, the basilica and the temple of the city, the Senate has dedicated to Constantine for his meritorious deeds."¹⁹⁸ The basilica mentioned by Aurelius Victor is unquestionably that listed in the *Notitia* and the *Chronograph of 354* as the *basilica Constantiniana*, and the *Curiosum* as the *basilica nova*.¹⁹⁹ This was first proposed by Antonio Nibby in the early

¹⁹⁸ Aur. Vic. *De Caes.* 40.26, "Adhuc cuncta opera, quae magnifice construxera, urbis fanum atque basilicam, Flavii meritis patres sacravere."

¹⁹⁹ *Notitia, Regio IV & Chron.* 354, 146M, "horrea Piperataria ubi modo est basilica Constantiniana et horrea Vespasiani;" *Curiosum, Regio IV*. The name in use for the basilica in this section is derived from the entry in the *Curiosum*. Given that the *basilica Constantiniana* is decidedly absent in *Regio IV* of the *Curiosum*, the appellation Basilica Nova must refer to the same structure listed as the *basilica Constantiniana* in the other

nineteenth century when he recognized that its location matched the site in the ancient descriptions of the basilica of Constantine.²⁰⁰ Unlike the Sacra Via Rotunda, Maxentius' patronage of this building cannot be questioned as a result of Aurelius Victor's statement. Maxentius' role in the building's final design, however, has been minimized. Maxentius has consistently been credited with only initiating the project and Constantine is seen as adding the features that make the Basilica Nova's form so distinct. Consequently, the relating ideological impact and historical importance of this Maxentian building has been undermined and has left the scholarship on it somewhat lacking. Recent architectural and archaeological surveys of the monument, however, challenge this misconception and provide evidence that demonstrates a much more central role for Maxentius in relation to the building. Such a reappraisal elucidates Maxentius' intended design for the building and demonstrates a Maxentian awareness of urban planning. With this evidence it may be better observed how the building served to demonstrate Maxentius' power.

Situated on the Velia, pressed between the massive podium of the *Templum Romae* on the east and the important access road to *Carinae* to the west, the Basilica Nova was an imposing structure built into the urban fabric (fig. 17). Its foundations, measuring one hundred meters by sixty-five meters, cut into the Velia on the north and rested upon the appropriated Flavian *horrea Piperataria*, which it used as substructures.²⁰¹ The basilica's facade faced the Sacra Via, which delimited it to the south, and in its finished form was monumentalized by a columnar entrance way. The porch extended onto the Sacra Via by six and half meters and was accessed by a tripartite stair well. Four porphyry columns added to the monumental appearance of the porch

regional, the *Notitia*. Since this section focuses on Maxentian architecture, the appellation from the *Curiosum*, Basilica Nova, is preferred.

²⁰⁰ For summary of Nibby's identification and subsequent study of the northern apse, see Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 63 & Marlowe, "Liberator Urbis Suae," (2010), 208.

²⁰¹ Amici, C, "From Project to Monument," in *The Basilica of Maxentius: the monument, its materials, construction, and stability* (2005), 26-38; Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 73.

and fifteen windows, arranged in groups of three, were cut into the south facade.²⁰² Once inside, the south aisle opened onto a nave unrivaled in scale; measuring eighty-five meters by twenty-five meters, its three cross vaults reached a height of thirty-five meters and sprung from eight piers fronted by fifty-foot proconnesian marble columns.²⁰³ The lateral thrust of the cross vaults was supported by three twenty-five meter high barrel vaults that comprised the side aisles, while eight arched partition walls, four on each side, were built on top of the terrace supported by the extrados of the side barrel vaults to further counter the lateral thrust of the cross vaulting.²⁰⁴ A monumental apse, approximately sixteen meters wide, interrupted the straight north facade. Entrance to the apse was controlled by two columns *in antis* and two pilasters on top of which sat a decoratively carved entablature.²⁰⁵ The walls of the apse were accentuated by sixteen niches, eight on either side of a larger center niche, while small cipollino columns framed each one of these presumably statue-bearing niches.²⁰⁶ Architecturally, the walls of the apse abut the east facade and, as such, indicate it was a later addition. The ceiling of the nave and the side aisles was coffered and stuccoed over while the floor and walls were enlivened with polychrome marbles in geometric designs.²⁰⁷ Natural light enhanced the colour of the marble as it filtered through the thirty large aisle windows, fifteen on the north and south side, and through large clerestory windows on the side of the cross vaults. A large twenty meter wide apse on the west end of the basilica drew the attention of visitors entering into the nave as it housed a colossal

²⁰² Minoprio, A., "A Restoration of the Basilica of Constantine, Rome," *PBSR* 12 (1932), 3-4. Although the columns have been restored in modern times in front of the basilica without definitive confirmation, fragments of porphyry found above the Neronian Sacra Via level seem to suggest that their restoration is correct.

²⁰³ The sole extant column is now erected in the Piazza di Santa Maria Maggiore. It is a monolithic fluted Proconnesian marble column measuring approximately fifty-two feet tall, with twenty-four flutes.

²⁰⁴ Amici, "From Project to Monument," (2005), 37.

²⁰⁵ Minoprio, A., "A Restoration of the Basilica of Constantine, Rome," *PBSR* 12 (1932), 14.

²⁰⁶ Minoprio, A., "A Restoration of the Basilica of Constantine, Rome," *PBSR* 12 (1932), 14; Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 109.

²⁰⁷ Minoprio, A., "A Restoration of the Basilica of Constantine, Rome," *PBSR* 12 (1932), 9. Marbles are said to include giallo antico, cipollino, porphyry, serpentine, and pavonazzetto.

acrolithic seated statue of the emperor,²⁰⁸ while a narrow eight meter wide single storey narthex ran across the entire length of the east side and acted as an entrance providing passage to two doorways that entered into the basilica. Whether entering through the monumental southern portico or more modest eastern narthex, once inside the visitor would be treated to a visual spectacle of marble, statuary, and decorative architecture that was all enclosed in this gargantuan cross-vaulted seven thousand square meter space (fig. 18).²⁰⁹

The basilica's design, however, departed drastically from the standard form of *basilicae* in the Roman world. Its length to width ratio of 4:3, cross axial design, and cross-vaulted ceiling only find comparison in Roman thermal designs, specifically *frigidaria*.²¹⁰ This calls to question the function of the space and reason for the design. The building was, undoubtedly, a basilica as every ancient source, historical and topographical, clearly indicate thus. This architectural qualification implies a particular function; this function could vary from a civic, military, domestic, palatial, or religious context as precedents for each can be found in the Roman world.²¹¹ Yet, the Basilica Nova's peculiar design, derived from thermal architecture, has made its particular basilican function far less certain. Coarelli, in the same series of work that saw the Sacra Via Rotunda as a new temple of the *penates* and a Valerian cenotaph, argued that this

²⁰⁸ Remains of this statue, now in the guise of Constantine, can be seen today in the cortile of the Capitoline Museum. This statue has long been a topic a study for art historians and has been subject to many reappraisals. Most significant for our purpose, the statue is argued to have been originally dedicated to Maxentius and only a subsequent re-carving allows it to be identified as Constantine. This argument will be explored in detail on chapter three, "Erasing Maxentius: Constantine's Secular Building in Rome." For the most recent scholarship that argues a Maxentian original see Varner, E., "Tyranny and the Transformation of the Roman Visual Landscape," in *From Caligula to Constantine Tyranny and Transformation in Roman Portraiture* (2001), 14-15 & fn. 50-57.

²⁰⁹ Amici, C, "From Project to Monument," (2005), 31.

²¹⁰ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 92.

²¹¹ Civic *basilicae* are found all over the Roman world, almost always near the central forum. The Basilica Iulia is a prime example. Military basilica sprung up in *castra* in Britain and Gaul during the imperial period, generally featuring complimentary apses on each short side. Vitruvius, *De Arch.* 6.5.2 mentions the existence of domestic basilica, "*in aedibus... praeterea bybliotheas, pinacothecas, basilicas non dissimili modo quam publicorum operum magnificentia habeant comparatas,*" while palatial *basilicae* are also attested, take Constantine's basilica in Trier for example. Vitruvius *De Arch.* 5.1.5-9 also provides evidence for basilica with a religious function, at Fanum Fortunae he reports that the basilica had an *aedes* incorporated in its structure. Moreover, the primary function of *basilicae* would become religious at the advent of imperial sponsored Christian churches, as we will see.

building functioned as a monumental audience hall for the urban prefect.²¹² This interpretation has proliferated and made its way unchallenged into highly conspicuous literature on the basilica, such as the *Lexicon Topograficum Urbis Romae*. Although evidence for the location of the urban prefecture has already been examined above, it deserves some further attention here given the notoriety of its connection with the Basilica Nova.

Coarelli's association is predicated upon two lines of argumentation; first, that the Temple of Tellus, infamously recognized in relation to the urban prefecture, was located beside the *Compitum Acilii* one hundred and forty meters east of the basilica. And second, the identification of a series of rooms on the northeast corner of the basilica as the seat of the urban prefecture.²¹³ The former has already been demonstrated as untenable,²¹⁴ while the latter will be proven as equally difficult to sustain. The northeast rooms in question are found on a sixteenth century sketch by Pirro Ligorio, from which Coarelli argues that the rooms were coeval to the basilica and formed a unified complex constructed for the *praefectus urbis*. Ligorio, however, has a well known reputation for idealizing the building remains he sketched; a trend among Renaissance antiquarians first made evident in Ligorio's drawings by Ashby and restated most recently by Dumser.²¹⁵ Excavations in that area in the 1930s do little to advance Coarelli's theory as they brought little to no evidence of the building to light, and a re-examination of the archaeological drawings in the 1980s found nothing that could correspond to Ligorio's sketch.²¹⁶ The evidence, both the lack of archaeological remnants and Ligorio's characteristic fabrications, suggests that these rooms either did not exist or were part of previous, or later, domestic

²¹² Coarelli, "l'urbs e il suburbio," (1986) 22-35.

²¹³ Coarelli, "l'urbs e il suburbio" (1986), 22-35.

²¹⁴ See above, Chapter 2, *From the Absent Rule of Four to Maxentius, Conservator Urbis Suae*, 71-73.

²¹⁵ Ashby, "The Bodleian MS of Pirro Ligorio," *JRS* 9 (1919), 170-201; Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 80, fn. 66 and fig. 15 & 16, where she points out that Ligorio added a third, archaeologically and architecturally, unattested apse on the south facade in lieu of the entrance portico so as to create a symmetrical and more harmonious plan that is clearly idealized.

²¹⁶ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 81.

architecture that did not communicate with the basilica proper. With this in mind, neither of Coarelli's supposed links of the urban prefecture to the basilica can be accepted, and his whole argument that the Basilica Nova served as a hall of the *praefectus urbis* must be viewed as problematic, if not outright rejected.

The key, then, in determining the Basilica Nova's function is its location. Located just outside the *Forum Romanum*, the Basilica Nova must have functioned as a civic basilica, where inside daily business would be accommodated. This is not so hard to believe as the economic nature of the space would have been naturally perceived given that Flavian warehouses were appropriated for its construction. Its design, although contrary to the Vitruvian ascribed basilica—a lofty rectangular hall with a wooden- trussed roof, flanked by colonnaded porticoes, and built at a 2:1 length to width ratio—betrays certain features that still made its distinct form recognizable as a civic basilica.²¹⁷ In particular, the apse was a traditional basilican feature, while the nave was also more elongated than typical *frigidaria*, which may have been an attempt to mimic basilican proportions.²¹⁸ This deviation from the archetypical basilican form has been ascribed to the familiarity of the available architects to thermal design, with Dumser positing that Maxentius relied on architects who had just completed the Baths of Diocletian, which were dedicated in late 305 or early 306.²¹⁹ But such a reason cannot fully account for this radical design departure for a building whose main function was that of a civic basilica. More appealing is that Maxentius saw an opportunity to demonstrate his break from the tetrarchy through monumentality.

²¹⁷ For the Vitruvian design see, Vitruvius, *De Arch.*, 5.1.4-9.

²¹⁸ For apse see Vitruvius, *De Arch.* 5.1.7, where he writes that the Basilica at Fanum Fortunae, which he constructed, had an apse forty-six feet along the front to house a tribunal, so that those standing in front of the magistrate did not get in the way to those conducted business. For irregularly elongated nave see Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 92, fn. 105.

²¹⁹ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 93

The tetrarchs rebuilt both the *Basilica Julia* and the *Basilica Aemilia* after the fire of 283 CE, and they did so along the lines of their traditional forms.²²⁰ These *basilicae*, rebuilt in the *Forum Romanum*, on which order was imposed by the tetrarchs, would reflect tetrarchic intervention in the space. Therefore, the innovative design of the Basilica Nova must have served a more dynamic purpose. Just as Maxentius sought to reorient the space along the Sacra Via, he also used this space to reaffirm the *Forum Romanum* and demonstrate his separation from the tetrarchy. The continuous, straight towering facade, soaring concrete vaults, and voluminous interior served as a stark contrast to tetrarchy's *basilicae* a couple of hundred meters to the west and attracted focus to the basilica's interior, possibly echoing Maxentius' own Rome-centric inward facing view. Maxentius was an innovative, but at the same, a traditional Roman emperor; he sought to resurrect Rome but did so away from the control of the tetrarchy, and the Basilica Nova's design must have demonstrated this to the people of the *Urbs*.

The description of the Basilica Nova in its completed phase, its attribution to Maxentius, its function, and the reason for its novel design have given little attention to the most contested architectural question of the structure; that is, the original Maxentian design and the final realization of the project. The greatest majority of scholarship pertains to the inclusion of the south entrance portico and the addition of the northern apse. Nibby originally suggested that the monumental northern apse belonged to a later construction phase and that the axially-aligned southern entrance should be seen as coeval to the construction of the northern apse.²²¹ This argument has largely been accepted and has been expanded upon to suggest that both features represent Constantine's heavy-handed interventions which altered the orientation of the

²²⁰This demonstrates that the architects of the time were also familiar with and could replicate the design of traditional *basilicae* if required to do so, and may help to vitiate Dumser's explanation.

²²¹ Nibby, A., *Del tempio della Pace e della basilica di Costantino* (1819).

building.²²² Recent archaeological evidence, however, has elucidated that Constantine's intervention at the site may be less significant than originally perceived. Therefore, since both of these architectural elements have a significant impact on how the Basilica Nova communicated with the surrounding urban and architectural environment, their examination is integral in understanding the intended ideological message of the building.

Concerning the southern entrance portico, Minoprio, the first scholar to offer a complete restoration of the basilica, suggests that the original design of the building included a seven and a half foot terrace that ran along the length of the south facade, and that afterwards the projecting portico, measuring seventy-nine feet wide, was added followed by the stairway and three-door entrance.²²³ He argues that a lack of bonding between the portico and the basilica demonstrates that the projecting portion was a later addition. This has subsequently been the accepted phasing without any additional scrutiny and, more problematically, has led many scholars to interpret this phase as Constantinian and, thus, confirm his heavy-handed interventions at the site.²²⁴ Recent archaeological work, however, has superseded Minoprio's longstanding analysis. In 1986, Buranelli Le Pera and D'Elia noted that the elevated foundation of the portico and the supporting structures under the western corner of the steps both bore the marks of large blocks that reinforced the western most stairwell partition (fig. 19). From this it is clear that the stairway extension and the portico were structurally connected.²²⁵ They went on to cautiously suggest the portico as a whole was also linked with the foundation of the basilica. Amici, in an analysis of the construction phases of the basilica, proves this conjecture. She cites as evidence the eastern

²²² Those attributing the north apse and southern entrance to Constantine's intervention and expanding on the ideological implications include, Krautheimer, *Rome: A Profile of the City, 312-1308* (1980), 8-9; Bauer, F.A. *Stadt, Platz und Denkmal in der Spätantike* (1996), 58; Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (1992), 52; and Coarelli, "Basilica Constantiniana, B. Nova," *LTUR I* (1993) 170-173.

²²³ Minoprio, A., "A Restoration of the Basilica of Constantine, Rome," *PBSR* 12 (1932), 3.

²²⁴ See above, fn. 222.

²²⁵ Buranelli Le Pera and D'Elia, "Sacra Via: note topografiche," *BullCom* (1986), 247-249.

end of the portico and provides a phasing of its construction. She argues that the foundation of the portico was first built in part against the ground and in part against the foundational blocks of the basilica's terrace. Subsequently, an elevated section was added with blocks on each end, and this section, contrary to Minoprio's observations, was clearly bonded to the exterior wall of the basilica.²²⁶ From this data a new phasing of the construction of the basilica and its design becomes apparent. First, the stairwell and the projecting portico are structurally linked and, thus, chronologically linked as well. Second, and more importantly from a design perspective, the presence of bonding between the outer wall of the basilica and the elevated foundation of the portico confirm the southern portico was built in the initial phase of the basilica's construction.

All of this indicates that the southern entrance fronting the Sacra Via was the intended original entrance, and not the eastern narthex that has been consistently suggested. Such an arrangement is more in line with basilican architecture as entrances along the long sides of the building were preferable, while the position of the building along the Sacra Via suggests that not planning an entrance on the south facade would be contrary to logical ambulation patterns. The evaluation of individual constructional elements of the portico, then, has largely proven that the southern entrance was planned and conceived by Maxentius in his original design and, therefore, the beautifully ornate entrance portico can now be seen as the logical original entrance. Furthermore, this conclusion has excised the need to associate Constantine with a re-orientation of the space along a north-south axis and significantly minimizes his "heavy-handed" interventions in the construction of the basilica. Remaining is the northern apse.

From his original identification of the building as the Basilica Nova, Nibby rightly observed that the northern apse must have been a later addition as its walls abut the exterior

²²⁶ Amici, C, "From Project to Monument," (2005) 40-41 & fig. 2.24.

walls of the basilica's northern flank.²²⁷ Its addition, along with the perceived, but now untenable, later addition of the southern entrance, was used to emphasize Constantine's appropriation of Maxentius' building. In order to confirm this, subsequent scholarship has sought to establish a *terminus ad quem* for the construction of the apse with architectural and archaeological evidence. Minoprio and, later, Heres both saw the apse's brickwork as Constantinian. The former saw the brick as a "much darker red" than the Maxentian bricks, while the latter describes the bricks alternatively as yellowish-red or orange.²²⁸ The subjective nature of this evidence and the resultant varying interpretations of Minoprio and Heres make any strict chronological identification for the apse's construction difficult to sustain when relying on brickwork alone. Coarelli would rather see this apse as a post-Constantinian addition and remove it from its ideological function entirely. Rather than relying on the subjectivity of brickwork analysis, he cites the foundations of the apse as evidence. He observes that the apse's foundations rest upon the pavement of the alley behind the basilica and must, therefore, reflect the accumulation of debris over time in this unused space.²²⁹ He contends that the foundations must have been sunk into the infill which obscured the street, and since the foundations were over a meter high it suggests that the debris would have been at least this height.²³⁰ Such an accumulation would then preclude a Constantinian date for the apse and, therefore, its construction should be placed at much later, possibly in the late fourth century, to account for the time it took for the debris to accumulate. At first sight Coarelli's argument appears appealing, however recent archaeological investigations behind basilica contradict Coarelli's hypothesis.

Excavations where the north-eastern run of the Maxentian wall meets the northern apse have

²²⁷ See above, fn. 221. This was acknowledged by Minoprio (1932), 14, who observed that at the sides of the apse it is clearly visible how the original Maxentian windows were cut away.

²²⁸ Minoprio, A., "A Restoration of the Basilica of Constantine, Rome," *PBSR* 12 (1932), 19; Heres, T. *Paries. A Proposal for a Dating System of Late-Antique Masonry Structures in Rome and Ostia* (1982), 228-231.

²²⁹ Coarelli, "l'urbs e il suburbio" (1986), 32.

²³⁰ Coarelli, "l'urbs e il suburbio" (1986), 33.

revealed a drainage channel that runs parallel to the wall and concentric with the apse.²³¹ Infill above the channel contained pottery from which a *terminus post quem non* of the mid-fourth century can be securely established.²³² Therefore, Coarelli's date of the apse's construction to sometime in the late fourth century becomes untenable and further evidence is required to establish a date. Amici's architectural analysis does just this.

Amici observes that the lateral thrusts of the barrel vaults, supported only by the exterior walls, began to be too much to bear already during the construction phases.²³³ She cites the vertical cracks on the supporting side walls as evidence. While at the north end, structural aggravations were exacerbated by a sag in the northwest barrel vault, which occurred once the scaffolding was removed, made visible by the proportionally thicker floor depth above the extrados of this vault.²³⁴ The north side was then buttressed by arched partition walls to correct the structural issues and, at the same time, the north apse was added.²³⁵ Amici notes that original wall section was destroyed along such irregular vertical lines that structural damage seems to be the only explanation for it, and that necessity dictated an apsidal support not aesthetic.²³⁶ Contrary to Coarelli, Amici argues that the foundations of the apse were built at staggered levels and in separate footings, and that this should conclude beyond a doubt that the original construction of the basilica had yet to be completed.²³⁷ Therefore, although there is not

²³¹ Amici, C, "From Project to Monument" (2005), fn. 2. Providing synopsis of notes from Fabiani-S. Coccia, *Le indagini archeologiche recenti, Basilica di Massenzio* (2003).

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Amici, C, "From Project to Monument" (2005), 52.

²³⁴ Amici, C, "From Project to Monument" (2005), 52.

²³⁵ Amici, C, "From Project to Monument" (2005), 52-55. On the west an arched partition was added that extended over the *via ad carinas* and connected to the perimeter wall of the *Templum Pacis* precinct. While on the east an arch was added above the narthex terrace and connected by another arch to the Neronian concrete structures.

²³⁶ Amici, C, "From Project to Monument" (2005), 58. I find it difficult to agree with Amici on this point. No doubt that a curved support was necessity, however the monumentality of the apse, along with its internal decoration, seems to suggest necessity was used to facilitate an ideological motivation. This will be explored further in chapter three.

²³⁷ Amici, C, "From Project to Monument" (2005), fig. 2.51. On the east side of the apse concrete was poured in foundation trenches without formwork, while on the west it was poured within formwork.

conclusive proof, Amici's analysis seems to suggest that the north apse was added during the construction phase and likely after ground settlement occurred during a short term interruption. The most likely period for this interruption may, in fact, be the civil war between Maxentius and Constantine, making the north apse a true Constantinian intervention.

With the most highly contested architectural design elements of the Basilica Nova addressed, a Maxentian design of the Basilica Nova comes into sight. From the outset Maxentius planned to create a massive architectural structure, ornately adorned and highly conspicuous. He expropriated space formerly reserved for commercial warehouses and constructed his monumental basilica. Its design, more akin to thermal architecture, was innovative and deftly negotiated the space between his Sacra Via Rotunda and the *Templum Pacis* to the west and the *Templum Romae* to the east. He intended a monumental entrance from the south and included a subsidiary entrance on the east side such that the building communicated both with Sacra Via and the western facade of the *Templum Romae*, while its massive interior space, elongated nave, and western apse all bespeak a building intended for civic purposes. With the urban prefecture firmly associated with the space on the western brow of the Oppian and removed from the Maxentian structures, the Basilica Nova can be categorized as a civic basilica wherein the traditional external emphasis was turned one hundred and eighty degrees and placed on the internal space of the building creating a new Maxentian experience. This experience served to reaffirm the importance the *Forum Romanum* and demonstrate Maxentius' architectural individuality when compared to the nearby visual reminders of the tetrarchy. The Basilica Nova, earning its name as the "new" basilica through its innovative design, was the visual centrepiece to the Maxentian trio, not only by its position but as a result of its message. The Basilica Nova demonstrated a desire by Maxentius to replicate the traditional

munificence of the Roman emperor. But more than this, its design, characterized by a straight towering facade on the exterior that gave way to a voluminous interior, attracted focus inward mirroring the perspective of Maxentius' new Rome—inwardly orientated rather than outwardly, while its relation to the *Templum Romae* to the east made manifest Maxentius' reverence for tradition and for the city.

The Templum Romae

The last of the three buildings in the Maxentian “Sacra Via Trio” is the Temple of Venus and Rome. Built atop the massive Hadrianic terrace, Maxentius chose to retain much of the second-century design. The Hadrianic terrace in question measured one hundred and sixty-five meters by one hundred meters and stretched along the summa Sacra Via from the arch of Titus to the Colosseum Valley. The terrace was elevated from the Sacra Via on the south by almost three meters and from the Colosseum Valley on the east by nine meters.²³⁸ The temple itself was raised from the terrace and reached by an additional seven steps. It measured fifty-four meters by one hundred and twelve and was framed by its ten by twenty-two dipteral peristyle of proconnesian marble columns. Of the three buildings in the “Sacra Via Trio,” the Temple of Venus and Rome's fourth-century design is most securely attributed to Maxentian patronage. Both Aurelius Victor and the *Chronograph of 354* provide evidence. The former mentions it in the same passage along with the Basilica Nova as dedicated to Constantine by the senate,²³⁹ while the latter explicitly attests Maxentius' role in its (re)construction, stating, “Maxentius ruled 6 years. In this reign the temple of Rome burned down and was rebuilt.”²⁴⁰ Both sources

²³⁸Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius*, 219. The south face of the terrace was 2.7m higher than the Sacra Via pavers

²³⁹Aur. Vic. *De Caes.* 40.26, “*Adhuc cuncta opera, quae magnifice construxerat, urbis fanum atque basilicam, Flavii meritis patres sacravere.*”

²⁴⁰*Chron.* 354, MGH, “*Maxentius imp. ann. VI. hoc imp. templum Romae arsit et fabricatum est. thermas in palatio fecit et circum in catecumbas. fames magna fuit. Romani traxerunt militum Moesiaceum et occisi sunt Romani a militibus homines VI. Romanis omnibus aurum indixit et dederunt. fossatum aperuit, sed non perfecit.*”

confirm Maxentius' association with the temple, while archaeological evidence confirms its rebuilding, and the proliferation of the temple's image on Maxentian coinage demonstrate its importance to Maxentius himself. A recent comprehensive study on the nomenclature of the temple reveals its fourth-century name to be the *Templum Romae* and, therefore, this will be adopted here.²⁴¹ The importance of this temple to Maxentius and within his architectural repertoire cannot be understated. Its position and grandiosity made it a visual focal point in Rome's center and its ill-omened destruction early in Maxentius' reign forced him to physically implement his promise to "preserve his city." Maxentius did not fail on his promise, and the rebuilding of the *Templum Romae* simultaneously reflected Maxentius' reverence for Rome's illustrious past and his penchant for repackaging his own Romaphilia when presenting to the *populus romanus* his 'new' Rome.

As stated, situated in the large space along the summa Sacra Via, the gargantuan second-century temple was the visual conclusion (or introduction) in the parade of Maxentian buildings. Spurred by a damaging fire, that so characteristically ravaged the ancient *Urbs*, Maxentius left his mark on this iconic Roman structure. The damage caused by the fire, however, is often over emphasized. Archaeological survey of the site reveals that the massive Hadrianic peristyle and the porticoed terrace were likely undamaged and, consequently, retained in the Maxentian structure. In a study predominantly concerned with the Hadrianic phase of the temple, Barattolo argues that the fourth-century structure reused the outer course of the Hadrianic *cellae* walls as an exterior shell. The builders, then, lined the *opus quadratum* masonry with cement on the

occisus ad pontem Mulvium in Tiberim." "Maxentius ruled six years. In this reign the temple of Rome burned down and was rebuilt. He built baths on the Palatine and a circus in the catacombs. There was a great famine. The Romans hung the soldiery of Moesia and six thousand Roman men were killed by the soldiers. He began a ditch, but did not complete it. He was killed at the Milivian bridge on the Tiber."

²⁴¹ For the study see Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 195-203.

inside, retaining the lateral walls of the second-century *cellae*.²⁴² This demonstrates that the fire that “ravaged” the *Templum Romae* mentioned in the *Chronograph of 354* was likely contained in the *cellae*, burning down the wood-trussed roof and leaving the rest of the structure intact. As a result, Baratollo’s study becomes integral in understanding the exterior of the fourth-century *Templum Romae*.

The temple sat atop the aforementioned massive terrace, which was lined with a portico on both the north and south side. On the south, the portico was comprised of a double colonnade constructed in grey granite that stretched the entire one hundred and sixty-five meters of the terrace. It was broken up in the middle by a double-facing tetrastyle *propylaeum* erected with cipollino columns that would have visually contrasted the continuous grey colonnade.²⁴³ On the north, the double colonnade was substituted for a single colonnade closest to the temple and behind, a wall was built with pilaster responds.²⁴⁴ A singular *propylaeum* facing south toward the temple also broke the rhythm of the colonnade on the north (fig. 20). It is conjectured that the porticoes would have stood about twelve meters high.²⁴⁵ Beside the archaeological evidence that the fourth-century fire was limited in scope and left the porticoes unscathed, Prudentius, writing in the fifth century, provides support that they were retained in the Maxentian design. In a lengthy description of a sacrificial procession in honour of *Roma* he alludes to this fact referring

²⁴² Barattolo, A., “Nuovo ricerche sull’architettura del tempio di Venere e di Roma in eta adrianea,” *RomMitt* 80 (1973), 248-252. The opus quadratum blocks are no longer present on the site but the impressions in the cement suggest their presence, while a few extant blocks reveal that the outer wall was constructed of peperino.

²⁴³ See Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 222, fn. 83. She notes the excavation records from the 1930s record that the foundations of the propyleum were uncovered and cipollino fragments were recovered nearby.

²⁴⁴ Barattolo, A., “Il tempio di Venere e di Roma: un tempio Greco nell’urbe” *RomMitt* 85 (1978), 400. The wall is evidenced by the surviving foundations.

²⁴⁵ Dumser (2005), 221 posits this from Nibby’s measurement of the column bases, which were 1.18m in diameter. She applies principles of the Corinthian order, which fragments suggest the porticoes were, to arrive at this height.

to the *Templum Romae* as the “*delubrum Romae*.”²⁴⁶ This is significant as the term *delubrum* was alternatively used to refer to the temple proper or the area surrounding the temple. Varro in his *Rerum divinarum*, quoted in Macrobius, seems to make this distinction clear and reveals that when referring to an area surrounding a temple, *delubrum* may connote a space enclosed by a portico:

“that some consider a *delubrum* to be the area obtained for the sake of the gods before the temple, just as the *delubrum* of Jupiter Stator near the Circus Flaminius, others consider it to be the place in which the image of the god has been dedicated.”²⁴⁷

Here the phrase “*ut est in Circo Flaminio (delubrum) Iovis Statoris*” is of the utmost importance as the temple of Jupiter near the Circus Flaminius, built by Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus in 146 BCE, was enclosed within the porticus *Metelli*.²⁴⁸ Prudentius, therefore, when using the appellation *delubrum*, coupled with the fact that archaeological evidence indicates that the fire did not damage the exterior precinct, can be interpreted to support that the terrace of the *Templum Romae* was likely still lined with porticoes in the fifth century.

Once on the terrace, the temple proper was approached by seven stairs raising it a little over one meter from the precinct's terrace.²⁴⁹ It was surrounded by a peristyle constructed with fifty-foot fluted marble columns. Baratollo originally reconstructed the peristyle as pseudodipteral with ten columns across the front and twenty down the flanks.²⁵⁰ However, excavations revealed foundations on the eastern facade of the temple that conclusively

²⁴⁶ Prudent. *C. Symm.* 1.215-219, “*ut publica festa diesque/ et ludos stupuit celsa et Capitolia vedit/ laurigerosque deum templis adstare ministros/ac Sacram resonare Viam mugitibus ante/ **delubrum Romae**.*”

²⁴⁷ Macrobius, *Sat.*, 3.4.2, “*Varro libro octavo Rerum divinarum: Delubrum ait alios aestimare in quo praeter aedem sit area adsumpta deum causa, ut est in Circo Flaminio Iovis Statoris: alios in quo loco dei simulacrum dedicatum sit.*”

²⁴⁸ Platner & Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (1929), 303-305; Vitruvius, *De Arch.* 3.2.5, “*quemadmodum est sine postico in porticu Metelli Iovis Statoris Hermodori et Mariana Honoris et Virtutis a Mucio facta.*”

²⁴⁹ 1.3m exactly, for summary of excavation record containing peristyle design and temple elevation see Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 224, fn. 87.

²⁵⁰ Baratollo, A. “Nuovo ricerche sull'architettura del tempio di Venere e di Roma in eta adrianea” (1973), 248.

demonstrate that the peristyle was dipteral with ten columns across the east and west facades and twenty-two columns down the flanks to accommodate the double colonnades on the fronts.²⁵¹

One hundred and twelve columns in all elevated the roof of the temple almost twenty meters from the terrace it rested upon, a monumental size almost unmatched in the Eternal City.²⁵²

Passing through the monumental peristyle, one would find themselves inside a hexastyle *pronaos* facing the entrance into one of the back-to-back *cella* of the temple.²⁵³ It is here that the most extensive damage was done by the fire and that fourth-century Roman aesthetic becomes discernible. Maxentius retained the Hadrianic back-to-back *cellae* design but completely altered the interior space and roofing. The exterior Hadrianic *opus quadratum* walls were reused but were thickened to double their width with an interior lining of cement.²⁵⁴ The burnt down wooden-trussed roof was replaced by a barrel vault so characteristic of Maxentian design. The vault spanned an area in each *cella* that was twenty meters by twenty-three meters and a domed apse was added to house the statues of the goddesses at the end of each *cella*. Once inside the expansive *cellae*, the space was made to look even more voluminous as the lateral walls were

²⁵¹ See above fn. 249.

²⁵² The height is conjectured from the height of the columns. At 50 ft, or 15m, once fitted with bases and capitals the columns would be closer to 60 ft, or 18m, add on the 1.3m variance between the temple and the precinct and the peristyle would have stood close to 20m tall.

²⁵³ The Maxentian incarnation of the temple has almost unwaveringly been restored to include the tetrastyle *in antis pronaos* attributed to the Hadrianic monument, see Baratollo "Nuovo ricerche sull'architettura del tempio di Venere e di Roma in eta adrianea" (1973), fig. 1; Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), fig. 5 for two examples. The same excavations, however, that proved the temple was dipteral instead of pseudodipteral also revealed that the restoration of the Hadrianic *pronaos* needed revision. A series of foundations provide evidence that the *pronaos* were hexastyle prostyle and, thus, need to be reconstructed as such on the Maxentian incarnation. To the contrary, Dumser would have it that the *pronaos* fifty-foot fluted columns were removed altogether in the Maxentian design and relocated inside the Basilica Nova, where they were used to support the spring of the cross vaults. She argues that some of the twelve columns may have been damaged in the fire of the *cellae* and the remaining eight were relocated, accounting for the peculiar use of fluting on interior columns in the adjacent basilica. Although Dumser's theory is a possibility no definitive evidence survives to suggest this. Moreover, the one surviving column from the Basilica's interior shows no signs of fire damage and, therefore, Dumser's theory must be approached with caution. It is more readily accepted that the Maxentian incarnation retained the revised hadrianic hexastyle prostyle *pronaos*.

²⁵⁴ Baratollo, A. "Nuovo ricerche sull'architettura del tempio di Venere e di Roma in eta adrianea" (1973), 252-258. He writes that the lateral walls of the Maxentian *cellae* needed to be double the width of the hadrianic predecessor to support the barrel vault that spanned the *cellae* above.

pierced by alternating aedicular and square niches. Between the niches, porphyry columns supported an entablature, while the niches were all flanked by small porphyry columnettes placed atop small marble consoles. Above each niche and supported by the columnettes were arched and triangular pediments (fig. 21).²⁵⁵ The *cellae* were again elevated from the temple, and their floors were enlivened with *opus sectile* laid right on top of the Hadrianic paving. In all, the *cellae* unarguably reflected fourth-century Roman aesthetic that began to develop so boldly in Maxentius' "Sacra Via Trio."

A picture of the Maxentian incarnation of the *Templum Romae*, therefore, begins to emerge. The massive one hundred and sixty-five meter by one hundred meter terrace, with its retained porticoes, and the one hundred and twelve column dipteral peristyle temple that sat atop it, which were both harmoniously juxtaposed with the audaciously redesigned *cellae*, announced Maxentius to the Eternal City and served as a means to fulfil his promise to the *populus Romanus*. Maxentius turned what could have been a disastrous omen caused by an untimely fire into an opportunity to secure his power in the *Urbs*.²⁵⁶ By nature of its position and scale, the *Templum Romae* would serve as visual introduction and conclusion to Maxentius' redeveloped Sacra Via, and with this one building Maxentius highlighted his dedication to Rome; it was the exceptional reminder of his *romanitas*. That the exterior precinct and peristyle were left

²⁵⁵ For the interior design of the Maxentian *cellae* see Ranaldi, A., "La decorazione architettonica interna delle celle del tempio di Venere e di Roma: un ipotesi di restituzione," *Quaderni dell'istituto di Storia dell'architettura* 14 (1989), 3-16.

²⁵⁶ For fires in temples as portents or omens see, for example, Plu. *Alex.* 3.3-3.4 "Alexander was born early in the month Hecatombaeon, the Macedonian name for which is Louos, on the sixth day of the month, and on this day the temple of Ephesian Artemis was burnt...but all the Magi who were then at Ephesus, looking upon the temple's disaster as a sign of further disaster, ran about beating their faces and crying aloud that woe and great calamity for Asia had that day been born." & Herodian 1.14.1-3, "In that time of crisis, a number of divine portents occurred. Stars remained visible during the day; other stars, extending to an enormous length, seemed to be hanging in the middle of the sky. Abnormal animals were born, strange in shape and deformed of limb. But the worst portent of all, which aggravated the present crisis and disturbed those who employ auguries and omens to predict the future, was this. Although no massing of dark clouds and no thunderstorm preceded it, and only a slight earthquake occurred beforehand, either as a result of a lightning bolt at night or a fire which broke out after the earthquake, the temple of Peace, the largest and most beautiful building in the city, was totally destroyed by fire."

untouched by the fire was only to Maxentius' benefit. He was able to demonstrate his reverence to the past by leaving intact the monumental design of the Hadrianic temple that called to mind Rome's glorious past and emphasized Rome's perseverance. The necessity to rebuild the *cellae* was also exploited effectively by Maxentius. Since a slavish rebuilding of the Hadrianic design would have reflected a disinterest in restoring and enhancing his city, he consciously injected his innovative designs into the middle of this revered site. The back-to-back *cella* design was retained, but the interior space of the *cellae* was enlarged by the use of barrel vaults and the introduction of apses. The space was punctuated with statue bearing niches and polychrome marbles, all of which resonated to demonstrate Maxentius' promise not only to preserve his city, but also to initiate a period of prosperity for the newly re-found imperial capital.

The "Sacra Via Trio" considered as a unified whole were the visual manifestation of Maxentius' power and by far his most conspicuous undertaking in the Eternal City. Where the messages on coinage and the use of certain epigraphic language may have only been discernible to a select few, the massive buildings along the Sacra Via were intelligible to all. They were the first intervention in this space since Hadrian and visually announced Maxentius' to the *populus Romanus*. Moreover, they demonstrated that Maxentius intended to earn his self-proclaimed appellation by providing civic space that honoured "his own" city. Of the three buildings, I have argued that the visual remnants of the Hadrianic *Templum Romae*, the exterior porticoes and columnar order of the temple, served as a reminder to all that Maxentius revered the glorious past of Rome, while with the reconstruction of *cellae*, where he was forced to intervene, by altering the original design, integrating space characteristic of fourth-century Roman aesthetic, Maxentius trumpeted his message that Rome was again to be the center of the empire. Moreover, by juxtaposing the vaulted and ornately adorned voluminous spaces of the *cellae* with the

traditional, yet unmatched, porticoes and columnar order of the temple precinct, it has been demonstrated that Maxentius was not just a “preserver” of Rome but an emperor ready to re-found Rome and reposition it at the center of ever changing new empire. This same message is demonstrable within the Basilica Nova. As the central building of his trio, the Basilica Nova reflected Maxentius and his reign more so than his other contributions. So unique in its design, the Basilica Nova was the largest concrete cross-vaulted space ever constructed in the Roman world. I have argued that its thermal design was not only a product of present architectural knowledge but also a way to demonstrate Maxentius’ break from the tetrarchy. With it he provided a visual counterpoint to the newly arrayed “tetrarchic” *Forum Romanum*, and also reaffirmed the forum and its surrounding environs as the most important space in Rome and, subsequently, the empire. More than this, it now seems evident that the space was planned so as to communicate effectively with each surrounding building or space from its genesis, while its internal emphasis appears to reflect Maxentius’ view of Rome within the empire— it was at the center, and the only important view was that looking inward toward Rome. Unlike the *Templum Romae* and the Basilica Nova, however, the Sacra Via Rotunda has been displaced from within an ideological and propagandistic framework. I have argued that the complex was not a temple to the Divine Romulus, as its generally accepted name would suggest, nor was it a Valerian cenotaph or a temple to the *penates*. Rather, the rotunda was an elaborate vestibule that masked the off-axis alignment of the *Forum Romanum* and the imperial *fora* and served as passage architecture into a coeval rectangular reception *aula*. Lacking evidence to definitively place a specific magistrate within the apse of the *aula* any precise propagandistic connections to Maxentius and his political program are difficult to discern. Nevertheless, the Sacra Via Rotunda served as a unique structure that navigated the limited space within the Forum and functioned as

the visual introduction to the Maxentian Sacra Via. As the closest member of the trio to the Forum proper its position, visibility, and innovative design announced Maxentius' intervention in the Forum and promised what was to follow as one continued along the Sacra Via.

Maxentius' "Sacra Via Trio," then, was part of traditional form of munificence prevalent from Augustus onward, wherein public buildings were the most important medium through which emperors could display their power.²⁵⁷ Viewed in this context, the "Sacra Via Trio," must be recognized as the most important contributions to Maxentius' political platform. Their conspicuity and innovation contradict those who assign a banal explanation to their construction and diminish their importance within Maxentian propaganda. They represent the only new popular benefactions, other than the baths of Diocletian, in the city of Rome since the Severans and as a whole reaffirm the importance of the *Forum Romanum*. In light of all of this, the "Sacra Via Trio's" role in Maxentian politics was anything but mundane; they were the most explicit message that Maxentius was all that he advertised: the *propagator* of the Roman state, the *conditor* of his own eternal (re-founded) Rome, and the *conservator* of his city.

The Arch of Maxentius?

In a series of articles in the early 1900s Arthur Frothingham proposed that the Arch of Constantine was originally an Arch of Domitian, on to which subsequent rulers added their own features in an act of appropriation.²⁵⁸ Since then his hypothesis has been refuted and a Constantinian date had been reaffirmed. This was accepted until the 1990s when two teams of scholars from Rome reopened the debate. The first team led by Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro carried out excavations on the south side of the arch and uncovered foundations and a deposit

²⁵⁷ Zanker, P., "By the emperor, for the people," in *The Emperor and Rome. Space, Representation, and Ritual* (2010), 78.

²⁵⁸ Frothingham, A., "Who Built the Arch of Constantine? Its History from Domitian to Constantine, Part I," *AJA* 16 (1912), 368-386; Part II, *AJA* 17 (1913), 487-503; Part III, *AJA* 19 (1915), 1-12; Part IV, *AJA* 19 (1915), 367-385.

comprised entirely of second-century material in direct contact with these foundations.²⁵⁹ This led to a series of conclusions; namely, that the arch we see today is Hadrianic, that the *tondi* are in their original position, and that the arch was built on top of a demolished Domitianic arch.²⁶⁰ Although the evidence from the deposits is indisputable, many of Melucco Vaccaro's conclusions are untenable. A second team of scholars from the Università di Roma at La Sapienza represent the staunchest opposition to Melucco Vaccaro's hypotheses. Led by Patrizio Pensabene and Clementina Panella, they carried out excavations on the north side of the arch on a limited scale and a series technical analysis of the monument's fabric. The excavations amount to incomplete conclusions based on their limited scale, but included the uncovering of a possible foundation construction trench with fourth-century material in its infill (fig. 22).²⁶¹ Most damning to Melucco Vaccaro's theory, however, was the examination of the monument's structure and fabric. The analysis uncovered that every single block in the arch was spolia, all reused having served some other prior function.²⁶² The latter findings serve to vitiate all hypotheses that seek to date the construction of the present arch before the late third century, as the reuse of architectural marbles is virtually unknown in Rome prior to this point and

²⁵⁹ US 86 was found in contact with the foundation on the south side of the eastern pier of the central passage.

²⁶⁰ Melucco Vaccaro, A., and Ferroni, "Chi costrue l'arco di Costantino?" *RendPont* 66 (1993-94), 49-52.

²⁶¹ Zeggio, S., "La realizzazione delle fondazioni," in eds. Patrizio Pensabene and Clementina Panella, *Arco di Costantino* (1999), 117-138. Holloway, R., *Constantine and Rome* (2004), 51 raises doubt that this was a foundation trench. He argues that its width (6 metre wide) and irregular edges both suggest that this was a later incursion and not an original foundation trench as construction trenches tend to be only as wide as necessary and cut with regular edges.

²⁶² Pensabene, P., "Progetto unitario e reimpiego nell'Arco di Costantino," in *Arco di Costantino* (1999), 9-13. Holloway (2004), 51 has provided support to Panella and Pensabene's conclusions and helped to further condemn Melucco Vaccaro's conclusions. As after examining the records from Melucco Vaccaro's excavations he observed that the arch actually sits askew on the foundations that were uncovered. To account for the findings, he proposed that the second-century foundations were laid for an arch that was never realized or that the arch may have been completed but was subsequently torn down. The latter proposal appears less likely as monument and building demolition was less common than appropriation in cases of *damnatio memoriae*.

inconceivable during the Hadrianic period.²⁶³ Given the findings of the team from La Sapienza, a date for the construction of the Arch of Constantine in the late third or early fourth century seems virtually certain. Yet, the many incongruities in the final realization of the arch still prompts scholars to question the singular nature of the arch's construction and, therefore, its original patron. This section, then, will seek to evaluate the supposition that Maxentius, and not Constantine, was the emperor who initiated the arch's construction and, in turn, argue that, if this was the case, Maxentius was acting more akin to the first and second century emperors in creating a monumental space that propagated his imperial ideology.

In accepting a late third or early fourth century date for the construction of the arch only a small number of emperors become viable candidates to have commissioned the arch. Yet this list is quickly abbreviated. Galerius and Severus never entered Rome and no source attributes an arch to either, making their attribution unlikely. While the remaining tetrarchs would seem to be excluded by an excerpt from the *Chronograph* of 354 which records that Diocletian and Maximian built only one arch, the *Arcus Novus*, located in *Regio VII*.²⁶⁴ This leaves Maxentius and, of course, Constantine as the sole remaining possibilities to whom the arch now standing in the Colosseum Valley was originally dedicated. The arch's name, iconography, and attic inscription unanimously point to the latter, however, the many incongruities of the arch promotes suspicion that it was carried out from a single initial plan.²⁶⁵ This has led to a hypothesis that

²⁶³ Wilson Jones, M. "Genesis and Mimesis: The Design of the Arch of Constantine in Rome," *JSAH* 59, No. 1 (2000), 57.

²⁶⁴ *Chron.* 354, 148M. "Diocletianus et Maximianus imper. ann. XXI m. XI dies XII. cong. dederunt ∞ DL. his imper. multae operae publicae fabricatae sunt: senatum, forum Caesaris, basilica Iulia, scaena Pompei, porticos II, nymphaeum III, templa II Iseum et Serapeum, **arcum novum**, thermas Diocletianas. sparserunt in circo aureos et argenteos. partectorum podium ruit et oppressit homines XIII; et mulier nomine Irene peperit pueros tres et puellam. regem Persarum cum omnibus gentibus et tunicas eorum ex margaritis numero XXXII circa templa domini posuerunt. elephantos XIII, agitatores VI, equos CCL in urbem adduxerunt. excessit Diocletianus Salonas, Maximianus in Gallia." The *Notitia* and *Curiosum* both record its location in *Regio VII*, the Via Lata.

²⁶⁵ Wilson Jones, M., "Genesis and Mimesis: The Design of the Arch of Constantine in Rome," *JSAH* Vol. 59, No. 1 (2000), 50-77 represents lone opposition to this statement. In this article Jones reaffirms the Constantinian date but argues persuasively based on complex mathematical proportions that the arch was conceived as a unified

Maxentius initiated the arch's construction and like many other of his buildings was subsequently appropriated when Constantine entered Rome in October 312 CE. This theory has found considerable support as Maxentius' contributions to the area could have easily extended beyond the boundary of the *Templum Romae*. Knudsen has been the strongest proponent for such a hypothesis. In two papers that remain unpublished, save for short summaries, she proposes that both the relief panels on the north and south column pedestals and the Constantinian frieze were spolia and that Maxentius was the arch's builder.²⁶⁶

That the Constantinian frieze was originally made for a different patron and possibly a different arch is evidenced in three portions of the frieze: on the north face with the *adlocutio* and *largitio* scenes, and the triumphal procession on east pier. In all three, Constantine is depicted without his head preserved, and deep chisel lines can be observed along the line of the neck and top of the background which may indicate that this portion of each section was re-cut in antiquity to replace the original head with Constantine's (fig. 23).²⁶⁷ Knudsen adds to this, suggesting that the truncated legs on the recipients depicted in the *largitio* scene are a result of the original being cut down to fit between the bottom of the tondi and the projecting cornice that sat atop the extrados of the side passage arch. This is supported by differentiation in height between the *largitio* scene on the north face and the processional scene on the western pier, as the latter is visibly taller than the former (fig. 24). In accepting that the Constantinian frieze is, indeed, spolia then the *adlocutio* scene provides a *terminus post quem* for its production. In it,

whole, in which Vitruvian *eurythmia* (visual harmony) was sacrificed for *symmetria* (mathematical) harmony. Although Jones argument accounts for the visual incongruities it does not preclude that Maxentius did not begin the project. All of Jones' conclusions are predicated on core proportions and column proportions, both of which could have been in place when and if the monument was quickly appropriated by Constantine.

²⁶⁶ Knudsen, S. "Spolia: The So-called Historical Frieze on the Arch of Constantine," *AJA* 93, No. 2 (1989), 267-268; Knudsen, S. "Portraits of Maximianus Herculius on the Arch of Constantine," *AJA* 97, No.2 (1993), 317.

²⁶⁷ This theory was first proposed by Wace, J., "Studies in Roman Historical Reliefs," *BSR* 4, No. 3 (1907), 271. Now, new photos of the arch would seem to provide evidence that confirms Wace's proposal. This is most readily observed in the triumphal procession scene.

the tetrarchic five-column monument is visible behind the rostra and, therefore, the frieze could not have been commissioned before 303 CE, the date of the monument's dedication. With all other early fourth century emperors already stated as unlikely candidates, this leaves Maxentius as the only other possible patron to have first commissioned the arch.

In a publication that came out of the *Aurea Roma* exhibit held in the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in 2000, Ensoli advanced a theory that supports Maxentius' patronage of the arch. Unlike Knudsen, Ensoli does not look for internal evidence. Instead, she relies on the recent evidence from Melucco Vaccaro's and Pensabene and Panella's studies and proposes theories based purely on ideological and surface observations. Of the former, she is hesitant to remove the monument from Melucco Vaccaro's Hadrianic chronology but recognizes that the preponderance of spolia precludes such an attribution. To navigate this, Ensoli argues that Maxentius commissioned the arch that was intended but never realized by Hadrian, and in correlation with his restoration of the *Templum Romae*, that he sought to complete Hadrian's urban program and extend his own ensemble of buildings into the Colosseum Valley.²⁶⁸ That Maxentius even intervened in the space of the *Templum Romae* was by chance of an ill-omened fire, so to suggest that he must have commissioned the Arch of Constantine in order to complete an intended program in honour of Hadrian becomes difficult to sustain. However, Ensoli's proposal that the arch represented an extension of the Maxentian "Sacra Via Trio" is appealing. The arch would have worked to enclose the south end of the Colosseum Valley and direct spectators walking along the *Via Triumphalis* through its central fornix past the *Meta Sudans* and

²⁶⁸ Ensoli, S., "I colossi di bronzo a Roma in eta tardoantica: dal Colosso di Nerone al Colosso di Constantino. A proposito dei tre frammenti bronzei dei Musei Capitolini," in *Aurea Roma dalla Citta Pagana alla Citta Cristiana* (2000), 87.

up the Sacra Via to the parade of other Maxentian buildings.²⁶⁹ In this way the arch would have closed off the area to the south of the Colosseum Valley, creating a separate and, inevitably, enhanced experience of the new Maxentian “Sacra Via Trio.”

In line with Knudsen's observations, then, it appears that the definitive attribution of the fourth century frieze to Constantine does not hold up under scrutiny. This, when coupled with Ensoli's surface and ideological observations, although partially misguided, make the theory that Maxentius was the original inspiration for the Colosseum Valley arch highly probable. Therefore, to speak of an Arch of Maxentius is no longer erring and when viewing the “Sacra Via Trio” the arch needs to be considered alongside as part of a unified project that affected the whole of the Colosseum Valley.

An additional observation by Ensoli which demonstrates the relationship of the (renamed) Arch of Maxentius with another monument may further affect the evaluation of Maxentius' contributions to the city's center. She noted that as one made an approach from the south the central fornix of the arch would perfectly frame the Colossus of Sol.²⁷⁰ This observation appears to reflect an intentional design choice by the original honorand of the arch, whom I argue was Maxentius. This argument, then, appears to be borne out with evidence that indicates that the Colossus may have also been appropriated by Maxentius.

The Colossus was originally sculpted by Zenodorus for Nero's *Domus Aurea* and was placed in the palace's vestibule on the Velia.²⁷¹ In 133 CE Hadrian moved the statue into the Colosseum Valley, where the rubble core of the base remains today, to make way for the

²⁶⁹ Note that the appellation Via Triumphalis is used out of convenience to label the road that stretched from the Septizonium to the Colosseum Valley.

²⁷⁰ Ensoli, S., “I colossi di bronzo a Roma in eta tardoantica: dal Colosso di Nerone al Colosso di Constantino. A proposito dei tre frammenti bronzei dei Musei Capitolini” (2000), 87; Marlowe, E., “Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the Roman Cityscape,” *ArtBull* Vol. 88, No. 2 (2006), 223-242. The latter takes Ensoli's observation and makes a strong architectural and ideological argument to support Constantine's patronage of the arch, however, each of her premises would equally suit the conclusion that Maxentius had begun the arch.

²⁷¹ Suet. *Nero* 31.1.

construction of his monumental Temple of Venus and Roma and, at the same time, he consecrated the statue to Sol.²⁷² In the subsequent years the Colossus was purportedly subject to a number of rededications and changes, none more important for our purpose than those supposedly made by Maxentius. In the mid-1980s fragments of a large inscription were discovered in the attic of the Arch of Constantine, the inscription remains unpublished but La Regina presented the findings publically in 1988.²⁷³ The fragments, three in all, mention the Colossus, its rededication to (Divus) Romulus and the dedicator, the governor of Sardinia in 309 CE, Lucius Cornelius Fortunatianus. The scale of the letters is said to be large enough to fit on a base the size of that conjectured for the Colossus of Sol. Moreover, the date of the dedication coincides with the untimely death of Maxentius' son, Romulus. From this inscription it can be justifiably concluded that under Maxentius the Colossus was rededicated. If the above evidence, therefore, is enough to conjecture that the Arch of Constantine actually began its life as the Arch of Maxentius, as I believe it to be, then the arch and the Colossus represent the fourth and fifth monument, respectively, that can be attributed to Maxentius. In light of this, his impact on the area just east of the *Forum Romanum* must be re-evaluated.²⁷⁴

With the Arch of Constantine now restored to Maxentius, enclosed in which was the evidence for Maxentius' rededication of Colossus to his deceased son, a veritable Forum of Maxentius comes into sight. Characteristically *fora* were defined by an expansive open space line by porticoes, a sequential ordering of this space, an axially-arrayed temple, and a walled

²⁷² *Had.* 19.12, “*transtulit et Colossum stantem atque suspensum per Decrianum architectum de eo loco in quo nunc Templum Urbis est, ingenti molimine, ita ut operi etiam elefantos viginti quattuor exhiberet, et cum hoc simulacrum post Neronis vultum, cui antea dicatum fuerat, Soli consecrasset, aliud tale Apollodoro architecto auctore facere Lunae molitus est.*”

²⁷³ Since then it has been referred to indirectly in a number of publications including but not limited to: Panella (1990), 87; Ensoli (2000), 86; Curran (2000), 62; Marlowe (2004), 171, fn. 33.

²⁷⁴ It is important to note that until the inscription is published, its contents must remain speculative and no definitive conclusions can be drawn.

separation from the exterior urban area.²⁷⁵ In the case of a “forum of Maxentius” the term “forum,” then, is inevitably problematic. Maxentius’ building ensemble deviates so greatly from the above criteria that any argument that attempts to label it as such is difficult to sustain. Upon further scrutiny of his urban layout, however, it appears that, just as evidenced in his buildings, Maxentius still intended to utilize space in the *Urbs* in a traditional manner.

The Arch of Maxentius demarcated the southern limit of the Colosseum Valley and separated it from regions to its immediate south, while the rededicated Colossus hemmed in the northern end. Both monuments carried a message, the latter was a colossal symbol of Maxentius’ dynastic intentions and hereditary legitimacy, while the former, if completed, would have presented Maxentius as the triumphant defender of Rome. These monuments were not limited to a singular message, however. In a recent article, Marlowe demonstrated how the Arch of Maxentius (Constantine) communicated with the Colossus and, consequently, how the two monuments worked to delimit and control the space.²⁷⁶ Working from Ensoli’s observation that the central fornix framed the Colossus, Marlowe reconstructed sight lines from south of the arch and provided a visual study model that demonstrates how the arch and Colossus communicated at different points along the *Via Truimphalis*. She suggests that once at a distance of thirty-five meters from the arch the entire height of the Colossus would be framed within the central fornix.²⁷⁷ Such a sight would have been quite impressive and would have provided a potent ideological message as both monuments would now be viewed with a singular identity that

²⁷⁵ All of these features are present in the imperial *fora* of Rome.

²⁷⁶ Marlowe, E., “Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the Roman Cityscape,” *ArtBull* Vol. 88, No. 2 (2006), 223-242. Marlowe’s argument seeks to demonstrate how the whole Colosseum Valley functioned as a planned ideological program that propagated Constantine’s control of the space. Since the Arch of Constantine is argued here to have been begun by Maxentius, these same observations must hold true Maxentius as well.

²⁷⁷ Marlowe, E., “Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the Roman Cityscape” (2006), 230 & fig.11. Marlowe bases the visual reconstruction on the height of the arch at 21m, the distance between the arch and the base of the Colossus at 108m, Albertson’s conjectured height of the Colossus statue of 38m, and her own posited height of the Colossus’ base at 5.92m, which she derived from its known proportions.

demonstrated their patron's control over the space. Therefore, the sequential ordering of the Arch, the Colosseum piazza, and the Colossus of Divus Romulus that now defined this space facilitated a specific, yet complex, ideological message; this message propagated Rome and Maxentius' triumph, Maxentius' dynastic intentions, and his control over the *Urbs*.

As is often the case with evidence from the ancient world it can be interpreted to support divergent and often competing hypotheses, in the case of the Arch of Constantine this is no different. The only unequivocal evidence is that uncovered by the team from La Sapienza which demonstrates that every single one of the blocks used in the arch's construction were spolia. This fact negates any hypothesis that attempts to date this monument earlier than the late third century. With this in mind, external evidence leaves only two possible patrons for the original commission of the arch: Maxentius and Constantine. While the latter has been ubiquitously associated with the arch, a re-evaluation of the so-called Constantinian frieze provides support that Maxentius may have been the original intended honorand of the arch. Moreover, surface observations and ideological reasoning support Maxentius' commission of this monument forcing a reconsideration of his imprint on this area of the Eternal City. Lastly, an unpublished inscription now buried in the attic of the aforementioned arch would appear to also confirm Maxentius' rededication of the Colossus. Therefore, his ensemble of monuments, now numbering five, must be seen as much more than the reaffirmation of the importance of the *Forum Romanum*. The Arch of Maxentius and the rededicated Colossus individually presented Maxentius as the triumphant emperor, legitimized by his hereditary rights and dynastic intentions, while together their architectural relationship provided a spectacle that propagated Maxentius' control of this central space. These ideological messages would have been echoed by those imbued in his monumental benefactions on the Sacra Via. In this way, the Colosseum

Valley and the whole area just east of the *Forum Romanum* would have become an expansive, separated space redounding to the glory of Maxentius.²⁷⁸ This is significant as not a single emperor, perhaps since the second century, had sought to make such substantial changes to the topography of Rome's center. By endeavouring to do this, Maxentius created a space that contained overwhelming displays that propagated a form of imperial self-representation which evoked feelings of perseverance against the vicissitudes of change. If it had been fully realized, Maxentius' work along the Sacra Via and in the Colosseum Valley, which now should include the Arch of Maxentius and the rededicated the Colossus, would have definitely demonstrated Maxentius' reverence for Rome and his commitment to her *renovatio*.

Conclusion

On October 28, 312 CE, six years to the day from the time he assumed the imperial mantle, Maxentius' reign abruptly ended. After he and his troops were thoroughly defeated by Constantine at the Milvian Bridge, Maxentius met his watery fate, drowning in the Tiber. Maxentius' rise and corresponding six year reign proved incredibly important to Rome and its perseverance. In the preceding years, the tetrarchy had marginalized the ancient capital, subjecting it to a peripheral position within the empire. They established a new ecumenical view of Rome and her populace and, if not for Maxentius, the glory of the eternal city may have faded long before its actual time. Maxentius harnessed the propagandistic power of Rome and proved unequivocally that the tetrarchic belief that Rome was where the emperor resided was a

²⁷⁸ This argument may be buttressed with archaeological evidence. A unique find was made on the Palatine in 2006 by a team of Italian archaeologists from La Sapienza in Rome led by Clementina Panella. They uncovered a horde of buried imperial *insignia* datable to Maxentius' reign, included in which were glass spheres, a sceptre, and, what are presumably, bases for imperial standards. They were found buried under the north-eastern corner of the Palatine, in direct communication with the ensemble of Maxentian monuments discussed above, and may work to demonstrate not only Maxentius' control and representation in this space, but also his continual support after his defeat to Constantine, since they may have been buried by one of his intimates so as not to fall into the hands of his conqueror. For full detail about these finds, see Panella, C. *I segni del potere: realtà e immaginario della sovranità nella Roma imperiale*, 2011.

misguided fallacy. Maxentius controlled space in the center of the *Urbs* and launched a coordinated program that propagated his Romaphilia and, by consequence, his authority in the Eternal City. His message was spelled out on coinage and statue bases across the city; Maxentius was the *conservator*, the *conditor*, and the *propagator* of his own Rome, the eternal Rome. Of these three titles none has served to characterize Maxentius' relationship with Rome more than the first, *conservator*. Maxentius wasted no time in presenting himself as the preserver of Rome, from his first issue of *aurei* through his entire reign Maxentius' coinage was struck with the legend *Conservator Urbis Suae*. He conveyed this message in a coordinated manner with varying legends and types across all of his coinage. Most conspicuous of which was his adoption of *Dea Roma* as the fundamental sign of his reign. In stark contrast to the tetrarchy, who failed entirely to include *Dea Roma* in their coinage, Maxentius made her the most prominent god/goddess on his coinage and intrinsically tied her to his favorite legend, *Conservator Urbis Suae*. Where *Dea Roma* was absent Maxentius replaced her with particularly Roman types, such as the *dioscuroi* and the *lupa romana*, directly addressing the *populus Romanus*' appeal to the *mos maiorum*. If these things were not enough, in reaction to the vicissitudes of the political climate, Maxentius used coinage to establish Mars' prominence and inextricably intertwined himself with the deity so that he was able to effectively exploit Mars' deep connection with the city as the father of its founders. Through an examination of Maxentius' coinage alone it becomes apparent that he envisioned Rome as the author of his power and that he continually adapted so as to repackage his Romaphilia and convey a continual ideological message, that of Rome's pre-eminence and his preservation of it.

Bereft of a coin, one could see this message written all over the city. Although the epigraphic record is marred by the paucity of evidence, that some inscriptions remain located in

highly conspicuous places speaks to what must have been before Maxentius' memory suffered at the hands of Constantine. Just as on his coinage, the epigraphic evidence that pertains to Maxentius vigorously propagates his *romanitas*. Whether dedicatee or dedicator the epigraphic record amounts to what appears to be a coordinated political and ideological programme that placed Maxentius at the center of the *renovatio Romae*. In the heart of the *Urbs*, Maxentius trumpeted his virtues. There, Maxentius loudly associated himself with the symbols of Rome, again placing his name beside that of Mars and proclaiming himself the *conditor* of a new but, nevertheless, eternal Rome. More subtly, he reintroduced a long defunct imperial appellation that recalled Rome's last resident emperors and spoke to his enhancement of the *Urbs* as the *propagator rei Romae*, while, for both these achievements, the populace and the Senate lauded Maxentius' piety and austerity. As it were, these inscriptions when viewed together delivered a potent message; Maxentius was not a tetrarch but Rome's own emperor who represented himself in due proportion to his lauded virtues. What remains of the epigraphic evidence elucidates that Maxentius sought to distance himself from the tetrarchs and systematically proclaim himself the "preserver of his city." Yet, it also shows that that he took this even further, fashioning himself as the founder of a revived Rome and the *propagator* of his own eternal city.

On his coinage and in imperial language conveyed on stone across the city, Maxentius made a promise to Rome and he worked to fulfill this promise by initiating a massive building programme unattested since the Severans and parallel in scale to the great efforts of the second-century CE emperors. He made each of his self-proclaimed titles manifest in erecting a series of buildings and monuments on the Sacra Via and in the Colosseum Valley. But more than manifestations of simple appellations, these buildings functioned as the main avenue of Maxentius' coordinated programme of propaganda. They were the ultimate representation of his

renovatio urbis Romae. Nevertheless, each appellation could be seen to reflect some aspect of his building programme. As a *conservator*, Maxentius rebuilt the Temple of Venus and Rome, now the *Templum Romae*, and retained the exterior porticoes and columnar order of the temple to demonstrate Rome's perseverance and Maxentius' own reverence for the city. In the same building, Maxentius altered the original *cellae* design, integrating space characteristic of fourth-century Roman aesthetic that announced his intention that Rome was again to be the center of the empire. As a *propagator*, Maxentius built the Sacra Via Rotunda. Originally thought to be a dynastic monument or a temple to the *penates*, the Sacra Via Rotunda was, in fact, a monumental vestibule to the apsidal reception hall behind it. It worked to extend Maxentius influence and his imprint on the topography of the city into the *Forum Romanum* and to connect what would be his own monumental space with the imperial *fora* of previous emperors. As a *conditor*, Maxentius provided the *Urbs* with the largest concrete cross-vaulted space ever constructed in the Roman world, the Basilica Nova. As a basilica its atypical thermal design demonstrated Maxentius' break from the tetrarchy and provided a visual counterpoint to the newly arrayed "tetrarchic" *Forum Romanum*. More than this, its internal emphasis reflected Maxentius' view of his re-founded Rome within the empire—it was at the center, and the only important view was that looking inward toward Rome. These three buildings, which constitute the Maxentian "Sacra Via Trio," were part of a age old form of munificence, in which public buildings were the most important medium through which emperor's could display their power. This is incredibly significant since, in a period when the emperors' largest building endeavours were lavish imperial palaces in distant capitals, the "Sacra Via Trio" sought to fit within a paradigm so prominent in the Principate. They, therefore, represented a significant departure from tetrarchic initiatives, and their construction was the main avenue to promote Maxentius' propaganda.

Important and as effective as they were, the “Sacra Via Trio” were only a part of a larger vision. Both the Colossus of Sol and the Arch of Constantine combined with the trio and made up an ensemble of monuments that amounted to a veritable Forum of Maxentius. Although never realized and not necessarily a forum, this space was built in the tradition of past monumental imperial spaces in the *Urbs* and represented the first intervention of this kind in the *Urbs* since, perhaps, Trajan. Maxentius, in this regard more so than ever, sought to provide a manifestation of his own perseverance alongside that of Rome's. He manipulated the space along the Sacra Via and in the Colosseum Valley creating a place of memory that propagated imperial perseverance against the vicissitudes of change. Maxentius, thus, envisioned a grand ceremonial space, organizing and initiating the construction of an impressive sequence of buildings that would have provided the populace with a visual spectacle of his power, perseverance, and his reverence for Rome if ever fully realized.

Maxentius' entire political programme promised Rome's *renovatio* and perseverance and he carried it out across multiple mediums in a coordinated manner. None were more potent and conspicuous than his building initiatives. Maxentius ubiquitously fashioned himself as the *Conservator Urbis Suae* and in carrying through all that this appellation signified he shattered the flawed belief that Rome was defunct and that its power now resided in emperors, carried to where they resided. To the contrary, Maxentius proved that the eternal city was a living, breathing manifestation of years of imperial dominance and that it had the power, if harnessed and manipulated correctly, to create and uphold emperors. Maxentius answered the call from Rome for an emperor to return and he turned tetrarchic ideology upside down, something not lost on Constantine when he entered the city after his triumphant victory on October 28, 312 CE.

Chapter Three:

A Liberator, Innovator, or Imitator? Constantine and Rome

Introduction

When Constantine entered Rome on October 29, 312 he did so with all the pomp of an imperial triumph.²⁷⁹ He displayed the head of his vanquished foe at the front of his procession as it made its way through the city, while he himself followed in a chariot.²⁸⁰ The message, albeit grim, was clear. Constantine had defeated his enemy, and now the man who had so readily fulfilled his promise to preserve and reinvigorate the capital was to be construed as nothing more than a usurper. This strange paradox was one Constantine was forced to navigate from the outset of his reign and he did so effectively. Constantine immediately took up residence on the Palatine and in the subsequent days sought to win the support of the *populus* by enacting classical displays of imperial *beneficia*. He reached out to every section of the *populus*, putting on secular games, giving a speech in the Curia, an *adlocutio* from the Rostra, and distributing largesse to the *populus*.²⁸¹ Despite these typically Roman rituals, Constantine's defeat of Maxentius has been viewed as a watershed in Rome's continuity, marking Christianity's defeat of paganism.²⁸² Such an outlook has resulted in a long scholarly tradition beginning with Alföldi in the 1940s and later taken up by Krautheimer, amongst others, that views Constantine's interventions in Rome as purely peripheral, fundamentally uninterested with pagan traditions, and comprising

²⁷⁹ Whether a formal imperial triumph took place or not has been a subject of great debate. Evidence that seems to suggest that Constantine did not enter the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus has been used to argue that his arrival was a mere *adventus* and not a triumph. This may prove to be inconsequential for our purpose as Sabine MacCormack, in *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, demonstrates that by this period connotations of triumph and victory had also become integral in *adventus* ceremonies.

²⁸⁰ *Pan. Lat.* 12.18.3; 4.31.

²⁸¹ For his immediate residency on the Palatine see *Pan. Lat.* 12.19.3. For the games see *Pan. Lat.* 12.19.6, and for his speech in the Curia see *Pan. Lat.* 12.20.1. The *adlocutio* and the *congiaria* are evidenced on the Arch of Constantine.

²⁸² This dominant view follows Eusebius in assuming that Constantine's full-fledged conversion to Christianity occurred on the eve of the battle of the Milvian Bridge, *Eus. VC* 1.27-32.

solely of Christian dedications.²⁸³ To the contrary, Constantine's contributions were far greater. In fact, he recognized what Maxentius had proved—that Rome's symbolic power could be converted into real power²⁸⁴—and, just as Maxentius had done, he harnessed the power of Rome's center to his own benefit, emulating and outright appropriating Maxentius' successful model.

Consequently, Constantine's concerted effort of appropriation has led to a second and, perhaps as of late, a more influential viewpoint. First advanced in 1986, Coarelli argued that Constantine was particularly disinterested with the restoration of the capital and was content to simply complete the works of his predecessor.²⁸⁵ Subsequently, this has found support with scholars such as Pensabene, Varner, Holloway, and to a lesser extent Van Dam.²⁸⁶ Advocates of a Constantinian Rome are quick to view this valuation negatively and seek to revise it.²⁸⁷ However, the evidence will show that this is exactly what Constantine did; he focused his entire effort in Rome on appropriating and completing Maxentius' work. It will be argued here, however, that although he may have "limited" his work in Rome to this one aspect, rather than expressing disinterest in the ancient *Urbs* this action demonstrated his great concern for the Eternal City. Constantine set about a coordinated program to erase Maxentius from the

²⁸³ Valenziani, "La politica urbanistica tra i tetrarchi e Costantino," in *Aurea Roma* (2000), 42-44. Krautheimer, R., *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (1983), 40ff; *Rome: A Profile of the City, 312-1308* (1980), ch. 1; Alexander, S.S., "Studies in Constantinian Church Architecture," *RAC* 47 (1971), 283; Alfoldi, A., *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome* (1948), 90-104. Curran, J., *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 71 outlines the tradition but does not adhere to it.

²⁸⁴ The same idea was first expressed by Marlowe, E. "*Liberator Urbis Suae*," (2010), 217.

²⁸⁵ Coarelli, "l'urbs e il suburbio" (1986), 2, "Costantino non era particolarmente interessato alla restaurazione dell'immagine e della funzione di Roma...so accontento in questo campo di confermare in larga parte l'opera del suo predecessore, facendola risultare sotto il suo nome."

²⁸⁶ Pensabene, P. "Il reimpiego nell'eta costantiniana a Roma" in *Costantino il Grande* (1992), 762, "Costantino si sia limitato a terminare per cio che riguarda l'edilizia pubblica civile i cantieri iniziati da Massenzio." Varner, E., "Tyranny and the Transformation of the Roman Visual Landscape," in *From Caligula to Constantine Tyranny and Transformation in Roman Portraiture* (2001), 14 & fn. 56; Holloway, *Constantine and Rome* (2004), 16; and Van Dam, R., *Remembering Constantine at the Milvian Bridge* (2011), 190, 244, & 249-252.

²⁸⁷ The strongest and most recent arguments for revision can be found in Marlowe, E., *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome*, (PhD Diss. 2004) & "*Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius*," 2010.

topography of the city assuming responsibility for all of Maxentius' buildings and, thus, intentionally equally rooting himself in the tradition and power of the *Urbs*.

Ultimately, this chapter sets out to examine Constantine's impact on the center of Rome and his relationship with the *Urbs*. It will be argued that his influence was far greater than simple peripheral contributions and that even these peripheral contributions facilitated Constantine's main objective, which was to demonstrate his authority through the spatial and architectural control of the *Urbs* in the form of traditional imperial munificence and, by consequence, to erase Maxentian memory. Moreover, it will be shown that Constantine effectively utilized the same methods with which Maxentius secured his power to create a fictive lasting narrative in which Maxentius was a tyrant from whom Constantine wrested the city of Rome, effectively becoming her liberator.

Liberator Urbis Suae: Panegyrics and Propaganda

Maxentius, a Tyrannus?

A large inscription which dominates the center of the attic of the Arch of Constantine, repeated on both facades, is the most visible element of the monument's design. Comprising of eight lines of thirty-eight centimeter high *scriptura monumentalis* the text reads as follows:

To Emperor Caesar Flavius Constantinus Maximus
Pius Felix Augustus
Because by divine inspiration and with the greatness of mind
He restored the state with his own army both from a tyrant
and from his every faction at one time with just arms
The Senate and the People of Rome have dedicated this arch honoured by his
triumphs.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ *Imp. Caes. Fl. Constantino Maximo/ P.F. Augusto S.P.Q.R./quod instinctu divinitatis mentis/ magnitudine cum exercitu suo/ tam de tyranno quam de omni eius/ factione uno tempore iustis/ rem publicam ultus est armis/ arcum triumphis insignem dicavit.*

Dedicated in 315 CE for Constantine's *decennalia*,²⁸⁹ the inscription makes apparent that in just three short years Constantine was able to make Maxentius, only recently the preserver of Rome, into the tyrant of what was once "his own city." By contrast, Constantine is presented as Rome's liberator, who restored the city from this insatiable despot. This is reinforced on the west interior wall of the central fornix of the arch where, above the great Trajanic frieze, the phrase *Liberatori Urbis* is inscribed.²⁹⁰ The arch, then, was a conspicuous advertisement of Constantine's deeds, namely his defeat of Maxentius, and a representation of Constantine's relationship with Rome.

A monument, such as this arch, which commemorates the defeat of a fellow Roman, however, must be understood as a considerable break from Roman tradition. This fact is evident as in the preceding three centuries of the Principate it was generally accepted that emperors not be praised for their victories in civil war.²⁹¹ In fact the negative connotation of such commemoration is confirmed as late as the mid-fourth century when Ammianus condemns Constantius II's dedication of triumphal arches to celebrate victory in civil war as perverse and improper.²⁹² Why such a monument was chosen to employ an untraditional and roundly criticized form of commemoration, itself not receiving the same criticism as Constantius II's dedications, then, requires some consideration.

It would appear that the language contained in the arch's inscription fits into a larger, imperially directed program of Maxentius' *damnatio memoriae*. Although the arch was dedicated

²⁸⁹ The arch makes its date of dedication clear. On the north and south face above each lateral fornix *votis X, votis XX* and *sic X, sic XX* are written respectively. This indicates it was dedicated on the emperor's *decennalia* expressing thanks for ten years of rule and a wish for ten more. The only date this could correspond to for Constantine is 315 CE; coincidentally, he also returned to Rome in that year.

²⁹⁰ This is mirrored on the east with the words *Fundatori Quietis*.

²⁹¹ Mayer, E., "Civil War and Public Dissent: State Monuments and the Decentralised Roman Empire," in *Social and Political Life in Late Antiquity* (2005), 148. The lone exception was Octavian's defeat of Anthony but even this was categorized and depicted as a defeat over Egypt.

²⁹² Amm. Marc. 21.16.15, "*Ut autem in externis bellis hic princeps fuit saucius et afflictus, ita prospere succedentibus pugnis civilibus tumidus, et intestinis ulceribus rei publicae sanie perfusus horrenda: quo pravo proposito magis quam recto vel usitato, triumphalis arcus ex clade provinciarum sumptibus magnis erexit in Galliis et Pannoniis, titulis gestorum affixis, se quoad stare poterunt monumenta lecturis*".

by the Senate to Constantine, it is likely that Constantine made the active choice for this arch to commemorate his victory over Maxentius since imperial assurance must have been sought for the arch's atypical and unsettling message. Beyond the sheer perversity of the commemoration there is other evidence that suggests Constantine made a choice in language and commemoration on the arch. The anonymous panegyrist of 313, delivering his panegyric less than one year after Maxentius' defeat, was the first literary reference to acknowledge Maxentius' devious and licentious behaviour but did not once attach to him the epithet *tyrannus*, instead he substituted words such as: "*monstrum*," "*stultum et nequam animal*," "*vernula purpuratus*," and "*hostem rei publicae*."²⁹³ Conversely, a law promulgated by Constantine in 314 published in the *Codex Theodosianus* uses the precise word "*tyrannus*" to denote Maxentius.²⁹⁴ The latter reference marks the first time Maxentius is given this epithet, which in this case is clearly derived from official Constantinian propaganda. This would mean that the inscription on the attic of the Arch of Constantine must have been influenced by the same stream of propaganda when employing the epithet *tyrannus* in describing Maxentius. It is possible, then, when coupled with the necessary imperial assurance for the untraditional commemoration, that Constantine also specifically chose the language. If this is the case, the effect of Constantine's choice is borne out in the historical tradition, wherein the greatest difficulty is had assessing Maxentius' success because of the damning lens of Constantinian history.

²⁹³ *Pan. Lat.* 12.3.5 "monster," 12.14.3 "stupid and worthless creature," 12.16.3 "a slave dressed in purple," and 12.18.2 "enemy of the state."

²⁹⁴ *Codex Theodosianus* 5.8.1, "*Imp. Constantinus a. Ad Volusianum. Universi devotionis studio contendunt, si quos ingenius natalibus procreatos sub **tyranno** ingenuitatem amisisse aut propria contenti conscientia aut aliorum indiciiis reconoscunt...*" The date is taken from the notation of the consulships and the end of the entry, "*Prop. viii kal. mai. Romae, Volusiano et Anniano coss.*" The law was, therefore sent to Volusianus on April 24, 314 when he, Rufius Volusianus, and Petronius Annianus were consuls. See Bagnall *et al.*, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire* (1987), 162-163 for all sources and references to their consulships. Drijvers includes *Codex Theo.* 15.14.4 as an additional citation and dates it to 313. This is clearly an error as 15.14.4 is datable to 326 CE given that Constantine is listed as consul for the seventh time and his co-consul is Constantius II, which did not occur until 326. Therefore, although repealing Maxentius' laws and referring to him as a tyrant, it cannot be used to support the initiation of this tread as it was deployed when the epithet was already strongly in place.

Indicative of how Constantine successfully utilized and manipulated language in constructing a negative image of Maxentius is the regular use of the epithet *tyrannus* in subsequent panegyric. Whereas the aforementioned anonymous panegyrist of 313 never used the epithet once, only six years after the dedication of the arch, in 321 CE, Nazarius refers to Maxentius as *tyrannus* eight times, never once calling him by name.²⁹⁵ Moreover, in Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica*, published around 315,²⁹⁶ when describing Maxentius' character Eusebius uses the epithet *tyrannus* six times, yet still refers to him by name at least twice.²⁹⁷ By contrast, in his *Vita Constantini*, published sometime after Constantine's death, Eusebius refers to Maxentius as a tyrant no fewer than ten times without ever once using his name.²⁹⁸ *Tyrannus*, then, had effectively become the most common epithet for Maxentius. Already in 313 CE, after Constantine damned his memory, Maxentius was described as insatiable; however, it was Constantine who, when approving the message of the arch in the Colosseum Valley, advertised a trend that saw Maxentius become, specifically, a *tyrannus*.

By using specific language, which he chose to place in highly conspicuous places in Rome, Constantine was able to create this fictive narrative, in which Maxentius was made into a tyrant. This narrative proliferated into literature so that by the end of Constantine's reign, his predecessor in Rome had become an insatiable, deviant despot whose unbearable traits drove him from Rome into Constantine's liberating hand. In fashioning Maxentius as a *tyrannus*, Constantine implemented an epithet that had scarcely, if ever, been used for an emperor and it became accompanied by a series of undesirable traits relentlessly assigned to him by the

²⁹⁵ *Pan. Lat.* 4.6.2, 4.7.4, 4.25.4, 4.30.1, 4.31.4, 4.32.3, 4.32.6, 4.34.4.

²⁹⁶ For dating of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* see Barnes, T.D. *Constantine and Eusebius* (1981), 148-163. Specifically he suggests that there were three successive editions with the earliest published no later than 315 CE.

²⁹⁷ Eus. *HE* 8.14.

²⁹⁸ Eus. *VC* 1.33-38.

anonymous panegyrist of 313 and, later, Nazarius and Eusebius.²⁹⁹ In this way, Constantine was innovative in constructing a negative image of Maxentius. Not only did the epithet connote a series of negative traits, but it also worked to undermine Maxentius' legitimacy effectively erasing Maxentius the beloved traditional Roman emperor from historical memory.

Erasing Maxentius: Constantine's Secular Building in Rome

Appropriation and Continuity of Power: Part I

The Rome that Constantine entered in late October 312 CE was one that had been substantially changed by Maxentius' regime. The remnants of this change were most likely incomplete and highly conspicuous; Constantine could not simply wipe the pavement clean so to speak. In the process of constructing Maxentius the tyrant he set about erasing Maxentius' name from stone, his image from statues, and his legacy from the Eternal City.³⁰⁰ The monumental undertakings in the city's center, however, proved more challenging than the epigraphic record and statuary population. Maxentius had provided Rome with buildings of the sort which had not been undertaken in the *Urbs* in almost a century, Constantine would have been remiss to tear them down and abandoning their construction would have been perceived as equally inattentive to the city's need. Instead, Constantine elected to complete all the buildings and assume responsibility for their erection.

Just as Aurelius Victor's remark served as the singular link of Maxentius to the Basilica Nova, this very same remark preserves for posterity Constantine's appropriation of Maxentius'

²⁹⁹ Drijvers, J. W. "Eusebius' Vita Constantini and the Construction of the Image of Maxentius," in *From Rome to Constantinople, Studies in Honour of Averil Cameron* (2007), 18. *Pan. Lat.* 12.3.4-4.3 & 4.31.1-4.

³⁰⁰ For an example of Maxentius' erasure from stone see *CIL* VI, 33856 which was discussed extensively in chapter two. On this statue base a visible attempt was made to erase Maxentius' name from the face of the stone. For statuary see below pg. 124-129 concerning the seated acrolith of Constantine.

initiatives.³⁰¹ Victor states that every work Maxentius constructed, the Senate dedicated to Constantine, specifically mentioning two buildings: the *Templum Romae* and the Basilica Nova. That this was Constantine's course of action is not surprising since, as a recent study by Penelope Davies shows, Roman architecture was rarely demolished when its patron was subject to *damnatio memoriae*.³⁰² In fact, there was little to no precedent for such an action, save for perhaps Commodus' legacy, and, when coupled with the potent ideological message of Rome's rebirth entrenched in Maxentius' structures, Constantine had little choice. Though Victor is rather reserved in listing only two structures on to which Constantine fastened his name, it is evident from Maxentius' extensive undertakings throughout the city that Constantine's appropriations must also have reached considerably farther. This section, then, will examine the archaeological and literary evidence arguing that Victor's rather minimalist catalogue of appropriations is in need of an addendum. Constantine continued where Maxentius had left off, he finished what was incomplete and what was complete he claimed for his own. In this way, Constantine "the imitator" continued Maxentian policy in reinvigorating the Eternal City, only now this rebirth bore Constantine's name and face.

To start with what Aurelius Victor remarks; he writes that the Senate dedicated the Temple of the city, the *urbis fanum*, and the basilica to Constantine. Of the former, there is little doubt he is making reference to Maxentius' *Templum Romae*. Few studies have been carried out specifically on the fourth-century temple; a small entry by Monaco on the temple's fourth-century phasing can be found in the *Aurea Roma* collection and a thorough examination of the

³⁰¹See Chapter Two, "The Basilica Nova," 75. Aur. Vic. *De Caes.* 40.26, "*Adhuc cuncta opera, quae magnifice construxera, urbis fanum atque basilicam, Flavii meritis patres sacravere.*" "Furthermore, every work, which he (Maxentius) constructed magnificently, the basilica and the temple of the city, the Senate has dedicated to Constantine for his meritorious deeds.

³⁰²Davies, P. "What Worse than Nero, What Better than his Baths?": *Damnatio Memoriae* and Roman Architecture," in *From Caligula to Constantine, Tyranny and Transformation in Roman Portraiture* (2001), 42.

Maxentian design was carried out by Dumser and in chapter two of this work.³⁰³ Little architectural evidence remains, however, to date the building's precise phasing due to the fact that the temple was subject to multiple damaging post-classical interventions. Most notably the structure has been compromised by the incorporation of S. Francesca Romana into the western *cella* in the twelfth century and the attempted fascist restorations in 1935. As a result, it is difficult to discern if the Senate's rededication of the temple to Constantine was accompanied by any architectural or physical appropriation. In an examination of the temple's fabric, Monaco suggests that it was. He observes that two niches, one on each spur of wall flanking the central apse, were filled in at a later date.³⁰⁴ Furthermore, he suggests that an architrave composed solely of spoliated blocks was installed post-Maxentius and, based on similarity in mortar, he argues that the installation of the architrave and the infill of the side niches were contemporaneous.³⁰⁵ Recent examination of the fourth-century Velabrum Quadrifrons provides evidence that may support Monaco's supposition that it was Constantine who made these physical alterations to the structure. A similarity was observed between the quadrifrons' cornice blocks and certain architectural design elements in the *Templum Romae*, prompting the suggestion that the cornice blocks were spolia from the *Templum Romae* made available by Constantine's intervention in the original design.³⁰⁶ Despite this support, Monaco's suggestion remains hypothetical as none of his observations include evidence that provides a definitive date for the alterations, rather only that alterations to the original plan were made at some point.

³⁰³ Monaco, E., "Il Tempio di Venere e Roma. Appunti sulla fase del IV secolo," in *Aurea Roma dalla Città Pagana alla Città Cristiana* (2000), 58-60; Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 193-282; *supra*. Chapter Two, "*Templum Romae*," 79-87.

³⁰⁴ Monaco, E., "Il Tempio di Venere e Roma. Appunti sulla fase del IV secolo," (2000), 60. In light of this, he also suggests that the two porphyry columns that flanked the apse were not part of the original plan as they block these would be statue bearing niches.

³⁰⁵ Monaco, E., "Il Tempio di Venere e Roma. Appunti sulla fase del IV secolo," (2000), 60.

³⁰⁶ Marlowe, E., *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome* (2004), 91 & fn. 87.

Beyond the paltry archaeological evidence of any Constantinian alterations there is slight external evidence that may also help to reinforce Constantine's appropriation of the Maxentian *Templum Romae*. Two issues of *aes* were minted in Rome in 312 CE for Constantine with the same type as Maxentius' *conservator urbis suae* coins. On the reverse of each issue Roma is depicted seated inside a hexastyle temple holding a globe and sceptre while Maxentius' ubiquitous accompanying legend is replaced alternatively by LIBERATORI VRBIS SVAE and RESTITVTOR(i) VRBIS SVAE.³⁰⁷ No person in possession of these coins would fail to notice the similarities between Constantine's new coins and those of his predecessor. They were a blatant appropriation of Maxentius' most visible type and may have also been used to announce Constantine's appropriation of Maxentius' role as benefactor to Roma's cult and as restorer of her temple. An image of the seated goddess similar to those found on the coins' reverses can be seen on the keystone of the central fornix on the north side of the Arch of Constantine (fig. 25). This image is undeniably subtle when viewed as part of the arch's entire composition; Pensabene and Panella, however, recognized that this image and the image of Roma on the east keystone of the Velabrum Quadrifrons are almost identical.³⁰⁸ This has led to the suggestion that both these images reflect the appearance of the statue of the goddess seated in the *Templum Romae*.³⁰⁹ If this is the case, the proliferation of the image on what are thought to be Constantinian monuments support the supposition that Constantine was attempting to show reverence to the goddess. Beyond this, the close location of the image on the Arch of Constantine and the *Templum Romae*, as well as the fact that the keystone faced the temple so as to directly communicate with it, might have helped to bolster Constantine's appropriation of the temple.

³⁰⁷ *RIC* VI, Roma 303 & 304; *RIC* VI, Roma 312.

³⁰⁸ Pensabene, P. and Panella, "Reimpiego e progettazione architettonica nei monumenti tardo-antichi di Roma, II. Arco Quadrifronte del Foro Boario," *RendPont* 67 (1995), 52.

³⁰⁹ Marlowe, E., *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome* (2004), 91 referencing L'Orange and von Gerkan's observation from the 1930s.

Neither the internal nor external evidence provides definitive support that the senatorial rededication of the *Templum Romae* to Constantine announced by Victor was accompanied by physical alterations. What the evidence does suggest, however, is that Constantine was aware of the political importance of Maxentius' restoration of this building, and that it was equally as important that his name be tied to the temple. Constantine appropriated Maxentius' most conspicuous numismatic type, which signified his relationship with the temple, and he placed the seated image of Roma on monuments whose sculptural program can be arguably attributed to Constantine's own choice. If this was not enough, it is possible that Constantine also made small alterations in the fabric of the *Templum Romae*. These alterations were made in the only truly Maxentian portion of the temple, as he introduced new decorative elements in to the temple's *cellae*. As a whole, however speculative, it would appear that Constantine used multiple ways to reinforce his appropriation of the *Templum Romae*, and in the same way I argued Maxentius' reconstruction of this building demonstrated his reverence for Rome, Constantine's appropriation of the building also appropriated this message, announcing to the *populus Romanus* that Constantine cared for "his own city," liberating its monumental temple from the memory of a tyrant.

In addition to the *Templum Romae*, Aurelius Victor also mentions the Basilica Nova. Here, the archaeological evidence for Constantine's physical appropriation is much greater. For a long time scholars associated the monumental southern entrance and the north apse with a later, presumably Constantinian phase.³¹⁰ This was used to suggest that Constantine not only appropriated the building but entirely reoriented the space, so that, as Marlowe originally put it, "they (Constantine's alterations) transformed the structure into a phenomenologically new

³¹⁰ For a overview of the Basilica Nova see, Chapter Two, "Basilica Nova," 75-87; For a comprehensive argument for all that follows in this paragraph and sources pertaining to the southern entrance portico see, Chapter Two, "Basilica Nova," 82-83.

building, thereby harnessing its magnificence to the service of Constantine's own authority and legitimacy."³¹¹ Recent archaeological work on the site, however, calls for a significant downgrade to Constantine's role in the basilica's final design. It is now almost certain that the south entrance was part of the original plan and, thus, Maxentius intended that the building feature a cross-axial design from the outset.

As for the northern apse, that it was a later addition has always been certain, yet scholars have looked to find an exact date for its inclusion.³¹² Until a recent architectural examination of the building's fabric was undertaken, Coarelli's opinion that the apse was a late fourth century addition was widely accepted. The results of the architectural study prove, however, that the apse was part of a systemic re-strengthening of the north side of the basilica during initial construction made necessary by immediate ground settlement. This led Amici to suggest that the apse was, indeed, Constantinian but was a pragmatic and necessary addition rather than an ideological one. Marlowe, in a reappraisal of her previous argument that saw the apse and southern entrance as Constantinian, concedes that the southern entrance is now known to be part of the original design.³¹³ However, in accepting the Constantinian date of the north apse's construction, she argues that Amici's mundane explanation of its addition as simply structurally necessary cannot be accepted.³¹⁴ Rather, she sees the monumental size of the apse and its ornate ornamentation as having a dramatizing effect; that is "Constantine made a virtue of necessity."³¹⁵ That this was the case seems highly probable as the rather unassuming apse to the north of the narthex was added

³¹¹ Marlowe, E., *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome* (2004), 90. She goes as far as comparing the effect of the alterations to the introduction of the glass pyramid in Paris' Cour Napoleon.

³¹² For a comprehensive argument and sources pertaining to the addition of the northern apse see, Chapter Two, "Basilica Nova," 76-78.

³¹³ For her original conclusion see Marlowe, E., Marlowe, E., *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome* (2004), 90. For her reappraisal see Marlowe, E. "Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius," (2010), 209.

³¹⁴ Marlowe, E. "Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius," (2010), 211.

³¹⁵ Marlowe, E. "Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius," (2010), 211.

at the same time and for the same purpose.³¹⁶ Moreover, external buttressing could have been added, attached to the north wall and extended over the back alley to the retaining wall holding the force of the Velia, to counter the thrust of the cross vaulting, as this was the solution that was used on the northwest and northeast side of the basilica.³¹⁷ The northern apse's inclusion in the Basilica Nova's final design, then, was Constantinian and, although it was an answer to a structural problem, it also had an ideological purpose. It reified Constantine's appropriation of the building and, for the spectator, it worked to draw them toward the nave from the southern entrance where they would be met with another visual, and possibly more potent, reminder of Constantine's appropriation, the colossal statue in the western apse.

In 1486 the head of a colossal statue of Constantine, measuring almost three meters in height, was unearthed in the ruins of the Basilica Nova and fragments of the figure's arms, legs, and hands were recovered along with it (fig. 26). The statue, the fragments of which are now housed in the cortile of the Palazzo dei Conservatori, has been restored as an enthroned acrolithic image of the emperor holding a sceptre in his right hand in the guise of Jupiter. Ubiquitously considered to be a depiction of Constantine in its present state, new arguments that the statue was actually re-carved from an earlier image and, thus, appropriated by Constantine have recently gained momentum.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Amici, C, "From Project to Monument," (2005), 58.

³¹⁷ Amici, C, "From Project to Monument," (2005), 50; Marlowe, E. (2010), 211 alludes to the possibility of less obtrusive alterations.

³¹⁸ Accepting that the statue was re-carved: Harrison, E., "The Constantinian Portrait," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 67 (1967), 81-96; Coarelli, "L'urbs e il suburbio," (1986), 32; D. Kleiner, *Roman sculpture* (1992), 407-408; Evers, C., "Remarques sur l'iconographie de Constantin," *MEFRA* 103 (1991), 785-803; Curran, J., *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 58; Ensoli, S., "I colossi di bronzo a Roma in eta tardoantica: dal Colosso di Nerone al Colosso di Costantino. A proposito dei tre frammenti bronzei dei Musei Capitolini," (2000), 66-90; Varner, E., "Tyranny and the Transformation of the Roman Visual Landscape," (2001) 14-15 & nn. 50-57; Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 81-90.

In 1967, Harrison was the first to advance the thesis that the colossal statue was, indeed, re-fashioned into the guise of Constantine from a previous emperor.³¹⁹ After closely scrutinizing the extant foot, arm, and hand fragments, Harrison argues that the present Constantinian physiognomy was likely carved from an image of Trajan or Hadrian as the fragments betray signs of sculptural techniques reminiscent of the Trajanic or Hadrianic period.³²⁰ These observations were part of article examining the change in Constantinian portraiture in numismatic evidence and statuary and, as such, she drew a number of other conclusions about the acrolithic statue. Foremost among them, Harrison observes that the physiognomy of the colossal statue finds closer comparison to late numismatic representations of Constantine, particularly in coinage minted between 326 to 335 CE and, therefore, concludes it must be considered a product of the later years of his reign.³²¹ In light of this, she suggests that Constantine appropriated a colossal statue of Trajan or Hadrian, maybe from the former's forum or from the latter's adjacent Temple of Venus and Rome, and that the statue was relocated to the basilica, with Constantine waiting until later in his reign, when an official portrait had developed, to re-carve the head.³²²

The problems in her thesis are immediately discernible as there is a preponderance of evidence that points to the fact that the western apse and the colossal statue were conceived together. The seated acrolithic statue, with its flat, unfinished back, was designed with the knowledge that it would be viewed from the front alone, and not in the round, while its size

³¹⁹ Harrison, E., "The Constantinian Portrait," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 67 (1967), 81-96.

³²⁰ Harrison, E., "The Constantinian Portrait," (1967), 93. She observes that the feet are both remarkable for their smooth rounded finish and exquisite detail, while the care with which the veins are rendered on the arms demonstrate a concern for organic forms so reminiscent of the time of Trajan and Hadrian.

³²¹ Harrison, E., "The Constantinian Portrait," (1967), 91-92. She claims that the high narrow head with the face's weight sinking towards the jawline, the projecting cleft-chin, aquiline nose, and big expressive eyes closely resembles features discernible in coins struck at Trier and Nicomedia in 332 and 335 respectively.

³²² Harrison, E., "The Constantinian Portrait," (1967), 94.

seemed uniquely tailored to fit in a space similar in size to the western apse of the basilica.³²³

Both points provide insight that suggests that the statue may have been built specifically for the Basilica Nova, while the architectural evidence of the basilica itself points to the statue's and basilica's mutual conception. It has been recently argued the flat marble-revetted surface of the western apse was a direct response to the presence of the statue.³²⁴ Whereas the other walls of the basilica were consistently adorned with statuary niches, the west apse remained a plain surface indicating that the colossal statue was considered in the building's design. This supposition seems to be borne out in Maxentian design elsewhere. In the eastern *cella* of the *Templum Romae* the rear wall of the apse that would have housed a seated image of the goddess is unadorned, while the lateral walls are characteristically enlivened with niches. Such being the case, the *cellae* of the *Templum Romae* serve as direct and contemporary comparanda for the design that carried over into the Basilica Nova's western apse. In considering the unique size of the seated statue and the unadorned wall of the western apse, which finds comparison in the nearby *cellae* of the *Templum Romae*, it would appear that not only was the acrolith specifically designed for the western apse of the Basilica Nova, but that the apse itself was designed with the statue in mind.

Despite the hypothetical nature of her conclusions,³²⁵ Harrison's observations have prompted subsequent scholars to re-examine the colossal statue and helped to open the

³²³ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 87; Harrison points out that Kähler made this same observation in his 1952 article titled "Konstantin 313," for this see Harrison, E., "The Constantinian Portrait," (1967), 92 & fn. 70. That the statue was actually located in the western apse and not elsewhere is confirmed by the appearance of a base in the west apse on two renaissance drawings, of which the proportions are also preserved and prove a match for the colossal size of the statue, for this is see Minoprio, A., "A Restoration of the Basilica of Constantine, Rome," *PBSR* 12 (1932), 12 & fig. 10.

³²⁴ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 87.

³²⁵ She herself acknowledges this at Harrison, E., "The Constantinian Portrait," (1967), 93. Here, she states that she has yet to have the time to make a study of colossal hands and feet of the Roman period but still quickly disregards the possibility of their fourth-century origin. Such a concession calls into question her hypothesis, not in the least because there is no record of an acrolithic seated statue of Trajan.

possibility that the acrolith, just as the Basilica Nova, was appropriated by Constantine. In the process of identifying the emperor from whom Constantine likely appropriated the acrolithic statue both Hadrian and Maxentius have been advanced as possibilities.³²⁶ Since I have argued that the acrolith and the western apse were conceived contemporaneously, and given that Maxentius designed and began the Basilica Nova, it would seem most likely that if Constantine did, in fact, appropriate the colossal statue, he did so from Maxentius. This suggestion has found considerable support, most recently with Varner advancing a compelling argument.³²⁷ He suggests that the head provides telltale evidence that the statue was, indeed, re-carved. When viewed frontally, based on asymmetricalities, it appears that the eyes and mouth have been modified. The left side of the mouth is longer and the space between the lips on the right side is wider, while the left eye is larger than the right and has a visibly larger bottom eyelid (fig. 27).³²⁸ From profile it becomes discernible that the forehead was also altered, cut back beneath the hairline. That the statue was not originally Constantine is also suggested by the irregularities of the temple. On both the left and right side a small square has been cut below the hairline and in front of the ears (Fig. 28). It has been argued that these holes were cut in order to affix locks of hair before the ears, which were characteristic of most Constantinian portraiture.³²⁹ This evidence has been used to suggest that the statue was re-carved from an original with flat temples

³²⁶ For the statue's identification as Hadrian see, Evers, C., "Remarques sur l'iconographie de Constantin," (1991), 794-799.

³²⁷ Varner, E., "Tyranny and the Transformation of the Roman Visual Landscape," (2001)14-15 & fn. 50-57. Others who accept that the colossal was once Maxentius are Coarelli, "L'urbs e il suburbio," (1986), 32; D. Kleiner, *Roman sculpture* (1992), 407-408; Hekster, O., "The city of Rome in late imperial ideology: The Tetrarchs, Maxentius, and Constantine," (1999), 17-18.; Curran, J., *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 58; Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 81-90. Ensoli, S., "I colossi di bronzo a Roma in eta tardoantica: dal Colosso di Nerone al Colosso di Costantino. A proposito dei tre frammenti bronzei dei Musei Capitolini," (2000), argues that Maxentius appropriated it from Hadrian and then Constantine from Maxentius.

³²⁸ Varner, E., "Tyranny and the Transformation of the Roman Visual Landscape," (2001)14 & fn. 56-57.

³²⁹ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius*, 83. Dumser provides the boar-hunt tondo as a comparandum. On it she says that the curly locks before the right ear are preserved. However, better evidence might be seen on the Colossal bronze portrait of Constantine (Rome, Musei Capitolini, no. 1072) and two other colossal heads, both from Rome (Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, no. 3147 & New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 26.229). All three examples depict Constantine's long, curly protruding locks before the ear.

since the abundance of hair on the statue's head, carved in high relief, reveals that there was enough stone to have carved the necessary temple locks from the outset.³³⁰ Maxentius is a good candidate for this original. All extant statuary portraiture of Maxentius portrays him with a short, cropped coiffure with flat sideburns running over the temples (fig. 29a).³³¹ Moreover, Varner finds comparison in the colossal head's physiognomy with three other Maxentian portraits, arguing that the statue retains Maxentius' characteristic high, arching brow, wide eyes, prominent nose, and cleft chin (fig. 29b).³³² He acknowledges similarities in Constantine's physiognomy to all of these supposedly Maxentian traits; however, he demonstrates the inconsistency with which they are employed for Constantine while they remain consistent on all Maxentian portraiture.³³³

That the statue was re-carved cannot be proven with absolute certainty, but the evidence seems to suggest that it is highly probable. Given this probability, when coupled with the location of the fragments' discovery, the nature of the statute's depiction,— seated not standing— and the monumental size of the image all suggesting that the statue was uniquely made to fit into the western apse of the Basilica Nova, Maxentius becomes the prime candidate from whom Constantine appropriated the image. This possibility is borne out in an examination of the features of the colossal head, where particularly Maxentian traits are still visible.

Moreover, observations of the architectural design and decorative program of the Basilica Nova

³³⁰ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 83.

³³¹ For examples see Ostia, Antiquarium, no. 70; Rome, Museo Torlonia, no. 600; Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Skulpturensammlung, no. 406; Stockholm, National Museum, no. NM Sk 106; Hannover, Kestner Museum, inv. 1979.1.

³³² Varner, E., "Tyranny and the Transformation of the Roman Visual Landscape," (2001) 14 & fn. 50. The three portraits are Rome, Museo Torlonia, no. 600; Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Skulpturensammlung, no. 406; Stockholm, National Museum, no. NM Sk 106.

³³³ Varner, E., "Tyranny and the Transformation of the Roman Visual Landscape," (2001) fn. 55. For example he lists Constantine portraiture without the cleft chin including: Madrid, Prado, no. 125 E; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 26.229; Rome, Musei Capitolini, no. 1072; Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, no. 3147.

reveal that the colossal statue and the basilica were mutually conceived, thereby confirming with some certainty that Maxentius, the original patron and designer of the gargantuan basilica, was the original honorand of the statue.

In appropriating the acrolithic statue and opting to build the ostentatious northern apse rather than a smaller, yet still structurally sufficient solution to support the north wall, Constantine made the Basilica Nova his own. Now, despite through what entrance a spectator entered, the west apse would become the center of all focus as the north apse drew visitors entering from the south into the basilica's nave and the east entrance was axially aligned with it. That this was the focus was surely intended as the colossal acrolithic statue, now in the guise of Constantine, seated in the western apse would have reinforced Constantine's appropriation of the whole structure and, consequently, also reminded observers of his victory over "the tyrant" Maxentius. In fact, this message may have been reinforced by a dedicatory inscription that accompanied the statue which is reported to have stated that Constantine freed the city "from under the yoke of a tyrant."³³⁴ Although the southern entrance has been restored to the Maxentian phase of the Basilica Nova, there is still plenty of evidence beyond Aurelius Victor's words that demonstrate Constantine's appropriation and physical alteration of the space. In the case of the Basilica Nova, in contrast to his oft advertised "heavy-handed" interventions, the archaeological evidence supports that Constantine sought rather to make tactful and purposeful

³³⁴ Two versions of the inscription are attested, one in Eusebius' *HE* and the other in Rufinus' Latin translation of Eusebius' history. Despite a minute variation between the two that is more pertinent to Constantine's religious orientation than the language employed on the inscription, both refer to Maxentius as tyrant. Rufinus' Latin translation is preferred here to Eusebius' original as Rufinus had lived in Rome in the late fourth-century and had likely seen the inscription in question, which is now lost. *HE* 9.9.11: "*in hoc singulari signo, quod est verae virtutis insigne, urbem Romam senatumque et populum Romanum iugo tyrannicae dominationis ereptam pristinae libertati nobilitatique restitui.*" "In this exceptional sign, which is a sign of true virtue, I restored the city of Rome and both the senate and the people of Rome having been snatched from under the yoke of a tyrant's domination to their ancient liberty and nobility."

alterations turning necessities into virtues and concretely tying his image and name to the monumental and highly conspicuous bequest to the *populus Romanus*.

Just west of the Basilica Nova, absent Aurelius Victor's guiding words, archaeological evidence suggests that Constantine also appropriated the third and final building in the Maxentian "Sacra Via Trio," the Sacra Via Rotunda. An inscription purportedly observed by Pirro Ligorio on the facade of the Rotunda Complex in 1562 associates Constantine with the building. His sketch records an inscription on the entablature: CONSTANTIVS MAXIMVS TRIVMPH PIVS FELIX AVGVSTVS. The authority of Ligorio's inscription, however, has been called into question with it suggested that the transcription very likely includes portions that are Ligorio's own inventions.³³⁵ However, a contemporary of Ligorio, Onofrio Panvinio, also provides evidence for an inscription relating to the Sacra Via Rotunda. In his manuscript Panvinio records an inscription that was considerably more fragmentary than Ligorio's, only including three words in two parts: MAXIMO...ME..... on one side and CONSTANTIN on the other.³³⁶ Subsequently, Panvinio's inscription was reproduced in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, while Ligorio's restoration was only referenced. Included in the discussion on the inscription in *CIL* is the suggestion that ME be read instead as MP, thus potentially restored as [triu]mp[hatori] to match the dative *maximo*.³³⁷ Such a restoration finds support in no fewer than

³³⁵ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 137; Marlowe, E. *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome* (2004), 92. Marlowe, E. "Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius" (2010), 214. Already discussed was Ligorio's penchant for invention and preference for the complete monument or structure (See above, Chapter Two, pg 79 & fn. 215), likewise his sketch of the Sacra Via Rotunda almost certainly included reconstructions. An examination of a contemporary antiquarian drawing reveals just this, as many elements Ligorio includes in his sketch are absent in his contemporary's, one of which was the very entablature that Ligorio reports to have seen the inscription on (see below fn. 339). Given Ligorio's reputation for idealizing the building remains and since a contemporary account does not seem to corroborate Ligorio's observations his inscription must be viewed as tenuous at best.

³³⁶ *CIL* 6.1147.

³³⁷ *CIL* 6.1147. It is also suggested that the MP could be reconstructed as *se[mp]er victori* or left as ME, it may be restored to read *cle[me]ntissimo*. The latter is possible but unlikely as it is only attested in two other inscriptions in Rome (*CIL* VI, 1134 & 1143) and never accompanies the epithet *Maximus*. See Marlowe, E.

five inscriptions known from Rome which include *triumphator* in a series of epithets that appear to become routinely attached to Constantine at least by the 320s and consistently follow the epithet *maximus*.³³⁸ Coarelli, however, rejects Panvinio's observation on the grounds of his misreading of ME and the irregular arrangement of Constantine's nomenclature in his transcription, as it positions *Maximus* as a prefix to Constantine, an arrangement which Coarelli argues is epigraphically unattested. Thus, both of his lines of argumentation seem to preclude the overall accuracy of Panvinio's testimony.³³⁹

The situation thus far suggests that either Ligorio and Panvinio both fabricated their transcriptions or that there is another tenable solution. An alternative readily presents itself in an earlier sketch of the Rotunda by another contemporary antiquarian, Maarten van Heemskerck. Dumser notes that in his drawing a number of architectural marbles of indistinct decoration are found clustered around the base of the facade.³⁴⁰ It is possible that Panvinio, after consulting Ligorio's drawings, viewed the building only to find that it was no longer preserved up to the facade, and upon inspecting the cluster of nondescript architectural marbles at the base of the facade he found that some blocks were inscribed with the purported "*in situ*" finding. He then creatively installed these fragments at the top of the Sacra Via Rotunda's facade. As such he appears unconcerned with the particular order of the nomenclature, erroneously and carelessly presenting the blocks in an unattested arrangement. Such an interpretation, admittedly

"*Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius*," (2010), fn. 48. She suggests a transcription of MP, but negates the dative case of MAXIMO and carelessly restores it as [TRIUMPH]MP[H].

³³⁸ CIL VI, 1135, 1141, 1142, 1144 and 1146.

³³⁹ Coarelli, "L'urbs e il suburbio" (1986), 11. The additional transcription error Coarelli cites is based on Panvinio's claim that the fragmentary inscription was seen *in situ*. If this was the case MAXIMO had to have preceded CONSTANTIN, an arrangement Coarelli rightly views as unsustainable since *Maximus* is epigraphically unattested as a prefix to Constantine. If Panvinio's arrangement is accepted, however, it would have to be viewed as such, making his transcription very difficult to sustain indeed. Instead, Coarelli chooses to accept Ligorio's inscription as authentic, yet provides no real grounds to do so. Although Coarelli's skepticism of Panvinio's restoration is understandable, his preference to accept Ligorio's restoration is not a viable alternative

³⁴⁰ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 137, fn. 66. Dumser suggests that the drawings by Maarten van Heemskerck reveal a number of elements that are only in Ligorio's sketch, included among them was the entablature.

hypothetical, vitiates the argument brought against accepting Panvinio's inscription and may provide supportive evidence for Constantine's "triumphant" appropriation of Maxentius' Sacra Via Rotunda.

Although the history of the inscription on the facade of the Sacra Via Rotunda is veiled in uncertainty, the fact that it was attested by two separate sources makes its complete fabrication unlikely. That said, without entirely dismissing the epigraphic evidence there is still only questionable proof of Constantine's physical appropriation of this Maxentian structure. Actual structural evidence that may corroborate the message of the purported inscription was found in the 1970s when a series of excavations uncovered the foundations of an original rectilinear facade slightly behind the later concave facade.³⁴¹ These same sondages revealed that the masonry of the concave facade abutted the Rotunda and flanking aisle walls, which definitively demonstrated that the concave facade was part of a separate and secondary building phase. Chronologically, however, the concave facade must still be closely related to the complex's original construction as its masonry is identical to the brickwork and mortar of the Rotunda proper.³⁴² The facts that the rectilinear facade was replaced with the more aesthetically appealing concave facade and that the latter was chronologically almost contemporary with the original structure have been used to suggest that Constantine altered the facade when the building was rededicated to him to physically demonstrate his appropriation.³⁴³

That the facade was a Constantinian intervention, however, remains contested. Dumser made an observation that the concave facade would have covered windows that were cut into the

³⁴¹ Fiore, P., "L'impianto architettonico antico," (1981), 74-81; Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 129-130; Marlowe, E. "Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius," (2010), 213.

³⁴² Fiore, P., "L'impianto architettonico antico," (1981), 81; Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius* (2005), 129.

³⁴³ Fiore, "L'impianto architettonico antico," (1981), 81; Coarelli, "L'urbs e il suburbio" (1986), 11; Marlowe, E. *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome* (2004), 93. Marlowe, E. "Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius" (2010), 213.

Rotunda's drum but were later infilled during the construction of the building. From this observation she argues that the infill of the windows and the construction of the concave facade were contemporary. She concludes that the windows were undoubtedly filled during the construction of the Rotunda's drum as the interior marble revetment ran seamlessly over the infill and, therefore, that the change to a concave facade was made late in the building's initial construction and not in a second, closely contemporaneous, phase.³⁴⁴ In making this conclusion Dumser attempts to return the final and present design of the Sacra Via Rotunda to Maxentius and negates the supposed Constantinian interventions.

It appears that just as the inscription amounts to uncertain evidence for Constantine's physical alteration or appropriation of the Sacra Via Rotunda the architectural evidence is equally as unstable. If Constantine did appropriate the Sacra Via Rotunda then any unequivocal proof of this has been lost to posterity. Despite this, given that Constantine made physical alterations to both the *Templum Romae* and the Basilica Nova when the Senate rededicated them to him, marking his appropriation of them, it is likely that a similar tactic was employed with the Sacra Via Rotunda. The evidence that remains, although highly inconclusive, suggests that Constantine did just this, while the superficial nature of the alterations suggests that a purely ideological motive lay behind the change. Constantine used the Sacra Via Rotunda to signify his triumph over Maxentius in the same way his triumphal arch would do to the south-east of Constantine's newly appropriated "Sacra Via Trio." If this was the case, both the new facade and the contested inscription conveyed an overt message, trumpeting Constantine's victory over the tyrant Maxentius as a triumph to be celebrated and remembered by the *populus Romanus*.

Appropriation and Continuity of Power: Part II, "The Arch of Constantine"

³⁴⁴ Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius*, 119 & 129-130.

With the addition of the Sacra Via Rotunda, Aurelius Victor's list is lengthened. Yet, there remains another monument that was undoubtedly a Senatorial dedication, and possibly a rededication. The Arch of Constantine in the Colosseum Valley was dedicated to Constantine by the Senate and the People of Rome for his triumphs over the tyrant Maxentius. In Chapter two of this thesis, I argued that the Arch of Constantine was actually conceived by Maxentius, as three panels in the so-called frieze of Constantine betray evidence of re-cutting for reuse. This being the case, the inscription on the arch's attic should be viewed not only as an explicit message of the monument's dedication to the triumphant emperor Constantine, but also as a sign of his appropriation of the monument.

Recent studies on the arch, its architecture, and sculptural program have contributed to the large body of scholarship that seeks to decipher its political and iconographic intentions and they result in a number of divergent conclusions. The first of which argues that the arch was the most prolific way in which Constantine articulated his relationship with the sun-god Sol. Wilson-Jones was the first to advance this argument, while Marlowe has become its strongest proponent offering its topographical relationship with the Colossus of Sol in support of Wilson-Jones' observation of Sol's representation on the arch.³⁴⁵ Van Dam advanced a second theory arguing that the arch's composition, both with the spolia and the new frieze, was a direct message from the Senate to Constantine that dictated the sort of emperor he was supposed to be in Rome; that is, he was to be the traditional "Republican" emperor who was a purveyor of civic duty and civilian comportment, not a provincial tetrarchic warlord.³⁴⁶ While a third position advanced by Mayer envisions the arch, first and foremost, as a laudatory monument, divested of all other

³⁴⁵ Wilson Jones, M. "Genesis and Mimesis: The Design of the Arch of Constantine in Rome," *JSAH* Vol. 59, No. 1 (2000), 69; Marlowe, E., "Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the Roman Cityscape," *ArtBull* Vol. 88, No. 2 (2006), 223-242.

³⁴⁶ Van Dam, R., *Remembering Constantine at the Milvian Bridge* (2011), 124-140.

ideological meaning save for representing Constantine as conqueror of not only Maxentius but also barbarian tribes along the Rhine frontier.³⁴⁷ All three of these readings of the arch when viewed from a different perspective support the argument that Constantine actually appropriated it from his predecessor in the same way he seized the entire ensemble along the Sacra Via.

The topographical relationship of the Colossus of Sol and the arch has already been discussed, and if it is accepted that Maxentius had dedicated the Colossus to his son, Romulus, then the visual connection between the arch and the statue suits Maxentian dynastic propaganda as equally as it does any sort of religious connection between Constantine and Sol. The latter relationship, then, between Sol and Constantine, is only made to seem stronger by the subsequent appropriation and additions to the sculptural program of the arch made by Constantine. As a triumphal arch it would similarly suit the commemoration of Maxentius' victory over Domitius Alexander in Africa. In fact, the relative contemporaneity of Maxentius' recovery of Africa and his defeat at the Milvian Bridge would explain the arch's incomplete state and Constantine's ability to appropriate and add to its sculptural program where necessary. Therefore, both aspects which must have been decided at the arch's origin, its position and reason for construction, would equally fit into Maxentian policy and propaganda, while the sculptural relationships which have been used to support a Constantinian date for the arch may have been subsequent additions to further enhance Constantine's appropriation of the monument.

Van Dam's argument that the arch was a message to Constantine from the Senate detailing the norms of an emperor's social comportment furthers the argument above as it is the most compelling of the three to suggest that Constantine did, in fact, appropriate the arch. He uses two lines of argumentation to reach his conclusion. First, in claiming that the re-cut images

³⁴⁷ Mayer, E., "Civil War and Public Dissent: State Monuments and the Decentralised Roman Empire," in *Social and Political Life in Late Antiquity* (2005), 147-148.

of the old, good emperors were specifically chosen, he argues that by representing Constantine like a new Marcus Aurelius, a new Trajan, and a New Hadrian the Senate expected him to behave like them in the traditional manner.³⁴⁸ Second, he argues that the sequential ordering of the so-called Constantinian frieze represents Rome's role in the transformation of the emperor. Constantine is first depicted wearing full battle gear on the south side of the arch in the Siege scene, while on the north face, one hundred and eighty degrees away from the Siege scene, Constantine is depicted in Rome and for the first time in the traditional Roman toga on the *largitio* panel. Van Dam argues this new iconography represents Constantine how he was supposed to appear, as a traditional civilian emperor.³⁴⁹ Of Van Dam's two lines of argumentation his first is the more difficult to sustain since it is more likely that the panels were chosen out of availability than specifically chosen for ideological purposes. Even if it were accepted that the panels were an attempt to represent the honorand as a traditional emperor, then they would fit Maxentius' propaganda more aptly than Constantine's as he initiated a series of buildings in a traditional manner to which the arch marked entrance. His second line of argumentation is far more tenable, yet, coincidentally, it is the two most traditional Roman depictions of the emperor found in the frieze, upon which his argument hinges, that are likely Maxentian originals.³⁵⁰ The two most important premises of Van Dam's argument, then, became either untenable or support Maxentius' authorship of the original arch and Constantine's appropriation of it. Since it now seems that the arch was an appropriation, the question remains as to how much was actually standing when Constantine first laid eyes on the monument.

³⁴⁸ Van Dam, R., *Remembering Constantine at the Milvian Bridge* (2011), 127. I find this argument difficult to sustain as it is more likely that these panels were chosen out of availability from a marble yard than specifically chosen for ideological purposes. Rather, his second line of argumentation is more sustainable.

³⁴⁹ Van Dam, R., *Remembering Constantine at the Milvian Bridge* (2011), 133.

³⁵⁰ See chapter two, "An Arch of Maxentius?" The *adlocutio* scene and the *largitio* scene.

Of all architectural dedications in the Roman world arches provide the almost exclusive examples of destruction after an emperor was condemned by an order of *damnatio memoriae*.³⁵¹ The reason for this is immediately apparent: whereas other buildings usually had some secular or religious function arches were purely propagandistic, they served as “billboards for the emperor’s legitimation policy or ideology through inscriptions, sculpture, and sheer physical presence.”³⁵² Serving this unitary function, their demolition would have been an uncomplicated matter, as such if Maxentius had constructed an arch it would be conceivable that Constantine destroyed rather than appropriated it. Yet, Davies acknowledges one potentiality, that is, if an arch were not built of solid masonry its concrete core could present an obstacle.³⁵³ It seems that the incomplete Arch of Maxentius presented this very issue to Constantine when he entered Rome in 312 CE.

Thought originally to be constructed purely of marble blocks in *opus quadratum* below the attic level, a technical analysis of the arch’s fabric carried out by the team from Università di Roma at La Sapienza proved instead the homogeneity of the fabric of the whole arch. In this analysis, core samples were taken from above and in between the *fornices* and revealed the presence of cement at the center of the monument behind the *quadratum* facing.³⁵⁴ In light of this, it appears that if Maxentius did initiate the arch, he built it with a concrete core and when faced with the difficulty of destroying this core, Constantine simply employed the same tactic he did with the other Maxentian structures to the west; he appropriated the arch and all its corresponding messages.

³⁵¹ Davies, P. “What Worse than Nero, What Better than his Baths?”: *Damnatio Memoriae* and Roman Architecture,” (2001), 31.

³⁵² Davies, P. “What Worse than Nero, What Better than his Baths?”: *Damnatio Memoriae* and Roman Architecture,” (2001), 31.

³⁵³ Davies, P. “What Worse than Nero, What Better than his Baths?”: *Damnatio Memoriae* and Roman Architecture,” (2001), 32.

³⁵⁴ Panella, C., “Tecniche costruttive e modalità inserimento dell’apparato decorativo,” in eds. Patrizio Pensabene and Clementina Panella, *Arco di Costantino*, 51-55.

At the very least, then, it appears that the superstructure of the arch was already standing on October 29, 312 CE. Moreover, it would seem that particular sculptural aspects had already been planned and begun by the Maxentian architects, including certain portions of the “Constantinian frieze,” specifically the *adlocutio* and *largitio* scene on the north face and the triumphal procession on the east pier. Constantine saw this as an opportunity to broadcast his message. He approved additions to the sculptural program that commemorated his victory in the civil war against Maxentius, turning the Constantinian frieze into a narrative of his march into Rome. The most traditional depictions of the Roman emperor found in the frieze, however, were re-cut from the Maxentian originals and placed on the north face of the arch so as to communicate with this traditional Roman space which had recently been built up by Constantine’s predecessors in an attempt to reaffirm the importance of the center of the *Urbs*. Moreover, Constantine made this monument an extremely explicit reminder of his victory. The inscription trumpeted his victory over a “tyrant,” while the arch’s mere presence completed the message Constantine sought to propagate by his interventions in the traditional center of Rome, that of triumph and abolition. To complete his appropriation of Maxentius’ structures, Constantine rededicated the Colossus to Sol and removed the infamous inscription detailing the statue’s dedication to Maxentius’ son, Romulus, only to reuse it in the construction of the attic of his newly decorated arch. Maxentius’ erasure, then, is architecturally nowhere more explicit than in the Arch of Constantine, in fact, just as the message of Maxentius’ defeat is broadcasted all over his own original monument his very memory is buried within it.³⁵⁵

Through a re-examination of archaeological and architectural aspects of each of Constantine’s contributions to the center of the *Urbs* it becomes increasingly demonstrable that

³⁵⁵ For the metaphor of Maxentius’ ‘burial’ in the arch see Marlowe, E. *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome*, (2004), 74.

each had a previous life, albeit short-lived. They were initiated by Constantine's predecessor, Maxentius, and represented the reversion to traditional forms of imperial munificence.

Maxentius harnessed the power of the pavement in the center of the *Urbs*, promising it a rebirth, and, in return for his reverence and adherence to traditional forms of comportment, the Eternal City legitimized Maxentius' rule. Constantine recognized this and, accordingly, sought to capitalize in the same manner. Given that destroying the monumental bequests was not a viable option, Constantine appropriated each one, tactfully displaying his control over space in the *Urbs* and, at the same time, his own reverence for the erstwhile *caput mundi*. Contrary to the opinions that Constantine left the city center virtually untouched or that his contentment to simply complete what Maxentius had begun demonstrated his disinterest in the *Urbs*, Constantine altered the topography of the area surrounding the Sacra Via and Colosseum Valley enough for it to unquestionably announce Constantine as Rome's own triumphant emperor and provide would be usurpers with a image of their eventual fate.

Constantine's Christian Building in Rome: "*Novatoris Turbatorisque*" or *Novatoris Conservatorque*?

As Christianity became a state sponsored religion for the first time in the early fourth century Constantine's imperial sanctioning of the religion served as a catalyst for the proliferation of innovative church foundations all across the *Urbs*. However, the burgeoning number of adherents and perceived imperial attention given to the religion in the *Urbs* has also been viewed as the cause of great conflict within the pagan Senatorial class.³⁵⁶ Likewise, it has

³⁵⁶ For the process of Christianization of the Senatorial Aristocracy in the west and Constantine's role in it see Salzman, M.R. *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire* (2002), 178-200. For the most recent and comprehensive study on conflict throughout the fourth century between Pagan and Christian Senators see Cameron, A. *The Last Pagans of Rome*, (2010). Ultimately, Cameron dispels this myth arguing that conflict within the aristocracy did not occur along religious lines. In this process, however, he provides an unmatched survey of all the evidence for and progressions of arguments that adhere to a paradigm of religious conflict.

been suggested that Constantine's supposed sponsorship of Christianity saw him shirk traditional forms of imperial munificence for new forms of Christian *beneficium*, in which he placed Christian edifices on the outskirts of the city so as not to disturb the historic pagan center, all the while ignoring old gods.³⁵⁷ The latter point assumes that Constantine's sponsorship of Christian buildings would have "disturbed" traditional sentiment in the Eternal City. It will be argued here, however, that the locations of Constantine's church foundations were much more than simply the product of a non-confrontational building programme. In fact, his earliest foundations in Rome, categorized by a *terminus post quem* of 312 CE and an *ante quem* of 324 CE for the commencement of their construction, shared the same ideological and political function as his work in the traditional center, an observation which Curran was first to recognize about the Lateran.³⁵⁸ As such, Constantine's early Christian building programme warrants examination within the framework of traditional imperial beneficence. In doing so, it will be seen that Constantine's Christian patronage and his work at the center of the *Urbs* followed similar ideological and traditional patterns, making Constantine an innovator but also a preserver of traditional imperial comportment in Rome.

The *Liber Pontificalis* serves as our only comprehensive extant source on church foundations in Rome for this period.³⁵⁹ The text is comprised of a collection of Latin biographies of the Roman bishops, in its full extent chronicling their lives down to 891 CE. The first editions of the work, however, contained lives only until 530 CE, and were likely completed shortly thereafter. The compiler of the work drew upon the early papal chronicles, which were in

³⁵⁷ Krautheimer, R. *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (1983), 29. For more see Valenziani, "La politica urbanistica tra i tetrarchi e Costantino," in *Aurea Roma* (2000), 42-44. Krautheimer, R., *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (1983), 28-40; *Rome: A Profile of the City, 312-1308* (1980), ch. 1; Alexander, S.S., "Studies in Constantinian Church Architecture," *RAC* 47 (1971), 283; Alfoldi, A., *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome* (1948), 90-104.

³⁵⁸ Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 96.

³⁵⁹ For an introduction to the *Liber Pontificalis*, its breadth, content, editions, validity and possible dating see Davis, R. *The Book of Pontiffs* (2000), xi- xlix.

existence as early as the second century CE, and supplemented this information with sources such as Rufinus, Jerome, and apocryphal materials. As a result of this amalgam of source work, especially its vigorous consultation of apocryphal materials, the validity of the *Liber Pontificalis* has often been criticised. Nevertheless, its catalogue of church endowments proves largely reliable and, thus, invaluable.³⁶⁰ It is in this respect, then, that it becomes integral in a study of Constantinian church foundations. In the Life of Sylvester and that of Mark, the *Liber Pontificalis* lists no fewer than fourteen churches in Rome and its environs attributable to Constantine, offering extensive lists of imperial endowments for each. It offers little value, however, as a chronological catalogue of Constantine's Christian foundations as churches appear to be listed based on endowment wealth and future prominence. Yet, how the church foundations in Rome relate temporally to Constantine's reign is of the utmost importance in understanding their political and ideological significance.

Despite its ineptitude in presenting a precise chronology for foundations within the Life of Sylvester, the *Liber Pontificalis* lists the Basilica Constantiniana, better known as the Lateran Basilica, and the adjacent Baptistry first among Constantine's Christian benefactions in the city.³⁶¹ An early date for the Lateran's foundation is partially confirmed by the list of imperial lands allocated to it found in the *Liber Pontificalis*. All but the one endowment of the Adriatic island of Cephalonia are from the areas of Italy and North Africa.³⁶² This suggests that the initial

³⁶⁰ It often contains fiscal and prosopographical details that would be difficult to fabricate. For example see Champlin, E., "Saint Gallicanus (Consul 317)," *Phoenix* 36, 71-76. In his short essay, Champlin associates a certain Gallicanus, who bequeathed land as endowments to the Church of Peter, Paul, and John the Baptist in Ostia, with Ovinus Gallicanus, *praefectus urbis* 316-317 and consul in 317. Ovinus Gallicanus was himself curator of Teanum, a city just west of Suessa Aurunca while he had close ties with Caesonii Bassi, one of whom was the *curator rei publicae Suessanorum*. This is important as one of the properties listed in the *Liber Pontificalis* donated by Gallicanus was in the territory of Suessa (*territuro Suessano*). In a similar way, Champlin shows that all four properties listed in the *Liber Pontificalis* as donated by Gallicanus can be tied to landed estates likely owned by Ovinus Gallicanus.

³⁶¹ *LP* 34. 9-15. Silvester was Pope from 314-335; therefore, the *LP* only concedes that the Lateran was constructed sometime in this period; as will be seen, a chronology that can be narrowed considerably.

³⁶² *LP* 34. 12-14.

endowments for the Lateran's construction and revenue had to have occurred after Maxentius was defeated in 312 CE but before Constantine came to control the eastern portions of the empire after his defeat of Licinius in 324 CE. Outside of the *Liber Pontificalis* there is further evidence to suggest an early date for its construction.

Situated on the apex of the Caelian hill, the Lateran was inserted into the midst of a multitude of aristocratic *domus*. This massive basilica measured 99.76 meters from the inner facade to the apex of the apse and featured an 18.73 meter wide central nave flanked on either side by two aisles, each exactly half the width of the nave, for a total width of approximately fifty-six meters.³⁶³ Repeated sondages under the modern S. Giovanni in Laterano from the 1930s through to the 1980s have brought to light significant portions of this Constantinian basilica. Interestingly, the extant foundations of the apse, nave, and aisles were sunk into what were once the foundation walls of a Roman *castra*.³⁶⁴ These barracks were identified in the 1930s as those of the *equites singulares*.³⁶⁵ It is this identification that proves to be significant evidence in determining the chronology of the Lateran Basilica.

Speidel demonstrated that the *equites singulares*, as an integral part in his ascension to emperor and his protection whilst reigning, shared a close relationship with Maxentius until his demise.³⁶⁶ In light of this, he suggested that after the battle of the Milvian Bridge Constantine did away with the entire corps of the *equites singulares*. He cites this passage from Aurelius Victor as evidence:

³⁶³ Krautheimer, R. *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (1983), 16 & Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 96.

³⁶⁴ Krautheimer, R. *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (1983), 15.

³⁶⁵ Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 93 & fn.117. Extant remains under S. Giovanni in Laterano were identified as part of the camp of the *equites singulares* by Josi, E., "Scoperte nella basilica costantiniana al Laterno," *RACrist* 11 (1934), 335-358.

³⁶⁶ Speidel, M.P., "Maxentius and his Equites Singulares in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge," *ClAnt* Vol. 5 (1986), 253-262.

“On account of their (the Senate and the people of Rome) hate for them, the legions of the Praetorian and the support units, more serviceable to factions than to the City of Rome, were completely eliminated together with the use of arms and the wearing of military garments.”³⁶⁷

Here, Speidel argues that the support units or *subsidia* were likely the *equites singulares* given their close association with Maxentius. Therefore, having disbanded their number, Constantine was faced with the physical remainder of their former prominence since their now empty barracks remained on the Caelian and it appears that in the plan for the Lateran, then, Constantine found a ready solution. Constantine razed the barracks of the *equites singulares* and initiated on its very spot the construction of the massive Lateran Basilica.

Curran was the first to explicitly recognize the unique importance of this foundation. Although a monumental offering to the Christian community, he argues that the Lateran was foremost a physical reminder of the “ruthless obliteration” of Maxentius’ *equites singulares* at the hands of Constantine.³⁶⁸ This assessment, however, does not go far enough. We know from the *Liber Pontificalis* that the basilica was endowed with landed estates for its revenue and construction solely derived from territory recovered from Maxentius. Therefore, the Lateran can also be considered as a quasi-manubial temple, set up from the spoils (in this case the lands) acquired from Maxentius’ defeat.³⁶⁹ Furthermore, in choosing to patronize the Christian god, the Lateran as the first intramural church foundation in Rome can also be characterized as an ex-voto to the god whom Constantine accredited for his victory on the eve of October 28, 312 CE.³⁷⁰ These very functions, when coupled with the history of the demise of the *castra equitum singularium*, all but confirm the primacy of the Lateran’s foundation.

³⁶⁷ Aur. Vic. *De Caes.* 40.25, “*Quorum odio praetoriae legiones ac subsidia factionibus aptiora quam urbi Romae sublata penitus, simul arma atque usus indumenti militaris.*”

³⁶⁸ Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 96.

³⁶⁹ A theory first advanced by Marlowe, E. *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome*, (2004), 71.

³⁷⁰ Krautheimer, R. *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (1983), 15, calls it an ex-voto.

When viewed from this perspective the first state-sponsored Christian church in Rome begins to look more like a traditional imperial foundation in the city of Rome. Architecturally, its monumental size and publicity mirrored Constantine's secular or civic benefactions to the west of the Caelian in the city's center, while its endowments placed it within the tradition of manubial foundations in Rome, in this case honouring an eastern deity in a way no different than Aurelian's temple of Sol did half a century earlier. Moreover, the Lateran Basilica was an additional expression of Constantine's triumph over Maxentius, erasing him from the topography of the city and the memory of the *populus Romanus* just as his appropriations in the heart of the city had done.

There are two remaining churches that can be ostensibly placed within the category of Constantine's early church foundations, the Church of SS. Marcellinus and Peter and the *Basilica Apostolorum*. Both, like most of Constantine's church foundations, were extramural buildings that were constructed on sites that venerated Christian martyrs. The peripheral location of these and the other churches along the main approaches from the south and east of the city on the Via Appia, the Via Labicana, and the Via Tiburtina has been used to elucidate the separateness of Constantine's church building programme and his desire not to disturb the traditional center of the pagan gods.³⁷¹ Yet, it will be seen that this line argumentation is not entirely sustainable. Beyond the pragmatic solution which sees the extensive imperial extramural holdings dedicated to many extramural foundations as the reason for their peripheral location,³⁷² that each church was situated on the burial site of martyrs and saints also works to vitiate the

³⁷¹ Later, Constantine's daughter, Constantina, built Sant'Agnese fuori le mura on the Via Nomentana and Constantine's successors completed San Paolo fuori le mura on the Via Ostiensis. This way all the main approaches to the city from the south, south-west, east, and north-east introduced Constantine and his dynasty and reflected what would become a new inside-out profile of the city.

³⁷² Marlowe, E., *That Customary Magnificence which is your due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome* (2004), 65. She suggests the location of extramural imperial *horti* helped facilitate churches' locations.

argument since it was these very sites that represented the heart of Christianity in Rome.³⁷³ In building Christian churches at specific extramural sites, Constantine was the first to pay imperial homage to their locations. Although these very traits are discernible in the *Basilica Apostolorum* and the Church of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, that the two can be placed early in the catalogue of Constantine's church foundations is predicated on a subsidiary ideological premise similar to that in place at the Lateran; that is, the erasure of Maxentius.

For the first of the two early extramural foundations one must look to the fourth entry in the *Liber Pontificalis*. Here the *Liber Pontificalis* records that Constantine built a basilica for Saints Marcellinus the deacon and Peter the exorcist *ad duas lauros* at the third mile on the Via Labicana.³⁷⁴ Included in its endowments were lands all from the territory which previously was in the possession of Maxentius and none from the eastern diocese. Much like the Lateran, then, the Basilica of Saints Marcellinus and Peter must have a *terminus post quem* of 312 CE and a *terminus ante quem* of 324 CE. What is interesting about the site, however, is that the *Feriale ecclesiae Romanae* references only one, obscure martyr named Gorgonius in connection with it.³⁷⁵ Later it appears that the basilica became associated with Saints Marcellinus and Peter as attention was drawn to their burial in the nearby catacombs by Pope Damasus.³⁷⁶ It appears, therefore, that the association of the saints with the Constantinian phase of the basilica was a later interpolation and rather it was the increased importance of martyr shrines in the fourth

³⁷³ Hunt, E.D., "Imperial Building at Rome, the Role of Constantine," in eds. K. Lomas and T. Cornell, *Bread and Circuses* (2003), 117. He emphasizes Constantine's endorsement of the new "inside-out" profile of the city. Brown, P. *The Cult of the Saints* (1981), 1-8. Here, Brown elucidates how integral the Cults of Saints and Martyrs were to Roman Christianity. He writes that the martyrs' relationship with God and their roles as intercessors made them fundamental in a Christian's ability to establish intimacy with God.

³⁷⁴ *LP* 34.26.

³⁷⁵ *Feriale ecclesiae Romani*, *MGH I*, 72. The relics of this martyr were apparently deposited here on September 9, 258 CE.

³⁷⁶ Damasus was pope from 366-384 and fragments of a monumental arch found here with letters of Philocalian character reveal that the site was marked with one of his *Epigrammata*, inscriptions written in verse demarcating certain points in the Christian topography of Rome. See Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 148-156 for a detailed discussion on the *Epigrammata* of Damasus.

century that dictated the necessity of their connection. An alternative reason for Constantine's selection to establish a Christian foundation on the site becomes necessary. The archaeological evidence provides just this and helps to confirm its chronological primacy among extramural foundations.

All that remains on the site today is the remnants of a large mausoleum, commonly known as Tor Pignattara. Constructed as two stacked drums, the lower portion is preserved to half its circumference, while the upper portion, although it is preserved to a lesser degree, reveals that it was pierced with windows recessed into domical niches (fig. 30). The mausoleum's interior diameter measured 20.18 meters and the interior walls were revetted in marble. The lower drum was articulated with niches, in to which mosaics were set.³⁷⁷ This mausoleum was the funeral rotunda of Constantine's mother Helena, who was buried here in a porphyry sarcophagus.³⁷⁸ Excavations carried out on the site in the 1940s revealed the foundations of the basilican structure attested in the *Liber Pontificalis*. The basilica was sixty-five meters long and twenty-nine meters wide, it featured a central nave and flanking side aisles that joined in the apse to form an ambulatory. On the east end, the mausoleum was connected to the basilica by a narthex to which it was bonded.³⁷⁹ From this it is clear that the mausoleum was never a free standing structure and that the basilica and the mausoleum were contemporaneous. A coin found in the mortar of the interior marble revetment on the mausoleum rotunda provides a date between 324 and 326 for the completion of the whole complex.³⁸⁰ Perhaps the most striking aspect of the

³⁷⁷ Holloway, R., *Constantine and Rome* (2004), 87. He writes that the niches were still partially visible in the sixteenth century and that it is also likely that the interior of the dome was covered with mosaic.

³⁷⁸ *LP* 34.26. The porphyry sarcophagus is preserved to this day, although heavily restored, and is housed in the Vatican museum. The military motif on the sarcophagus has led to he belief that this burial may have been originally intended for Constantine but later his burial place was moved to the Church in the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.

³⁷⁹ Holloway, *Constantine and Rome* (2004), 89-90.

³⁸⁰ Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 102, fn. 163 & Holloway, *Constantine and Rome* (2004), 89-90 both cite the coin reported in the excavation reports to be found in the mortar. The obverse legend of

building's architecture, however, is that it was partially built atop the enclosure walls of an older cemetery.

The west wall of the narthex and the east short wall of the nave used older enclosure walls as its foundations. These walls have been identified as the enclosure walls of a cemetery of the *equites singulares*, Maxentius' personal cavalry.³⁸¹ The identification is not certain, yet it is highly plausible as the foundation of the basilica contained a considerable amount of funeral *stelae* commemorating members of this very corps of soldiers.³⁸² In fact, Krautheimer notes that the top of the concrete foundations is composed, almost exclusively, of *stelae* fragments of the *equites singulares*.³⁸³ In light of this, the ideological importance of this structure is immediately apparent. Just as on the Caelian, only three miles outside the Aurelian walls not far from the Sessorian Palace or the Lateran itself, Constantine razed another site of Maxentius' *equites singulares*. He desecrated their cemetery and built atop of it a second quasi-manubial temple, consecrating the site for his own mother's burial so that her memory, and by consequence his, would far outlast that of the prior occupants of the site. Furthermore, that this basilica served to erase Maxentian memory supports the archaeological evidence that suggests an early date for the complex, since Constantine appeared to first direct his architectural patronage to erasing Maxentius from the topography of Rome. It seems that here, on the Via Labicana, under the guise of enlarging the cult of the martyrs Constantine continued his policy of architectural *damnatio memoriae* on the outskirts of the city.

the coin read CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C and the reverse PROVIDENTIAE CAESS. For dating of coinage see Bruun, P. *Roman Imperial Coinage VII*, 284-295. A date between 324 and 326 is reached from the inaugural date of the *Providentiae* series in Rome which seems to have occurred no earlier than 324 and the from the temporary cessation of minting of bronze coinage there after Crispus' death in 326 CE,

³⁸¹ Holloway, *Constantine and Rome* (2004), 92, citing excavation records of Guyon.

³⁸² Krautheimer, R. *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae II*, 197; Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 101-102; Barnes, T.D. *Constantine. Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire* (2011), 87. For the date of the cemetery and desecration of the cemetery by Constantine see Speidel, M.P., "Maxentius and his Equites Singulares in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge," *ClAnt* Vol. 5 (1986), 255-256.

³⁸³ Krautheimer, R. *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae II*, 197.

For Constantine's second extramural Christian foundation one has to look away from the pages of the *Liber Pontificalis* as it is not mentioned among his contributions. The *Basilica Apostolorum*, now known as S. Sebastiano, rose up between the second and third milestones along the Via Appia across from the Villa of Maxentius. This basilica, built in an area that had been occupied by burials since at least the first century CE, received renewed interest in the mid-third century when the apostles Peter and Paul began to be venerated on the site. The *Feriale ecclesiae Romanae* states that three days before the *kalends* of July in 258 CE relics of Peter and Paul were placed here, while approximately one hundred and ninety *graffiti* found around the early site offer salutations to both Peter and Paul, which suggests that the site was a focal point of Christian worship in the late third century.³⁸⁴ The site was originally quite modest, comprising of a *memoria apostolorum* which included a porticus and a fountain. Yet, in the fourth century a large apse-ended basilica with an ambulatory, measuring 73.4 meters long and 30 meters wide with the width of the flanking aisles 7 meters on either side, was constructed on the site.³⁸⁵ The date of the basilica's foundation has been routinely questioned with the patron alternatively identified as either Damasus, because the site's lone mention in the *Liber Pontificalis* comes in the Life of Damasus, or more unconventionally as Maxentius, based on the silence of the *Liber Pontificalis* concerning its actual construction and the close architectural similarities between the surviving fourth-century remains of the basilica and the nearby Villa of Maxentius.³⁸⁶ Neither of

³⁸⁴ *Feriale ecclesiae Romani*, MGH, 71, "III kal. Iul. Petri in Catacumbas et Pauli Ostense, Tusco et Basso cons." *Graffito* found carved into the stucco of the early *memoria* with a consular date confirms the sites veneration in the mid-third century. For consular dated *graffito* see Krautheimer, R. *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae* IV, 103. Also cited by Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 97 & Machado, C., "Roman Aristocrats and the Christianization of Rome," in eds. P. Brown and Lizzi Testa *Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire (IV-VI Century A.D.)*, (2011), 496. On the extensive amounts of *graffiti* see Holloway, *Constantine and Rome* (2004), 106 and for the site as a heart of Christian identity in the third century see Machado, C., "Roman Aristocrats and the Christianization of Rome," (2011), 496.

³⁸⁵ Krautheimer, R. *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae* II, 119 & 140.

³⁸⁶ Krautheimer, R. *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae* II, 145, suggests that the work at the on S. Sebastiano and the Villa of Maxentius were carried out by the same architect and team. He makes this conjecture as the strange elliptical windows which can still be seen in the remaining original walls in the present church betray

these pieces of evidence, however, can be relied upon to date the structure with any certainty and archaeological examination of the site in the early twentieth century further complicated the matter. These sondages revealed a threshold block with a Constantinian monogram on it, itself, however, also inconclusive as it could refer to Constantine, Constantine II, Constantius II, or Constans.³⁸⁷ One, then, is left in a quandary over the origin of the site, so much so that Holloway suggests it could have been built in 310, 320, 330, or even later.³⁸⁸ Excavations conducted between 2006 and 2012 on the adjacent site of the Villa of Maxentius by the University of Boulder Colorado and the Comune di Roma, however, have uncovered evidence that may help to establish a date of construction for the fourth-century *Basilica Apostolorum*.

In the 2012 excavation season, work carried out on the *aula palatina*, a large apsidal dining/reception hall with a vestibule that is axially arrayed with the circus structure below, revealed that the palatial complex of Maxentius on the Via Appia was never completed. Republican layers were discovered which included a complex water system that was intersected by the east wall of the *aula*, while a Hadrianic phase, belonging to Herodes Atticus, was also brought to light. The current hypothesis that the villa was never completed was deduced from the fact that no Maxentian floor level was found in the *aula*. The floor walls were lined with *tubuli* and entrances to three *praefurnia* were visible suggesting that a heated floor was to be provided. However, the bedrock of the actual Maxentian level floor in the center of *aula* was never cut into to fit *suspensurae* which would suggest it was never completed. Moreover, the entrance threshold to the Maxentian vestibule is lower than the Hadrianic level which further suggests that the *aula* was never completed as the outside ground level was never altered to facilitate access to

identical characteristics to ornamental elliptical niches in the mausoleum of Romulus across the Via Appia. Curran (2000), 99 notices further similarities in the brickwork, as both the Villa and the Basilica are constructed in the *opus vittatum* and the mortar type of both structures.

³⁸⁷ Krautheimer, R. *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae II*, 136; Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 98.

³⁸⁸ Holloway, R., *Constantine and Rome* (2004), 108.

the vestibule.³⁸⁹ Given the suggested architectural similarities between certain areas of the villa complex and the *Basilica Apostolorum* and the presence in the basilica of the previously undatable Constantinian monogram found on a threshold block, when coupled with the new definitive evidence that the Villa of Maxentius was never completed, it can be conjectured that after the battle of the Milvian Bridge, Constantine pulled the workers from the Maxentian villa and began construction on the *Basilica Apostolorum*.³⁹⁰

In accepting this hypothesis, it appears that the *Basilica Apostolorum* should be added to the list of Constantinian church foundations and that construction on it likely began soon after Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge. In fact, the foundation of this basilica on the Via Appia can be interpreted to fit Constantine's ideological and political platform in two ways. First, by stopping construction of Maxentius' grand extramural palatial villa, Constantine emphasized Maxentius' defeat. Whereas the abandonment of Maxentius' structures in the city's center would not have been effective, here in the *suburbium* the abandonment of the villa's construction in favor of a site for the Christian populace had a potent message. It demonstrated that the concern for providing for the *populus Romanus*, Christian or otherwise, outweighed Constantine's desire for personal aggrandizement. Second, this monument was an act of patronizing the apostolic forbears of Roman Christianity, thus Constantine's association to it placed him in connection with the very foundation of the Roman Church.³⁹¹ He provided a site for worship that became

³⁸⁹ This information is owed entirely to the co-director of the project Dr. Giani Ponti of the American Academy at Rome. All of the evidence presented in this paragraph was provided by Dr. Ponti in a lecture given at the excavation site on Wednesday, June 20, 2012. Permission to reproduce the evidence in this work was given verbally on the same day.

³⁹⁰ This hypothesis was proposed by G. Ponti in a personal communication.

³⁹¹ Hunt, E.D. "Imperial Building at Rome: the Role of Constantine," (2003), 112. Hunt offers this proposal but he remains non-committal as to whether Constantine actually built the basilica and, thus, he admits to the conjectural nature of his proposal. With the new evidence from the Villa of Maxentius the importance of Hunt's proposal can now be appreciated.

integral to Christian memory and ceremony in the following centuries.³⁹² Outside of the Christian context, in patronizing these founders of the Roman Church, Constantine acted in a way similar to emperors of the past who claimed heritage to the founders of Rome, and presently no one previous emperor who had done this was more conspicuous than Constantine's predecessor Maxentius.

The situation seems to form a coherent picture of Constantine the Christian benefactor. Contrary to the long standing opinion, Constantine's early church foundations, both inside the walls of Rome and outside, were situated in sites that were particularly chosen not only to monumentalize popular pre-Constantinian Christian sites, but also to fit Constantine's initiative of Maxentius' architectural erasure. Far from placing these structures on the periphery to avoid conflict, Constantine was following a programme which he initiated in the pagan center of the city and he was acting in a traditional imperial manner in providing for the Christian church. For the Christians, the Lateran represented their triumph as the first monumental edifice inside the city to facilitate mass worship, while for the pagan population, its religious function would have been overshadowed by its familiar architectural form similar to standard civic *basilicae* and, as such, its main message would have been the reminder of Maxentius' defeat. The two extramural sites were similarly multifaceted in their significance. The *Basilica Apostolorum* represented the imperial patronage of the two most important Saints in Roman Christianity, while its construction was facilitated by the abandonment of work on Maxentius' adjacent and conspicuous grand villa complex; thus it served to reinforce the latter's *damnatio memoriae*. The Church of SS. Marcellinus and Peter was built atop the desecrated burial site of the *equites singulares* and sought to commemorate the memory of Christian martyrs, but more so than this, early on, with the inclusion of the mausoleum it appears to represent a concerted effort to replace

³⁹² Machado, C., "Roman Aristocrats and the Christianization of Rome," (2011), 494.

the lasting memory of Maxentius' supporters with that of the imperial household. Moreover, both churches' establishment, incidentally, also gave rise to a new paradigm, in which the outside approaches to the city began to become as important as the city's center. Constantine, having initiated this, capitalized on the process so that his authority was discernible outside as well as inside of the city. The Lateran, the Church of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, and the *Basilica Apostolorum*, then, formed a trio of structures that effectively attacked Constantine's predecessor's memory. Their locations were a poignant message to the whole *populus Romanus*, both pagan and Christian, and indicative of a policy that was not so untraditional save for the particular deity the edifices were dedicated to.

Conclusion

Constantine's success in manipulating and controlling the space in the *Urbs* was literally written all over the city. In the most visible places in the city Constantine was touted as the triumphant and victorious liberator and enhancer of the city of Rome.³⁹³ More significantly, all traces of Constantine's predecessor, Maxentius, were now but a distant memory. Where the latter had succeeded in harnessing the propagandistic power of Rome by carrying out a programme that physically displayed Rome's *renovatio* and perseverance, Constantine was equally as successful in appropriating that very display. Maxentius significantly altered the monumental topography of Rome and on October 29, 312 Constantine was faced with these highly conspicuous, incomplete, and ostentatious displays of his predecessor's munificence.

³⁹³ For Constantine the Liberator see inscription on the west pier of the Arch of Constantine, "*Liberatori Urbis*." Also *CIL* VI, 40768, "[*Fortitudin*]e ac virtute [*divina*] / [*invictis*, *senat*]us populiq(ue) R(omani) tae[*terrimis*] / [*tyrannis extinctis*] **liberatoribus** [*atque rei*] / [*publicae*] restitutori[*bus*] / [*dd(ominis) nn(ostris) Fl(avio) Val(erio) Const[antino] Maxmo*] [---]." For Constantine the enhancer/expander of the city of Rome see *CIL* VI, 1142, "**Amplificatori urbis Romae**, / *domino nostro Constantino maximo*, / *pio, felici, victori ac triumphatori, semper Aug(usto)*, / *Anicius Paulinus Iun(ior), v(ir) c(larissimus), cons(ul) ordinarius, / praef(ectus) urb(i) et iudex sacr(arum) cognitionum, / pietati eius semper dicatissimus*." & *CIL* VI, 1141, "*D(omino) n(ostro) Constantino maximo, / pio, felici ac triumphatori, semper Augusto, / ob amplificatam toto orbe rem publicam factis consultisq(ue)*, / *S(enatus) P(opulus)q(ue) R(omanus)*, / *dedicante Anicio Paulino Iuniore, v(iro) c(larissimo), cons(ule) ord(inario), praef(ecto) urbi*."

Constantine was alert to the symbolic power of Rome and in a coordinated effort he took control of space in the *Urbs*, so that even in his almost perpetual absence he himself would be considered Rome's eternal liberator, conservator, and enhancer. Despite this success, Constantine's interventions in the *Urbs* have consistently been marginalized as minimal and peripheral. This chapter sought to demonstrate that Constantine's role in Rome was anything but this.

Beyond the *Templum Romae* and the *Basilica Nova*, both of which Aurelius Victor states were rededicated to Constantine, at least three additional monuments can be added to the list of Constantine's appropriations. It appears that upon entering Rome, Constantine immediately also placed his name on the Sacra Via Rotunda, the Arch in the Colosseum Valley, and the Colossus of Sol. He made physical alterations on all five of these monuments in order to reify his appropriation of them and along with the actual structures he also appropriated the message attached to each. Each building reflected Constantine's own reverence for the Eternal City and his desire to be construed as Rome's conservator acting along lines of traditional imperial comportment. But more significantly, now each structure of what was once a concerted effort by Constantine's predecessor to reaffirm the historical center of the Eternal City also became imbued with a message of Constantine's triumph over this same person. In fact, this very message was explicitly displayed on either end of the Constantine's "Sacra Via Trio." At the eastern limit of the *Forum Romanum* proper, Constantine had the facade of the Sacra Via Rotunda altered and he had inscribed on its entablature his own name accompanied by the epithet *triumphator*, while to the west, delimiting the Colosseum Valley to the south-east, sat the most potent visual display of Constantine's defeat of Maxentius—the Arch of Constantine. The arch in the Colosseum Valley universally thought to have been initiated by Constantine himself

is now rightfully viewed as yet another of his appropriations. On its attic it not only mirrored the language of the Rotunda's facade honouring the triumphant emperor Constantine, but outstripped it, labelling Maxentius as nothing more than a *tyrannus*.

This epithet, first displayed on the highly conspicuous arch in the Colosseum Valley, was in all possibility chosen by Constantine himself and it initiated a trend that saw the proliferation of the epithet *tyrannus* in literature to describe Maxentius. In this way, Constantine was able to create a lasting fictive narrative, in which Maxentius was the tyrant and Constantine the liberator who wrested the city from the insatiable despot. This negative image distorted Constantine's predecessor's memory for posterity so that Maxentius' achievements had all but been erased not only physically, but also from historical memory.

Along the Sacra Via, in the historical record, and throughout the rest of Rome Constantine effectively became a liberator, but he did so by imitating and emulating many of his predecessor's deeds. Despite his significant effort to augment, complete, and appropriate some of the most significant contributions to the topography of Rome in almost a century, for a long time it had still been suggested that Constantine's supposed sponsorship of Christianity saw him shirk these traditional forms of imperial munificence for new forms of Christian *beneficium*. The reality of the situation has proven to be distinctly different. Far from disregarding models of traditional imperial comportment, the foundation of the Lateran Basilica, the *Basilica Apostolorum*, and the Church of St. Marcellinus and Peter all followed the programme which Constantine had initiated in the pagan center of the city. Each was located on a site that was previously significant to Maxentius or his supporters and their construction was funded by spoils acquired by his defeat. Therefore, their construction attacked Constantine's predecessor's memory and could be understood within the tradition of manubial temple foundations. The only

significant difference is the deity to whom they were dedicated. But even in this regard Constantine's church foundations were far from abnormal as the adoption of an eastern deity had been seen with the introduction of Sol some half a century before or that of Elagabalus almost another half a century prior to that. In reaching this conclusion, I have argued that Constantine's church foundations should be examined within the same framework as buildings in the city's center and that the peripheral view that for so long has been emphasized requires reconsideration.

Constantine's relationship with and success in Rome can be evaluated on two fronts; the first was the erasure of Maxentius. This dictated all of his early work in the *Urbs* and he devoted a great amount of effort to appropriating and altering the topography so as to achieve it. Its success is manifest in the very nature of the debate presented in this thesis. Constantine so effectively attached his name to Maxentius' *renovatio* that most, if not all, Maxentian structures have at some point been considered Constantinian in origin. The second is the development of a lasting new topography; Constantine initiated the development of a new profile of the city that would not take hold until after his death, but that now positioned the outside of the city as equally as important to the inside. Constantine's Christian foundations, standing alongside the main approaches to the city, would be the visual introduction to Constantine's Rome. In this way, Rome's *renovatio* in the fourth century bore Constantine's name and face at the city's gates and at its heart, in the city's center. The topography of Rome unquestionably announced Constantine as Rome's own triumphant emperor and he achieved this through traditional forms of imperial munificence in the city's center and equally with his peripheral Christian foundations.

Conclusions

Rome was long the center of the empire and the emperor's role there was to fulfill obligations to the *populus Romanus*. This arrangement whereby the city's needs took precedence to those of any one emperor is manifest all over the city. The largest architectural *beneficia* in Rome were public buildings, while by contrast the imperial residence in the city was rather small. Such was the traditional relationship between Rome and its emperor's established by Augustus and maintained until the late-third century. Rome maintained its traditions and as the first among all citizens it was the emperor's duty to preserve these. However, in the third century, amidst political, religious, and economic crises Rome suffered as the aforementioned traditional forms of imperial munificence all but disappeared and the relationship between Rome and her rulers began to break down. It is this relationship that this thesis set out to examine in ultimately answering the question whether or not the tetrarchy succeeded in establishing an irreversible process that would eventually relegate Rome to nothing more than a peripheral, provincial capital. In achieving this, it explored imperial propaganda related to and in the city of Rome, manifest on coins, stone, in panegyric and architecture, from the establishment of the tetrarchy in 293 CE through to the reign of Constantine.

It appears that the distancing between Rome and the emperors did, in fact, take hold in 293 CE when Diocletian instituted the political reformation of the tetrarchy. As the tetrarchs made their new imperial capitals outside the city of Rome, lavishing them with grandiose residences, a new paradigm developed; Rome became a peripheral capital. Mayer persuasively argued that this process was discernible in the distribution of state sponsored architecture of the period and, as a result, architecturally, Rome became visible wherever the emperors were. In chapter one of this thesis, however, I argued that this policy was reflected in more than just

imperialy sponsored architecture outside of Rome. I argued that through a new system of government the tetrarchs' advertised empire wide unity and established a new definition of *romanitas*. Under the tetrarchs *romanitas* became an ecumenical virtue and was no longer exclusively attached to the *Urbs* and her citizens. One of the results of this was that Rome's individual power was, ultimately, reduced. Furthermore, I have argued that even the tetrarchy's contributions to the topography of the city reinforced Rome's subordination to tetrarchic ideology. The tetrarchy reoriented the central area of the *Forum Romanum*, imposing an order on a space that for a long time had abounded in complex historical tradition and meaning. For the tetrarchy, Rome was a peripheral capital, while its role in imperial propaganda was simply to be represented as a harmonious member of a unified empire, in which Rome was reflected in the persons of the emperor, manifest wherever they were and also made visible in the Eternal City itself.

In chapter two, however, I argued that this process was far from irreversible as Maxentius proved that Rome still possessed the power to create and legitimize emperors and that its resources could still be exploited to the benefit of an emperor. For this to work, however, the emperor's traditional relationship with the city needed to be adhered to. It is in this regard that Maxentius' reign was successful. Maxentius adeptly manipulated his political policy to appeal to the wounded pride of the *Urbs*. He fashioned himself the *conservator urbis suae*, but more than this he inextricably intertwined his person with the traditions of the city. I argued that the most ostentatious and significant avenue of his propaganda were his architectural contributions to the *Urbs*. Maxentius erected three monumental buildings and one arch, as well as appropriated the Colossal statue of Sol, so as to create a space that visually propagated his perseverance along with Rome's own. For Maxentius, Rome was central in all he did; as *conservator* of his own city

he promised Rome's *renovatio*. What Maxentius proved was that despite the tetrarchy's attempt to marginalize the capital, if harnessed correctly, the erstwhile *caput mundi* still possessed the power to create emperors.

Thus, on October 29, 312 CE Constantine entered a city that had been significantly altered by his vanquished foe and he was faced with the omnipresent and ostentatious displays of his predecessor's *romanitas*. In chapter three, I argued that when faced with this, Constantine could not simply revert to and continue the policy put in place by the tetrarchs before him. Instead, he was forced to initiate a coordinated political programme that turned the former *conservator* of the Eternal City into a tyrant from whom Constantine liberated the *populus Romanus*. Yet, in achieving this Constantine was forced to appropriate and emulate Maxentius' very model in Rome. In fact, I argued that this was Constantine's singular intention in the Eternal City: he limited his work in the center of the city to completing and altering Maxentius' architectural *beneficia* to reify his appropriation of them. Far from a negative valuation that this position may suggest, by "limiting" himself to the emulation of Maxentius in Rome, Constantine intentionally equally positioned himself as a traditional emperor in the *Urbs*. Ultimately, Constantine's relationship with Rome was contradictory, he needed to reduce the Eternal City's power but also harness this power to his person and for his own benefit. Similarly, as Marlowe has argued, Maxentius' legacy was equally paradoxical; Constantine sought to suppress Maxentius' memory and, at the same time, to appropriate it.³⁹⁴

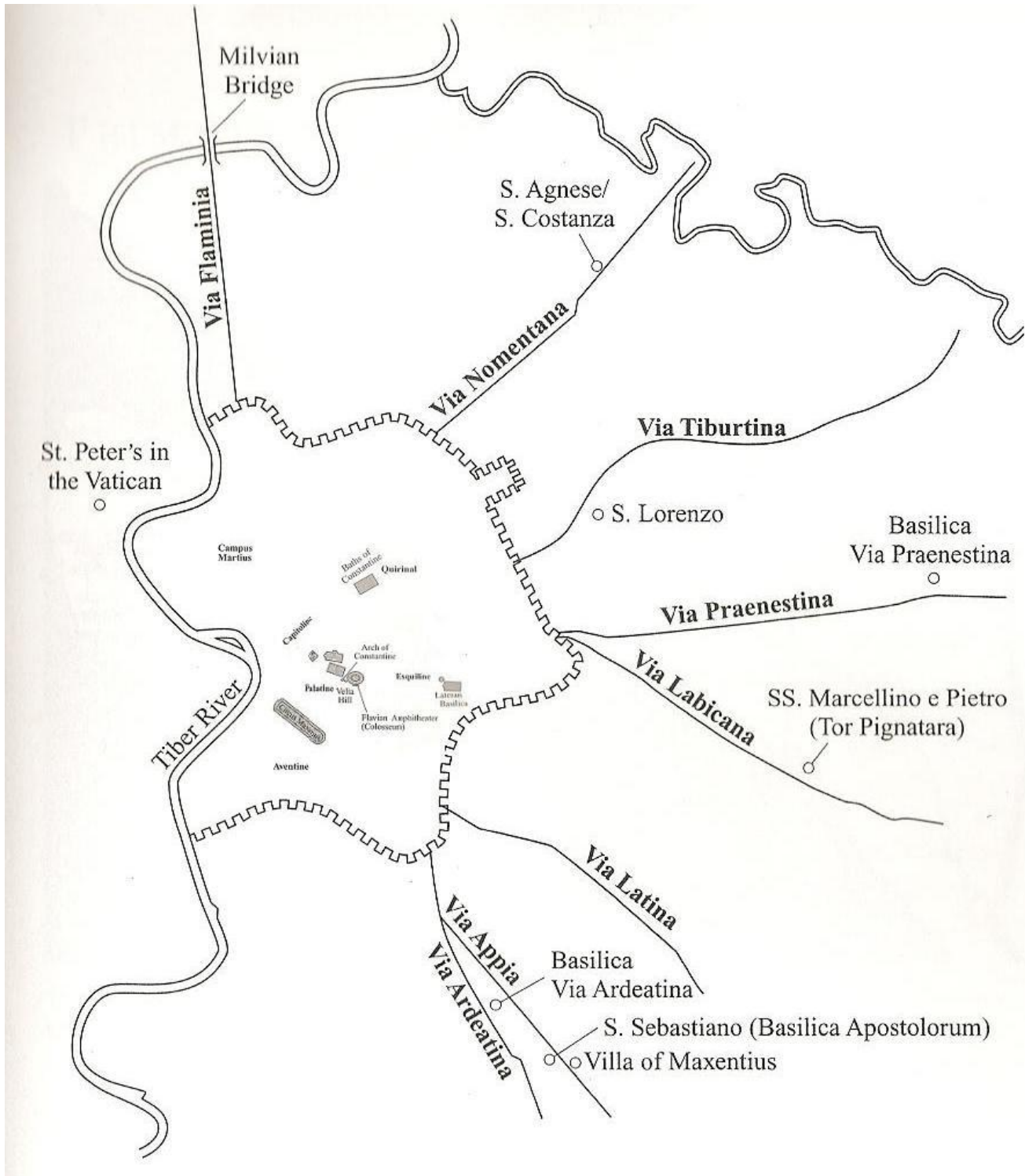
Further, this chapter set out to dispel the longstanding tradition that Constantine was fundamentally uninterested with the center of the *Urbs*, choosing instead to intervene on the outskirts of the city in the form of Christian dedications. I argued that Constantine's Christian foundations followed a similar pattern to those in the city's center. Thus, it would appear that

³⁹⁴ The same idea was first expressed by Marlowe, E. "*Liberator Urbis Suae*," (2010), 217.

Constantine's building policy in Rome was undertaken with the singular purpose of eliminating Maxentius' memory. Even his Christian foundations, although in part built to venerate pre-Constantinian Christian sites, were primarily still a response to Maxentius' legacy. For Constantine, Rome was integral to his legitimation policy as an emperor. Constantine recognized where the tetrarchy had failed and Maxentius had succeeded. He manipulated the city of Rome, appropriating all that Maxentius had initiated so that, despite being perpetually absent, Constantine became the liberator, preserver, and enhancer of Rome, something proven to be of the utmost importance.

In summary, it appears that Rome's diminution to nothing more than a provincial, peripheral capital was not a singular uninterrupted, irreversible process that began with the tetrarchs. To the contrary, it appears that, despite the tetrarchs' attempt, Rome could never be fully divested of its power. Maxentius readily displayed this, while Constantine's acute awareness of Rome's importance only works to strengthen the argument. Ultimately, even after the establishment of Constantinople, Rome's symbolic importance and perceived invincibility continued to dictate its role in the newly arranged empire. Subsequently, the empire would be divided between two poles, Constantinople in the East and Rome in the West, and Rome still represented the epitome of tradition and power in the West, although it no longer functioned as the *sedes imperii*.

Image Appendix



Map 1. Map of Rome, 330 C.E., with extramural and intramural buildings of Maxentius and Constantine (adapted from Lenski 2006, Map 3.1 & 3.2).



Fig. 1a. Porphyry Group, Venice
(Rees 1993, Pl. 2)



Fig. 1b. Porphyry Groups, Vatican Library
(Rees 1993, Pls. 9 & 10)

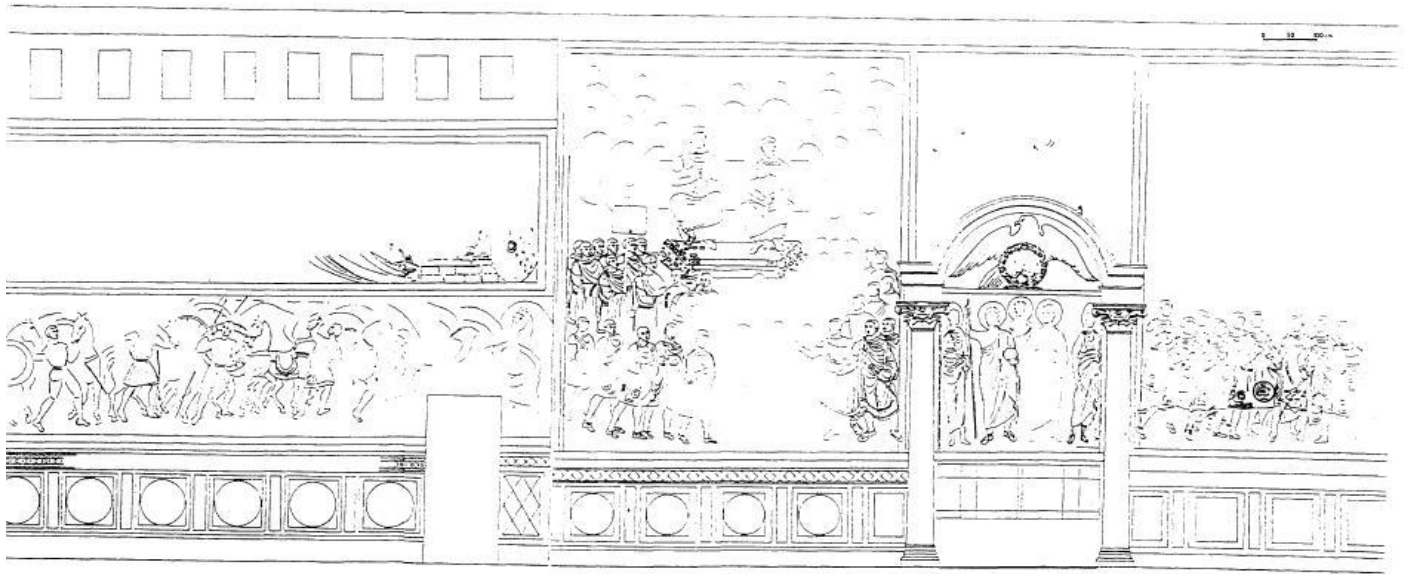


Fig. 2 Sketch of Cult Room at Luxor
(Rees 1993, Pl. 3)

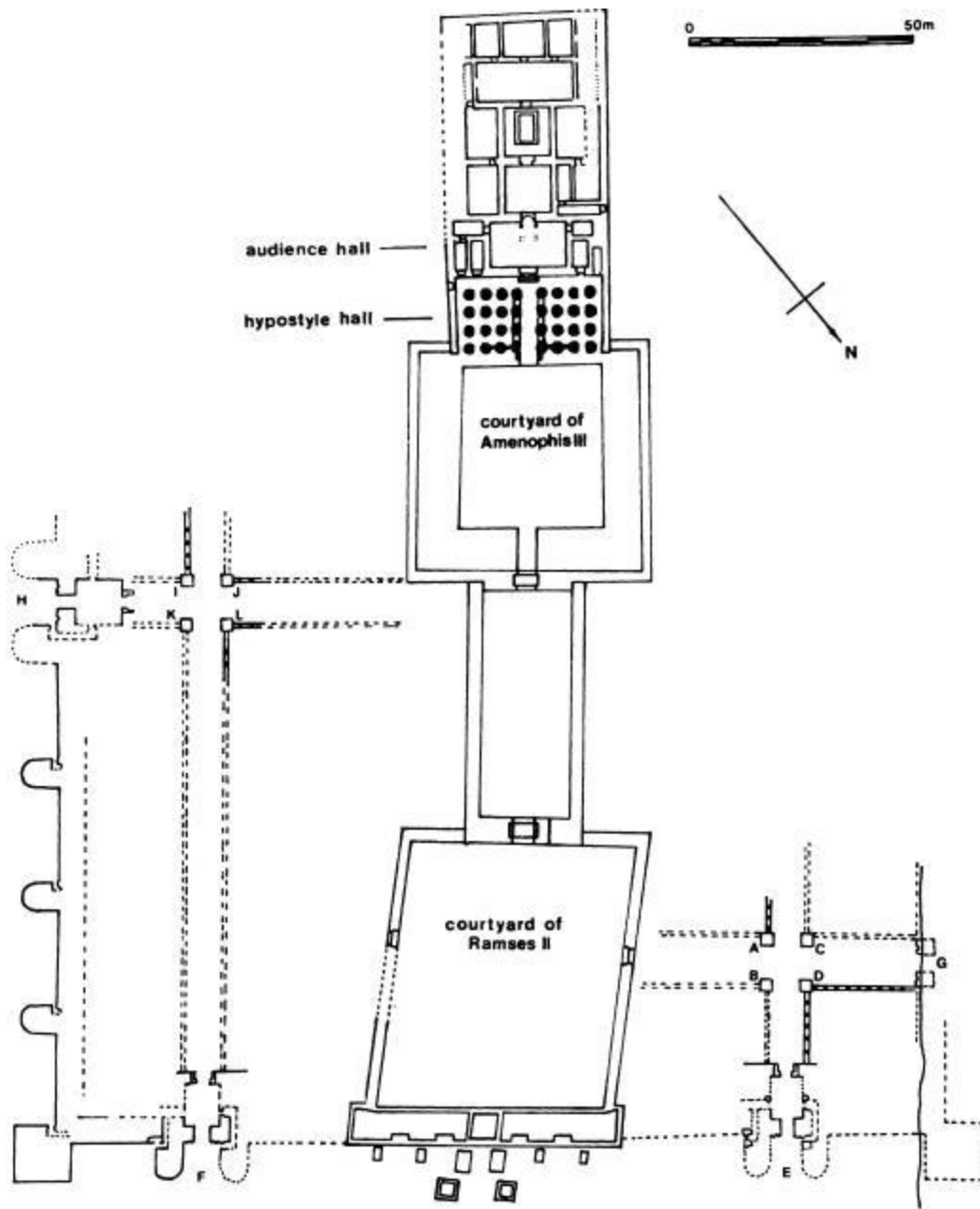


Fig. 3. Luxor, Temple of Ammon in the late third century
(Kalavrezou-Maxeiner 1975, Fig. A)



Fig. 4. Tetrarchic Five-Column Monument depicted on the Arch of Constantine
(Kalavrezou-Maxeiner 1975, Fig. 27)



Fig. 5. *Decennalia* base from Five-Column Monument in the *Forum Romanum*
(L'Orange 1973, Abb.6)



Fig 6. Gold Medallion of Tetrarchy from Trier
(American Numismatic Society 1967.153.38)



Fig. 7. Silver Coin of Constantius I from Trier
(American Numismatic Society 1944.100.5869)



Fig. 8. *Aes* coin of Diocletian, Unmarked
(American Numismatic Society, 1984.136.358)



Fig. 9a. Reception of Persian Delegation
(Pond Rothman 1977, Fig. 19)

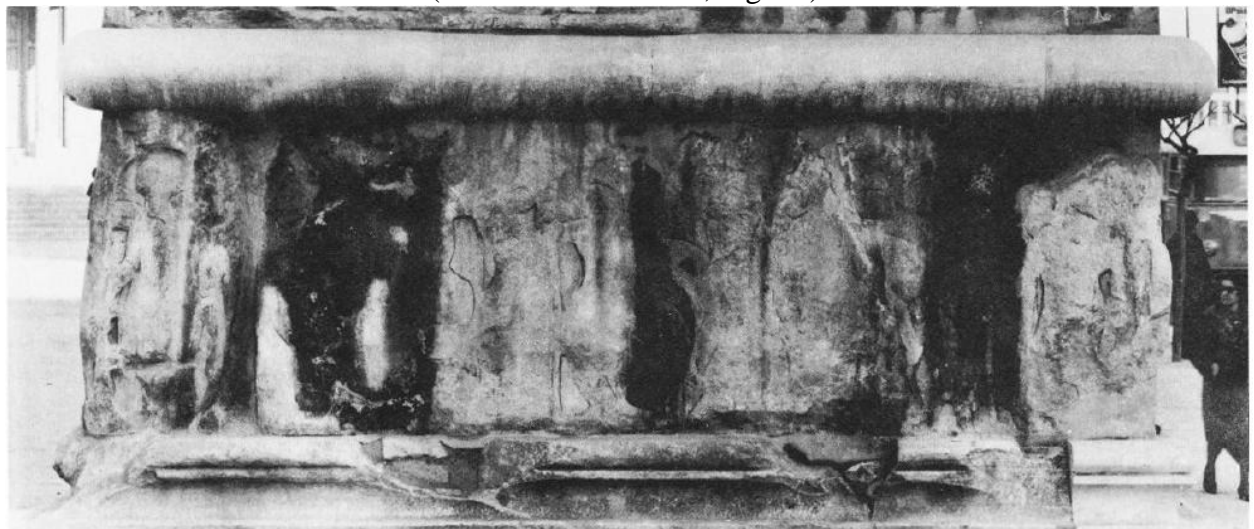


Fig. 9b. Roma flanked by the Personifications of other Imperial Cities
(Pond Rothman 1977, Fig. 28)

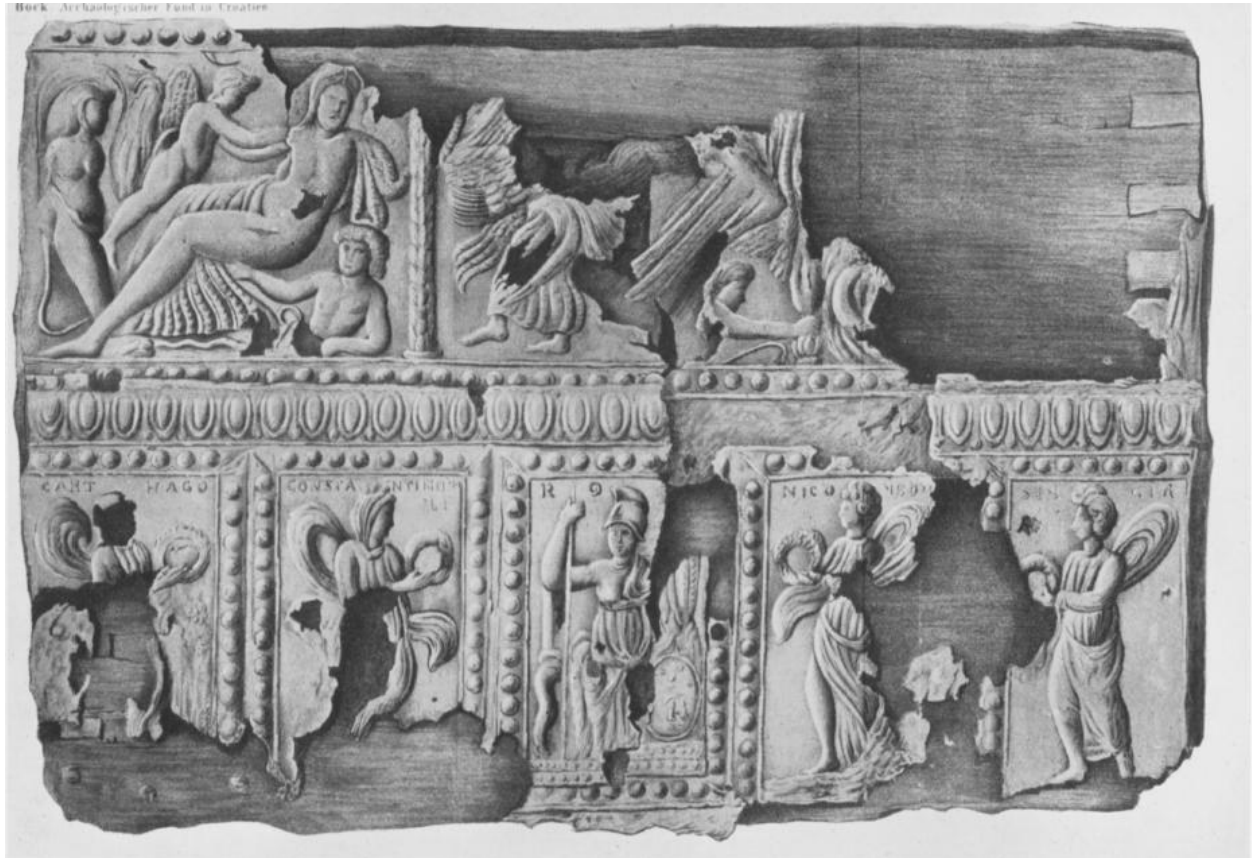


Fig. 10. Bronze Relief with Roma Flanked by Personifications of Imperial Cities
(Toynbee 1947, Pl VII)

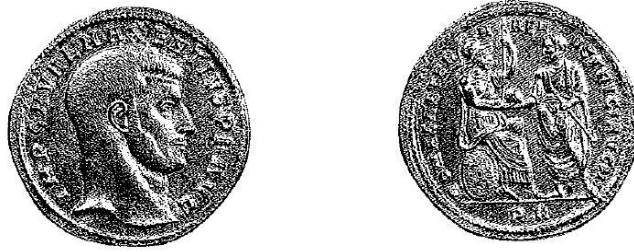


Fig 11a. *Aureus* multiple from Rome, Obverse Legend: IMP C M VAL MAXENTIVS P F AVG, Rev Legend: ROMAE AETERNAE AVCTRICI AVG N (Cullhed 1994, Fig. 4)



Fig. 11b. *Aureus* from Rome, Obverse Legend: MAXENTIVS P F INVIC AVG (British Museum R. 137)



Fig. 11c. *Aes* coin minted in Ostia for Maxentius with *dioscuri* on reverse (American Numismatic Society 1974.95.17)



Fig. 11d. *Aes* coin from Rome, Reverse Legend: CONSERV VRB SVAE (American Numismatic Society 1944.100.3030)



Fig. 12a. Statue base beside Lapis Niger in *Forum Romanum* dedicated to Mars and the founders of Rome by Maxentius
(Last Statues of Antiquity Database, LSA-1388)



Fig. 12b. Right side of statue base set up by Maxentius
(Last Statues of Antiquity Database, LSA-1388)



Fig. 13. Statue base set up for Maxentius in *Forum Romanum*, later reused
(Last Statues of Antiquity Database, LSA-1387)

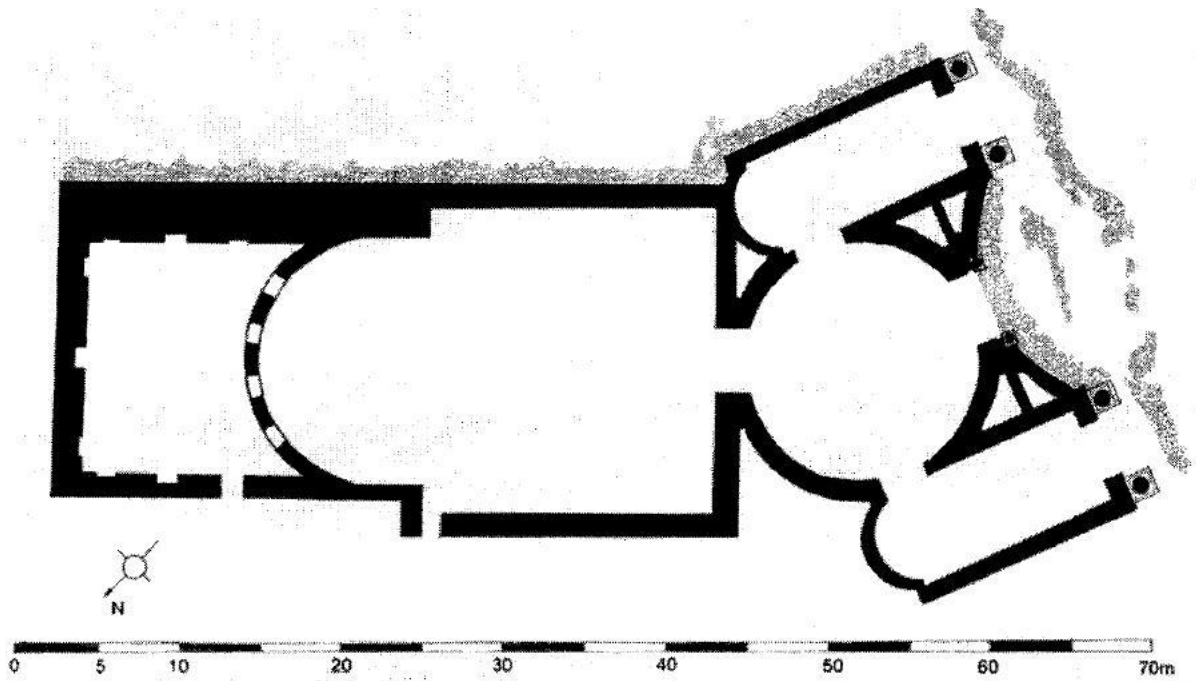


Fig. 14. Plan of Sacra Via Rotunda
(Dumser 2005, Fig. 36)

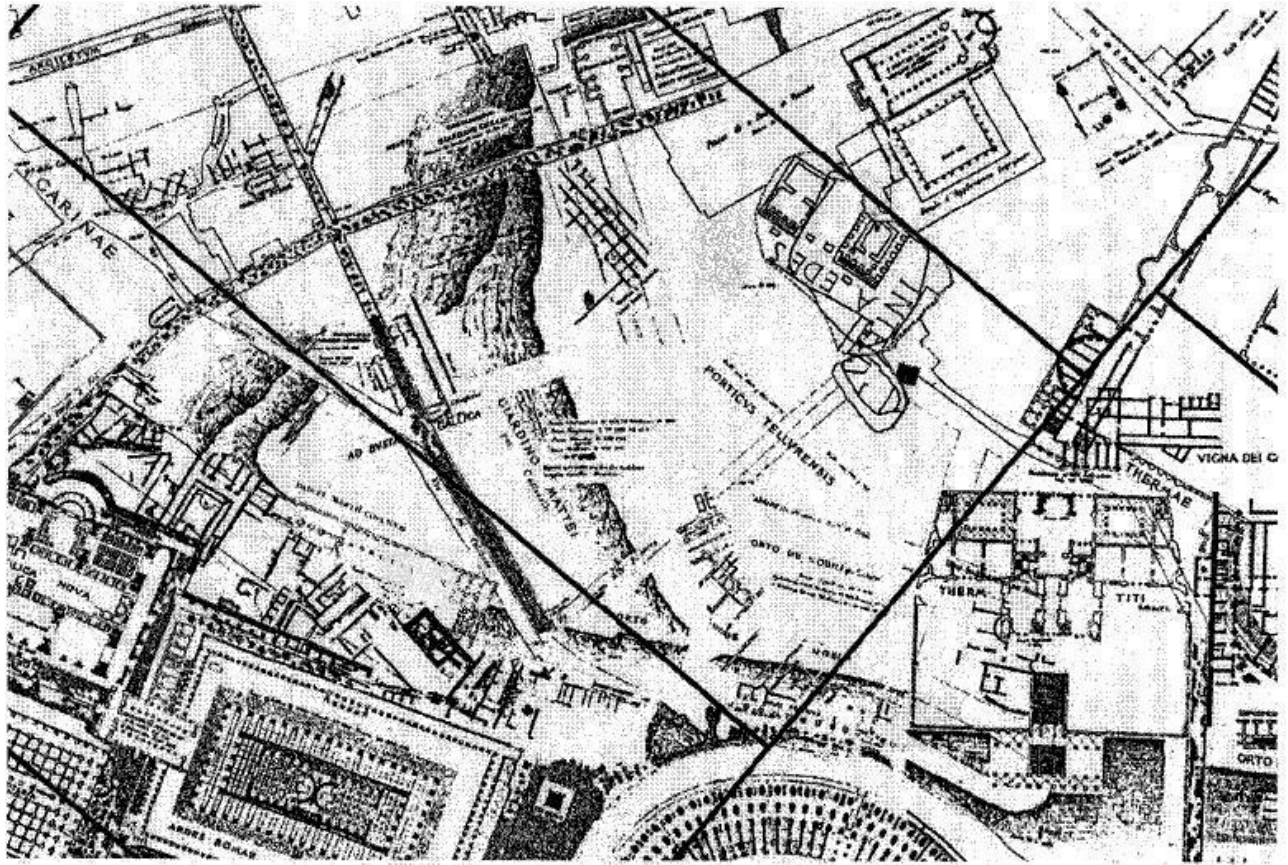


Fig. 15. Severan Marble Plan fragments 672abcd & 577 positioned near S. Pietro in Vincoli (Palombi 1997, Fig. 65)



Fig. 16. Fragments 672a-d from Severan Marble Plan
(Stanford Digital *Forma Urbis Romae* Project, Stanford # 672abcd)

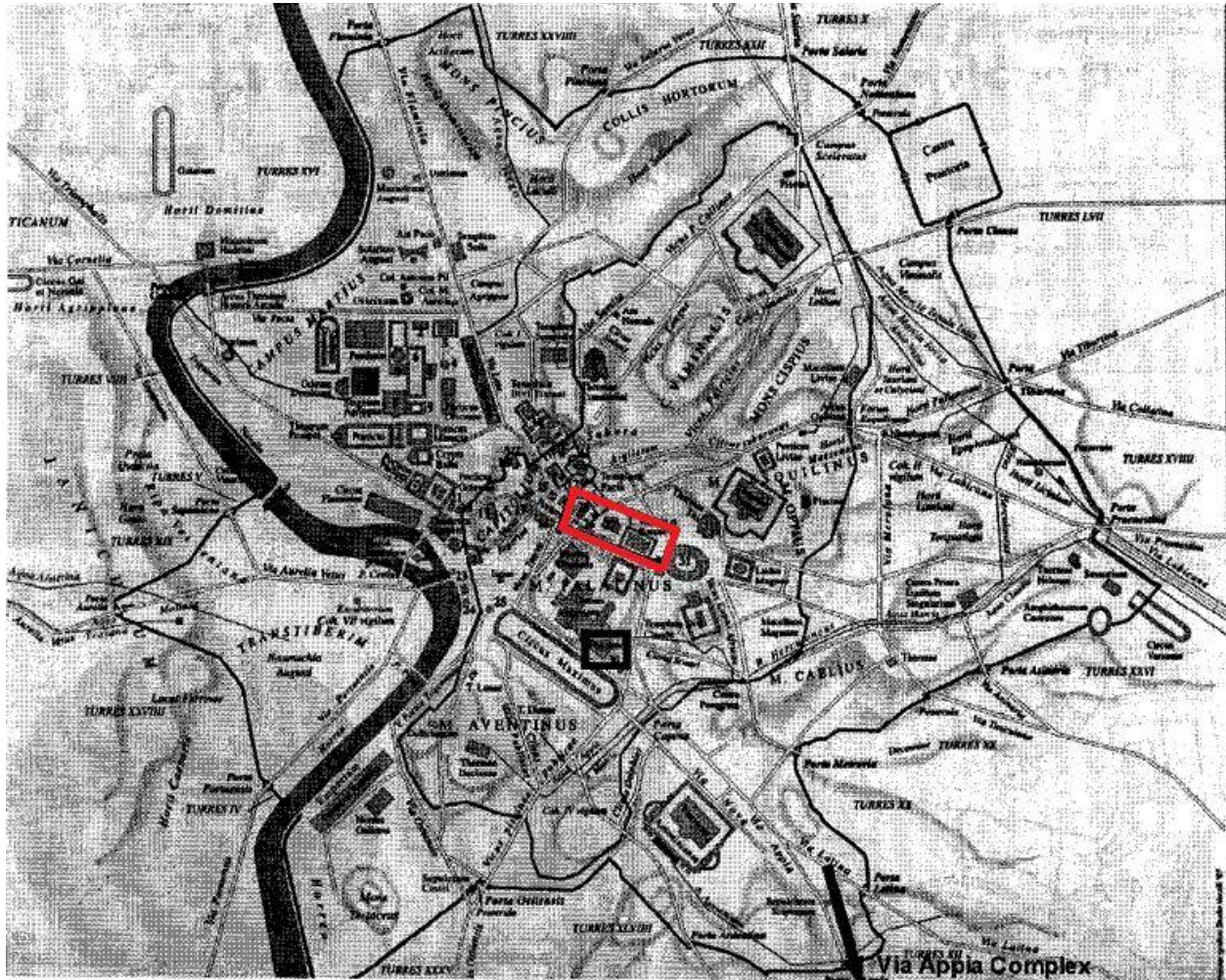


Fig. 17. Maxentius' "Sacra Via Trio:"
(adapted from *LTUR* III 1996, Fig. 190)

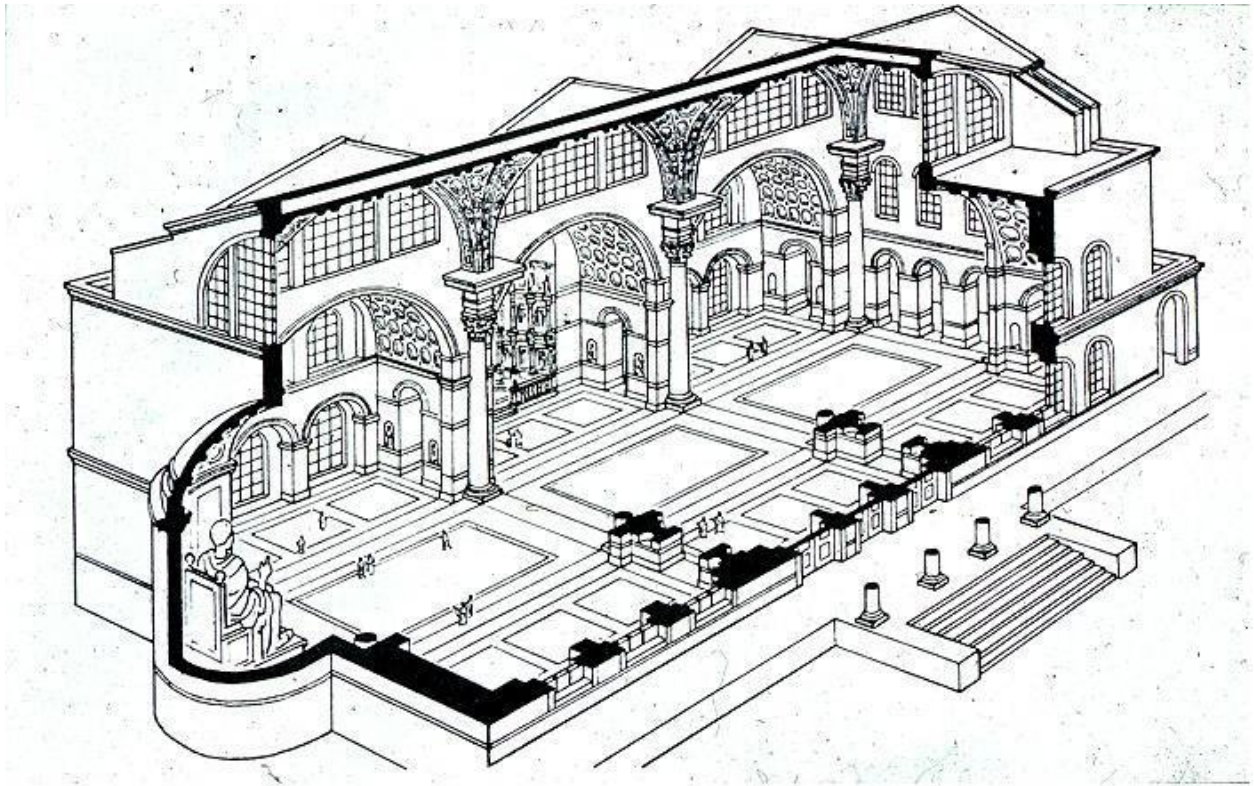


Fig. 18. Axionometric reconstruction of the Basilica Nova
(Kleiner 2006, pg. 204, Fig. 7-78)

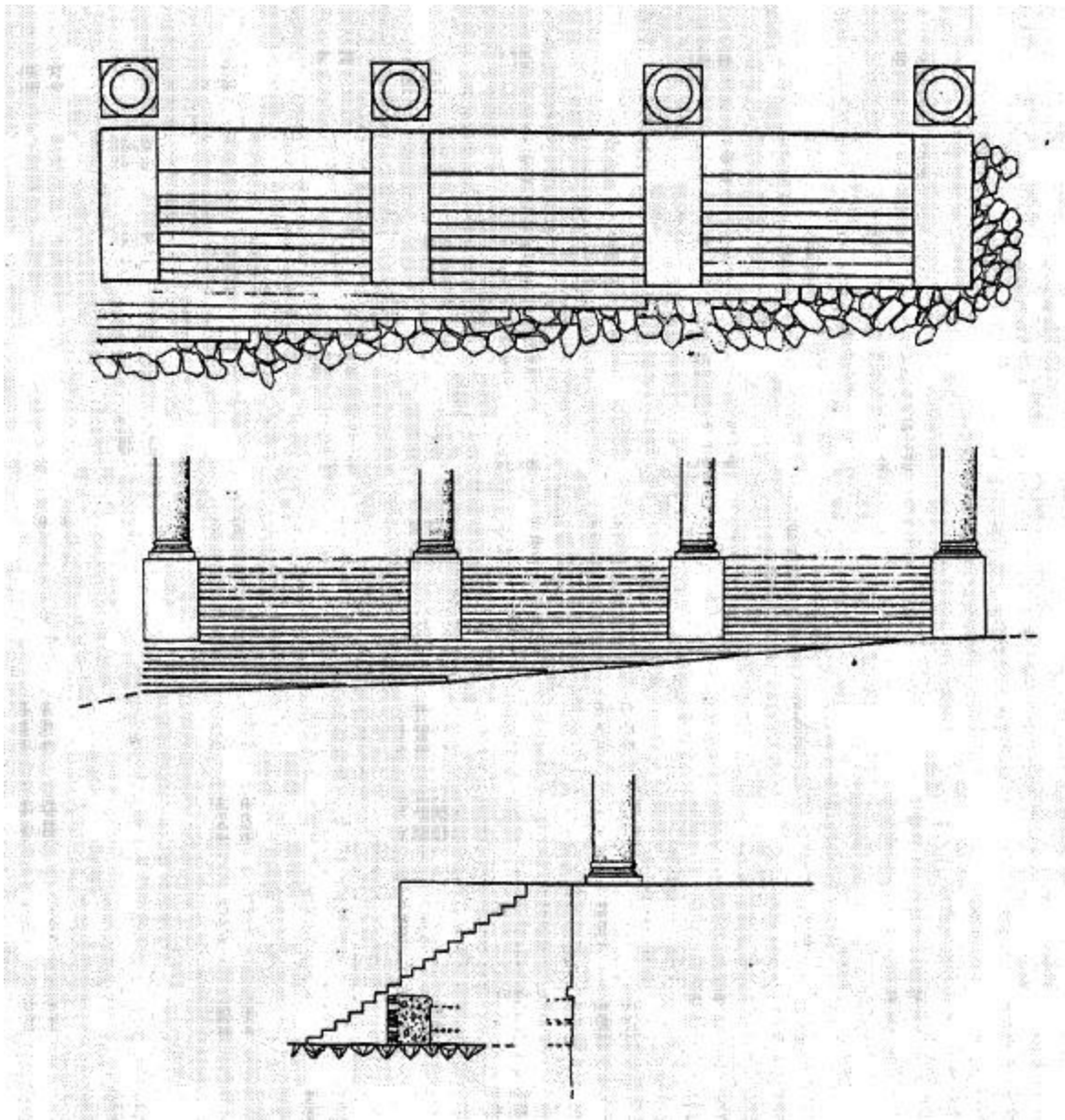


Fig. 19. South Entrance Portico of the Basilica Nova
(Buranelli Le Pera and D'Elia 1986, Fig. 12)

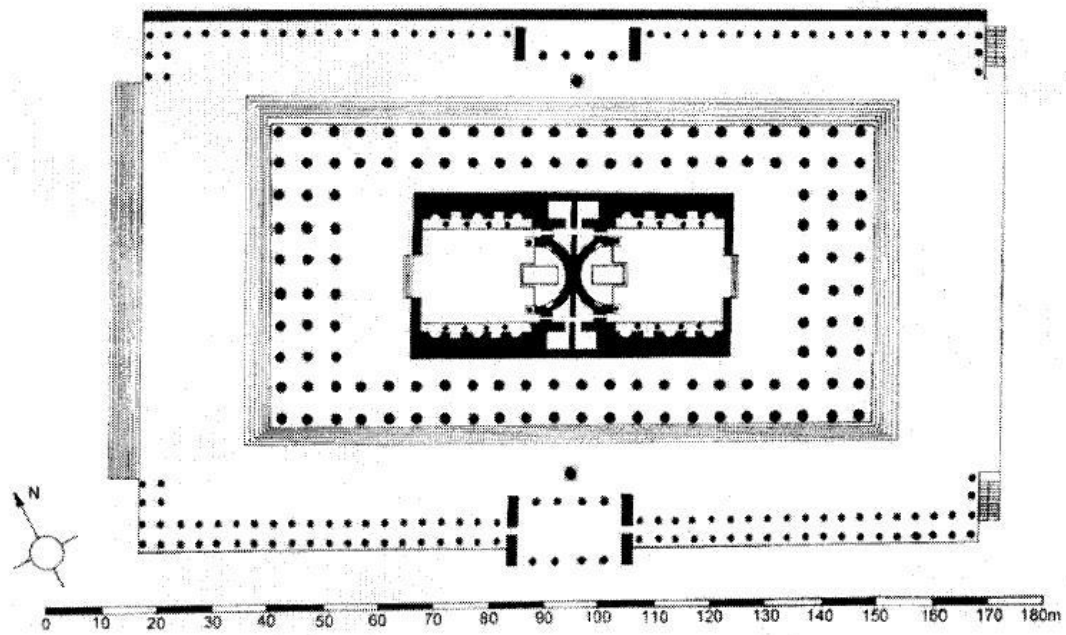


Fig. 20. Plan of the Maxentian *Templum Romae*
(Dumser 2005, Fig. 56)

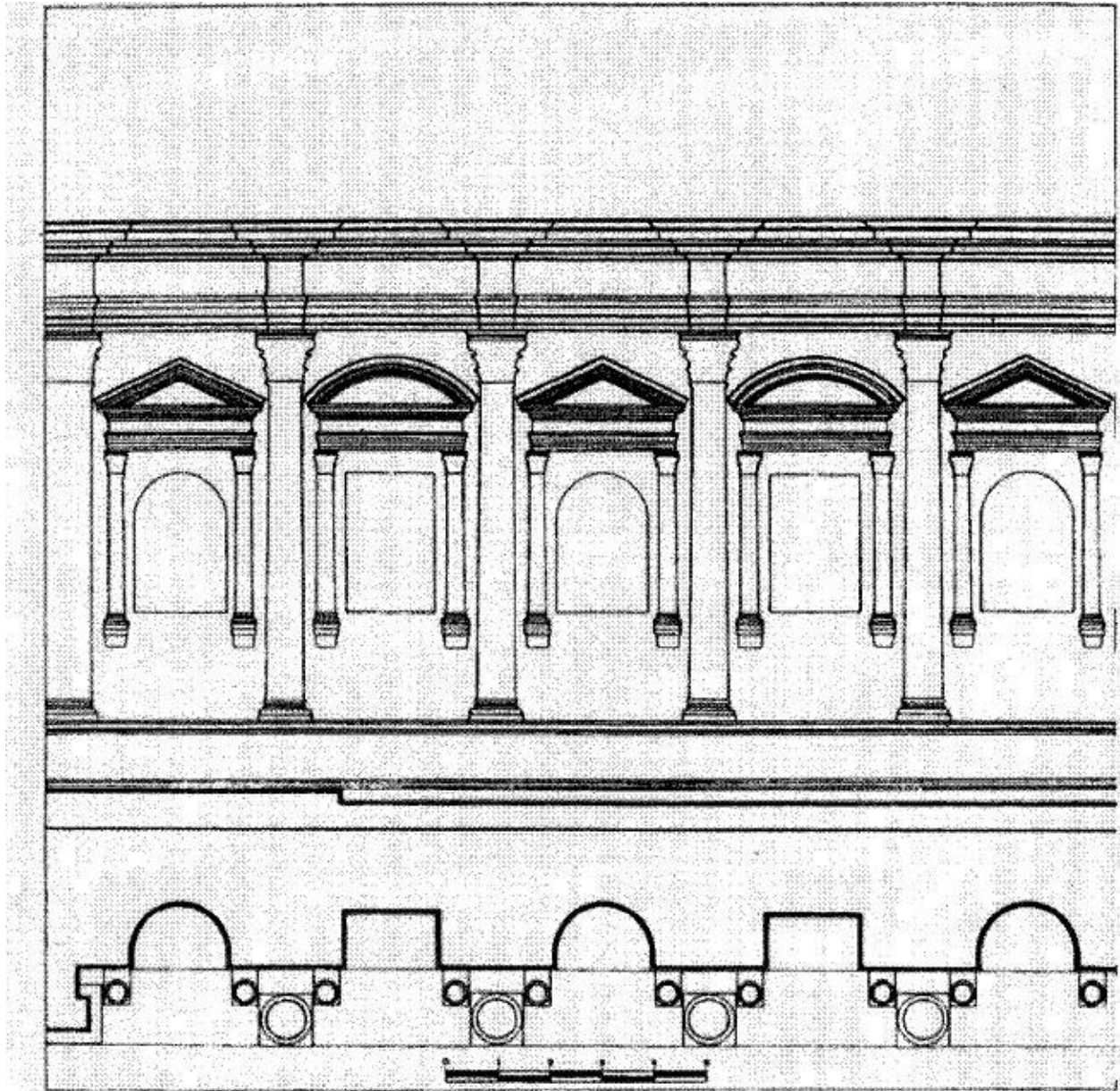


Fig. 21. Reconstruction of the lateral walls of the *Templum Romae cellae*
(Ranaldi 1989, Dis. 2)

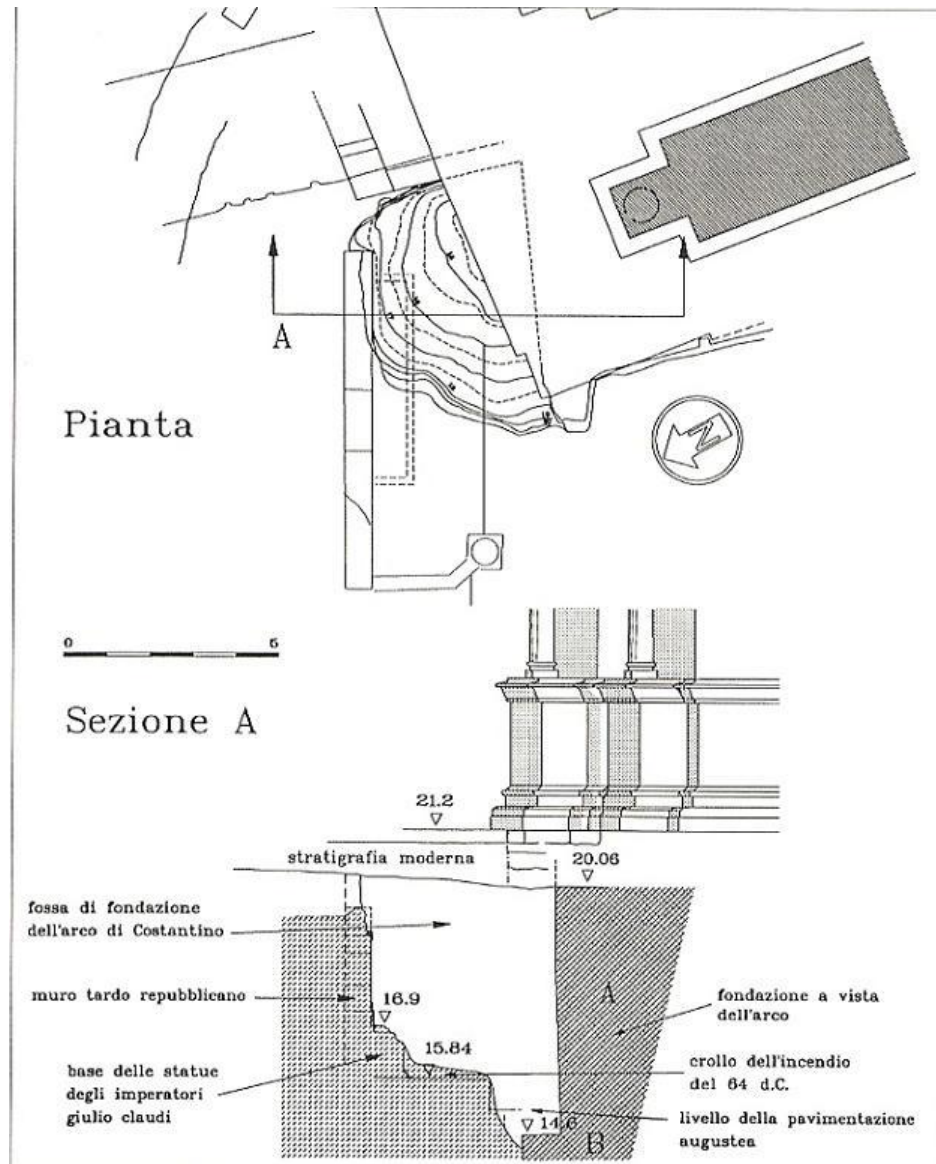


Fig. 22. Schematic section of the excavations of the foundation of the Arch of Constantine
(Zeggio 1999, Fig. 10)



Fig. 23. Evidence of re-cutting on *Adlocutio*, *Largitio*, and Processional panels on Arch of Constantine
(Photos by Arianna Zapelloni)



Fig. 24. Evidence of height discrepancy between the so-called Constantinian frieze on the north face of western pier and that on the west face of the same pier on the Arch of Constantine
(Photo by Arianna Zapelloni)



Fig. 25. Seated Roma depicted on the keystone of the central fornix of the Arch of Constantine,
North side
(Photo by Arianna Zapelloni)



Fig. 26. Fragments of Colossal Statue of Constantine, Musei Capitolini, Palazzo dei Conservatori
(Photos by author)



Fig. 27. Colossal head of Constantine
(Photo by author)



Fig. 28. Colossal head of Constantine, profile
(Last Statues of Antiquity Database, LSA-558)

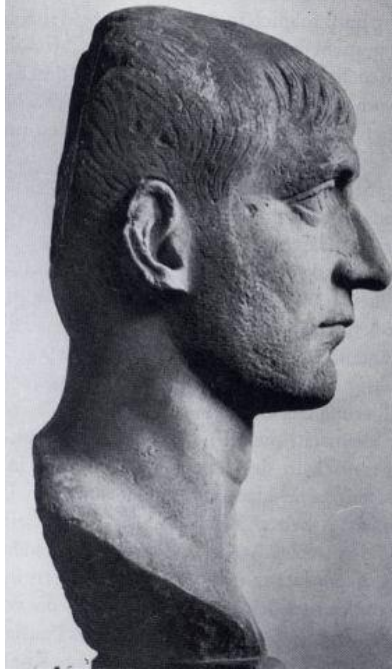


Fig. 29a. Bust of Maxentius, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Skulpturensammlung, no. 406 profile
(Last Statues of Antiquity Database, LSA-896)



Fig. 29b. Bust of Maxentius, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Skulpturensammlung, no. 406
(Last Statues of Antiquity Database, LSA-896)



Fig. 30. Mausoleum of Helena, Via Labicana
(Photo by author)

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