martyr trials no longer was the various aspects of army religion or discipline, but the imperial order to sacrifice. It would seem that whether or not a person was a soldier, these were bad days for any Christian; even though these men were tried by military authorities, their profession was simply the place where they were found. Of course, the accounts of these soldiers incidentally tell us features of their military life, their past performance as soldiers, and other facts we have used to build a picture of military life for a Christian. One such feature of these acts is that when they were caught, we see them using their past record for a defense, as in the case of Tipasius and Julius, both veterans. These men, it appears, had no quarrel with the military, either its duties or religion, since both had good military records.

In view of the attitude toward the service displayed by those martyred after 303, the question arises whether they enlisted as Christians or were converted while in the army. Unfortunately, no evidence exists to decide the question either way. In 'De corona' Tertullian pondered whether a converted soldier must leave the service or be permitted to remain in it, but laid down no rule concerning the situation. However, the only recruit known, Maximilian, refused on the spot. On the other hand, the concentration of Christians in the army in districts where Christian communities were largest, especially the provinces in the east, suggests that some Christians may have enlisted willingly. As we have seen, there were incentives to enlisting; even after citizenship disappeared as an incentive under Caracalla, salary, pension and land still remained. On the basis of military law, the chances were against leaving the army after conversion; a departure before one's period of service was completed (which varied from sixteen to twenty-five years depending on the branch of service and the period in the empire's history) meant, of course, desertion and the death penalty. If one attempted to mutilate himself in order to obtain a 'medical discharge', the Romans had penalties for that too.

Christians in the late third century had an answer for Celsus, an answer which was anathema to Origen. Some of these men were doing their part to defend the empire against its enemies, both without and within. In the generations before Diocletian, Christians had their chance to refute their accusors' charges of disloyalty; in so doing they refuted the charges in both word and deed. To be sure, Constantine closely watched their conduct, wondering whether the followers of Christ would be as helpful to the empire as their God himself would be, whether they could fight as well with prayers of iron as with those of words. It is to Constantine's decision that we will now direct our attention.

IV. Constantine, Christians, and Military Service

In the course of our study we have assumed that the beginning of the reign of Constantine was a major chronological termination of the events in

our period. This assumption, although convenient, would not apply to the pacifist position because the need for combat remained. Nor would it apply to the arguments of the church Fathers because the old religion of the Roman army remained intact. Therefore, dividing our study into periods before and after Constantine must remain a convenience. However, once the Great Persecution died away, so did our evidence for Christian soldiers, save for Constantine himself. Some of the undatable inscriptions no doubt belong to his reign, but acts of military martyrs cease entirely, as do the prohibitions from the theologians of the church. Admittedly, Constantine was one of the most complex persons in the history of the west, though it would seem that his contemporaries helped to make him seem enigmatic in our eyes, for he is the symbolic threshold from the Roman to the Christian empire. While it is certain that Constantine was aware of the struggle between old and new Rome raging around him and knew well the direction in which he wished to lead the empire, both old and new Rome held him in their grasp, each describing his career in their own terms. Before turning to Constantine 'the Christian soldier', we must first ask, as have all historians of this era, where he developed his religious life and for what religion(s) he had sympathy.

1. Constantine's Religious Background

While the Great Persecution raged in the east, a young man, soon to be Caesar, then Augustus, watched from the palace of Galerius. What effect the persecutions had on the mind of Constantine is not possible to tell, but he must have noticed, as did Eusebius, that the persecution had made the Church stronger by pruning away those persons nominally committed to it[343]. Eusebius tells us that, after the persecution had gone on for a time, some Romans no longer had the stomach to continue; executioners in Alexandria had to relieve each other and, it would seem, Romans missed Christian friends now dead[344]. With the memory of these events still fresh in his mind, Constantine escaped the tenacious presence of Galerius, hamstringing mounts in livery stations along the way, preventing Galerius from removing a future rival. He made his escape to join his father, Constantius Chlorus, before the news of his impending death came true. Arriving in York, Constantius' camp, before his father's death on July 25, 306, Constantine must have left the east one or two months previously. When he returned to the east eighteen years later, he would be hailed as the savior of the church, the sole emperor, and Christianity's most famous soldier, though we may be relatively certain that he did not consider himself a Christian in 306.

It is almost certain that he did not continue in the west the persecution still in effect in the east. The persecution did not amount to much in the

[343] Eusebius begins book VIII of his 'Ecclesiastical History' with the observation that the forty years before the Great Persecution were free of any systematic persecution. As a result, the church had grown lax and had concerned itself with 'worldly' pursuits.

[344] HE VIII, 9, 4—5.

west; his father burned few churches but no bodies, and Maxentius did not do much more[345]. The infrequency of outrages against the church can be explained by the generally small Christian population in the west, so it is difficult to imagine that Christians in the west made any profound impression on Constantine, at least in terms of numbers. (However, we know of one bishop from York at the Council of Arles in 314, as well as two others from Britain[346]). Whatever his private sentiments toward religion might have been early in his reign, officially he maintained the religious framework of the tetrarchy initiated in Diocletian's reign, IMPERATORES SEMPER HERCVLI remaining on his coinage until after the death of Maximian in 310[347]. Nevertheless, indications are that he was moving toward the worship of Sol Invictus-Apollo so prominent in the middle of his reign. Putting aside the polytheism of Diocletian and Maximian, he became a solar monotheist; the legend SOL INVICTVS COMES did not disappear from his coinage until the year 325[348] after the defeat of Licinius, who maintained the connection with the Jovian religion of Diocletian. Accordingly, the worship of Sol Invictus and solar monotheism stand behind the visions attributed to Constantine which played an important part in the battle at Milvian Bridge.

2. Constantine's March on Rome

When Constantius died, his army immediately acclaimed Constantine Augustus, an embarrassing upset to the tetrarchy as Diocletian had conceived of it. During the next five years personalities and power struggles, not orderly lines of succession, determined who would rule the empire. At first Constantine was cautious, never advancing his position beyond what he had the strength to control securely. Accordingly he sent word to Galerius, senior Augustus in the west, asking approval of his position as Augustus; Galerius sent back word that Severus, not Constantine, was to be Augustus and that Constantine should hold the rank of Caesar; Constantine acquies-

345 On the Deaths of the Persecutors 15 shows that in Gaul the persecutions involved mostly property. W. H. C. FREND (Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church [Garden City, N.Y., 1967], p. 365, note 62) thinks that records of martyrdoms in Gaul in 304 show more than a token persecution. However, we can be certain that the persecution in the west never reached nearly the intensity of what it was in the east. H. GRÉGOIRE cites Optatus of Mileve to show that Maxentius was in fact friendly to Christians since he restored freedom to Christians in his part of the empire. GRÉGOIRE thought that Maxentius was the first emperor after the Great Persecution to offer an edict of toleration to the Christians. See H. GRÉGOIRE, Les persécutions dans l'empire romain, 2ème éd., rev. (Brussels, 1964), p. 85, p. 87. FREND agrees that Maxentius held a favorable attitude to the Christian communities in Rome and North Africa (FREND, pp. 388—389).

346 The three bishops present from Britain were Eborius, *de civitate Eboracensi, provincia Britannia* (modern York), Restitutus, *de civitate Londinensi*, and Adelfius, *de civitate Colonia Londinensium* (MANSI, Sacrorum Conciliorum nova collectio II [Florence, 1759], 476).

347 JULES MAURICE, Numismatique Constantinienne, Vol. II, (Paris, 1911), 81—91, 217, 230.

348 Ibid., pp. 354—355, 507—513.

ced. Since Maxentius, son of Maximian, had been overlooked when Galerius appointed Severus as Caesar, he now moved to claim what he felt rightfully his. Late in October 306, aided by a revolt of praetorian guards, Maxentius was proclaimed Augustus in the absence of Severus. While Constantine watched from the north, first Severus, then Maximian, who emerged from retirement and attempted to regain the throne from his son, met their deaths. The attempt of Galerius to help his favorite, Severus, and Maximian's plot to discredit his son, both failed, leaving Severus suicide as the only possibility.

Although Constantine was cautious, he was not inactive. Probably his first move to gain the upper hand in the west was to encourage the revolt of Alexander of Africa[349], thereby placing corn shipments to Rome in jeopardy. Since Maxentius retained control of Spain, this threat was not decisive until Constantine, under pretext of routing pirates from the Iberian peninsula, took control. Maxentius succeeded in relieving Roman famine by sending an expedition to Africa and killing Alexander.

In 312 Constantine knew that he must move against Maxentius, Maximian's son, or wither on the vine waiting to be destroyed later; Constantine and Licinius were pitted against Maxentius and Maximin Daia[350]. Leaving a majority of his force defending the frontier on the Rhine, Constantine moved across the Alps into Italy taking Turin, Milan, and Verona. After the surrender of Modena the army camped in the neighborhood of the Milvian Bridge, having secured northern Italy. Constantine set up camp opposite the bridge (made of pontoon boats)[351] on October 26, 312[352]. That night in a dream, as Lactantius tells us, he was told to place the 'heavenly sign' on the shields of his army. Whatever the exact form of the monogram was, it gave Constantine courage to pursue the fight. Since Lactantius appears to be the more reliable authority, we follow his interpretation at this point rather than that of Eusebius[353].

349 We have an inscription showing Constantine's name linked with Alexander's: *Impp dd nn L Domitio Alexandro et Fl. Constantin Augg* (ILS, 8936).

350 According to Lactantius (On the Deaths 44) Constantine discovered that Maximin Daia had been in league with Maxentius only after he had taken Rome and found their correspondence. Since Constantine named Maximin Daia Consul in 313, HEINZ KRAFT concludes that Constantine did not know whom to fight at first, Maximin or Licinius. Therefore, KRAFT argues that Constantine's wars were not to end religious persecution but directed toward gaining power. See HEINZ KRAFT, Kaiser Konstantins religiöse Entwicklung (Tübingen, 1955), p. 62.

351 HE IX, 9, 5.

352 On the Deaths 44.

353 Although neither Lactantius nor Eusebius is entirely trustworthy, Lactantius was closer chronologically to these events than was Eusebius. ALTANER gives the date of his appearance in Constantine's court as 317. B. ALTANER, Patrology, trans. by HILDA GRAEF (New York, 1961), p. 208. Responding to GRÉGOIRE's criticism of the 'Life of Constantine', A. H. M. JONES and T. C. SKEAT published a papyrus which is almost an exact copy of a document of Constantine recorded by Eusebius (II, 27—28). SKEAT dates the hand 340 or 350 at the latest. Since GRÉGOIRE argued that the documents contained in the 'Life' are forgeries, JONES felt that he had vindicated Eusebius' author-

The events surrounding the battle at Milvian Bridge have been studied from many different approaches; it is necessary to digress here to summarize the major ones. Basically, two features of these events have come under intense criticism in the journals of modern scholarship — the vision reported seen by Constantine and the symbol referring to Christ which he ordered placed on the shields of his soldiers.

Since no account of the vision or the monogram written in the sky appears in Eusebius' 'Church History', MacMullen is probably right in saying that the miracle of the vision lies in the relative silence surrounding it[354]. Eusebius reported this event years later when he claimed to have heard it from Constantine himself[355]. The interval of all these years between the event and its appearance in Eusebius' presentation casts doubt on its accuracy[356], if not its authenticity. Upon comparison of Lactantius and Eusebius on this point, it becomes clear that if there was a vision, the account has undergone substantial changes in the form in which it now appears. While in Lactantius the cross appeared in a dream[357], in the 'Life of Constantine' Eusebius wrote that the cross appeared in the sky above the sun and beneath it was the inscription, "by this conquer"[358]. In addition, this phenomenon took place in the early afternoon and appeared to all of Constantine's troops. Attempting to restore faith in the account of Eusebius, Baynes and Jones have accumulated meteorological data showing that recently, in southern England, the sun has shown through stratospheric ice crystals, producing the form of a cross, although with the sun at the point of intersection of the rays, not below it as Eusebius reported[359]. Jones further thought that since Constantine was entering battle at a numerical disadvantage, his 'overwrought imagination' connected sun worship and cross worship. However, it is not likely that the cross was the Christian symbol at that time as it is presently; the unadorned cross was not used until the fifth century, long after the abolition of crucifixion[360]. If so, the arguments of Jones and Baynes do not

ship because one of the documents was authentic, therefore the rest probably were too. Whether or not what Eusebius wrote in the 'Life' is accurate remains another matter. Jones does not answer the obvious attack that the document is a copy of Eusebius, not Constantine. See H. Grégoire, Eusèbe n'est pas l'auteur de la Vita Constantini dans sa forme actuelle et Constantin ne s'est pas «converti» en 312, Byzantion, XIII (1938), 561—583; A. H. M. Jones and T. C. Skeat, Notes on the Genuineness of the Constantinian Documents in Eusebius' Life of Constantine, Journal of Ecclesiastical History, V (1954), 196—200.

354 MacMullen, Constantine (New York, 1969), p. 73.

355 Eusebius, The Life of Constantine (hereafter cited as 'Life'), I, 28—31.

356 A. H. M. Jones, Constantine and the Conversion of Europe (New York, 1962), p. 85.

357 On the Deaths 44.

358 Life I, 28: ἐν τούτῳ νίκα.

359 N. H. Baynes lists the dates, all of which were in April. See N. H. Baynes, Constantine the Great and the Christian Church, Proceedings of the British Academy, XV (1930), 58, note 31. Also Jones, pp. 85—86.

360 M. Sulzberger, Le symbole de la croix et les monogrammes de Jésus chez les premiers Chrétiens, Byzantion, II (1925), 337—448, esp. pp. 447—448. He also concludes that there is no reason to believe that the heavenly sign in the liver reading incident (On the Deaths 10) was not a cross in the shape of a perpendicular (p. 403).

help in understanding what happened before the battle. If there was a heavenly manifestation of the kind Eusebius described, there is no mention of it in any source, Christian or Roman, before the writing of the 'Life of Constantine'.

While scholars almost universally regard with suspicion Eusebius' version of how the cross helped Constantine, the report of Constantine's dream in Lactantius has not escaped reinterpretation[361]. Shortly after Lactantius told about the dream of Constantine, he related how Licinius, on the eve of a crucial battle with Maximin Daia on May 1, 313, also had a dream in which an angel gave him a prayer to be recited by his troops immediately before joining combat[362]. As MOREAU suggested, Lactantius wrote the account of Licinius' dream at a time when it was not yet clear whether Constantine or Licinius or both were to be the champions of Christianity[363]. In that time of uncertainty it was astute of Lactantius to credit both men with the same divine aid. Also, Lactantius may have been claiming for Christianity what the panegyrics claimed for sun worship, for the panegyric in 310 states that Apollo had appeared to Constantine[364]. Therefore, the vision of Lactantius probably was written to respond to the vision in the Apollo sanctuary in Gaul and at the same time to place Constantine on an equal footing with Licinius[365].

Fortunately, the statements which Lactantius and Eusebius made about the *labarum* are more easily investigated than the statements about the vision, for here we have epigraphy and numismatics against which their stories may be placed. Lactantius' version is less complex than that of Eusebius. He said that the heavenly sign was to be placed on the shields of the men, and that it was the letter X, with a line drawn through it and turned around at the top, representing the name of Christ[366]. Eusebius' description of the Chi—Rho emblem differs considerably. The shaft of a spear forms the upright segment and it is overlaid with a perpendicular bar to form a cross. On it is placed the emblem, while the entire standard is covered with gold and gems; from the cross arm hangs an embroidered cloth[367]. What Eusebius

[361] On the Deaths 44.

[362] Ibid., 46.

[363] JACQUES MOREAU, Sur la vision de Constantin, Revue des Etudes Anciennes, LV (1953), 307—333, esp. p. 310.

[364] Panegyricus VII (6), 21. See EDOUARD GALLETIER, ed. and trans., Panégyriques Latins (Paris, 1949).

[365] MOREAU, p. 312.

[366] On the Deaths 44, 5 (MOREAU): *Facit ut iussus est et transversa X littera [I] summo capite circumflexo, Christum in scutis notat.* H. I. MARROU disagrees with MOREAU's conjecture that the *I* must be inserted to make sense out of the text. His solution is that the *X*, usually written as though connecting the four corners of a square, should be rotated 45 degrees to make a cross and the top then should be drawn around to make the sign ☧. On the basis of his interpretation of Lactantius' description, he concluded that there was an insoluble hiatus between Lactantius' sign and the monogram stamped on Constantine's coins. H. I. MARROU, Autour du monogramme Constantinien, in: Mélanges offerts à Etienne Gilson (Toronto, 1959), pp. 403—414.

[367] Life I, 31.

has described is the Roman *vexillum*; this type of standard, called the *labarum*, was used in Roman units after Constantine's death[368] and probably after the defeat of Licinius. On the one hand, Eusebius knew nothing about such a symbol marked on the shields before the battle at Milvian Bridge, and on the other, Lactantius never mentioned a standard of the sort Eusebius described.

ALFÖLDI has claimed that he saw evidence of the Chi-Rho emblem on Roman coins and that, since this mark appeared on the coins soon after the battle, Constantine celebrated his conversion on them[369]. In response to this claim PATRICK BRUUN has examined the coins of the years of Constantine's reign and concluded that the coins simply cannot be made to support ALFÖLDI's argument. Although ALFÖLDI thought that the Chi-Rho emblem itself had lost its detail and was replaced by a six-pointed star located on the rear of the helmet, BRUUN has shown that these stars were mint marks with no symbolic value. For example, the coins struck in Arles had eight-pointed stars[370]. If the corollary thesis of ALFÖLDI were true, that Constantine regulated all the mints in the west after 312, such a star would be an impossibility[371]. But ALFÖLDI suggested, too, that the star was a descendant from a Chi-Rho prototype[372]. One must ask, however, if the Chi-Rho had been allowed to become a star, what would the propaganda value be, assuming that only the officials at the mint knew what the prototype was? Moreover, it must be remembered that neither Eusebius nor Lactantius mentioned anything about such an emblem on any helmet. Who would place an emblem on a helmet with the intention of proclaiming his conversion and then locate it on the back, where it could not be seen by the enemy about to be defeated?

Considered as a symbol, the *labarum* does not belong to the Christians alone, for there is evidence to show that it existed two centuries before the birth of Christ on Greek and Scythian coins[373]. Depending on what figures one is willing to count as early forms of this symbol, it may extend two millennia prior to the Roman empire. Some studies have placed this symbol

368 R. GROSSE shows that this standard was used regularly in armies after the time of Constantine. R. GROSSE, Labarum, RE, XII, 1 (1924), pp. 240—242.

369 A. ALFÖLDI, The Helmet of Constantine with the Christian Monogram, JRS, XXII (1932), 9—23, esp. p. 12.

370 PATRICK BRUUN, The Christian Signs on the Coins of Constantine, Arctos (nova series), III (1962), 5—35. On some coins the stars were nothing but issue marks (p. 21). The issue with the reverse containing the *labarum* striking the serpent, usually considered Christian since the serpent was interpreted as paganism, is a symbol of the suppression of the barbarians, not a Christian motif necessarily (pp. 21—22). It was the mint issues after 325, when the Christian symbol came to the fore, that Eusebius described. BRUUN does not think that Constantine told Eusebius about the *labarum* (p. 27).

371 PATRICK BRUUN, The Disappearance of Sol from the Coins of Constantine, Arctos (nova series), II (1958), 15—37, esp. p. 37.

372 ALFÖLDI, p. 11.

373 SULZBERGER, p. 423. GRÉGOIRE suggests that the word *labarum* came from the word *laureum*, a garland used in connection with victory celebrations. Possibly it came from the garlanded standards celebrating the victory over Maxentius in 312. See H. GRÉGOIRE, L'étymologie de 'Labarum', Byzantion, IV (1929), 477—482.

in Gaul earlier than the fourth century A.D.[374]. One inscription from Lyons, for example, shows a double hatched cross on a monument dedicated to Thor[375]. HATT argued that the *labarum* originated from the Celtic worship of Apollo and that there have been archaeological remains to show that the symbol X was closely related to it[376]. In addition, HATT shows that Constantine had been in attendance at Grand, the home sanctuary of Apollo[377]. In an attempt to secure the help of these people, Constantine had worshipped at their sanctuary. It was probably there that the symbol X (not VOT X), which appears on some Constantinian coins originated.

While the Chi-Rho symbol later became famous to Christians, it also was common to the people of Gaul. The ambiguity of Constantine's symbols, it would appear, was part of his plan to enlist the support of as many people as possible to gain control of the west and the east. At the same time he wanted to offend as few as were absolutely necessary. Accordingly, he let be inscribed on his arch in Rome in 315 that he had suppressed the tyrant, *instinctu divinitatis* ("by divine inspiration")[378]. In fact, part of the reason that the history of the monogram is so vague is that Constantine never decisively stated that he was adopting this emblem to give credit to the God of the Christians. Licinius, as well as Constantine, adopted an ambiguous policy toward religious groups in the empire; his prayer dictated to the troops before the defeat of Maximin Daia was addressed to *Summus Deus* ("the supreme God")[379].

Whatever the symbol was, if any, which Constantine placed on the shields of his men, he may have felt there was a divine power behind his victory, since estimates of Maxentius' and Constantine's relative numerical strength range from four to one, to two to one[380]. But the nature of his troops must have compensated for the numerical superiority of Maxentius' army; Constantine had battle-hardened veterans of frontier life and battles while Maxentius had urban southern troops. In view of the policy of local recruitment, the conclusion must be drawn that Constantine's army did not have many Christians in its ranks, but no one, not even Eusebius, has ever thought to attribute Constantine's victory to Christians in his ranks, as Christians did with Marcus Aurelius.

As might be assumed, Christians interpreted the battle and victory in Christian terms, attempting to show that Maxentius' gods had no power.

[374] J.-J. HATT, La Vision de Constantin au sanctuaire de Grand et l'origine celtique du labarum, Latomus, IX (1950), 427—436.

[375] CIL, XIII, 2140. A monument dedicated to a dead child; the parents dedicated it under the name of Thor (*sub ascia dedicauerunt*), *ascia* being the axe or hammer of Thor.

[376] HATT, pp. 431—432.

[377] Ibid., p. 433.

[378] CIL, VI, 1139. The monument celebrated his decennalia in 315.

[379] On the Deaths 46.

[380] PARKER, History, p. 249. JONES, Constantine, p. 85. BAYNES, Constantine (CAH, XII [1939] 681) argues that Maxentius had 100,000 troops to Constantine's 40,000. All agree that Constantine had about 40,000.

Accordingly, Lactantius includes a story of how Maxentius consulted the Sibylline oracles telling him that if he attacked, that day an enemy of the Romans would perish[381]. The battle went in the opposite way from which Maxentius imagined; Constantine's forces drove the army of Maxentius back toward the pontoon bridge. Perhaps overloaded, it broke down and many of the defenders fell into the Tiber, along with Maxentius in full armor, and drowned. Since the battle is interpreted in religious terms, there is no condemnation of Constantine's military action; both Eusebius and Lactantius, as we saw above, pp. 759 and 762, do not criticize him in this regard.

3. Church Councils During Constantine's Reign

Not long after the battle of the Milvian bridge, Constantine took an active role in the affairs of the Church; the first evidence of his disapproval of schismatics in the Church was his summons to bishops in Italy, Africa, and Gaul to deal with the Donatist movement, in October 313[382]. In August 314, he held a council inviting representatives from all over the west to Arles; there they dealt with problems much more varied than those of the Donatist schism. In canon III of the Synod of Arles the council agreed: "Concerning those, who throw down their arms in time of peace, we have decreed that they should be kept from communion"[383]. The phrase, "in time of peace", has caused a great deal of controversy, probably because one might expect to find soldiers throwing away their weapons when they sense difficult combat imminent, and therefore, might substitute the phrase, "in time of war", as the most easily explained reading. Noting that this latter reading did not appear until some time later, HORNUS, nevertheless, asserted that "in time of war" testifies to the "inescapable sense of the canon"[384]. BAINTON too, has tried to explain the apparently strange reading on the basis of his theory concerning Christians in the Roman police forces. His view is that in time of peace a Christian is at liberty to serve in the police forces but that in time of war he may be allowed to withdraw. But withdraw from what? The police? The army? At any rate, we have seen above, p. 793—795, that Christians did not have special preference for police work even if such a preference was a possible alternative. Therefore BAINTON's interpretation of canon III does not help us to decipher its obscure meaning.

Some scholars have taken the phrase, "in time of peace", to refer to the peace which was established between the church and a benevolent emperor

381 On the Deaths 44. The answer of the Sibylline books is reminiscent of the answer given Xerxes prior to the defeat of his navy at Salamis.

382 R. M. GRANT, Augustus to Constantine (New York, 1970), p. 237.

383 C. J. HEFELE, Histoire des Concils: Vol. I, trans. by H. LECLERCQ (Paris, 1907), 282. *De his qui arma projiciunt in pace, placuit abstineri eos a communione* (Trans. J. STEVENSON, A New Eusebius, p. 322).

384 HORNUS, Evangile et Labarum (above, note 20), p. 129.

like Constantine[385]. We agree with BAINTON[386] that such an interpretation would be a special rendering of the words; however, the interpretation does fit the time in which the canon was written. Returning to our study of the martyr acts, we find that only Marcellus in Spain actually threw down his arms and for the reason that the army religion was idolatrous. But the case of Marcellus could be taken to refer to all the Christians who had religious problems with the army. Although Constantine had shown favor to the Christians, the religious cults of the army probably had not changed in only two years since the victory over Maxentius. While Constantine befriended Christians, there is ample evidence, as we have seen, to show that he tried to avoid offending the non-Christian elements of Roman society; for example, the inscription on his arch was vague to the point that nobody in the empire would have complained. Even if Constantine had adopted the *labarum* as a standard and had placed the Chi-Rho emblem on soldiers' equipment, it does not follow that all traditional standards would have been discarded, for doing so would have upset the soldiers considerably. In fact, it would appear that the religious cults of the army changed so slowly that generations later Ambrose would say that the name and religion of Jesus must lead the army, not eagles and birds[387]. In addition, the council made no mention of throwing away arms in time of war because military laws had already covered this possibility and had assigned the death penalty to such acts[388]. But the council had to take action to stop Christians who might be offended at army religion from leaving the service at a time when the penalties would be less severe. Constantine did not want to lose any soldiers on account of military religion, for he intended eventually to attack Licinius[389]. Moreover, we know of no soldiers who left the army or were executed for failure to observe the religious rites of army discipline under Constantine

[385] HEFELE, pp. 282—283, lists prominent interpretations of this canon: (1) Some later manuscripts substitute "in battle" for "in peace", therefore it forbids the use of arms except in war. (2) The canon refers to gladiators, as do the two following canons. (3) "Religious scruples" prevented some from enlisting, but he does not state whether he thinks these refer to idolatry or pacifism. HARNACK supports this view (MC, pp. 87—88). Concerning gladiators, it seems that, as the canon reads, it would make no sense to tell them to worry about excommunication if they did not perform in the games. Such an interpretation makes no sense if either "in peace" or "in war" were the reading.

[386] BAINTON, Attitude, pp. 80—81.

[387] De fide christiana II, 16.

[388] Digest XLIX, 16, 3 (13). *Miles, qui in bello arma amisit vel alienavit, capite punitur: humane militiam mutat.* ("A soldier who in time of war loses or disposes of his arms shall suffer death; through indulgence he may be transferred to another branch of the service", quoted from BRAND [above, note 281], pp. 174—175.) This law was taken from Modestinus, who was a student of Ulpianus, and was *praefectus vigilum* between 224 and 244. See TH. MAYER-MALY, Modestinus, Der Kleine Pauly, III (1969), 1377—1378.

[389] CHRISTIAN HABICHT argues that the war between Constantine and Licinius, usually dated 314, must be put in late 316 or early 317. Constantine stayed in Trier in the north while he was thought to be fighting Licinius in the eastern provinces. See CHRISTIAN HABICHT, Zur Geschichte des Kaisers Konstantin, Hermes, LXXXVI (1958), 360—378. For the early date see PARKER, History, p. 256.

The situation under Licinius was a different matter. While we will study his relationship to Christians in the army in detail later, it would appear that he carried out a persecution of Christians in his army like that of Diocletian. Canon XII of the Council of Nicaea (325) takes cognizance of the Christians who had been in Licinius' army, became offended at his rigid observance of old Roman rites, and left his service. After they had left the service they remembered what they had lost (stipend, pension, social status) and decided that they wanted to get back in. The pertinent part of this canon reads,

> "Those who have been called by grace, and have at first displayed their ardour, but afterwards have run like dogs to their own vomit (insomuch that some have spent money, and by means of gifts have acquired again their military station), must continue among the prostrators for ten years after having been for three years amongst the hearers"[390].

There is no problem in canon XII of Nicaea regarding military service as such, but only those who bribed their way back into the army of Licinius[391]. Anyone who entered the army of Licinius was dealt with as an apostate, since the emperor demanded a renunciation of Christianity[392]. That this canon was speaking about the situation under Licinius is clear, for the preceding canon (XI) made explicit reference to his religious persecution. Eusebius claimed to have in his possession an imperial statute with Constantine's signature on it[393]. In part of it Constantine permitted soldiers who confessed and lost rank to have the option of resuming that rank or to gain an honorable discharge, and to live in undisturbed peace[394]. Apparently Constantine reflected the wishes of soldiers who wanted either possibility. The fact that there is no reference to the military service as an illicit occupation in canon XII throws light on canon III of Arles. Both these

390 Οἱ δὲ προσκληθέντες μὲν ὑπὸ τῆς χάριτος, καὶ τὴν πρώτην ὁρμὴν ἐνδειξάμενοι, καὶ ἀποθέμενοι τὰς ζώνας, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐπὶ τὸν οἰκεῖον ἔμετον ἀναδραμόντες ὡς κύνες, ὡς τινὰς καὶ ἀργύρια προέσθαι, καὶ βενεφικίοις κατορθῶσαι τὸ ἀναστρατεύσασθαι· Οὗτοι δέκα ἔτη ὑποπιπτέτωσαν μετὰ τὸν τῆς τριετοῦς ἀκροάσεως χρόνον. HEFELE, pp. 591—593. Translation from: J. STEVENSON, A New Eusebius, p. 361. CALDER related the spiritual belt, ζώνη, of Eugenius to the reference to the military belt in canon XII. See his 'Studies in Early Christian Epigraphy' (above, note 322), p. 49.

391 BRIGHT explains his conclusion that canon XII was concerned with only religious problems by commenting briefly on the military martyr acts as we have done above. See WILLIAM BRIGHT, The Canons of the First Four General Councils (Oxford, 1892, 2nd ed.), pp. 46—50.

392 H. J. SCHROEDER, Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils (St. Louis, Mo., 1937), pp. 41—42.

393 Life II, 23. The letter runs from II, 24 to II, 42. In addition to the arguments of JONES and SKEAT, the language of this letter is another point in favor of the authenticity of the 'Life of Constantine'. For in it Constantine distinguished the "Supreme God" from the God of the Christians; a Christian forger would not make such a distinction. In addition, the title "Supreme God" reminds one of the vague dedication on the arch; Constantine was victorious "by divine inspiration".

394 Life II, 33.

canons show us that the Church, acting in an official capacity, had no objection to military occupations as such. Moreover, it is quite unlikely that the Church ever did. If only these two canons of all the councils held during Constantine's time concern military subjects, then military service was not a problem. Although we have only the indirect evidence of Constantine's so-called Edict of Milan, granting toleration of all religious groups within the empire, we may assume that he made it clear to his military commanders that Christians in the ranks were not to be disciplined on the basis of their religion. As we have seen, no military martyrdoms took place under his reign, though anyone could always have been the object of military disciplinary trials for refusing to fight or to obey orders.

4. Persecution in the Army under Licinius

From the Council of Arles until about 320 no direct evidence survives to inform us how the Christians in the armies of both Constantine and Licinius fared. Of the two armies that of Licinius probably contained the larger number of Christians, since he was Augustus in the east. While Constantine took the lead in seeking the favor of Christians, Licinius decided not to move against them, if he indeed wanted to, because he did not think it wise to violate his treaty of peace with Constantine. In late 316 the military conflict between the two emperors came to a stalemate, in effect creating two empires, since neither was to trespass on the other's territory except in case of barbarian invasion[395]. However, they were not entirely independent of each other; they celebrated their consulship jointly in 315[396]. Moreover, the fact that they both stood behind the so-called Edict of Milan of 313 shows that they both had much to gain by a unified empire supported by Christians as well as other groups.

It is this unity which is behind the prayer Licinius circulated among his troops just before the battle with Maximin Daia on April 30, 313:

> "Supreme God, we beseech Thee,
> Holy God, we beseech Thee,
> Unto Thee we commend all right,
> Unto Thee we commend our safety,
> Unto Thee we commend our empire,

[395] PARKER, History, p. 257. On the date see HABICHT, p. 366.

[396] 'Fasti Consulares', in: A. H. M. JONES, et al., The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, Vol. I (Cambridge, 1971), 1041—1047. In 315 Constantine and Licinius held the consulship jointly, each for the fourth time. For the years 316 and 317 Sabinus and Rufinius, then Gallicanus and Bassus, held that office. In 318 Licinius and Crispus, Constantine's son, were consuls; in 319 Constantine and Licinius, son of Licinius, held the consulship. HABICHT's (p. 366) contention finds support, for, in the years 316 and 317, relative unknowns were consuls, reflecting the first period of conflict between Constantine and Licinius.

By Thee we live,
By Thee we are victorious and happy,
Supreme Holy God, hear our prayers;
To Thee we stretch forth our arms,
Hear, Holy Supreme God"[397].

As is obvious, the prayer is a masterpiece of ambiguity; there was nobody in the empire who could not have prayed it, each imagining his own god as the highest god. The prayer bears the same calculated vague language as the inscription of the arch of Constantine ("... by divine inspiration ..."). HARNACK was not correct when he attributed to the prayer the honor of being the first Christian military prayer, denying that it was intended to be prayed before Christians and non-Christians alike[398]. Contrary to usual interpretations of Licinius' reign, Licinius tried as hard as Constantine to convince the Christians to support him. To Licinius, H. GRÉGOIRE attributes a policy of seeking Christian favor independently of Constantine, sometimes preceding him[399]. According to the 'Theodosian Code', Licinius published from Nicomedia an edict of toleration on behalf of Christians on June 13, 313, later to be known as the Edict of Milan. Demonstrating his desire for the support of his constituents, Licinius had already granted tax relief to his highly overtaxed subjects[400]. GRÉGOIRE continues by arguing that Licinius had an original policy vis-à-vis Christians, citing Constantine's and Licinius' claims of imperial descent: while Constantine claimed Claudius Gothicus as an ancestor, Licinius named the emporer Philip, thought to have been the first emperor who favored Christians[401].

Both emperors were up to the same game, it seems, for both made attempts to enlist Christian support, through Licinius had more to gain by it than Constantine, since there were many more Christians in the east than in the west[402]. Strange to say, Eusebius may be giving a correct impression

397 On the Deaths 46: *Summe deus, te rogamus, sancte deus, te rogamus: omnem iustitiam tibi commendamus, salutem nostram tibi commendamus, imperium nostrum tibi commendamus. Per te uiuimus, per te uictores et felices existimus. Summe, sancte Deus, preces nostras exaudi: brachia nostra ad te tendimus: exaudi sancte, summe deus* (Trans. WILLIAM FLETCHER, ANF, vol. VII).

398 Militia Christi, p. 90.

399 H. GRÉGOIRE, About Licinius' Fiscal and Religious Policy, Byzantion, XIII (1938), 551—560.

400 GRÉGOIRE (ibid.), shows that Maximin Daia had relentlessly taxed his subjects and that it was Licinius who gave both religious freedom and tax relief to the common people, attempting to gain popularity with his new subjects. The law (Codex Theodosianus XIII, 10, 2) entered the codex under the name of Constantine, but since he had no power in the east at that time, GRÉGOIRE argues that it was Licinius (p. 556) who wrote it. For Maximin Daia's oppressive tax policy see On the Deaths 37 and HE VIII, 14, 10.

401 Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Gordian 3, 34 and HE VI, 34.

402 W. TELFER (The Author's Purpose in the Vita Constantini, Texte und Untersuchungen, LXIII [Berlin, 1957], 157—167) thought that Constantine had actually used Christians as a fifth column behind the lines of Licinius since Constantine became angry at the

when he regards Licinius favorably at the beginning of his reign. However, at the end Licinius appears to be a savage beast[403]. In the struggle between the two emperors, the Christians appear to be pawns, but so are other religious groups. Both emperors appealed to groups behind the lines of the other in order to gain the support needed to control east and west. As a monument to this struggle we have the ambiguous prayers of both Constantine[404] and Licinius. Since it appeared that Constantine would be the winner, and since he had taken interest in the church, Christians called him the friend of God[405], and called Licinius the opposite, in spite of his previous legislation in favor of the church.

The relationship between the two emperors once again disintegrated; the restless Constantine continually pressed his eastern colleague. Up until 320 the consulships had been filled with both eastern and western representatives, but in that year Constantines I and II were consuls, and in 321 Constantine's sons Crispus and Constantine II appeared in that post[406]. Licinius responded by prohibiting church councils, casting Christians out of the imperial palaces, denying them the right to worship in towns and cities (but letting them congregate in the country), and making it unlawful for men and women to meet together[407]. If Eusebius' information is correct, the policy of Licinius, like that of Diocletian, was to strike at the church by making it impossible for the established ecclesiastical machinery to function. However, Licinius' persecution as it appears in Eusebius is not illustrated by many concrete details, a fact which suggests that this persecution was of limited scope. N. H. Baynes agrees with this assessment of Licinius' persecution; however, he attemps to lay the cause for the final civil war at the door of Licinius[408]. He does not mention that Constantine seems to have provoked the civil war, leaving Licinius no alternative but to attack. Besides

Bithynian bishops who did not rise up against Licinius. He based his conclusion on Athanasius' statements in De decretis Nicaenae Synodi 41.

403 Licinius had a favorable interpretation in HE VIII, 13, 14; IX, 9, 1; IX, 10, 2; IX, 11, 9; X, 5, 1. Only at the end of the 'Church History' does he appear evil: X, 8 to the end.

404 Life IV, 20.

405 HE X, 9, 2.

406 Jones, Fasti Consulares, p. 1043.

407 Eusebius, Life I, 51—53. E. Honigmann (Basileus of Amasea, Patristic Studies, Studi e Testi, CLXXIII [Città del Vaticano, 1953], 6—27) points out that Licinius' prohibition of councils must be dated in the later years of his ten-year reign, since no less than six councils (Ancyra, Caesarea, Neocaesarea, Bithynia, Caesarea Palestine, and Alexandria) were held in his half of the empire during his reign. Probably the edict concerning councils was issued in 321 or 322. If so, this late date clearly shows that Licinius' edict was not a provocation but a reaction to Constantine's advances.

408 N.H. Baynes, p. 16. Baynes' point of view, boldly put forth, is that Constantine was converted in 312 and from that time forward was a Christian using his throne to defend the church in every possible way. This interpretation of Constantine's reign does not sufficiently account for the evidence showing his caution against offending any one interest group in the empire. J. Moreau, in his 'Sur la vision de Constantin' (above, note 363), p. 307, takes the opposite point of view, contending that the wars of Constantine were in no way religious wars.

nominating his sons consuls, another provocation was moving his capital to Serdica (modern Sofia), within convenient striking distance of Licinius' territory[409].

Also in the same fashion as Diocletian, Licinius moved against Christians in the army and civil service; since his measures against these Christians were similar to those of Diocletian, he may have been using Diocletian's procedure as a precedent. He gave orders that soldiers in the cities were to sacrifice or to be deprived of their commands[410]. Because Eusebius tells of Licinius' qualification that urban soldiers who commanded were to be singled out, it seems that Licinius aimed at officers and only at those who were in cities, where uprisings might be more contagious than among soldiers on the frontiers. BAYNES, however, does not concur that there was a persecution in the army[411]. He finds Eusebius' language strange, referring to the soldiers in the cities (τοὺς κατὰ πόλιν στρατιώτας)[412]; therefore he thinks the statement must point to members of the civil militia, not the military. Moreover, he argues, there is no direct evidence of any army persecution; even the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (as the legend has it, they were soldiers) were not necessarily soldiers; nor does the case of Theagenes apply, since he refused to serve[413]. Admittedly the account of the Forty Martyrs is troublesome, but there is no problem of speaking of soldiers in cities. Eusebius is merely reflecting the military situation in the eastern provinces, where soldiers frequently were quartered in cities; from the Dura Papyri we learn that the *cohors II Palmyrenorum* was billeted in the city of Dura. Frequently in winter soldiers left frontier posts for the comfort of town living, giving the eastern armies a reputation for being soft[414]. BAYNES does not mention canon XII of the Council of Nicaea which, as we have seen, refers to correcting the aftermath of Licinius' army persecution.

As in previous persecutions, whatever evidence we have concerning Licinius' persecution in the army points toward the religious conflict between Christians and conservative Roman religious policy. Once again, there is no evidence to show that any Christian refused to kill or objected to being placed in a position where combat was potentially possible. Viewing what evidence remains from the reign of Constantine, pacifist interpreters implicitly agree with our interpretation of Christian experience. However, for reasons both historical and interpretative, it is impossible to support their contention that the lack of pacifist evidence is due to the sale of the church's soul to Constantine[415].

409 A. ALFÖLDI, The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome, trans. by H. MATTINGLY (Oxford, 1948), p. 96.

410 Life I, 54.

411 BAYNES, pp. 80—82.

412 HE X, 8, 10.

413 See Appendix.

414 J. B. SEGAL, Edessa, the Blessed City (Oxford, 1970), p. 119.

415 GERO also argues with this interpretation but contends that the Church had already sold its soul to Caracalla (GERO [above, note 43], p. 298).

5. The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste

A legend concerning forty soldiers apparently martyred under Licinius' governor Agricolaus, survives in several forms, many of them written very late[416]. The date given the incident relates closely to the supposed date of Licinius' persecution in the church. DELEHAYE believed that it was possible to reconstruct the legend from homilies (Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Ephraim, John Chrysostom, and Gaudentius), but considered the testament of these soldiers the only authentic remains of the martyrdom[417].

As the story goes, forty soldiers from the *legio XII Fulminata* refused to obey Licinius' edict ordering the soldiers to worship idols. In Sebaste, in the province of Cappadocia, they went to trial, receiving the unusual punishment of being left naked on a frozen pond to die of exposure. All the while a fire burned on the shore, tempting them to sacrifice and to get warm. The testament was a document apparently written to bestow on the church their spiritual legacy as well as their relics. In it appear the names of the forty martyred soldiers. If indeed the testament is the only authentic document, leaving the legend about suffering on the frozen pond to the handiwork of later editors, as DELEHAYE and BONWETSCH contend, the document becomes useless to describe the persecution in the army, or for that matter any persecution under Licinius in or out of the army. Without the added legend, all evidence regarding the time, place, and cause of the martyrdom disappears; in fact, on the basis of the testament alone it is impossible to say that these men were soldiers. On these grounds we agree with BAYNES that this account is poor evidence for an army persecution in Licinius' army[418]. Even if the legend were accurate it would tell us no more about the nature of the persecution than one can glean from Eusebius' short account[419].

6. Eusebius' View of Constantine as A Military Commander

In this section we shall discuss Eusebius' interpretation of what Constantine did for the Christian Church and the way in which he did it. There have been scholars who thought that Constantine used the church to unite the empire by gaining control over the eastern provinces. Other writers have emphasized Constantine's concern for the church's well being for its own sake and have claimed that it was with this thought in mind that Constantine waged war on Licinius. Certainly the latter is Eusebius' point of view, as well as that

[416] N. BONWETSCH, Das Testament der vierzig Märtyrer, Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und Kirche, Vol. I (Leipzig, 1897), 75—80. KRÜGER—RUHBACH, pp. 116—119. MUSURILLO, pp. 354—361.

[417] H. DELEHAYE, The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, American Catholic Quarterly Review, XXIV (1899), 161—171.

[418] BAYNES, p. 82.

[419] Life I, 54.

of some modern scholars[420]. If there is any middle ground between these two positions, we stand there, since Roman religion and politics are never easily separated. While Constantine undoubtedly considered himself a Christian, Christ's appeal to him was in terms of power more than in terms of love.

As we have already seen in discussing Eusebius' account of the battle at the Milvian Bridge, Eusebius considered that battle and all those following as religious battles fought on behalf of the church. In addition to showing that Maxentius was a sorcerer[421], both the bridge's destruction and Maxentius' drowning appear in imagery derived from the drowning of Pharaoh's troops in the Red Sea (Exodus 15)[422]. Disregarding Constantine's provocative behavior, Eusebius paints the apocalyptic picture of Licinius as a savage beast who initiated the persecution against the church, hating all that was good. Constantine took pity on the persecuted Christians and prepared the troops for battle, using the *labarum* as his standard[423].

Making it explicit that religion was at stake, Eusebius attributed to Licinius a speech delivered to his soldiers which must be read in its entirety to be properly appreciated[424]. The salient points are that (1) Constantine had forsaken the religion of his forefathers, (2) he had honored an unknown god, (3) he was making war against us and our traditional religion, (4) the battle would decide whose gods were victorious, and (5) the victorious god was to be worshipped. Constantine too had his religious preparations for battle. In a tent pitched outside the boundaries of the camp, he had his religious devotions, from which he would rush at the time of battle, bringing inspiration to his troops[425]. If Eusebius is correct in describing Constantine's religious practices, it can be shown that Constantine had a concern for not upsetting the traditional army cults. Only the official army religions had access to the area bounded by the walls of the camp; archaeological investigations have shown that all dedications to unofficial gods have been found outside this area[426]. However, in the tent Constantine would fast and pray for the safety of his troops[427]. A long time after the victory over Licinius, Constantine apparently became more bold in the use of the tent. It probably became larger and was staffed with bishops from his court, the first Christian 'chaplains' in the army[428].

420 Baynes and Alföldi are the foremost exponents of this point of view.

421 Life I, 36.

422 Ibid., I, 38.

423 Ibid., II, 3.

424 Ibid., II, 5.

425 Ibid., II, 12.

426 Allan S. Hoey, Official Policy towards Oriental Cults in the Roman Army, Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, LXX (1939), 456—481, esp. p. 458.

427 Life II, 14.

428 Life IV 56. A. H. M. Jones, referring to Constantine's private devotional tent, wrote that these bishops were the first chaplains in the Roman Army. See his 'Military Chaplains in the Roman Army', HTR, XLVI (1953) 239—240. Moreover, he argues that the title πρεσβύτερον τοῦ νουμέρου from the Fifth century shows that chaplains became a promi-

Perhaps carried away in showing how religion played a role in the army Eusebius listed the supernatural powers attending the battle. Apparitions of Constantine's soldiers marching through Licinius' cities preceded his mundane march to battle[429]. When he actually did arrive, Licinius found himself confronted with another supernatural weapon — the *labarum*[430]. Constantine was pleased to discover that wherever it appeared the enemy fled and, by moving it to where the lines faltered, he was able to keep the opposing forces at bay. Following the traditional Roman practice of making standard bearers out of the most dependable men in the army, he entrusted the care of the *labarum* to a corps of fifty, according to what Constantine told Eusebius personally. He told Eusebius another incident: a soldier who panicked and left the standard with another was immediately killed. Resembling a porcupine, the shaft of the standard took a shower of darts, presumably fired shotgun-style from a *ballista*, leaving the bearer unscathed. Licinius told his men to avoid the *labarum* at all costs[431].

Whether through Christian concern for life or through good sportsmanship, Constantine appears to have been a very professional soldier. He never killed surrendering soldiers, attacking only those who remained armed[432]. Even barbarians felt the effect of his benevolent warfare; any soldier saving the life of any enemy was rewarded in gold[433]. This practice Eusebius attributed to thoughts about God forever running through Constantine's head.

Constantine's reform of army religion, however thoroughgoing it might have been, was probably a gradual affair, in order not to leave conservative soldiers with feelings that traditions were breaking down. The first change was to require the observance of Sunday in the army[434]. If this command came at the same time as his prohibition of lawsuits on Sunday, the date would have been 321[435]. It would seem that this is an early date in view of his impending battle with Licinius because, as we have seen, he took steps to avoid offending the army by placing his prayer tent outside the camp. On the other hand, if the date actually was 321, it might have been this action, among others, that caused Licinius to say (if in fact he said it) that Constantine had forsaken the gods of his forefathers. Moreover, he prescribed a prayer for the soldiers' Sunday use, but it was ambigious:

nent feature of the army. Other religious groups had 'chaplains', but they were lay rather than 'official', receiving their wages for spiritual counsel. In particular there was a priest, Themes, son of Mocimus, at the camp at Dura (Feriale Duranum, p. 32, note 65), though we do not know what his duties were other than to conduct sacrifices. He was a high-ranking non-commissioned officer.

429 Life II, 6.

430 Ibid., II, 7, 8 and 9.

431 Ibid., II, 16. The *labarum* apparently stayed with Constantine's army since it was used against barbarians also (IV, 5).

432 Ibid., II, 10.

433 Ibid., II, 13.

434 Ibid., IV, 18 and 19.

435 Codex Theodosianus II, 8, 1.

"We acknowledge Thee the only God: We own Thee as our king, and implore Thy succor. By Thy favor have we gotten the victory; Through Thee are we mightier than our enemies. We tender thanks for Thy past benefits, and trust Thee for future blessings. Together we pray to Thee, and beseech Thee long to preserve us, safe and triumphant, our emperor Constantine and his pious sons"[436].

In addition he required the soldiers to place on their shields the *labarum*, and decreed that the cross (*labarum*?) was to be the only standard preceding the legions[437]. To both civil and military branches of the population went the order to cease sacrificing[438]. Determined to perpetuate his faith, he made certain that his sons were to be given both religious and military educations as well as political and legal courses[439]. He ordered that his sons be attended by Christians only and at the same time decreed that only Christians be eligible for promotion to the high ranks of military command[440].

It seemed important to Eusebius to include an account of the grief of the soldiers including all ranks, even centurions, on hearing of Constantine's death[441]. And soldiers took an active part in the funeral as well as performing their normal duties without interruption[442]. On the way to its grave Constantine's body was preceded by many soldiers[443] who shortly before had joined with others all over the empire in saluting Constantine's sons as Augusti[444]. In mentioning these military details attending Constantine's funeral, Eusebius colored his history to paint a picture of unity between the church and the military, under the direction of Constantine's sons.

RAMSAY MACMULLEN writes, "The unprescient Eusebius had seen a proof of divine favor in Constantine's possession of three princes to succeed him; wiser men might have foretold civil war"[445]. Maybe Eusebius was more clever than MACMULLEN thought. Certainly Eusebius knew as well as anyone that there remained thousands of unconvinced Romans, despite Constantine's efforts to swing the empire to the side of the church. In writing his history in the way he did, he could see civil war as a distinct possibility and used his pen, as the only weapon he knew, in order to prevent that war.

7. Summary

In viewing the pertinent evidence from the year 312 to the death of Constantine, several conclusions become apparent. First, there is no evidence

436 Life IV, 20 (Trans. by C. C. RICHARDSON, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2, Vol. I, 545).
437 Ibid., IV, 21.
438 Ibid., IV, 23.
439 Ibid., IV, 51.
440 Ibid., IV, 52.
441 Ibid., IV, 65.
442 Ibid., IV, 67.
443 Ibid., IV, 70.
444 Ibid., IV, 68.
445 MACMULLEN, Constantine, p. 225.

of any controversy in the church involving pacifism. If there had been any general understanding in the church concerning the wrong of killing or entering combat, we should have found traces of the church adjusting itself to accommodate the new situation where Christians would be called to serve. Second, the evidence which does survive shows that what conflicts did occur revolved around army religion, as in canon III of the Synod of Arles. Third, the surviving evidence points to the conclusion that military service was not problematic for whatever reason.

Licinius' persecution of the Christians appears to have been conducted for the purpose of controlling a potentially mutinous sect. Moving against the soldiers in the cities, he secured himself against a potential fifth column on behalf of Constantine. It would seem that Christianity was the object of Licinius' persecution only insofar as this group could be counted on to fight for Constantine.

It is certain that Christians had now entered the power politics of the empire; in seeking their support, Constantine felt they would be reliable people to have on his side. Aside from the Great Persecution, religion probably played a minor part in the relationship Christians had with the army. For this reason we will now turn our attention to the explanation of the nature of that relationship.

V. Conclusion: Christians and Roman Army Religion

The conflicts which Christians had with the Roman army were religious, not ethical. It is possible to find random comments in the Fathers against killing in combat, but nowhere are such considerations part of a systematic view remotely resembling modern pacifism. Idolatry was the primary concern of the Fathers for those who enlisted in the army, or were about to do so. However, the evidence brought forth in connection with the reign of Constantine showed that even idolatry was not an insurmountable problem when the favor of the emperor toward the church was at stake. But long before the early fourth century, Christians had found the army a tolerable, if not suitable, career, and it would appear that the number of such Christians was larger than previous studies had estimated. So the question naturally follows as to how these Christians could exist in the military, particularly since both Roman and Christian authorities would potentially object. We have seen, however, that many Christians for a long time had been able to find a way to exist inside the army structure without encountering trouble; the majority of Christian military martyrs met their deaths in the Great Persecution, where the pressure did not arise from the army religion at all, but from the imperial sacrifice edict extended to the military as well as to the civilian population. It would seem, therefore, that had not the persecution arisen, these soldiers would have completed their military ca-

reers and retired into oblivion leaving no trace, undoubtedly the case with many Christian soldiers.

To understand better how so many Christian soldiers found the army a way to make a living we intend to explore briefly the Roman army policy and then to examine what had happened to Christianity, from the time of the first century, that would account for Christians joining the army.

Since we have dealt with the religion of the Roman army elsewhere it seems á propos to apply those conclusions to the subject at hand[446]. The army was a religious world in its own right, but one integrated with the state cult of Rome. As the Dura Europos Papyri, the 'Feriale Duranum' in particular, show, the army religion was highly liturgical, and it was prescribed for all army installations of at least cohort strength; certainly every legion observed all the specified rites. Probably the creation of this religious system went all the way back to the religious policies of Augustus who took old military festivals and incorporated them into this new framework. Because the rites are mostly imperial cult observations, modern scholars have described this part of army religion as 'official'. In contrast, the worship of Mithra, Christ, and many various local deities or deities brought with the soldiers from home have been given the name of 'unofficial' army religion. As long as the observance of these religions did not interfere with the discipline of the army (including the official observances), and as long as they were conducted outside the walls of the camp, military authorities paid little attention to them; probably most officers personally were involved in at least one of them[447].

As is well known, the purpose of the imperial cult was to insure the favor of the gods toward the empire. The relationship between the imperial cult and the gods can be described by the words 'pact', 'bargain', or 'deal'; in the Latin tongue the relationship is *do ut des* (I give in order that you might give)[448]. If everyone in the empire was pious in the sense that the rites, which the gods desired, received the regular and proper observances, the empire remained secure. Otherwise, trouble would follow; Tertullian said that if the crops failed or the Tiber overflowed the cry went out, "Christians to the lions". (In fact, some local persecutions in the first two centuries were the result of blaming Christians for not doing their duties to the gods.)

It did not matter whether the person performing the required rites 'believed in' what he was doing or not — the act itself was sufficient to satisfy the gods. Roman public religion was a matter of the hand, not the heart. This style of religious practise can be illustrated by the Military Martyr acts. When Julius the veteran appeared before Maximus the *praeses*, he refused every admonition to burn incense to the gods. Maximus simply could not understand why Julius could not perform this rite and go his way

446 See my article, 'Roman Army Religion' (above, note 21).

447 Allan S. Hoey, Official Policy towards Oriental Cults in the Roman Army, Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, LXX (1939), 456—481.

448 Robert Schilling, The Roman Religion, Historia Religionum: Handbook for the History of Religions, ed. by C. Jouco Bleeker and G. Widengren (Leiden, 1969), vol. I, p. 445

as if nothing had happened. In fact, Maximus suggested that, to save Julius' face, he could make it look as though Julius had sacrificed at the point of a sword[449]. The same understanding of religious practise appears in the argument of the judge before whom Maximilian appeared. He thought that, since the Christians in the emperor's mobile troops seemed to have no conflicts, why should Maximilian refuse to be inducted. Both these accounts portray Roman officials who did not in the least care what the Christian before him may have thought or felt about performing the required religious duties.

In the New Testament one encounters an entirely different view of what religion ought to be. Here, the attitude of the person toward his actions is the most important consideration, not the act itself. So Jesus valued the widow's mite more than all the gold of the rich, and Paul replaced the primacy of deeds with faith.

If we borrow the terminology of A. D. NOCK, the Roman and Christian styles of religious behavior can be described as adherent and convert respectively[450]. The adherent finds himself situated in a national or local cult where the obligation is to be present at the proper time for the observance of the ritual. In this religious style the worshipper does not believe, rather he does; he finds himself part of a religious community which gains the blessing of the gods by means of the performance of the cult. More than likely, the religious community is coterminous with the political boundaries of the city or state which the adherent inhabits. Accordingly, there is no clear distinction drawn between the obligations to the state and those to the cult of the state. On the other hand, the convert has internalized his religion and relates it to one god (or to one principle in the case of philosophers whom NOCK also calls converts); adherents may have several or many gods to receive their devotion. The conversion style of religion demands understanding, theology, and a personal ethical code. In conversion, the believer puts behind him the old life and fixes his attention on one god whose being is the reason for all that exists.

JONATHAN Z. SMITH had pointed out by means of his closely similar categories — native and diaspora types of religion — that mobility is an essential factor in the transition from native to diaspora religions[451]. The increased mobility of foreigners broke down the isolation of the adherent cults and, when individuals left their homeland carrying their religion with them, their religion changed. Whereas their religion was previously concerned with national posperity, in a foreign homeland it shifted to themes such as personal salvation, the theological understanding of the world, and

449 Maybe Maximus knew that some Christians had faked sacrifice to escape punishment. Canon I of the Synod of Ancyra (c. 314—319) had taken up the question of what to do with the Presbyters who had done this; they were not permitted to function as priests or preachers in the Christian community. HEFELE, pp. 301—302.

450 A. D. NOCK, Conversion (London, 1961), p. 8.

451 JONATHAN Z. SMITH, Native Cults in the Hellenistic Period, History of Religions, XI (1971—1972), 236—249.

the necessity to convert others to their transformed religion, leaving behind many of its ritualistic expressions. Denied access to any cult site, Christianity was a diaspora religion for at least the first century of its existence. Paul and others who both traveled and wrote epistles left forever their stamp on Christianity; its highest expression from then on would be that of diaspora or convert.

Monotheism, another characteristic of conversion religion, then became the theological issue which caused the problem for the Christians martyred in the army. It was also the main objection the Church Fathers brought against the thought of Christians enlisting. But what could explain the number of Christians in the army despite the strong theological and moral demands of Christianity as a conversion religion? From the Roman side we have already shown that there was no problem as long as the cult was observed.

There were those Christians who were trapped into deciding for Christianity. Such was the case with Marinus; if the jealous subordinate had not made an issue of the fact that Marinus was a Christian, he would have accepted his promotion to the rank of centurion without any commotion. Only after Marinus met with the bishop did he decide that army religion was idolatrous, and only then did he display the behavior associated with conversion style religion. Probably Marinus' Christianity did not offend his subordinate who took his place in line to advance to centurion; it seems that he merely used the religious issue to remove competition. Presumably, most of the soldiers martyred during the Great Persecution would not have suffered had they lived out their military career a generation earlier, but under Diocletian these men became the object of a far-reaching search. Even Marcellus must have tolerated the service for a long time (he went through all the subordinate ranks to reach that of centurion) before he threw off his insignia. And we have been able to identify at least eight tombstone inscriptions, dated before Constantine, which indicate the pride these men took in their military service. Nor can the fact be forgotten that both Eusebius and Tertullian approved of the Christians in the Thundering Legion. One could multiply evidence to point out the number of Christians in the army who served without religious conflict with their officers; some lasted a long time before they had trouble and some never had any. But on the basis of what the church Fathers said about the dangers of idolatry it is, in many ways, more interesting to see how conflicts did not occur than to discuss those which could be predicted, and it tells us a lot about the varieties of religious practise in the early church.

What most likely had taken place was that, in some way or another, these men had learned an adherent style of religious life into which they had fitted their Christianity. Certainly they met soldiers who worshipped several gods simultaneously, and, following their examples, found it no trouble to give the army gods their due in military matters and to worship Christ in matters of personal salvation. Maybe they even brought that style from home. There is evidence that at least parts of the Christian population had

been making the change from monotheistic, conversion Christianity to adherent ways of being Christian. One can point to Christian tombstones which made reference to the fates[452]. Christians were buried in surroundings with clearly non-Christian motifs in the tombs, for example in the Via Latina Catacomb[453]. Canons two and three of the Council of Elvira in 305 deal with Christians who were Flamens, priests of Rome and Augustus; they were responsible for the sacrifices attending gladiatorial games. Canon forty-nine of Elvira shows that Christians believed in other religious powers than their own in that they were not to allow Jews to bless Christian-owned fields lest Christian blessings become impotent. The martyr cult too is much more characteristic of the Roman use of *numen* than anything that St. Paul would have said; the relics of martyrs had mysterious power to cure illnesses, for example. Constantine himself was much more an adherent than a convert in that he blended the worship of various deities into his own personal and imperial religious practise. The way Christian soldiers seem to have embraced the religious style of the army illustrates the way in which Christianity itself moved from the conversion religion of the first century toward the highly ritualized adherent religious life of the Middle Ages. Accordingly, the story of how Christians accommodated themselves to Roman military life provides us with a more reliable picture of the majority of Christians than can be gathered from the church Fathers alone.

What this story seems to say is that the lay Christian did not differ from his Roman neighbor to the degree many have assumed. Both needed ways of making a living, both were concerned about the security of the empire, and both seem to have practised religious tolerance. The extent to which Christians had integrated themselves into Roman society probably was one of the reasons why the Great Persecution ultimately failed. For it is unlikely that the shrewd Constantine would have ended the persecution and invited the Christians to share with him the task of restoring the empire had he felt the majority of the laymen despised the work of keeping the empire safe from its enemies.

VI. Appendix: The Acts of the Military Martyrs

As the reader will gather from the summaries of the military martyr acts presented below, the authenticity of these accounts is questionable while those included in Chapter III are considered reliable. It is the purpose of this appendix to explain the grounds of the decision of which acts are included in Chapter III and which in the appendix, though no one principle can account for that decision. Moreover, it seemed better to include within

[452] ILCV, 3308 and 3308 A.

[453] J. M. C. Toynbee, Death and Burial in the Roman World (Ithaca, N.Y., 1971), p. 244.

the covers of this study all the martyr acts rather than only those which appeared to be authentic, leaving out acts likely to be fiction or forgery.

MUSURILLO has sketched the history of approaches to martyr literature[454]. He began with LE BLANT, who used the study of Roman legal terminology to divide authentic from unreliable acts; he contended that HARNACK rejected any act which contained any unhistorical or fantastic event; and finally he came to DELEHAYE's development of types of acts based on comparing hundreds of them. From the most to the least reliable, these types are: (1) official court records; (2) narratives based on eye-witness accounts; (3) embellished forms of the two previous types; (4) *passiones* containing an historical kernal; (5) pure fiction; and (6) forgeries. DELEHAYE rejected LE BLANT's application of legal terminology to the martyr literature on the ground that any skillful forger would know courtroom procedure well enough to make his account appear as though it was taken from the hand of the courtroom secretary himself. In turn, MUSURILLO rightly rejected DELEHAYE's classificaton of the acts into these six types since, under close examination, the accounts represent a spectrum of which the types are only an abstraction. For example, none of the so-called court reports represent only what the court reporter would have written; each has an additional Christian element, though such additions frequently appear as epilogues.

The method of treating the martyr literature in this study agrees with MUSURILLO's suggestions that each account be studied independently and be evaluated on the basis of historical data found in each of them. In general, the longer acts have appeared to be less reliable and have fewer identifiable details relating to the military than do the shorter ones. From time to time, however, the longer acts have been built around a short protocol which appears to be authentic, as in the case of Tarachus. Of the acts studied in this appendix, those most likely to be considered reliable are the Acts of Fabius, Luxorius, the Four Crowned Martyrs, and Tarachus. Each of these narratives has been embellished but appears to have been built on an actual martyrdom.

For all the pages of text covered by these acts there is little that a study of these martyrdoms adds to our knowledge of the relationship between Christians and the Roman military. However, it seems probable that, if the accounts of Fabius and Luxorius are correct, these men were the only Christians whom we know in the Roman navy. The conflicts all these martyrs had with the military were religious rather than moral. Whether authentic or not, every martyr refused to capitulate to Roman religious demands. Most of these accounts are attributed to the time during the reign of Diocletian, the Great Persecution in particular. None reflect what might be called a pacifist or moral objection to military service. While these acts do not tell us much that we did not know before, it is clear that nothing found in them disturbs the conclusions reached in Chapter III, above, p. 796f.

454 HERBERT MUSURILLO, The Acts of the Christian Martyrs (Oxford, 1972), pp. i—ivii.

Because it is impossible to assign to some of these martyrdoms precise dates as was possible in Chapter III, they appear in alphabetical order.

1. Andrew the Tribune

Andrew, an experienced and energetic tribune, was in the forces of Antiochus during the Persian invasion[455]. The text tells us that this invasion was at the time of Galerius. Despising to worship the idols of the army, Andrew called upon Christ to help him and his men; with divine aid they won the battle, but were reported to Antiochus as Christians. Let go for the time being, Galerius postponed their punishment in order not to disturb the troops. Eventually Seleucus, the military commander of Cilicia, the *vicarius* of Antiochus, received a letter from him saying that Andrew, formerly a *dux*, had contested the divine edicts and was now in his territory[456]. Eventually Seleucus caught up with Andrew and his group at Tamalme in the Taurus mountains and executed them with swords.

The date of this martyrdom should be placed after the Persian war in 296. JONES thought that Antiochus, although a figure in an embellished account, is the same Antiochus as the *dux* of Augusta Euphratensis of the acts of Serius and Bacchus[457]. As for Seleucus it is not likely that he would be underneath a *dux* and have the title *vicarius*, if the title were used in the technical sense as the ruler of a diocese. (See the account of Marcellus in Chapter III, above, p. 780ff.).

2. Callistratus and His Forty-Nine Companions

The martyrdom of Callistratus is said to have taken place in Rome during the reign of Diocletian[458]. He was a soldier of the Chalendōn cohort, and was Carthaginian by birth[459]. His fellow soldiers one night caught him praying and reported him to the tribune[460]. In his defense Callistratus argued that he had enlisted, always followed orders, and had fought well. The tribune replied that since Callistratus was obedient he ought to be willing to obey an order to sacrifice under pain of death[461]. Refusing, he suffered torments such as being filled with water from a funnel stuck in his mouth and being sealed in a bag and thrown into the sea (rather uncharacteristic military punishments). Fortunately there happened to be friendly

455 Text in: Acta Sanctorum (hereafter cited as ASS), XXXVI (August, III), 720—726.
456 Ibid., 8.
457 JONES, Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, I, 71.
458 Text in: F. C. CONYBEARE, The Apology and Acts of Apollonius and Other Monuments of Early Christianity (New York, 1894), pp. 389—436, and MIGNE, P.G. CXV, 881—900.
459 Ibid., 2.
460 Ibid., 3.
461 Ibid., 4.

dolphins on hand who brought him to shore. At this point Callistratus began to instruct all present concerning the tenets of his faith, a monologue into which, it seems, the author poured most of what he knew about the faith. Callistratus preached this monologue to forty-nine soldiers who were converted when they saw his rescue from the sea[462]. In the end the tribune and a *vir ducenarius* commanded Callistratus and his forty-nine friends to be beheaded in prison[463]. Subsequently, other fellow Christian soldiers took the bodies away and placed them in a location over which a church was later built.

3. Fabius

There are two indications of what the year of the martyrdom of Fabius might have been[464]. The title of the passion stipulates that it was on the 31st of July Diocletian and Maximian were consuls. Later in the text the martyrdom is placed in the time when Diocletian and Maximian were Augusti and Constantine and Galerius were Caesares[465]. If both of these facts are correct, the years in which Fabius could have died are narrowed to 293, 299, 303, and 304. According to the title, the martyrdom occurred in Caesarea, probably in the province of Mauretania.

Fabius was a *vexillifer*, a high non-commissioned officer, whose job it was, like the *signifer*, to carry the *vexillum* and other standards of his cohort[466]. Such a position shows that he was a trusted member of his unit since part of the job of these soldiers was to administer and guard the regimental savings bank. It is highly probable that Fabius was a sailor as well, since the Mauretanian fleet's home port was Caesarea[467]. Although the Roman soldier could be stationed anywhere in the empire in connection with administrative and police duties, the fact that Fabius held a ceremonial post in a port city indicates that he was assigned to a naval detachment.

Fabius refused to carry the *vexillum* in the parade connected with the *ferialia*; he was told to look like he enjoyed carrying it even though he detested it. This he refused as well[468]. As SMEDT contends[469], the writer of the passion wanted to connect the death of Fabius with the edicts of Diocletian during the Great Persecution. In this connection Fabius is forced to perform an incense offering whereas later in the text he is sentenced for failing to perform his duty as a *vexillifer*.

Fabius is taken before the *praeses* who ordered him to rethink his refusal to march in the parade. In light of his persistent disobedience, Fabius suf-

462 Ibid., 8.
463 Ibid., 14.
464 CAROLUS SMEDT, ed., Passio S. Fabii Vexilliferi, AB, IX (1890), 123—124.
465 Ibid.. 2.
466 WATSON, The Roman Soldier, pp. 79, 94.
467 ST. WEINSTOCK, Mauretania, in: RE, XIV, 2 (1930), 2385—2386.
468 Passio S. Fabii Vexilliferi, 3.
469 SMEDT, p. 125, note 4.

fered the uncharacteristic military punishment of dismemberment; his dismembered body was then thrown into the Mediterranean. The remainder of the passion, inspired by Ezekiel 37 : 1—14 (these dry bones will be covered with skin and sinew and will live again), concerns how the body of Fabius got back together again.

4. Longinus the Centurion

Longinus the centurion was stationed at the grave of Jesus where he was converted[470]. Although he was the most impressive soldier in his cohort, he threw off his military belt and left the army. The remainder of the story deals with his escape to Cappadocia, his execution there by henchmen of Pilate, and the miracles which his severed head was able to perform. The legend of this centurion is obviously related to Longinus the soldier.

5. Longinus the Soldier

Longinus was the soldier who pierced the side of Jesus when he hung on the cross; immediately an earthquake and eclipse occurred and he believed, saying, "This truly was the Son of God"[471]. He then withdrew from the army and took instruction in the Christian faith. The remainder of the acts include the trial at which (anachronistically) Longinus said he was a Christian. The *praeses* (another anachronism) had him tortured and finally killed because he would not sacrifice to idols.

6. Luxorius

This soldier read Psalm 85 and was converted to Christianity. Immediately Luxorius took offense at the idols of the Romans and made for himself a cross, thereby coming into conflict with Delphius, the *praeses* of Sardinia[472]. At his trial, Delphius tried to persuade Luxorius to sacrafice to the idols, but he refused, preferring a living God to a wooden one. Then Delphius gave Luxorius an opportunity to change his mind; since he did not, he was beaten, taken to Rome near the Trajan Forum, and finally beheaded.

The acts of Luxorius are probably based on an authentic account, though they seem to have been embellished. Imbedded in the text is a courtroom dialogue between Luxorius and the *praeses*; we know that at some time under Diocletian the administration of the island came under a *praeses*.

[470] ASS, VII (March, II), 380—384. See also R. J. Peebles, The Legend of Longinus in Ecclesiastical Tradition and in English Literature, and its Connection with the Grail (Baltimore, 1911).

[471] ASS, VIII (March, II), 379—380.

[472] ASS, XXXVII (August, IV), 416—417. Delphius the *praeses* is known only from this text. See Jones, Prosopography, p. 247.

Moreover, the town mentioned in the account, *civitas Calaritana*, is of course Carales (the modern Cagliari), the seat of the *praesidium*. Sardinia was placed in the dioecese of Italia, making Rome its administrative capital[473], possibly explaining Luxorius' alleged presence in Rome for his execution. Luxorius was probably stationed there as a sailor in the fleet of Misenum, part of which, we know from inscriptions, was located there. Nothing in this account yields an exact date but it probably was sometime during the Great Persecution.

7. Nereus and Achilleus

The legend of Nereus and Achilleus is a very much later construction, possibly from the fifth or sixth century[474]. Although the acts themselves do not mention their military careers, DE ROSSI found an inscription dedicated to them in the excavation of a church built in 390—the only evidence for their association with the army:

> "The martyrs Nereus and Achilleus had enrolled themselves in the army and exercised the cruel office of carrying out the orders of the tyrant, being ever ready through the constraint of fear to obey his will. O miracle of faith! Suddenly they cease from their fury, they become converted, they fly from the camp of their wicked leader; they throw away their shields, their armor and their blood-stained javelins. Confessing the faith of Christ they rejoice to bear testimony to its triumph. Learn now from the words of Damasus what great things the glory of Christ can accomplish"[475].

Nowhere do the acts reflect the story recorded on the inscription. The legend pictures these martyrs as eunuchs in the boudoir of Flavia Domitilla, perhaps related to the emperor Domitian (80—96) who may be the tyrant mentioned in the inscription. Beyond this information, no date, place, or reason for their deaths is certain.

8. Polyeuctes

The martyrdom of Polyeuctes, put to death under Decius and Valerian (sic), was written down by Nearchus, a fellow soldier[476]. Nearchus always had

[473] Notitia Dignitatum, Occident I, 96.

[474] Latin text: ASS, XVI (May, III), 4—13. Greek text: HANS ACHELIS, Acts SS. Nerei et Achillei, Texte and Untersuchungen, XI (Berlin, 1893), 1—23. Achelis placed the date in the fifth or sixth century, p. 66.

[475] Translation of the inscription from DONALD ATTWATER, Butler's Lives of the Saints, 4 vols. (New York, 1956), II, 284—285. The inscription itself is reproduced in ACHELIS, p. 44.

[476] Text translated from the Armenian version: F. C. CONYBEARE, pp. 123—146. The Greek text (B. AUBÉ, Polyeucte dans l'histoire. Etude sur le martyre de Polyeucte d'après des documents inédits [Paris, 1882]) was not available.

been a Christian, but Polyeuctes was converted as a result of the edict of persecution of 'the Emperor'. The martyrdom took place in Melitene. Much of the content of this prolix legend revolves around casting off the military cloak and cutting family ties to become a martyr. Unfortunately the account is vague concerning the reason for martyrdom and concerning Polyeuctes' connection with the army. Since a period of two years separated the reigns of Decius and Valerian, and they were never consuls jointly[477], the author must have written the account much later,

9. Procopius

DELEHAYE has shown that Procopius, included in Eusebius' 'Martyrs of Palestine', was gradually transformed into a military saint[478]. The earliest account of his suffering, found in Eusebius, mentions nothing about him being a military man.

10. Proculus the Soldier

Not even a text remains to narrate the sufferings of Procolus. Fragments of traditions place his death under Maximian in Bologna and state that he was a soldier. Even if this much is authentic, it is not possible to go beyond it[479].

11. The *quattuor coronati*

The story of the four crowned martyrs is built from several sources, of which the most prominent is the legend of the four sculptors, Claudius, Nicostratus, Simpronian, and Castorius, in Pannonia[480]. A fifth sculptor joined this group because their Christianity, he felt, influenced them to do such good work. Set to work by the emperor Diocletian, they did everything he wanted them to do but refused to carve a statue of Aesculapius. For this they eventually were killed. Ten months later, Diocletian required troops to sacrifice at the new temple of Aesculapius at Rome; all performed the sacrifice except four unnamed Christian *cornicularii*, or military secretaries. Their bodies were thrown into the streets for the dogs, from which place they were taken and buried outside the city[481].

[477] Texts in: H. DELEHAYE, Les légendes grecques des saints militaires (Paris, 1909), pp. 214—233.

[478] H. DELEHAYE, The Legends of the Saints, tr. by DONALD ATTWATER (New York, 1962), pp. 101—118.

[479] GODEFRIDUS HENSCHENIUS collected what was later said about Proculus in: ASS, XXI (June, I), 48—50.

[480] ASS, LXVIII (November, III), 748—784.

[481] Ibid., pp. 778—779.

If this narrative derives from an authentic source, these men suffered under Diocletian, probably during the Great Persecution. There is more reason to place their deaths in Pannonia than in Rome. However, the discovery of four soldier martyrs' tombstones near Split, Diocletian's palace, is the most tangible evidence relating to the legend[482].

12. Sebastian

In the text, assigned to St. Ambrose, there are no reliable indications of what the exact date of the martyrdom might have been. However, it is quite clear that Rome is its location[483]. Names which occur in the *acta* are no help in assigning an exact date to the martyrdom but they do indicate the span of time bounded by the papacy of Caius[484] and the reigns of Diocletian and Maximian, pointing to the years 284—296. That the text was written much later than the martyrdom is indicated by the author's problem in getting straight the consuls under which the event took place. The author said that Sebastian died the year Magnuntiacus Maximianus and Aquilinus were consuls, but unfortunately no such year occurred. Aquilinus was consul in 286, Maximianus in 287 but he never used the praenomen Magnuntiacus[485]. Ambrose gave another date, the Great Persecution, to the affair but agrees that Rome was its location[486]. We have two choices for the date since we cannot determine whether the author who attributed the *acta* to Ambrose, or Ambrose himself, had the more reliable information. These choices are 286 or 287 and after February 23, 303. In addition, it is not likely that Ambrose would hold to two dates if he were the author of the *acta* as they themselves state.

Sebastian entered the army under Carinus in 283 to encourage martyrs and confessors. While he was in the army at Rome, he cured Chromatius, *praefectus urbi*[487], who was then baptized. Diocletian raised Sebastian to a position of command in the praetorian guards (*inter primos palatii*)[488] but when Sebastian refused to swear by the safety of the emperor, Diocletian sentenced him to death on the archery field. His body was thrown into the sewer which drained the water from the Forum into the Tiber, but Christians retrieved it[489].

Much of the account is concerned with the religious conflict between Christians and Romans. Many of Sebastian's fellow soldiers would not con-

482 DYGGVE, History of Salonetan Christianity (above, note 264), p. 74. In this case the names of the soldiers were Antiochianus, Gaianus, Tellius, and Paulinianus.
483 ASS, II (January, II), 629—642.
484 Ibid., p. 639.
485 JONES, Prosopography, p. 1042.
486 Exposition of Psalm CXVIII 20, 44.
487 We have no record of any such person outside these acts.
488 The Acts of Sebastian, p. 642.
489 This was the *cloaca maxima*, ibid.

sent to sacrificing to idols and there follows an extended discussion about the idolatry involved in astrology[490]. Accordingly, this reference bears the stamp of the struggle between Christianity and Roman religion during the fourth century.

13. Sergius and Bacchus

These two officers were in charge of the *scholē gentilíōn* in the army of Galerius on the Syrian border[491]. Although they apparently were close to the emperor, they lost his favor when they refused to sacrifice in the temple of Jupiter. They suffered degradation and were sent to the *dux*, Antiochus, for torture and trial; mentioned as the place of torture is the Tetrapyrgion, nine miles from Rosafa, exactly as the account specifies[492]. Aerial archaeology has discovered the Tetrapyrgium, a walled camp thirty-seven by thirty-six meters with a tower in each corner, as the name implies[493]. The geographical accuracy of the account encourages us to trust the accuracy of the remainder of it, but unfortunately the story could have been fabricated using the Tetrapyrgium, obviously standing decades or generations later, as a device to elicit belief in the entire account. Antiochus, as we have seen, is also a character in the story of Andrew the Tribune[494]. Comparing these two martyrdoms we notice an inconsistency. In the case of Andrew, Antiochus referred the matter to Galerius, but in that of Sergius and Bacchus the case is sent down the chain of command to Antiochus. The latter instance is hard to imagine, for it is unlikely that Galerius would have even taken the time to deal with these men personally. Nor is it likely that Galerius would have sent them down to a lower officer had they appeared before him. Rather it would seem that the references to Galerius serve to connect the martyrdoms to him as one of the most relentless persecutors.

Other than the reference to Galerius, there is no evidence to give this martyrdom a precise date.

14. Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus

The narrative tells of the arrest and appearance before Fl. Gaius Numerianus Maximus, *praeses* of the province of Tarsus[495]. The narrative then

[490] Ibid., p. 639.

[491] Text in AB, XIV (1895), 375—395. The *scholē gentilíōn* was a recruits school, primarily for barbarians entering the army. See R. I. Frank, Scholae Palatinae, The Palace Guards of the Later Roman Empire (Rome, 1969), pp. 54—55.

[492] The Acts of Sergius and Bacchus, 25.

[493] Antoine Poidebard and René Mouterde, A propos de Saint Serge: aviation et épigraphie, AB, LXVII (1949), 109—116.

[494] Jones, Prosopography, p. 71.

[495] ASS, LIII (October, V), 566—584. Jones, Prosopography, p. 588. This text is our only acquaintance with Maximus.

takes the form of a courtroom report. Maximus asked Tarachus what his name was and he replied that when he bore arms he was called Victor but his parents had named him Tarachus. Because of his religion, he left the army, having been granted a discharge by his captain[496]. Tarachus continued his refusal to sacrifice and eventually suffered the torments of martyrdom as did Probus and Andronicus. HARNACK is probably right that the trial scene is authentic but the elaborate torments which these martyrs undergo are fiction[497]. Only Tarachus was a soldier; although the account does not tell us, he may have been dismissed from the service in accordance with Diocletian's command that Christian soldiers be put out of the service and that Christian officers should suffer loss of rank.

15. Theodore the Recruit

The legend of Theodore the recruit has divided into so many versions that Theodore the Commander came into being in order to distribute the excess hagiographical baggage[498]. Theodore was with a number of recruits when he refused to sacrifice in accordance with the command of Galerius and Maximin. When this order came he was said to be serving in the *legio Marmaritanorum* at Amasia on the Hellespont. Arrested, Theodore appeared before Publius the *praeses* whom we know only through this text. Nor do we know Brinca the *praepositus* of that legion, itself unknown.

16. Theodore the Commander

When Licinius began the persecution of Christians in his part of the empire, Theodorus was a soldier in his army[499]. Theodorus grew up in Euchaita, Cappadocia, the modern Tchorum, in a Christian home. He enlisted and distinguished himself in his military career, resulting in promotions to 'a high rank', in fact, to commander, fighting bravely in the wars against the barbarians[500]. The cause of his martyrdom was that people (it does not say whether they were soldiers) reported to Licinius that he was a Christian. As such he rejected the religion of the army under Licinius and declined to worship their 'idols'. Licinius did not want immediately to accuse Theodore because he was such a well-known and accomplished soldier, nor did he want to let the presumption go unpunished. His plan was to appear

496 Ibid., p. 567.

497 A. HARNACK, Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur, II, 479—480. Admitting that the date was "a priori", HARNACK assigned it to the year 304.

498 DELEHAYE included all the textual versions in 'Les légendes grecques des saints militaires', pp. 127—150. Gregory of Nyssa wrote a panegyric on Theodore, MIGNE, Patrologia Graeca, XLVI, 736—748.

499 Texts in DELEHAYE, pp. 151—201.

500 Ibid., p. 152.

to take personal command of the army, thereby having a better opportunity to confront him. Attempts to kill Theodore had failed, he was guarded by many whom he converted. But in the end the rage of Licinius had its way and Theodore was beheaded in secret.

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