

# **Chapter 3:**

## **The Lexicon of Abuse:**

### **Drunkenness and political illegitimacy in the late Roman world**

*By Mark Humphries*

#### **Introduction**

In the anonymous, mid-fourth century narrative known as the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* (*The Origin of the Emperor Constantine*), several apparently remarkable statements are made about the moral fibre — or more precisely the lack of it — of the enemies of the emperor Constantine.<sup>1</sup> Prominent among these villains are Galerius, Augustus of the eastern empire (305-311), and his short-lived associate as western emperor, Severus (Caesar 305-6; Augustus, 306-7). The relationship between the two men, so our anonymous author has it, was based on their shared propensity to heavy drinking: ‘Severus Caesar was ignoble both by character and by birth; he was a heavy drinker (*ebriosus*) and for this reason he was a friend of Galerius.’<sup>2</sup> Galerius’ own fondness for drink and its deleterious effects are soon described: ‘Galerius was such a heavy drinker (*ebriosus*) that, when he was intoxicated, he gave orders such as should not be implemented.’<sup>3</sup>

This paper will explain why it is significant that an emperor should be characterized as an *ebriosus*.<sup>4</sup> It will show that emperors described in this fashion were not ‘mere’ heavy drinkers, but that allegations of drunkenness were employed to

## Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

undermine the very legitimacy of their rule. My discussion here will focus primarily on texts dealing with emperors of the tetrarchy established by Diocletian and the succeeding Constantinian dynasty, so that the material will cover both the political and religious rivalries of the late third and early fourth centuries AD. It will emerge that no single religious group monopolized this particular vituperative technique, and that the connection between drunkenness and illegitimacy was drawn equally by pagans and Christians.

### **Drunkenness And The Construction Of Illegitimacy**

First, why should drunkenness be considered a defect in an emperor? The reason is to be sought in the place drunkenness occupied in Roman moral topography, particularly its opposition to the valued quality of *decorum*, which meant proper and dignified behaviour that kept inherent vices in check.<sup>5</sup> In Cicero's *De Officiis* — our best guide to Roman political morality — the conduct of a good servant of the state was marked by the display of *decorum* both in private and in public.<sup>6</sup> For Cicero, *decorum* was essential to the proper exercise of *honestas* (honourableness), and thus it was one of the foremost qualities that served to distinguish mankind from all other animals.<sup>7</sup> This distinction between men and beasts was epitomized by their diverging attitudes towards and reactions to lusts and pleasures. Animals, being governed by the appetites of their bodies, easily succumbed to sensual temptations; but men, who were characterized by reason, ought to be able to shun them.<sup>8</sup> Such attitudes to lusts and pleasures had profound implications for the conduct of politicians. Because of the heavy responsibilities of government, the behaviour of men holding political office should be characterized by the

### Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

same qualities as might be found in a state's laws.<sup>9</sup> In other words, statesmen took on the characteristics of the state, and as such they ought to embody its virtues.<sup>10</sup> It was precisely their possession of these virtues that legitimated their hold on power; consequently, to compromise these values by succumbing to base passions would have had the effect of undermining a statesman's authority.<sup>11</sup>

The idea that a statesman should embody the virtues of the state was given a new focus with the advent of the Augustan principate: now it was the emperor above all others who should personify political *decorum*.<sup>12</sup> Inscriptions and coin legends disseminated this message of imperial virtue throughout Italy and the provinces, advertising the emperor as the upholder of personal and political rectitude.<sup>13</sup> The force of this association was apparent from the outset in the character of Augustus' moral reforms which explicitly sought to undo the excesses of the late Republic.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the identification of emperors from Augustus onwards with qualities such as *clementia*, *libertas*, and *moderatio* advertised not only the their adherence to ancestral values, but also their devotion to good government in keeping with the rules of *decorum*, as well as with the expectations of their subjects.<sup>15</sup> In this system, any emperor who did not show self-control was considered to be deficient in imperial virtues. This was precisely the point of the damning portrait of the emperor Claudius painted in Seneca's satire the *Apocolocyntosis*: not only does the Claudius presented there explicitly lack certain virtues, he also possesses an abundance of manifest vices.<sup>16</sup>

## Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

These ideas continued to prevail in the late empire. For example, incidents of extreme rage — such as Theodosius I’s massacre of civilians at Thessalonica in 390 — still required ostentatious displays of *clementia* and *moderatio* to calm the uneasiness of the emperor’s subjects.<sup>17</sup> Lapses into anger, after all, suggested a bestial nature quite unbecoming in a civilized man, hinting that he was descending to the level of a barbarian.<sup>18</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, writing at the end of the fourth century, was critical of the excessive and unpredictable behaviour of Valentinian I (western Augustus, 364-75).<sup>19</sup> The emperor’s short temper showed, so Ammianus complained, that ‘he had surely forgotten that rulers ought to avoid all excesses (*omnia nimia*), just as if they were precipitous cliffs.’<sup>20</sup> Now Valentinian was no heavy drinker (as indeed Ammianus points out),<sup>21</sup> but a propensity to drunkenness would have made such losses of self-control altogether more likely. Elsewhere in his history, Ammianus described the bibulousness of the Gauls in precisely these terms: among this race, he remarks, ‘the senses are weakened by continual intoxication, which in Cato’s view is a voluntary kind of madness (*furoris uoluntarium speciem*).’<sup>22</sup> Here Ammianus is picking up on the common assertion that drunkenness loosened all those restraints by which vices might be held in check.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the dangers posed by drunkenness were precisely those posed by a lack of *decorum*. Any emperor who, like Galerius or Severus, was an *ebriosus* did not — indeed could not — embody these virtues as he should. Rather, a drunken emperor was one whose vices lacked restraint, and who was susceptible, therefore, to extreme acts of bestial and barbaric wickedness.

## Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

The Roman polemical tradition had long drawn a connection between private immorality and public disgrace. Just as virtues could provide material for praise, so vice could be seized upon for the purposes of invective.<sup>24</sup> In terms of drunkenness, Cicero himself exploited the opportunities quite mercilessly in his invectives against Mark Antony. In his second *Philippic*, for example, Cicero remarks that Antony's excessive drinking at a friend's wedding party would have been bad enough as a private vice; what made it worse, however was that the morning after, when he was addressing the Roman assembly, he vomited all over himself and the platform from which he was speaking.<sup>25</sup> For vituperative purposes, then, it was easy to draw a connection between private drinking and allegations of public incapacity, and when applied to a character like Antony, it impugned the validity of his political authority. This was a moral paradigm destined to have a long history: at the very end of antiquity, a collection of moral *exempla* from Gaul includes the reproof from a father to his drunken son that 'a man who advises others ought to be able to control himself.'<sup>26</sup> As for emperors, Ammianus had noted that Valentinian I's short-lived predecessor Jovian (Augustus 363-4) had been a glutton, too fond of wine and sex — but the historian hoped that Jovian, in recognition of his imperial status, would have abandoned such vices had he ruled for longer.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, such condemnations could provide opportunities for scathing humour. Cicero's account of Antony's vices, including his heavy drinking, seems to have been constructed quite deliberately to provoke laughter by appealing to certain comic archetypes.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, in his treatise on oratorical technique, Cicero recommended the polemical use of humour to diminish an opponent in the eyes of the audience.<sup>29</sup> In particular, he designated whatever was morally reprehensible (*turpitudo*) as a target for humorous invective.<sup>30</sup> By directing

### Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

attacks on such instances of deviant behaviour, humour could be used to reinforce a polemicist's ideal of the social order.<sup>31</sup> Accusations of drunkenness, then, had the effect of making their targets appear at once ridiculous and loathsome.

This was precisely the strategy employed by the anonymous author of the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* when he asserted that Galerius and Severus were heavy drinkers. By ridiculing them as repositories of vice when, as emperors, they ought to have been paragons of virtue, he sought to impugn the very legitimacy of their tenure of the throne. We can begin now to appreciate why our author should have claimed that Severus was a friend of Galerius because he was an *ebriosus*. This was a judgement on the moral character of the two emperors and, by extension, of their regimes. In similar fashion, the Christian rhetor Lactantius, author of the vitriolic pamphlet *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* (*De Mortibus Persecutorum*), explains how Diocletian (Galerius' predecessor) and his co-emperor Maximian were drawn together:

Maximian was not unlike Diocletian; for they could not have joined in such faithful friendship had not the one mind, the same way of thinking, as well as equal resolve and identical opinion been found in them both.<sup>32</sup>

Yet this was a meeting of minds of the worst possible kind, since Lactantius portrays both Diocletian and Maximian as men guilty of the most atrocious breaches of *decorum*. Diocletian was a man of 'insatiable greed', while Maximian's extraordinary appetites extended to sexual excesses with men and women alike.<sup>33</sup> This is precisely how the author of the *Origo* made the association between Galerius and Severus hinge upon their

### Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

fondness for drink: like Diocletian and Maximian, they were men drawn together by a shared taste for debauchery.<sup>34</sup>

The effect of such imagery is driven home by the stark contrast that Lactantius draws between the persecutors and their Christian adversaries. A glimmer of the *Origo*'s drunken Galerius can be seen in Lactantius' characterization of that emperor's mother. She is portrayed as a semi-barbarian pied piper, leading her neighbours down the road of debauchery and excess. Lactantius remarks how she was 'an extremely superstitious woman who worshipped the gods of the mountains (*deorum montium cultrix*)', in whose honour 'she held sacrificial feasts almost daily, and gave banquets for her neighbours.'<sup>35</sup> How different were the local Christians who refused to succumb to such temptations, and who, while these pagan festivities were in full swing, would devote themselves to fasting and prayer.<sup>36</sup> But Lactantius' most successful deployment of such rhetoric is used to extol Constantine's virtues. When the time comes, at the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian, to choose new Caesars to join the tetrarchy, Constantine would seem to embody all those qualities most need in an emperor. He was:

a young man of the greatest integrity, and the most deserving of imperial rank, whose remarkable physical presence, together with his upright habits (*decorum habitu*), military industry, moral probity (*probris moribus*), and incomparable affability, meant that he was loved by all the troops, as well as being favoured by the citizens.<sup>37</sup>

In appalling counterpoint to this paragon of excellence stands the character of Severus, the man chosen as Caesar in Constantine's stead. Like the author of the *Origo*, Lactantius presents him as an *ebriosus*, who drinks so heavily that for him 'night is as day and day is

as night.<sup>38</sup>

### Constructed Drinking

So far we have seen the enemies of Constantine presented as men given over to excess, and that this is frequently symbolized by their propensity to drunkenness. We ought to be suspicious that this is a partisan perspective reflecting the prejudices of pro-Constantinian sources, especially when Constantine himself emerges, as he does in Lactantius, as a model of *decorum*. Our suspicions ought to be aroused further by reflecting on the significance attached to drinking in the Roman literature of praise and invective. Furthermore, in late antiquity, as in earlier periods of Roman history, the rituals of drinking assumed enormous social importance, particularly in the lives of the élite. ‘Drinking’, as Mary Douglas has noted, ‘is essentially a social act, performed in a recognized social context’, and that in most societies there are ‘rules about where, when, and what to drink, and in whose company.’<sup>39</sup> Recent work on drinking in antiquity has stressed similar patterns.<sup>40</sup> When Cicero portrayed Antony spewing all over himself and the speaker’s platform, he did so to an audience who accepted that drinking belonged to the elaborate social rituals of aristocratic society, whether at banquets (*conuiuia, epulae*) or at religious celebrations (such as Saturnalia). Yet the same audience accepted that, for the purposes of political ridicule, heavy drinkers like Antony could be portrayed as having breached the rules that circumscribed social drinking.<sup>41</sup> So too the accusations of drunkenness levelled against Constantine’s enemies were made against a background where social drinking remained a norm for the social élite. Sumptuously appointed dining

### Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

rooms (*triclinia*) in villas and townhouses throughout the empire show in spectacular fashion how such structured drinking rituals persisted into late antiquity.<sup>42</sup>

Drunkenness, like any value-laden concept, was elastic, and could be manipulated to suit particular polemical contexts. The portrayal of Constantine's enemies as illegitimate debauchees was a finely modelled one, exploiting the worst possible interpretations of specific characteristics. For example, both Lactantius and the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius of Caesarea describe Galerius' immense physique as a grotesque manifestation of his moral depravity. Lactantius is particularly eloquent on this score, describing how the emperor's 'body imitated his morals (*corpus moribus congruens*)', with his 'vast fleshy expanses extended and bloated to horrendous immensity'.<sup>43</sup> Lactantius prefaces this description of Galerius' obesity with a sketch of the fundamental flaws in the emperor's character: he was a man of bestial and barbaric nature, possessed of a savageness alien to Roman ways.<sup>44</sup> Hence Galerius' horrifying girth symbolized not only his personal depravity; it was above all an outward sign of his unsuitability to the position of emperor.

Yet this was not the only possible interpretation of Galerius' physique, in that corpulence could be considered as a sign of good qualities in an emperor. Certain portraits identified as Constantine's erstwhile ally, the eastern Augustus Licinius (308-24), show him as fat-faced and heavy jowled, with a jaunty smile playing across his lips. This image may have been designed to emphasize Licinius' energy, strength, and power, as well as his jovial amenability.<sup>45</sup> So the corpulence that Lactantius and Eusebius

### Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

interpreted as an outward sign of Galerius' inner depravity was used by Licinius to assert his imperial virtues. On the face of it, this seems a startling contradiction, but it accords well with ancient physiognomical practice. It was not corpulence itself that was bad so much as the quality of the expansive flesh: if it was solid, thick and dry, it could represent power and strength; but if it was soft, flabby, and moist, then it reflected inner depravity.<sup>46</sup>

In time, however, Licinius too was excoriated as a villain, and in typical fashion, the traits that he had once stressed as signs of his virtue were now twisted to become symbols of his wickedness. While Eusebius would condemn him in rather stock fashion for his depraved lust,<sup>47</sup> the *History of Constantine* by the Athenian author Praxagoras — now lost, and known only through a Byzantine summary — hit rather closer to the heart of Licinius' own image, making an issue of how he had ‘masked his cruelty beneath a kindly appearance (œkrupte ... t<sup>3</sup>/4n ḷm᷑t̄ta filanqrwp...aj prosc›mati).’<sup>48</sup> So much for the jaunty smile shown in Licinius' portraits: if for Licinius it was representative of his benevolence, in Praxagoras’ hands it became an emblem of a tyrant’s cruel dissimulation.<sup>49</sup> As we will see now, this malleability of imperial public images in the hands of polemicists was a fate which was to befall even Constantine himself, as disgruntled pagan authors after the mid-fourth century began to look to him as the source of the empire’s ills. Once again, images of drunkenness were evoked, this time to ridicule the emperor whom Lactantius had upheld as the embodiment of imperial *decorum*.

### The Excesses Of Constantine

The most complete pagan narrative of Constantine's reign is contained in the late fifth century *New History* by Zosimus. In this account, Constantine is described as a bastard son of a harlot; a man whose moral laxity led him to weaken the empire's defences; and a coward whose only reason for converting to Christianity was to gain absolution for his murder of his son Crispus and the empress Fausta.<sup>50</sup> According to the ninth century Byzantine patriarch and bibliophile Photius, Zosimus' narrative was essentially plagiarized from the earlier (and now fragmentary) *History after Dexippus* written by the militant pagan Eunapius of Sardis in the early fifth century.<sup>51</sup> Eunapius' *History*, however, has not survived the censorship of Byzantine editors who were shocked by its hostile assessments of Christian emperors, especially Constantine.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, even within his own lifetime, Eunapius had been forced to revise the work, and excise from it many of his most pungent anti-Christian jibes.<sup>53</sup>

Very little about Constantine may be found in the scraps of Eunapius' *History* that have come down to us, but a glimpse of what it might have said can be gleaned from his extant work on the *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists (Vitae Sophistarum)*. In the *Lives*, Constantine is portrayed as a venal and inept emperor who, among many other crimes, allows himself to be seduced by his wicked praetorian prefect Ablabius into condemning to death the pagan sage Sopater.<sup>54</sup> Sopater himself is likened by Eunapius to the classical philosopher Socrates, whom the Athenians considered the 'walking image of wisdom', and whom they should not have condemned to death had they not been corrupted by drunkenness, madness, and licence at the festival of Dionysus, the god of

### Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

wine.<sup>55</sup> So too Sopater's condemnation was the product of a regime blighted by drunkenness. First, Eunapius describes in bleak terms how the new capital of the empire, Constantinople, was filled with:

the intoxicated multitude (*tῶν μεγάλοντα ... δάμον*) that Constantine had transported to Byzantium by emptying other cities ... because he loved to be applauded in the theatres by men overwhelmed by debauchery (*parabluζόντων κραιπέλησ οὐνερέψων*).<sup>56</sup>

Later on, when a shortage of grain supplies threatened famine on the city, Constantine was faced by an abrupt cessation of this drunken approval (*σφενήι ἀντοῖ μεγάλον τοῦ παρανού*). The emperor panicked, and Ablabius seized this opportunity to persuade Constantine that Sopater had induced the crisis. The sage had cast a magic spell, so Ablabius claimed, which had obstructed the winds that brought the grain ships to Constantinople. It was enough to gain Sopater's condemnation.<sup>57</sup> Eunapius uses the drunken crowds of Constantinople as a device to undermine the legitimacy of Constantine's rule. The emperor's deplorable susceptibility to drunken adulation robbed him of the one man who by reasoned argument could have checked his intemperate policies. In the end, however, Constantine was left at the mercy of the dissipated Ablabius who, far from influencing the emperor with reason, controlled him just as a demagogue might an unruly mob.<sup>58</sup> The implication is clear. Just as the drunkenness of the Athenians had prompted them to murder Socrates and so hasten the decline of their city and of Hellas as a whole,<sup>59</sup> so Constantine's pathetic vulnerability to the whims of his drunken subjects led him to condemn Sopater, and so undermine the security of the Roman empire.

While Eunapius was particularly outspoken in his insinuations against Constantine's probity, he was not the first to deploy images of debauchery to deride the Christian emperor's reputation. That distinction went to the man who, because of his energetic efforts to restore paganism, seems to have been the hero of Eunapius' *History*: the emperor Julian (361-3). Among his surviving works is that commonly known as the *Caesares* (but actually entitled the *Symposion or Kronia*), a satire composed at Antioch in 362, which describes a banquet of the gods at which various Roman emperors — together with Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great — are called upon to compete against each other in virtue.<sup>60</sup> Because the gods also want to be amused by this contest, Zeus summons one further emperor to act as a comic stooge during the debates. The man chosen for this role is Constantine, and his efforts to defend his reputation are ridiculed at every turn.<sup>61</sup> That Constantine is Zeus' choice for this ludicrous spectacle has less to do with his cowardly qualities — although he is said to prefer bribing barbarians to fighting them — than with his devotion to a life of pleasure and enjoyment.<sup>62</sup> At the end, when the gods award the prize for virtue to Marcus Aurelius (no surprise there!<sup>63</sup>), they command the defeated contestants to chose particular gods as guardians and guides.<sup>64</sup> This provides an opportunity to poke fun not just at Constantine, but at Christianity too.<sup>65</sup> When the pathetic figure of Constantine cannot find any god whose morals match his own, he ends up running after Tryphē, the personification of decadence.<sup>66</sup> She takes pity on him, and leads him off to her friend Asōtia, the personification of dissoluteness. Constantine discovers that Asōtia is already embracing a partner of her own, none other than Jesus Christ, who invites all manner of reprobates to come to him and be washed with water —

### Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

an obvious parody of baptism. At once, Constantine realizes that this is the place for him.<sup>67</sup>

The function of this scathing satire is not difficult to divine. Although he was himself a scion of the Constantinian house, he had little affection for Constantine himself. After all, Constantine had shown by his conversion to Christianity that he was an enemy of the pagan gods whose worship Julian now sought to restore. By ridiculing Constantine and his religion, Julian plainly impugned his legitimacy as emperor. But equally, by doing so, Julian risked undermining his own position as a descendant of Constantine, so he needed to find some way of rehabilitating the family's reputation. This he managed to achieve by emphasizing the virtues of Claudius II (268-70), the emperor claimed to have been the progenitor of the house of Constantine, and of Constantius I (305-6), Constantine's father.<sup>68</sup> In the context of the satire, the ruse works, and it is only out of regard for such distinguished ancestors that the family is not utterly damned.<sup>69</sup> Of course, Julian stops short of making any explicit accusation of drunkenness against Constantine, but his emphasis on the first Christian emperor's addiction to pleasure and debauchery leave us in no doubt as to Julian's belief in Constantine's moral degeneracy.<sup>70</sup> From here it was a comparatively small step for Eunapius to take when he embellished his account of Constantine's reign with images of drunkenness.

### Conclusion

The image of Constantine as a slave to pleasure and debauchery is a disconcerting one to those versed in a Christian tradition that has tended to emphasize his virtues. It is a

### Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

reminder, however, that the image of the emperor which has been handed on to posterity was produced in a polemical context, where the fine detail of what Constantine's achievements often counted for less than his reputation as religious innovator.<sup>71</sup> Lactantius, a Christian, had extolled Constantine as the embodiment of imperial *decorum*; the author of the *Origo* had implied it; both had buttressed the image by lampooning Constantine's enemies as debauchees, especially in terms of their immoderate drinking. These were caricatures of course, but their deployment sought to make their authors' arguments more persuasive. In so doing, Lactantius and the anonymous author of the *Origo* appealed to archetypes of imperial behaviour which taught that bad emperors were characterized by a propensity to drink heavily, an indulgence that made it difficult, indeed impossible, to control base passions as a good emperor should. It is hardly surprising, then, that those who wrote to defend Constantine and his religious beliefs should have chosen to portray his enemies as villainous reprobates with a fondness for booze. The picture could so easily have been different, and in the works of Julian, Eunapius, and Zosimus we catch a glimpse of an opposing perspective. When mounting Christian intolerance undermined the social and cosmic order that had been upheld by devotion to Rome's ancestral gods, defensive pagans were forced to reassess the role in this process played by Constantine. In their turn, pagan zealots appealed to the same archetypes of drunkenness and illegitimacy as the pro-Constantinian sources had done previously. The images of emperors as good or bad men were largely contingent upon the aims of a particular polemicist. When emperors were labelled as heavy drinkers, of their reigns were stigmatized as being pervaded by a drunken atmosphere, these should not be mistaken for accounts of actual bibulousness. Rather, they served to locate those

### Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

emperors and their regimes in the darkest and most foetid corners of late antiquity's moral landscape.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Text in I. König, *Origo Constantini: Anonymus Valesianus*. 1 *Text und Kommentar*, Trierer Historische Forschungen 11(Trier, 1987). For a recent discussion: *From Constantine to Julian: Pagan and Byzantine Views* ed. S.N.C. Lieu and D. Montserrat (London, 1996), pp.39-42.

<sup>2</sup> *Origo* 4. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Origo* 4.11.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout I will either translate *ebriosus* as 'heavy drinker' or leave it untranslated. It is inappropriate to translate it as 'alcoholic' (so, e.g., J. Stevenson in her translation of *Origo* 4. 9 and 11, in *From Constantine to Julian*, ed. Lieu and Montserrat, p.44), since modern views of alcoholism characterize it as a disease: P. Antze, 'Symbolic action in Alcoholics Anonymous', in *Constructive Drinking: Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology* ed. M. Douglas (Cambridge, 1987), esp. pp.154-8. In antiquity, by contrast, heavy drinking was seen primarily as a moral failing: J.H. D'Arms, 'Heavy drinking and drunkenness in the Roman world: four questions for historians', in *In Vino Veritas*, ed. O. Murray and M. Tecusan (London 1995), pp.315-17.

<sup>5</sup> For what follows: D'Arms, 'Heavy drinking and drunkenness', pp.306-8; also E. Gowers, *The Loaded Table. Representations of Food in Roman Literature* (Oxford, 1993), pp.19-21.

<sup>6</sup> Text in *M. Tullii Ciceronis De Officiis ad Marcum filium libri tres*, ed. O. Heine (Berlin, 1885). A helpful study of the *De Officiis* may be found in *Cicero: On Duties* ed. M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins (Cambridge, 1991), esp. pp.xxi-xxviii.

<sup>7</sup> Cic., *Off.* 1.11 and 96 (differences between men and beasts); and 1.93-5 (relationship of *decorum* to *honestas*).

<sup>8</sup> Cic., *Off.* 1.11; cf. Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 19.2. **A. Gellii Noctes Atticae, ed. P. K. Marshall, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1968).**

<sup>9</sup> Thus the implications of Cic., *Off* 1.92. discussing the acquisition and disposal of wealth.

<sup>10</sup> Explicitly at Cic., *Off.* 1.124: *est igitur proprium munus magistratus intellegere se gerere personam ciuitatis debereque eius dignitatem et decus sustinere.*

<sup>11</sup> Cf. C. Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, 1993), pp.196-7; esp. p.197: ‘Self-control legitimated the power of the elite in a way that wealth alone could never do.’

<sup>12</sup> A. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘*Civilis Princeps*: Between Citizen and King’, *Journal of Roman Studies* 72 (1982), pp.32-48; cf. id., *Suetonius: The Scholar and his Caesars* (London, 1983), pp.142-74.

<sup>13</sup> The exhaustive treatment of this ideological interrelationship is J.R. Fears, ‘The Cult of the Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology’, *ANRW* 2.17.2 (1981), pp.827-948.

<sup>14</sup> See most recently K. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture* (Princeton, 1996), esp. pp.80-90, 128-40.

<sup>15</sup> For a comprehensive survey of the *virtutes* with which emperors associated themselves: Fears, ‘Cult of the Virtues’, pp.889-948. For the expectations of subjects: S.M. Braund, ‘Praise and Proteptic in Early Imperial Panegyric: Cicero, Seneca, Pliny’, in *The Propaganda of Power: the role of panegyric in late antiquity*, ed. M. Whitby (Leiden, 1998), esp. pp.65-74.

<sup>16</sup> S.M. Braund, ‘Paradigms of Power: Roman Emperors in Roman Satire’, in *Humour and History*, ed. K. Cameron (Oxford, 1993), pp.56-69, esp. pp.62-8; cf. P. T. Eden (ed.), *Seneca: Apocolocyntosis* (Cambridge, 1984), pp.8-12.

<sup>17</sup> P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* (Madison, 1992), pp.48-61 (on anger and deportment), and pp.109-13 (on Theodosius).

<sup>18</sup> T.E.J. Wiedemann, ‘Between Men and Beasts: barbarians in Ammianus Marcellinus’, in *Past Perspectives: Studies in Greek and Roman historical writing*, ed. I Moxon, J.D. Smart, & A.J. Woodman (Cambridge, 1986), pp.189-201; cf. R.C. Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus: a study of his historiography and political thought* (Brussels, 1975), pp.183-4.

<sup>19</sup> M. Humphries, ‘*Nec metu nec adulandi foeditate constricta*: the image of Valentinian I from Symmachus to Ammianus’, in *The Late Roman World and its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, ed. J.W. Drijvers and E.D. Hunt (London, 1999), pp.117-26.

<sup>20</sup> Amm. Marc. 30.8.2. On Ammianus’ moral universe, see esp. R. Seager, *Ammianus Marcellinus: seven studies in his language and thought* (Columbia, 1986).

<sup>21</sup> Amm. Marc. 30.9.2.

<sup>22</sup> Amm. Marc. 15.12.4, a relatively common trope: M. B. Lançon, ‘*Vinolentia*: l’ivrognerie en Gaule à la fin de l’Antiquité d’après les sources littéraires’, in *Archéologie de la vigne et du vin* (= *Caesarodunum* 24: Paris, 1990), pp.155-61.

<sup>23</sup> Eloquently expressed by the younger Seneca in his essay on drunkenness: ‘Omne uitium ebrietas et incendit et detegit, obstantem malis conatibus uerecundiam remouet’ (*Epistulae Morales*, 83.19). **L. Annaei Senecae ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, vol 1**, ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford, 1965), pp.278-84.

<sup>24</sup> The point is made most clearly by Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 3.7.15 and 19. **Quintilian, Institutionis oratoriae libri duodecim**, ed. M. Winterbottom, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1970).

<sup>25</sup> Cicero, *Phil* 2.63: *tantum uini in Hippiae nuptiis exhauseras, ut tibi necesse in populi Romani conspectu uomere postridie.* **M. Tulli Ciceronis Orationes**, vol. 2, ed. A. C. Clark, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1918), pp.109-55. For commentary: Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, pp.190-5.

<sup>26</sup> A.C. Dionisotti, ‘From Ausonius’ Schooldays? A Schoolbook and its Relatives’, *JRS* 72 (1982), pp.103, lines 66-7.

<sup>27</sup> Amm. Marc. 25.10.15.

<sup>28</sup> L. A. Sussman, ‘Antony as *Miles Gloriosus* in Cicero’s *Second Philippic*’, *Scholia* 3 (1994), pp.53-83, esp. pp.79-80 on Antony’s drunkenness.

<sup>29</sup> Cicero, *De Oratore* 2.336; cf. 2.216. **Cicero, De Oratore**, vol. 2, ed. K. W. Pederit, rev’d. O Harnecker (Leipzig, 1889). For other instances of Ciceronian humour, cf. K. A. Geffcken, *Comedy in the Pro Caelio* (Leiden, 1973).

<sup>30</sup> Cicero, *De Oratore* 2.236. Ugliness (*deformitas*) was also fair game, since it would have provided an outward manifestation of inner baseness: T.S. Barton, *Power and Knowledge: Astrology, Physiognomics, and Medicine under the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, 1994), pp.95-131, esp. pp.110-15.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. A. Corbeill, *Controlling Laughter: Political Humor in the late Roman Republic* (Princeton, 1996), p.6.

<sup>32</sup> Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum* [DMP] 8.1 **Lactantius, De Mortibus Persecutorum**, ed. and trans. J. L. Creed (Oxford, 1984).

<sup>33</sup> Lactantius., DMP 7. 5 (on Diocletian) and 8. 5 (on Maximian).

<sup>34</sup> The opposite was also held to be true: according to Aurelius Victor, *Caesares*. 41.2 **Aurelius Victor**, *Livre des Césars*, ed. and trans. P. Dufraigne (Paris, 1975); Constantine and Licinius failed to secure a lasting alliances *ob diuersos mores*. For associations according to similar virtues see esp. R. Rees, ‘The Private Lives of Public Figures in Latin Prose Panegyric’, in *The Propaganda of Power: the role of panegyric in late antiquity* ed. Whitby, pp.77-101.

<sup>35</sup> Lactantius, *DMP* 11. 1. It is probable that Lactantius’ assertion that she was a *deorum montium cultrix* was intended to portray her as a woman outside the boundaries of civilized urban society, and hence a suitable mother for the bestial, barbaric monster that was Galerius (cf. *DMP* 9. 2). The trope has a lengthy pedigree; see, *inter alia*, R. Buxton, *Imaginary Greece: the contexts of mythology* (Cambridge, 1994), pp.88-92; E. Dench, *From Barbarians to New Men: Greek, Roman, and modern perceptions of peoples from the central Apennines* (Oxford, 1995), esp. pp.126-9, 166-73; and (of course) F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip the Second*, vol. 1 (London, 1972), pp.35-8.

<sup>36</sup> Lactantius, *DMP* 11. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Lactantius, *DMP* 18. 10.

<sup>38</sup> Lactantius, *DMP* 18. 12. The image is an old one, cf. Cicero, *De Finibus* 2. 23: *qui solem, ut aiunt, nec occidentem umquam uiderint nec orientem*. **M. Tullius Cicero, De Finibus bonorum et malorum**, ed. and trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass., 1931).

<sup>39</sup> M. Douglas, ‘A Distinctive Anthropological Perspective’, in *Constructive Drinking*, ed. Douglas, p.4.

<sup>40</sup> For classical Greek drinking, not considered here, see the lively appraisal of J.N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (London, 1997), pp.36-69.

<sup>41</sup> D'Arms, 'Heavy Drinking and Drunkenness', esp. pp.307-8; cf. Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, pp.198-204.

<sup>42</sup> L. Bek, 'Quaestiones conuiuiales: The Idea of the Triclinium and the Staging of Convivial Ceremony from Rome to Byzantium', *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 12 (1983), pp.81-107; K.M.D. Dunbabin, 'Scenes from the Roman *Convivium*', in *In Vino Veritas*, ed. Murray and Tecusan, pp.252-65; S.P. Ellis, 'Power, Architecture, and Decor: how the Late Roman Aristocrat appeared to his Guests', in *Roman Art in the Private Sphere*, ed. E.K. Gazda (Ann Arbor, 1991), pp.117-34.

<sup>43</sup> Lactantius., *DMP* 9. 3; cf. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica [HE]* 8. 16. 4. **Eusebius Werke II, Die Kirchengeschichte, vol. 2, ed. E. Schwartz (Leipzig, 1908).**

<sup>44</sup> Lactantius, *DMP* 9. 2: *Inerat huic bestiae naturalis barbaries, efferitas a Romano sanguine aliena*. Cf. n.35, above, for the relationship of barbarity to bestiality.

<sup>45</sup> R.R.R. Smith, 'The Public Image of Licinius I: Portrait Sculpture and Imperial Ideology in the Early Fourth Century', *JRS* 87 (1997), pp.170-202, esp. pp.191-3.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognōmonika*, 807A-B; also 813B. **Aristotle, Minor Works, ed. and trans. W. S. Hett (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), pp.84-137.** Cf. Barton, *Power and Knowledge*, 111, for similar examples. Cf. more generally, M.W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Representation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, 1995), esp. pp.55-81.

<sup>47</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 10. 8. 5-9.

<sup>48</sup> Photius, *Bibliotheca [Bibl.]* codex 62 (= Jacoby, *FGrH* 219). **Photius, Bibliotheca, ed. and trans. R. Henry (1959);** cf. Lieu and Montserrat, *From Constantine to Julian*, pp.7-9.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognōmonika*, 805A: ‘the brave man (¢ndreoj) and the shameful man (¢naid¾j) have the same facial expression.’

<sup>50</sup> Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, 2. 8. 2 (low birth); 2. 29. 2-5 (conversion); 2. 32-4 (weakening the empire).

**Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, ed. L. Mendelssohn (Leipzig, 1887).**

<sup>51</sup> Photius, *Bibl. codex* 98. Of course, Photius’ assertion is not accurate for all of Zosimus’ history, but it holds good for the Constantinian period.

<sup>52</sup> The **Byzantine lexicon known as the *Suda*** remarks that ‘Eunapius wrote rubbish about him’: **Eunap., fr. 9.1 Blockley.**

<sup>53</sup> Photius *Bibl. codex* 77.

<sup>54</sup> Eunapius *Vitae Sophistarum* [VS] 464. **Philostratus and Eunapius: The Lives of the Sophists**, ed. and trans. W. C. Wright (Cambridge, Mass., 1921), pp.342-565. For comm.: R. J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century AD: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis* (Leeds, 1990), pp.52-3, 126-7, 129-30.

<sup>55</sup> Eunapius VS 462.

<sup>56</sup> Eunapius VS 462.

<sup>57</sup> Eunapius VS 463.

<sup>58</sup> Contrast Eunapius VS 462 on Sopater and 464 on Ablabius. A famous fragment of Eunapius’ *History* directs a similar accusation against others who, like Constantine, put their faith in Christianity. Describing paintings set up at Rome which showed the hand of God securing an imperial victory over the barbarians,

## Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

---

he complained that such scenes were ‘the rubbish of painters in their cups (kwqwnizomšnwn grafšwn fl»nafoj)’ (Eunap., fr. 68 Blockley = fr. 78 Müller).

<sup>59</sup> Thus Eunapius *VS* 462.

<sup>60</sup> The major study is G.W. Bowersock, ‘The Emperor Julian on his Predecessors’, *Yale Classical Studies* 27 (1982), pp.159-72. Bowersock, whose approach to the work is at times rather precious, refuses to find the work in the least bit funny, but his reserve has been challenged in a recent study of Julian’s literary oeuvre: R. Smith, *Julian’s Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate* (London, 1991), pp.13-14.

<sup>61</sup> Julian, *Caesares*. 328D-329D and 335A-B. *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. W. C. Wright (Cambridge, Mass., 1913), pp.344-415.

<sup>62</sup> Julian, *Caesares*. 317D; cf. 329A.

<sup>63</sup> For Julian’s admiration of Marcus: Smith, *Julian’s Gods*, p.42.

<sup>64</sup> Julian, *Caesares*. 335C-D.

<sup>65</sup> cf. Bowersock, ‘Julian on his Predecessors’, pp.163-4.

<sup>66</sup> On *tryphē*, cf. Dench, *From Barbarians to New Men*, pp.12, 58-9.

<sup>67</sup> Julian, *Caesares* 336A-B.

<sup>68</sup> *Caesares* 313D; cf. Bowersock, ‘Julian on his Predecessors’, pp.163 and nn. 27-9.

## Chapter 3: Drunkenness and illegitimacy in the late Roman world

---

<sup>69</sup> Julian, *Caesares* 336B: δι τὸν Κλαύδιον καὶ Κωνσταντίον.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Gowers, *The Loaded Table*, pp.15, 18, for the moral topography to which Julian's portrait of Constantine appeals.

<sup>71</sup> There is now a large literature on this topic, e.g.: G. Fowden, 'Constantine's Porphyry Column: the Earliest Literary Allusion', *JRS* 81 (1991), pp.119-31; id., 'The Last Days of Constantine: Oppositional Versions and their Influence', *JRS* 84 (1994), pp.146-70; M. Humphries, 'In Nomine Patris: Constantine the Great and Constantius II in Christological Polemic', *Historia* 46 (1997), pp.448-64; and the various essays in *New Constantines*, ed. P. Magdalino (Aldershot, 1994).

<sup>72</sup> This paper is revised from the version delivered in Leeds. Whatever virtues it may possess owe much to the perceptive criticisms of Guy Halsall (London), Susan Rosser (Manchester), and Roger Rees (Edinburgh), as well as those who participated in the discussion after its delivery at the conference. My thanks also to Christopher Kelly (Cambridge) who, *a propos* other matters, has encouraged me to pursue this enquiry into the parallels and interpenetrations between praise and invective. The fault for all remaining vices, however, rests solely with me.