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Constantine's Civil War Triumph of AD 312 and the Adaptability of Triumphal Tradition

BY CARSTEN HJORT LANGE

Abstract. There existed an ancient consensus on the awarding of triumphs, clearly apparent during the Late Republic and Early Empire: a general could expect to triumph after a civil war victory if it could also be represented as being over a foreign enemy. A triumph after a victory in an exclusively civil war was understood as being in clear breach of traditional practices. This consensus continued during the Later Roman Empire. Nevertheless, as this paper will argue, Constantine may have taken to Caesar's final triumph, which, celebrating his victory over Pompeius' sons at Munda in 45 BC, was only over civil opponents, as a precedent. It is clear that Constantine did not conceal the civil war aspect of his victory, which is still visible today on the arch of Constantine, in particular on its inscription. By examining dealings in the immediate aftermath of civil conflicts, with a focus on Constantine, this paper will also consider the differences and similarities between two central Roman celebrations, the triumph and the *adventus*. The key distinguishing feature may have been that a triumph usually involved the display of spoils, while an *adventus* did not; and the assumption that the distinction between the two celebrations became virtually elided is wrong. Furthermore, the sacrifice on the Capitol is not a conclusive diagnostic, as it was often a feature of the non-triumphal *adventus*. The triumph was part of the rhetoric of political legitimation for the victor: the rules of triumph were flexible to some extent, but significantly, the ritual itself often varied.

While there has been a surge of interest in the Roman triumph in recent years,[1] those of the post-Augustan period have received surprisingly little attention.[2] During the Late Republic a convention arose that a triumph could not be awarded for victories in a civil war. Elsewhere I have examined this convention at some length, concluding that a commander usually could not expect to triumph after an exclusively civil war, but only a civil war that could also be represented as foreign; it was by nature of their external character that these conflicts qualified for a triumph.[3] Significantly, the civil war aspect (*victoria civilis*) of the triumphs was rarely denied.

The three triumphal arches still standing in the centre of Rome all commemorate the victors of lengthy civil wars (Titus, Septimius Severus and Constantine). The arch of Actium (from 19 BC: Actium-Parthian-arch) is hardly visible today, but Augustus' arch clearly belonged to this group, as Actium was both a foreign and a civil war.[4] The arches were built to legitimise new rulers and their dynasties by proclaiming their honorands' virtues, commemorating their achievements, and presenting a visual reminder of their success. Flaig suggests that the Principate itself possessed legitimacy, whereas the individual emperors received only an acceptance, and victory in war was central in the establishment of an emperor's pre-eminence.[5] This was perhaps never more crucial than in the aftermath of a civil war, when it functioned as a means of justification within post-civil-war arrangements.

This paper will examine these tensions within post-civil-war dealings, focusing on Constantine in particular, and in doing so will also consider the differences and similarities

between two central Roman celebrations, the triumph and the *adventus*.[6] Constantine's triumph can only be properly understood, it will be claimed, if we accept that the triumph was a ritual with a history, defined by conventions, dating to the Republican period.[7] The disputed triumph of Constantine in 312, I suggest, must be judged in the light of the Late Republican convention on civil war and triumph.

Civil war and Triumphs during the Later Roman Empire

The chief ancient source which provides an overview of the rules and customary practice relating to triumphs and the question of civil war is the chapter which Valerius Maximus (2.8) devotes to the topic as part of his treatment of *disciplina militaris*.[8] There can be no doubt that he used earlier sources contemporary with the civil wars of the Late Republic. His primary evidence is probably Varro.[9] The last section of Valerius Maximus' chapter (2.8.7) asserts that no *supplicationes*, ovations or triumphs had ever been held for a civil war:

> Verum quamvis quis praeclaras res maximeque utiles rei publicae civili bello gessisset, imperator tamen eo nomine appellatus non est, neque ullae supplicationes decretae sunt, neque aut ovans aut curru triumphavit, quia, ut necessariae istae, ita lugubres semper existimatae sunt victoriae, utpote non externo sed domestico partae cruore.
>
> No man, however, though he might have accomplished great things eminently useful to the commonwealth in a civil war, was given the title of *imperator* on that account, nor were any thanksgivings decreed, nor did such a one triumph either in ovation or with chariot, for such victories have ever been accounted as grievous, as they were necessary, because they were won by domestic not foreign blood.

Further evidence includes Cicero's *Philippics* (14.22-24; 22: "numquam enim in civili bello supplicatio decreta est" ["for no public thanksgiving has ever been voted in a civil war"]; Lucan, who at the start of his poem laments that the civil wars which were to be his theme were wars in which no general could win a triumph (1.12); and Florus (2.10.1, 9), referring to Pompeius' Spanish triumph. Plutarch (*Caes.* 56.7-9) and Dio Cassius (42.18.1, 43.42.1) mention the matter in relation to Caesar's triumphs, Dio Cassius (51.19.5) does so also in respect to Octavian's, while Tacitus (*Hist.* 4.4.2) reports the grant of *ornamenta triumphalia* to Vespasian's commanders as in breach of the rule.

There was, or so it would seem, an ancient consensus on the matter of the triumph. The consensus was however flexible enough only to deny a commander a triumph after an exclusively civil war: it remained possible to triumph after a civil war that could also be represented as foreign. This consensus continued during the Later Roman Empire, and scruples regarding the celebration of triumphs after civil wars were always present. Such attitudes appear in the panegyric of 321 (Nazarius), presented in Rome in Constantine's absence, reflecting on the celebrations of 312 (*Pan. Lat.* 4(10).31.1-3):[10]

> Non agebantur quidem ante currum vincti duces sed incedebat tandem soluta nobilitas. Non coniecti in carcerem barbari sed educti e carcere consulares. Non captiui alienigenae introitum illum honestauerunt sed Roma iam libera. Nil ex hostico accepit sed se ipsam recuperavit, nec praeda auctior facta est sed esse praeda desivit et, quo nil adici ad gloriae magnitudinem [maius] potest, imperium recepit quae seruitium sustinebat. Duci sane omnibus videbantur subacta uitiorum agmina quae Vrbem grauiter obsederant:…
>
> Leaders in chains were not driven before the chariot, but the nobility

> marched along, freed at last. Barbarians were not cast into prison but ex-consuls were let out of it. Captive foreigners did not adorn that entrance but Rome now free. She received nothing of an enemy's but recovered her own self, she was not enriched by spoils but ceased to be despoiled and – nothing greater can be added to the magnitude of her glory – she who had endured slavery got back her command.
>
> It certainly seemed to everyone that the vices which had grievously haunted the City were led in a subjugated procession:… [trans. Nixon and Rodgers 1994, adapted].

The ideology found in the *Panegyrici Latini* was not dictated by the imperial court,[11] but the orators were close to the court and thus were hardly critical voices.[12] The writer of the 321 panegyrics clearly knew what qualified for a triumph.[13] There is no critique of Constantine. Liberating Rome from the tyranny of Maxentius, who, according to this statement had persecuted the Senate, was sufficient justification for this extraordinary triumph or – as seems to be the case here, in contrast to a triumph – this *adventus* (32.1: "Quis triumphus inlustrior, quae species pulchrior, quae pompa felicior?" [What triumph was more illustrious, what spectacle more beautiful, what procession more fortunate?]). However, it cannot be entirely excluded that conventions of triumph are alluded to here in response to contemporary criticism of Constantine.

The historian and soldier Ammianus Marcellinus, writing in the 4th century, describes the *adventus* of Constantius II, the son of Constantine, in 357, in a section entitled "Constantii Aug. militaris ac velut triumphalis in urbem Romam adventus" (16.10.1-18: The arrival of Constantius Augustus in military attire and resembling a *triumphator*).[14] The civil war was fought against the usurper Magnentius, who was defeated at the battle of Mons Seleucus, after which Magnentius committed suicide (16.10.1-2):

> Haec dum per eoas partes et Gallias pro captu temporum disponuntur, Constantius quasi cluso Iani templo stratisque hostibus cunctis, Romam visere gestiebat, post Magnenti exitium absque nomine ex sanguine Romano triumphaturus. Nec enim gentem ullam bella cientem per se superavit, aut victam fortitudine suorum comperit ducum, vel addidit quaedam imperio, aut usquam in necessitatibus summis primus vel inter primos est visus, sed ut pompam nimis extentam rigentiaque auro vexilla et pulchritudinem stipatorum ostenderet agenti tranquillius populo, haec vel simile quicquam videre nec speranti umquam nec optanti.
>
> While these events were so being arranged in the Orient and in Gaul in accordance with the times, Constantius, as if the temple of Janus had been closed and all his enemies overthrown, was eager to visit Rome and after the death of Magnentius to celebrate, without a title, a triumph over Roman blood. For neither in person did he vanquish any nation that made war upon him, nor learn of any conquered by the valour of his generals; nor did he add anything to his empire; nor at critical moments was he anywhere seen to be the foremost, or among the foremost; but he desired to display an inordinately long procession, banners stiff with goldwork, and the splendour of his retinue, to a populace living in perfect peace and neither expecting nor desiring to see this or anything like it.

Constantius arrived like a *triumphator* ("velut triumphalis"). Ammianus is here mocking the unsoldierly Constantius, suggesting that he desired to arrive in Rome (*adventus*) like a *triumphator*, but *absque nomine* (without the name), thus suggesting that this was not a real triumph as the victory was against Romans

("ex sanguine Romano"). 16.10.2 explains why there could be no triumph: he did not defeat any nation who had attacked Rome and he did not conquer any nation. Nothing was added to the Empire (cf. Val. Max. 2.8.4). The temple of Janus is mentioned, but again, only to mock the emperor, as the temple was in fact never closed (cf. *RG* 13: the temple was closed when victories had secured peace by land and sea throughout the empire, used in relation both to foreign and to civil war). Had he indeed closed the temple, as a symbol of peace, the gesture would have been futile, as the Romans already lived in peace (10.2). Ammianus is part of a long Roman tradition, acknowledging the convention that no triumph should be won for a civil war.[15] The question now arises as to whether this was in fact an *adventus* or a triumph? MacCormack (1972, 726) stresses the point that:

> The empire gradually became Christian, and no subsequent emperors performed the sacrifice to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus. Thus the emperor's victorious arrival, formerly triumph, was assimilated into the *adventus* ceremonial.

Similarly, Beard (2007, 324) suggests that *adventus* had been transformed into triumph. According to her we should not restrict our consideration of ceremonies from Augustus onwards that are or appear "triumphal" and "like a triumph" to the triumph itself, because the language of triumph also provided a suitable way of representing the imperial *adventus*.[16] As I have suggested elsewhere, these developments originate during the reign of Augustus (Lange *forthcoming* b): Augustus' non-triumphal returns after 29 BC are a consequence of his rejecting of triumphs proper. The triumph-like returns thus became substitute-honours replacing the triumph. Augustus had defined anew a traditional war ritual – the triumph – and simultaneously had initiated the process of defining the *adventus* of the *princeps*. McCormick surmises that legalistic approaches have clouded our judgement on the issue of triumph, fostering an extremely unhelpful approach which branded some victory celebrations as 'real triumphs' as opposed to others which were only 'triumph-like' or not a triumph 'in the proper sense'.[17] However, in the Late Republic, as during the Later Roman Empire, the evidence suggests that most of the time the Romans full well knew the difference between triumph, *adventus* and triumph-like ceremonies. Or perhaps more significantly, they knew that exclusively civil war triumphs, and civil war celebrations in general, were problematic and ought to be avoided.

Even if, for the sake of argument, Constantius did celebrate a triumph, this was dismissed by Ammianus on the grounds that it was not possible to triumph after a victory in a civil war and that there was no foreign enemy. He even suggests that the emperor presented himself as if he was en-route to intimidate the Euphrates or the Rhine (10.6). Ammianus speaks of the emperor's *adventus* in triumphal terms, but this appears to be sarcasm. His final and very negative assessment of Constantius mentions an emperor who countered loss and disaster in foreign wars with success in civil wars (21.16.15). The *adventus* of Constantius is presented as if it was a civil war triumph, carrying the connotation that civil war celebrations should be avoided altogether.

The Egyptian Claudian, a writer of panegyric and propaganda for the court of Honorius, wrote a panegyric poem to celebrate Honorius' sixth consulship and his entry into Rome in January 404 (*VI Cons.* 543ff). Here the typical Byzantine emperor becomes the *popularis princeps* and a fellow citizen (*cives*: 558; cf. 58), a tradition dating to Pliny's panegyric on Trajan.[18] In Rome Honorius may have celebrated a triumph over Alaric and the Goths,[19] the background of the following speech by a personified Rome, on the issue of triumph and civil war (392-406):

> His annis, qui lustra mihi bis dena recensent, / nostra ter Augustos intra pomeria vidi, / temporibus variis;

> eadem sed causa tropaei / civilis dissensus erat. Venere superbi, / scilicet ut Latio respersos sanguine currus / adspicerem! quisquamne piae laetanda parenti / natorum lamenta putet? Periere tyranni, / sed nobis periere tamen. Cum Gallica vulgo / proelia iactaret, tacuit Pharsalica Caesar. / Namque inter socias acies cognataque signa / ut vinci miserum, numquam vicisse decorum. / Restituat priscum per te iam gloria morem / verior, et fructum sincerae laudis ab hoste / desuetum iam redde mihi iustisque furoris / externi spoliis sontes absolve triumphos.
>
> During these years which number twice ten lustres, I have but thrice seen an emperor enter my walls; the times differed but the reason for their celebrations was the same – civil war. Did they come in their pride that I should see their chariots stained with Italy's blood. Can any think a mother finds joy in the tears of her offspring? The tyrants were slain, but even they died for me. Caesar boasted of his battles in Gaul but said nought about Pharsalia. Where the two sides bear the same standards and are of one blood, as defeat is ever shameful so victory brings no honour. See thou to it that now a truer glory will restore the ancient ways; give me back the joy, long a stranger to me, of honest fame won from the enemy, and make good offensive triumphs by means of spoils won just by foreign madness.

The victory over a foreign enemy is the context of this exposition of triumph and civil war, although "*nostra ter Augustos intra pomeria vidi*" does not explicitly refer to triumph. However, *tropaeus* may here be a metonym for triumphal entry. There are more explicit statements later, especially at 553: "ovanti", 579-80: "curru ... triumphantem". However, this may just be panegyric portraying Honorius' *adventus* for his sixth consulship as a Gothic triumph. Significantly, even if this was an *adventus*, Claudian, as does Ammianus, speaks of the emperor's *adventus* in triumphal terms, not because they were virtually elided, but to stress that civil war celebrations were a bad thing.

The three occasions Claudian mentions upon which an emperor entered the walls, probably refer to the civil war triumph of Constantine in 312 over Maxentius and Theodosius' victories over Eugenius and Maximus (*VI Cons.* 57-59; *Pan. Lat.* 2(12).46.4). *Tyrannus* may have been a standard justification for such civil war victories (see below), but according to Claudian this clearly makes it no less a civil war victory. He makes the valid point that Caesar did not triumph for Pharsalus, however, he does not mention that Caesar's final triumph, following his defeat of Pompeius' sons at Munda in 45 BC, was only over civil opponents.[20]

The later Roman evidence clearly suggests that there was a continuation of the Late Republican consensus on the issue of triumph and civil war, a consensus dating to the period before the reign of Augustus. The principle that triumphs (indeed celebrations in general) should not be held for exclusively civil wars could only have been articulated in the first century BC when civil wars became common. The question arises, therefore, as to how the triumph of Constantine fits this Late Republican convention. Firstly however, we must briefly turn our attention to Augustus.

Augustus

Actium was considered as both a foreign and a civil war in the official ideology of the regime.[21] Civil war was not denied. The *triumphator* would customarily mention the enemy, as this is an integrated part of the justification for the triumph (see Fasti Triumphales), but as this was also a civil war the enemy was left unmentioned: it does not necessarily follow that civil war was downplayed, partly due to the conspicuous absence of the enemy, but the emphasis had shifted to the victor.

There can be no doubt that the war, when it finally came, was represented as a foreign war; the spear rite of the *fetiales* was performed by Octavian in person in 32 BC.[22] In this way Octavian successfully avoided starting a new civil war. Dio Cassius states (50.4.3-4) that not only was the war declared against Cleopatra, but that Antonius was not declared a *hostis* (see also Plut. *Ant.* 60.1).[23] Antonius was now a *privatus*, having been stripped of all his powers, and if he were to take up arms against Octavian and the *res publica*, he would declare war on the state and thus declare himself a *hostis*. He and other Romans fighting for Cleopatra would, by their actions, turn a foreign war into a civil war. Octavian never denied that he fought Antonius, but he made it appear that Antonius was the aggressor.[24] It was thus in principle permissible, at least as a possible means of justification, to triumph over civil war enemies if they were declared enemies of Rome.

During the period from the battle of Actium until the return of Augustus in 29 BC, the Senate passed a significant number of resolutions, primarily in honour of Octavian's victories at Actium and Alexandria (Dio Cass. 51.19.1-20.5). The first part of the list (51.19.1-3), relating to honours after Actium, includes an honorific arch (51.19.1). As these honours were given in connection with a victory and a subsequent triumph, the term triumphal arch seems in order, even if the term *arcus triumphalis* only dates from the third century AD.[25] The inscribed Fasti Triumphales (dated to around 19 BC, inscribed on the arch) establishes a firm connection here.

However, the surviving arch on the Forum Romanum presents a problem, in that there are two possible identifications: the arch of Actium and the Parthian arch. The most reasonable scenario remains that presented by Rich (1998), who suggests that the arch preserved is the arch of Actium. Later alterations meant it could accommodate the standards in order to celebrate the Parthian settlement.[26] It would have been very odd indeed if there was no monument commemorating Actium after 19 BC, if the Parthian arch replaced the demolished Actian arch.

This dating of the arch of Actium creates a possible and even probable context for an important inscription found in the sixteenth century in the Forum Romanum, but subsequently lost, which probably came from the arch:

> SENATUS POPULUSQUE ROMANUS/
> IMP(ERATORI) CAESARI DIVI IULI
> F(ILIO) CO(N)S(ULI) QUINCT(UM)
> CO(N)S(ULI) DESIGN(ATO) SEXT(UM)
> IMP(ERATORI) SEPT(IMUM)/
> RE PUBLICA CONSERVATA.
>
> The Roman Senate and people to Imperator Caesar, son of the deified Julius, consul for the fifth time, consul designated for the sixth time, *imperator* for the seventh time, the state having been saved (*CIL* VI 873 = EJ 17) [trans. Rich 1998, adapted].

The inscription is dated to 29 BC, the year of Octavian's triple triumph and thus the year when the arch was possibly completed. It is too small to have been placed on the central arch, but if the monument was triple-arched the inscription may have been situated on one of the side arches.[27] This would also explain why Actium is not mentioned here, as the victory would have been included in the inscription on the central arch.[28] Nedergaard suggests that it was attached to the temple of the Deified Iulius.[29] But surely it then would have honoured Caesar not Octavian.[30] The saving of the *res publica* should be dated to the capture of Alexandria in 30 (1st of August should be *feriae*), thus postdating the decision to award Octavian an arch after Actium as an additional honour.[31] Even though Actium and Alexandria produced two triumphs, they were clearly victories in the same war, fought against the same enemy (Cleopatra and Antonius).

There are two reasons for accepting that the inscription came from the arch: the triumviral assignment and the fact that the enemy is

not mentioned by name. The triumvirate was justified as an arrangement for a limited term (five years, later extended for another five years) with the task of setting the state to rights ("triumviri rei publicae constituendae"): ending the civil war and restoring order. This was accomplished at Philippi and thus further justification was needed (Brundisium 40 BC): to deal with Sextus Pompeius and act against Parthia. Octavian completed his task in 36 BC, but Antonius' failed in his Parthian campaign. Both men now promised to relinquish their triumviral powers, which finally occurred after the battle of Actium with the settlement of 28 – 27 BC.[32] Saving the state from the enemy was part of this assignment, even if the enemy changed over time.

In 36 BC, after the war against Sextus Pompeius, Octavian was given an honorific column on the Forum Romanum, with prows (Mylae, Naulochus), a golden statue, and an inscription: "Peace, long disrupted by civil discord, he restored on land and sea" (App. *B.Civ.* 5.130: "τὴν εἰρήνην ἐστασιασμένην ἐκ πολλοῦ συνέστησε κατά τε γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν").[33] After Actium the same concept appeared on the inscription of the victory monument at Nicopolis.[34] Using the same phrase as the inscription mentioned by Appian ("pace parta terra marique"), the enemies – Antonius and Cleopatra – are not mentioned.[35] I suspect that the central inscription of the arch of Actium was modelled closely on that of the Victory Monument at Actium (as in the laurelled letter sent to the Senate by Octavian after his victory) - although it would of course have been given as an honour by the *SPQR* (Dio 51.19.1), while the Nicopolis monument was built by Octavian himself.[36] It is therefore most unlikely that an enemy would be mentioned on the arch of Actium. Writing the *Res Gestae* late in life, Augustus unsurprisingly continued this trend of not mentioning his adversary by name (*RG* 1.1):

> ANNOS UNDEVIGINTI NATUS
> EXCERCITUM PRIVATO CONSILIO
> ET PRIVATA IMPENSA COMPARAVI,
> PER QUEM REM PUBLICAM A
> DOMINATIONE FACTIONIS
> OPPRESSAM IN LIBERTATEM
> VINDICAVI.
>
> Aged nineteen years old I mustered an army at my personal decision and at my personal expense, and with it I liberated the state, which had been oppressed by a despotic faction [trans. Cooley 2009].

Augustus claims that Antonius had oppressed the *res publica* through the tyranny of a faction (cf. Vell. Pat. 2.61.1: "Torpebat oppressa dominatione Antonii civitas" ["The state languished, oppressed by the tyranny of Antony"]).[37] Liberating the state from the faction turned the act of raising of an army into something legitimate.[38] The 'betrayal' of *libertas* is used as a denouncement of the defeated faction: Pompeius and Caesar had done the same (Dio Cass. 41.57.1-2 on Pompeius and Caesar calling each other tyrant and themselves liberators), as had Sulla before them (App. *B.Civ.* 1.57). Crucially, it was only as a victory in a foreign war that Actium could allow Octavian the honour of triumph. At the same time the reference to the tyranny of a faction had clear civil war connotations, here mentioned by Octavian because Antonius was not declared a *hostis*. These problems of conceptualizing civil war victories, as marked by a blurring of the boundaries between civil and foreign war, would re-emerge in post-Augustan times.

Vespasian and Titus

During the year 69, the year of the four emperors, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian ruled in succession. After his victory the usurper Vespasian drew on the same ideology of imperial victory as Augustus before him.[39] The triumph of Vespasian and Titus were celebrated *de Iudaeis*, but an intriguing notice in Tacitus (*Hist.* 4.4.2) tells us about triumphal ornaments for Vespasian's

commander Mucianus and others, disguised by reference to a Sarmatian campaign:

> Multo cum honore verborum Muciano triumphalia de bello civium data, sed in Sarmatas expeditio fingebatur.
>
> In magnificent terms the senators gave Mucianus the insignia of a triumph, in reality for a civil war, although his expedition against the Sarmatae was made the pretext.

Vespasian and Titus were following convention in celebrating their Jewish triumph in 71,[40] but Tacitus does imply that, reverting to earlier precedents, they could not resist triumphal celebration for the civil war.[41] Indeed, the whole language of restoration after the victory over the Jews suggests that there can be little doubt that the enemy was also internal. Josephus refers to triumphal celebrations over a foreign enemy as well as celebrations for the termination of civil discord and the return to normality (*BJ* 7.157). The language of restoration was thus part of the Imperial ideology: Vespasian's coinage proclaimed "LIBERTAS RESTITUTA" ("freedom restored") and he was hailed as "ADSERTOR LIBERTATIS PUBLICAE" ("protector of the free state").[42] In fact there was no real foreign enemy, only the suppression of an internal revolt. Noreña (2011, 128) states that Vespasian's Templum Pacis celebrated only the victory over the Jews, but it is reasonable to conclude that it may also have celebrated a civil war victory, mentioned or not: *pax* according to Noreña himself had a dual meaning, in Roman civil society implying a question of absence of civil war (2011, 127-132).

Unfortunately, because the emperor had died by the time of the erection of the arch in the early 80s, no titles, no assignment and no reason for the building of the arch is mentioned on the preserved dedicatory inscription (*CIL* VI 945): "SENATUS POPULUSQUE ROMANUS DIVO TITO DIVI VESPASIANI F. VESPASIANO AUGUSTO". The panels in the arch's passageways show the Jewish triumph, on one side booty and on the other the emperor in procession in Rome, with the apotheosis on the vault of the passageway.[43] The civil war enemies could still not be included, as a triumph required a foreign enemy, but it does not follow that no civil war was fought or that they were ignored in the triumphal celebrations.

Septimius Severus

In the prolonged civil war after the death of Pertinax in 193, Septimius Severus proved victorious. In 203 an arch built by the *SPQR* was dedicated to Severus and his two sons Caracalla and Geta, and positioned in front of the Temple of Concord.[44] It depicts the wars against Parthia. The last sentence of the inscription runs as follows (*CIL* 6 1033=*ILS* 425):[45]

> OB REM PVBLICAM RESTITVTAM
> IMPERIVMQVE POPVLI ROMANI
> PROPAGATVM/ INSIGNIBVS
> VIRTVTIBVS EORVM DOMI FORISQVE
> SPQR.
>
> The senate and people of Rome (have dedicated this monument), on account of the restoration of the commonwealth and the extension of the empire of the Roman people by means of their conspicuous virtues at home and abroad [trans. Noreña 2011, 226].

On the inscription Severus and his sons are hailed as moral exemplars ("*optimi principes*") and propagators of "*insignes virtutes*". The arch's inscription presents itself as justification of Severus' doings in both civil and foreign affairs: the famous phrase "*res publica restituta*" is attested here.[46] The return to normality after a civil war and the extension of the borders of the Empire (Val. Max. 2.8.4) reflect the ideology of Augustus.[47]

After his Parthian victory Severus sent a

letter to Rome and received the title *Parthicus Maximus* (Hdn. 3.9.12). If Septimius Severus did triumph on his return to Rome, it would have been an unexceptional foreign war triumph. According to McCormick (1986, 18) the procession was postponed for 5 years, but then took place at the time of the marriage of Caracalla, which was also the tenth anniversary of Severus' accession (Hdn. 3.10.1-2; Dio Cass. 77.1.1-5; *RIC* 4 68-9). However, the evidence does not appear to suggest that a triumphal procession actually took place.[48] The *SHA* explicitly states that he declined a triumph – and the stated reason, Severus' inability to stand for the length of time required, may even have been partly true (*Severus* 16.6-7). At any rate, its evidence is corroborated by the striking failure of both Dio Cassius and Herodian to mention a triumph in their quite detailed accounts of his return.

His victories, however, were commemorated in numerous other ways, including paintings (Hdn. 3.9.12; Ando 2000, 137) and the arch.[49] No enemy is listed on the inscription of the arch, although "Parthicus Arabicus" and "Parthicus Adiabenicus" are mentioned as part of the emperor's many titles. Severus clearly used the arch to celebrate both a victory over a foreign and a civil war enemy. This fact also explains the relative ambiguity of the inscription. The traditional details on the enemy are omitted. Nevertheless, as there was no triumph, even though there could have been one, a necessary link between triumphs and (triumphal) arches should not be overemphasized.

The Third Century – precursors to Constantine?

During the Third Century the re-conceptualisation of victories in civil wars as victories partly over foreign enemies once again became an integral part of political legitimation. Even if the civil war aspect of these victories was rarely denied, it remained useful to represent an internal enemy as non-Roman and indeed as an enemy of Rome.

After the siege of Aquileia in 238 the emperor Maximinus was assassinated (Hdn. 8.5.9). His head was sent to the senatorial emperor Clodius Pupienus Maximus at Ravenna (8.6.6-7). The head was carried in procession and laurel-bearing citizens greeted the procession on its way (8.6.5). The head was later transferred to Rome by Maximus and paraded through the city (8.6.7-8). Upon Maximus' arrival in the city he was acclaimed 'like a triumphator' (8.7.9). McCormick (1986, 19) concludes:

> That these celebrations of 238 have been generally overlooked helps explain how Constantine's triumphal entry of 312 has sometimes appeared puzzling to specialists more familiar with earlier triumphs.

However, this does seem not to have been a triumph after all, although the *SHA* (*Max.* 25-26) mentions "currus triumphales" and *supplicationes* (26.5-6). Whatever the answer, this was certainly a very conspicuous civil war celebration, something that became more usual in periods of prolonged civil war.

A later example clearly centres on triumph: Zenobia, the queen of Palmyra, was defeated in 272 by Aurelian after her expansion in the East at Rome's expense. Together with the Tetrici from Gaul, defeated in 274 as part of Aurelian's process of reunification of the Empire, she was led in triumph in Rome (*SHA Aurel.* 34.2-4; cf. 33.1, clearly referring to "Aureliani triumphus"):[50]

> Inter haec fuit Tetricus chlamyde coccea, tunica galbina, bracis Gallicis ornatus, adiuncto sibi filio, quem imperatorem in Gallia nuncupaverat. Incedebat etiam Zenobia, ornata gemmis, catenis aureis, quas alii sustentabant. Praeferebantur coronae omnium civitatum aureae titulis eminentibus proditae. Iam populus ipse Romanus, iam vexilla collegiorum atque castrorum et cataphractarii milites et opes regiae et omnis exercitus et senatus

> (etsi aliquantulo tristior, quod senatores triumphari videbant) multum pompae addiderant.
>
> In the procession was Tetricus also, arrayed in scarlet cloak, a yellow tunic, and Gallic trousers, and with him his son, whom he had proclaimed in Gaul as emperor. And there came Zenobia, too, decked with jewels and in golden chains, the weight of which was borne by others. There were carried aloft golden crowns presented by all the cities, made known by placards carried aloft. Then came the Roman people itself, the flags of the guilds and the camps, the mailed cuirassiers, the wealth of the kings, the entire army, and, lastly, the senate (albeit somewhat sadly, since they saw senators, too, being led in triumph) – all adding much to the splendour of the procession.

This part of the description does seem credible. However the *Historia Augusta* does also provide a long list of foreign barbarians, led in the procession (*Aurel.* 33.4-5). This part of the account on the triumphal celebrations of Aurelian is implausible, but the question remains why?[51] According to Beard the triumphal prisoners were "at least exotic and recognizably foreign" (2007, 122).

However, leading the Tetrici and Zenobia in triumph suggests a civil war. Gaius Pius Esuvius Tetricus became emperor in Gaul in 272 and there can be no doubt that there was a civil war element to this victory. Interestingly, after being led in triumph he received a senatorial appointment in Italy as "Corrector Lucaniae".[52] Zenobia bestowed Roman titles on her son and herself and used the imperial titles *Augustus* and *Augusta* (*ILS* 8924; *IGR* III 1065), which might imply a usurper.[53] Aurelian's victories are indeed described as a re-conquest of East and West (Eutr. 9.13.2; SHA *Aurel.* 32.4). Aurelian had numerous victories and a triumph could easily be justified (the Vandals, the Juthungi, the Goths, the Carpi and the Persians), but at the same time he clearly wanted to celebrate the re-established unity of the Empire,[54] as had Vespasian and Titus after the suppression of the Jewish revolt: there was no real foreign enemy, only the suppression of internal revolt. The "civil war" enemies are characterised as non-Roman, but crucially, the explicit reference to senators being led in triumph infers that the triumph was, in part at least, celebrating victory in civil war.

Thus far it has become clear that the civil war issue was very often woven into the regular triumph (in a development that can be traced back to Sulla. See Lange *forthcoming* a), but it remained very rare for a triumph to be devoted purely and explicitly to civil war. After Caesar's final triumph (although perhaps recorded as simply *ex Hispania*) and Mutina 43 BC (Decimus Brutus in the end never returned to Rome), the next example is the AD 312 triumph of Constantine. It was this triumph, I will suggest, that broke the taboo on exclusively civil war triumphs, thus undermining the "triumphal system" established by Augustus.

Constantine: triumph over a usurper

Victory in war was, as already mentioned, an integral part of generating political legitimacy, and, as during the Late Republic, civil war had to be justified if individual emperors were to obtain that legitimacy.[55] Discussing the contested triumph of Constantine, Beard (2007, 327-328) comments on later Roman triumphal celebrations:

> Yet we should hesitate before we conclude that the ancient triumph lasted as long as anyone was prepared to describe ceremonies in triumphal terms. This was, after all, contested territory. And at a certain point the gap between the triumphal rhetoric and the ritual action must have become so wide as to be implausible.

It does indeed seem difficult to use the

evidence of panegyrists and poets to determine whether a triumph has actually taken place, and in general one should be careful with inferences on this point drawn from their effusions. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the triumph was, as mentioned above, already contested territory during the period of the Late Republic.[56]

But first an obvious point: we should not exclude any triumphs held outside Rome. Triumphs in imperial residences were nothing new by the time of Constantine and certainly were not problematic, moreover, but as we shall see, a similar practice can be traced to Republican times. During Constantine's time at Trier he successfully defeated several German tribes. Barnes (1976, 150-151) has tabulated these victories as follows: the first German victories of Constantine appeared in 307,[57] the second in 308,[58] and the third preceded his *decennalia* in 315, most probably in 313.[59] The panegyric of 310 recounts the punishing of enemy chiefs within a triumphal context, referring to triumphs of the Republican period (*Pan. Lat.* 6(7).10.2-11.6, esp. 10.5-7). The result of the victory was peace (11.1), which corresponds to the 'sense of an ending' implicit in the ritual of the triumph (cf. Livy 26.21.2-4). After this victory over Frankish tribes, a procession was held in Trier culminating with the enemy chiefs being fed to the beasts in the arena (Eutr. 10.3.2: "magnificum spectaculum"). The spectacle and punishment of the enemy is also described in the panegyric of 307 (*Pan. Lat.* 7(6).4.2, 4; cf. Eutr. 10.3.2).

The panegyric of 313 (*Pan. Lat.* 12(9).21.5-22.5; 23.3-4; cf. Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 1.46; *RIC* 7 124, 163f, 166f) also mentions the celebration of a Frankish triumph (*triumphus*), probably in 313 (23.3):[60]

> Nam quid hoc triumpho pulchrius, quo caedibus hostium utitur etiam ad nostrum omnium voluptatem, et pompam munerum de reliquiis barbaricae cladis exaggerat?
> What is lovelier than this triumphal celebration in which he employs the slaughter of enemies for the pleasure of us all, and enlarges the procession of the games out of the survivors of the massacre of the barbarians?

Cameron and Hall suggest that this was only a generalizing statement, not a reference to a specific campaign.[61] This cannot be entirely excluded, but a local triumph remains a more reasonable conclusion, in light of the detailed description of the fate of the enemy chiefs.[62] In 307 and 308 Rome was under the control of the usurper Maxentius and even if Constantine desired to celebrate a triumph in Rome, he would not have had access to the city. In 313 Constantine chose to celebrate a triumph in Trier for other reasons, away from Rome and the Capitol, perhaps because this was close to the victories and because crossing the Alps with a large armed force would have weakened the frontiers.

In the Republic the Alban Mount triumph had already revealed the conundrum of the physical locality of the triumph: it concluded outside the city of Rome, approximately 30 km to the South-East of the city. As it did not end on the Capitol, it could not be considered a triumph; moreover it was the only form of triumph that was not granted to the victorious commander by the Senate. However, Alban Mount triumphs are mentioned and recorded on the Fasti Triumphales, erected during the reign of Augustus. This adaptability in the concept of the triumph can also be seen in the celebrations of Constantine in Trier: triumphs held outside Rome, out of necessity or practicality. And this adaptability reappears in the 312 celebrations in Rome.

Constantine and Rome AD 312

Having been passed over as a member of the tetrarchy, Maxentius usurped power in Rome, whereupon Galerius summoned Severus to recover the city from the usurper. This was unsuccessful, as was Galerius' later attempt to take Rome. Finally in 312 Constantine

invaded Italy and after the capitulation of Verona, moved against Rome. The Tetrarchy was finally collapsing into civil war. On the 28th of October Maxentius was defeated at the Milvian Bridge, in what was to become the foundation myth of the regime, and on the 29th of October Constantine entered Rome.[63]

As a usurper Maxentius was a *hostis publicus* and could be killed without consequence.[64] Furthermore, Lactantius and Zosimus both claim that Maxentius declared war on Constantine due to the death of his father, allegedly killed by Constantine.[65] This, however, may be a later rewriting by the regime, as the panegyric from 321 (4(10).9-11) observes that Constantine attacked first. The case is similar to that of Antonius in the civil war against Octavian: if Antonius, as mentioned, was to take up arms against Octavian and the *res publica*, he would declare war on the *res publica* and thus declare himself a *hostis*.[66] This was mainly a question of justification: civil war appeared inevitable, but Constantine did not want to be seen to cause it. He was, it would seem, closely following the tactics of Augustus.

On the arch of Constantine, Maxentius is clearly described as a *tyrannus* (see below).[67] Later, the Roman calendar entry for the 28th of October – the date of Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge – expresses a similar idea: "EVICTIO TYRANNI" (Fasti Furii Filocali: Degrassi 1963, 257). Grünewald (1990, 64-71) has shown that there is a distinct development in the ideology and justifications of Constantine: at first Maxentius is described as *hostis rei publicae* (*Pan. Lat.* 12(9).18.2), but in the panegyrics of 321 he is described as a *tyrannus*.[68] Significantly, this development appears to predate even the arch of Constantine, as Maxentius is already described as a *tyrannus* (the name Maxentius itself is absent) in a document dating from January 313 revoking his decisions (*contra ius*).[69]

In order to show that the tyrant and usurper was dead, Maxentius' head was carried in procession as part of Constantine's entry into Rome.[70] There was a macabre precedent for this: in 88 BC Sulla – seeking to legitimise his civil war victories – had Marius and others declared public enemies (App. *B.Civ.* 1.60). The heads of those executed were displayed in the Forum Romanum and the bodies thrown into the Tiber (Vell. Pat. 2.19.1 on Marius; Flor. 2.9.14; Luc. 2.160-161; Oros. 5.19.23, 20.4). Marius' body was even exhumed and the remains scattered on the orders of Sulla (Cic. *Leg.* 2.56).

In terms of Constantine's actual entry to the city itself, the question arises as to whether his entry was a triumph or an *adventus*, two forms of celebratory returns, which had been related since the Late Republic.[71] There are aspects of the arrival that do suggest a triumph, such as the already mentioned head of Maxentius, carried in procession.[72] According to our evidence the inhabitants of Rome were even mocking the head in vengeful rejoicing, a common feature in triumphal processions.[73] Furthermore, there were (triumphal) games in Rome.[74] The inscription of the arch of Constantine states: "ARCUS TRIUMPHIS INSIGNIS".[75] This may just mean that it was adorned with representations of victories won by Constantine, and does not necessarily mean that Constantine himself had held a triumph, although it may also imply that he did so. "ARCUS TRIUMPHIS INSIGNIS" certainly seems fitting on an arch built in memory of a triumph and significantly, there is no reason to doubt that the "triumphs" mentioned included the *victoria civilis*.

Then there is the panegyric of 321, already mentioned (*Pan. Lat.* 4(10).32.1; cf. Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 9.9.9).[76] It does not unequivocally describe his entry as a triumph, but may contrast his *adventus* with triumphs to its advantage: in triumphs captive leaders were led in chains, but here the liberated nobility marched instead (*Pan. Lat.* 4(10).31-32). However, we should also be wary concluding on the grounds of the panegyric that this was an *adventus*.[77] As we have noted, Nazarius clearly knew triumphal conventions and a triumph would have contravened the convention that no triumph should be held after a civil war. Whatever the case, in the end only the grim situation and

Maxentius' supposed violence towards the Roman nobility makes this *adventus*/triumph acceptable. It is important to note that the setting described by the panegyric is that of a military procession and entry (30.4: "Iam strepitus Martii, iam tubarum sonores festiuis (vocibus) et resultanti fauore mutantur" ["Now the shrill sounds of Mars, now the noises of trumpets change to merry voices and resounding applause"]). Victory is also mentioned numerous times in the text, all of which implies a triumph rather than an *adventus*. What is certain is that this is written as a justification of a celebration after a civil war.[78]

However, many modern commentators point to the lack of any evidence for a sacrifice on the Capitol by Constantine after his victory at the Milvian Bridge, but Stephenson (2009, 146) rightly suggests that we cannot give weight to such an argument from silence.[79] A triumph without a sacrifice on the Capitol would perhaps be an oddity, but we simply cannot be certain that Constantine did not go to the temple on the Capitol.[80] The detail of the panegyric of 313, that Constantine had entered the Palatine too quickly (*Pan. Lat.* 9(12).19, 3), is hardly conclusive. Another possibility is that he went to another temple, perhaps those of Sol or Apollo, his personal deities at the time.[81]

There is one aspect of the discussion about *adventus* and triumph that is all too often overlooked: even if a general/emperor declined a triumph, he would probably, similar to republican generals, have redeemed the undertaking in accordance with his vow on the Capitol and will have dedicated his laurels on the Capitol, *votis solutis*.[82] This is evident in the *Res Gestae* of Augustus (4.1): "L[AURUM DE F]ASC[I]BUS DEPOSUI IN CAPI[TOLIO, VOTIS QUAE] QUOQUE BELLO NUNCUPAVERAM [SOL]UTIS" ["I deposited the laurel from my *fasces* in the Capitoline temple, in fulfilment of the vows which I had taken in each war"]. The sacrifice on the Capitol is thus not a decisive diagnostic here, since it was often a feature of non-triumphal *adventus*. Augustus initiated this, with his dedications of laurels in fulfilment of his vows on his non-triumphal returns after 29 BC.

Was this precedent ever followed by his successors? We do hear of several emperors going to the Capitol to sacrifice as part of their first *adventus* after accession: thus Vitellius (Tac. *Hist.* 2.89.2), Vespasian (Plin. *Pan.* 23; Joseph *BJ* 7.126), and Septimius Severus (Hdn. 2.14.2). This could just be a general thank-offering, but it may have included a dedication of laurels. Since Gaius, emperors' first salutation had been from the troops on accession, and they may accordingly have assumed laurels for their fasces, retaining them until their arrival in Rome.

MacCormack's suggestion that the entry of Constantine was described in terms of an *adventus* (1972, 726) and subsequently, that Constantine refused the Capitol sacrifice "at a time when triumph was in the process of being definitively transposed into *adventus*" (1981, 35) is deeply problematic:[83] descriptions of both the triumph and *adventus* are complicated due to the state of the evidence. However, the fact remains that the sources do not mention a sacrifice on the Capitol, which corresponds with the evidence that suggests that Constantine refused sacrifice in general.[84] It seems however that Constantine only ended blood sacrifice at a later date. Indeed, the arch of Constantine has multiple scenes of sacrifice on the *spolia* panels, and the completed arch should be considered as a product of the ideology of Constantine (see below).[85]

Therefore, while there are discrepancies, the possibility of a triumph certainly cannot be excluded and even seems to be very likely, due first of all to the victory procession, including the head of Maxentius. This hardly seems to fit an *adventus*. The sum of evidence may thus point in the direction of a triumph and, crucially, there is nothing to suggest that Constantine was opposed to the concept and the idea of triumph.

This conclusion does however create a new question that should be addressed: if this was an exclusively civil war triumph, it was in breach of the convention that rejected

the concept of civil war triumphs – indeed, the above mentioned evidence suggests that civil war celebrations were something that should be avoided altogether. During Caesar's African triumph the crowds were upset as Caesar, shockingly, included depictions of the deaths of Scipio, Petreius and Cato, although without inscribing their names (App. *B.Civ.* 2.101). In 312 Constantine paraded the head of Maxentius in procession. Civil war is thus an integral part of the discussion of the triumph of Constantine and there can be little doubt that the victory of 312 was in a civil war (*hostis* or not, although together with *tyrannus* this was surely the *iustis armis* in the war against Maxentius). In later sources this was portrayed as a necessary civil war, protecting Christians (Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 14.1; *Optatus Milevensis* 1.18) and, perhaps most importantly, Constantine did not hesitate to use this detail on the arch in Rome (see below). Caesar's Spanish triumph in 45 BC unmistakably broke the taboo on civil war triumphs and Constantine seems to have followed this precedent. Accordingly Girardet states: "Daß hier (wie auch im Panegyricus von 313) zum Lob des Kaisers ein Bürgerkrieg thematisiert wurde, muß als ein massiver Tabubruch gewertet werden".[86]

Stephenson suggests that Constantine, as Augustus before him, would have turned a civil war victory into one over foreign enemies, but argues that there was no time for this in 312:[87] he no doubt wanted to enter immediately, but of course during the day, in triumph, not as Augustus' non-triumphal returns, during the night.[88] This would, of course, have changed by 315, and there are indeed defeated barbarians represented on the arch of Constantine (as are winged Victories, both traditional iconography on triumphal arches); but it is also important to note that the inscription of the arch does not mention barbarians.[89] No doubt much of the policy and ideology of Constantine can be traced back to Augustus and the Late Republic. However, when he triumphed in 312 he seems to have imitated Caesar more than Augustus. Keeping this in mind, we may now turn to the arch of Constantine in more detail.

The arch of Constantine

IMP(ERATORI) CAES(ARI)
FL(AVIO) CONSTANTINO MAXIMO/
P(IO) F(ELICI) AVGVSTO SPQR
QVOD INSTINCTV DIVINITATIS MENTIS
MAGNITVDINE CVM EXERCITV SVO
TAM DE TYRANNO QVAM DE OMNI EIVS
FACTIONE VNO TEMPORE IVSTIS
REM PVBLICAM VLTVS EST ARMIS
ARCVM TRIVMPHIS INSIGNEM DICAVIT

> To the emperor Caesar Flavius Constantinus the greatest, dutiful and blessed, Augustus, the Senate and people of Rome dedicated this arch, distinguished by [representations of] victories, because, by the inspiration of divinity and by the greatness of his mind, with his army he avenged the state with righteous arms against both the tyrant and all of his faction at one and the same time [*CIL* 6 1139=*ILS* 694. Trans. Lee 2000, 83, adapted].

The arch of Constantine was an honour given by the Senate to the victor and built by the *SPQR*.[90] However, Lenski (2008) has not only assigned the arch to the Senate, but also suggested that they sought to persuade the emperor that his victory was given by a pagan deity (suggesting that the "*Instinctu divinitatis*" recalls the Republican ritual of evocation). Similarly, other scholars have suggested that the Senate tried to construct Constantine as they wanted him to be, through the arch and its inscription.[91]

I would like to stress that it is surprising to mention civil war so prominently on the arch and that this certainly was in breach of tradition, similar to the arch of Septimius Severus, although his arch, triumph or not, also celebrated a foreign victory (the inscription from the arch of Augustus mentioned above is altogether less informative). Barnes states

that the inscription of the arch was about the liberator who brought peace after he ended the tyranny of a faction. This is all, he suggests, straightforward, and only *instinctu divino* is ambiguous.[92] Such an argument is unconvincing. It is possible that the inscription was written by the Senate, but whatever the case, it is improbable that the Senate would honour Constantine with an arch including an inscription prominently mentioning a civil war victory without the approval of Constantine himself.[93] The Senate must at least have known that the matter of civil war was not going to be a problem. The arch of Constantine clearly and visibly commemorated his victory over Maxentius: the fact that the name of the *tyrannus* is left unmentioned ('damnatio memoriae') suggests here that Maxentius is dishonoured, not forgotten.[94] All would have known, as we do today, who the *tyrannus* was. Significantly, the inscription of the arch must be close to the ideology of Constantine during the period before and just after the battle.

On the attic inscription Constantine, the conqueror of 312, is described as having saved the state from the tyranny of a faction, thus clearly echoing the words used by Augustus in *Res Gestae* 1.1. This seems to be universally accepted. This is a question of justification (*bellum iustum*). Constantine is also hailed as "FUNDATORI QUIETIS" ("to the founder of (internal) peace") and "LIBERATORI URBIS" ("to the liberator of the City") on the supplementary inscriptions of the arch (*CIL* 6 1139), again clearly pointing to a civil war victory. If the premise is accepted that Constantine celebrated a triumph entering Rome in 312, the arch becomes a problem, as already pointed out, in as much as no foreign enemy is mentioned. The arch was an honour, built by the *SPQR* in order to commemorate the victory of Constantine (decreed in 312 and finished in about 315), a victory in what appears to be exclusively a civil war. This is certainly a highly conspicuous civil war commemoration.

As in the Late Republic, rather than obscuring the obvious truth that many conflicts during the Later Roman Empire were civil wars, the victors utilised that very detail against their rivals – that is to say, they highlighted the fact that their opponents started the civil conflicts, which they then quelled. Elsner (2000, 173) unconvincingly suggest that: "Implicitly, the civil war has become a great victory over Rome's enemies, with the visual emphasis significantly turning on foreign enemies".[95] The civil war aspect of the triumph of Constantine in 312, without a foreign enemy, is not novel, only surprising.[96] As mentioned, Caesar's Spanish triumph in 45 BC and Mutina in 43 was only over a civil war enemy and thus had already broken the taboo on civil war triumphs.

The fact that civil war may be difficult to represent visually should not distract us from accepting that civil war was an integral part of Roman history. The answer to the paradox of how to represent a civil war visually may partly lie in triumphal conventions and traditional representations of warfare in ancient Rome. It was by virtue of their external character that the Romans considered their victories as qualifying for a triumph. The more this is stressed the more the triumph of Constantine becomes an oddity: the Constantine panels on the arch conspicuously show civil conflict. The siege of Verona and the Battle of the Milvian Bridge clearly show Roman soldiers fighting one other, while barbarians are only visible on the non-Constantinian panels.[97] The panels also show Constantine's address (*contio*) in the Forum Romanum, in military dress.[98] The "entry panel" shows Constantine in the same military clothing, including his sword, certainly much more fitting for an entry in triumph after a military victory.

Maxentius' building programme sought to revive Rome's status as an imperial capital and, if Holloway's ideas are accepted, some of the reuse of *spolia* on the arch must be attributed to Maxentius.[99] Significantly, the earlier material was recut into the head of Constantine, thus effectively turning the arch in to his arch – and his ideology.[100] The reuse of *spolia* from earlier monuments suggests continuity with the Roman past, and thus

would fit both Maxentius and Constantine.[101] Yet while the panels may suggest this continuity, the inscription does not. The arch may be fairly traditional, but the inscription is less so, as it honoured Constantine for a victory in an exclusively civil war, a victory that even earned the honorand a triumph.

Conclusion

In 389 Theodosius I celebrated a triumph in Rome on the first anniversary of his victory over Magnus Maximus. As part of the celebration a speech was delivered by Pacatus in the presence of the emperor (*Pan. Lat.* 2(12).46.4; cf. 47.3):[102]

> Vidisti civile bellum hostium caede, militum pace, Italiae recuperatione, tua libetate finitum; vidisti, inquam, finitum civile bellum cui decernere posses triumphum.
>
> Now you have seen a civil war ended with the slaughter of enemies, a peaceful soldiery, the recovery of Italy, and your liberation; you have seen, I repeat, a civil war ended for which you can decree a triumph.

This was a victory over yet another usurper and both civil war and the liberation of the city are mentioned conspicuously, clearly referring back to examples from Roman history (46.1-3). After his triumph Theodosius erected a triumphal arch in Constantinople with an inscription referring to his enemy as *tyrannus*: "HAEC LOCA THEVDOSIVS DECORAT POST FATA TYRANNI" ("Theodosius decorates this place after death of a tyrant").[103] Theodosius appears to be following the precedent of Constantine and, following a tradition dating to the Republic, the enemy is not mentioned by name. A triumph in Rome during the fourth century seems to have only been held after a victory where the sole rule of the empire had been at stake, which is to say, after a civil war.

While it does seem problematic to rely upon the evidence of panegyrists and poets to determine whether a civil war triumph or an *adventus* has actually taken place in 312, Constantine's procession, alongside the rest of the evidence certainly does seem to suggest a triumph. [104] The procession, including the head of the defeated enemy, the day after a military victory, does not really suggest an *adventus*.

The head of Maxentius was part of the spoils of victory, and at the same time may have distracted from whatever spoils that may also have been present. However, Constantine wisely did not lead the Roman soldiers of Maxentius in the procession. Caesar's African triumph presents a comparable scenario: the triumph itself was acceptable and he had established a model with his Juba celebrations, holding ovations/triumphs only for civil wars which could be represented as external. However according to Appian (*B.Civ.* 2.101), he provocatively included depictions of the deaths of Scipio, Petreius and Cato. It was this feature which was remembered. Constantine appears to have looked to Caesar's final triumph, which was only over civil opponents.[105] In fact his triumph even seems to have gone beyond this, as it was celebrated not *ex Hispania*, but over Italy itself (thus equalling Mutina). It is revealing that Constantine did not conceal the civil war aspect of his victory and triumph, which is still visible today: offered right before our eyes on the arch of Constantine. In light of this, the most probable scenario does appear to be that Constantine celebrated an exclusively civil war triumph in 312 over the *tyrannus* Maxentius, in clear breach of the convention that no triumph could be won for an exclusively civil war. But as we have seen, the civil war triumph of Constantine was not to be the last to be celebrated in Roman history.

What seems to be certain is that Constantine's post-civil-war commemorations were in breach of tradition, although it must be remembered that civil war celebrations were almost always contested. Our evidence clearly reveals a discomfort with any form of

civil war celebration. If we leave the triumph question aside, we can still see that Constantine dealt with a civil war victory in a more absolute manner than Augustus had before him: he bluntly mentions a civil war victory in the inscription of the arch, without any reference to a foreign enemy. Nevertheless, the ideology of Augustus and the Late Republic was clearly visible during the 312 celebrations, most notably the use of the concepts of *hostis*, the omission of the name of the opponent, the question of restoration after a period of civil war (return to normality and peace), as well as the monumental commemorations themselves, such as the triumphal arch. Our problem today is how to conceptualize such civil war victories. As mentioned at the outset, the three arches still standing in the centre of Rome, along with that of Augustus, all commemorate the victors of extended civil wars. The triumph and associated monuments were there to shape perceptions of the war they celebrated, as well as to reflect them.

Distinguishing between the triumph and the *adventus* is by no means simple, but it does not appear to be right to say that the distinction became virtually elided. Indeed, it is tempting to suggest that the key distinguishing feature was that a triumph normally involved the display of spoils, while an *adventus* did not.[106] Crucially, the question as to whether Constantine visited the Capitol in 312, and whether he sacrificed there, is in this case a red herring: we cannot know if he did and even if he did not, this does not prove that it was not a triumph. The Albano triumphs and the Trier triumphs of Constantine make it clear that a triumph did not have to be celebrated on the Capitol in Rome (although this may have been different in pre-Augustan times). The sacrifice on the Capitol is not a conclusive diagnostic here, also because it was often a feature of the non-triumphal *adventus*.

It has recently been argued that the question of triumphal conventions must be considered within the wider context of Roman political rules and rule conflicts.[107] And indeed, it was only on Marcellus' return from Syracuse in 211 BC that the issue first arose as to whether a commander could triumph without bringing his army back to Rome. In the case of Acilius Glabrio's triumph in 189 BC Flaig writes: "das Ritual führte allen vor Augen, dass der Sieg des Triumphators den Krieg nicht beendet hatte" (2004, 37). This may be true, but, he did receive a triumph. So while the rules of triumph were flexible, the ritual itself often varied much more than we have often been made to believe. Thus the 312 triumph of Constantine, given after an exclusively civil war, stands out as a triumph, copying Caesar's final triumph (no foreign enemy) and as a result being in clear breach of the Roman consensus on the matter. It was also different as a ritual, as Constantine perhaps did not visit the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, a detail which should not make us dismiss it as a triumph. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, it was different in the form of its commemorations, conspicuously celebrating a civil war triumph. However, all these differences apart, Constantine nevertheless celebrated a triumph.

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NOTES

1 See notably: Auliard 2001; Flaig 2004, esp. 32-48; Itgenshorst 2005; Bastien 2007; Beard 2007; Krasser et al. 2008; La Rocca & Tortorella 2008; Pittenger 2008; Östenberg 2009; Lundgreen 2011, 178-253. I am very grateful to John W. Rich, Troels Myrup Kristensen and Johannes Wienand for their helpful suggestions and comments. All abbreviations follow those listed in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (third edition). Unless otherwise stated, all translations are those of the Loeb Classical Library, with some corrections.

2 For a tabulation of imperial triumphs, see Barini 1952, 201-204.

3 Lange *forthcoming* a.

4 Lange 2009; Lange *forthcoming* a.

5 Flaig 1992; cf. 2010; McCormick 1986, 13; Ando 2000, 277. On consensus, see Ando 2000 and on the Roman emperor as a unifying symbol, see Noreña 2011.

6 On *adventus*, see MacCormack 1981; McCormick 1986; Millar 1977, 28-40; Halfmann 1986; Lehnen 1997; Benoist 2005, chs. 1-2.

7 Beard 2007, 289.

8 On the various rules and conventions governing the award of triumphs the classic treatments are Mommsen 1887 and Ehlers 1939. Other recent discussions of triumphal regulations include Auliard 2001; Itgenshorst 2005, esp. 180-188; Beard 2007, esp. 187-218; Pittenger 2008; Goldbeck and Mittag 2008; Lundgreen 2011, 178-253.

9 Lange *forthcoming* a; Bloomer 1992, 117-119; Wardle, 1998, 15-19, esp. 16.

10 Nixon & Rodgers 1994, 334-342.

11 Nixon & Rodgers 1994, 26-33; Bleckmann 2012, 24; contra Grünewald 1990, 11. See now also Rees 2012, 40-41.

12 On genre and as a general introduction, see Nixon & Rodgers 1994, 1-37; MacCormack 1981, 1-14; Rees 2012.

13 See also Grünewald 1990, 77.

14 According to Kelly 2002, Ammianus is writing for an audience at Rome. See also Davies 2004, 234-236, who takes a more nuanced view, seeing him as a self-declared Greek who wrote history in Latin (235). See Fornara 1992 on Ammianus' thorough knowledge of Latin literature.

15 On his use of earlier evidence, see Kelly 2008.

16 Cf. Matthews 2007, 233-234 on Constantius.

17 McCormick 1986, 80; contra MacCormack 1972; 1981.

18 Cameron 1970, 382-389 on the entry into Rome.

19 Stilicho's victories at Pollentia and Verona 402; cf. McCormick 1986, 51; Beard 2007, 326.

20 Livy *Per.* 116; Vell. Pat. 2.56; Suet. *Iul.* 37; Plin. *HN* 14.97; Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.61; Plut. *Caes.* 56.7; Dio Cass. 43.42.1; Flor. 2.13.88; Sumi 2005, 63-64; Lange *forthcoming* a.

21 Lange 2009, esp. 79-90; Lange *forthcoming* a.

22 Rich 2011, 204-209.

23 Against this view, see Suet. *Aug.* 17.2; App. *B.Civ.* 4.38, 4.45. On *hostis* declarations, see Vittinghoff 1936.

24 *RG* 24.1; Dio Cass. 50.4.5; Lange 2009, 60-93.

25 Lange 2009, 125-157. The term "triumphal arch" may refer to the *quadriga* on top of the monument. See Lusnia 2006, 275. Beard, 2007: 45-46 on the third century.

26 Cf. Lange 2009, 163-166; contra Nedergaard 2001, 107–127.

27 Gurval 1995, 42 on the measurements.

[28] Rich 1998, 109.
[29] Nedergaard 2001, 125, n. 51; cf. Gurval 1995, 42; contra Rich 1998, 100-114; Rich & Williams 1999, 184-185.
[30] For other possibilities, see Gurval 1995, 42, contested by Lange 2009, 165-166.
[31] On the connection between the capture of Alexandria and freeing the state, see Degrassi 1947, 489; EJ, p. 49; Rich & Williams 1999, 184–185.
[32] *RG* 34.1. Fixed-term tasks thus became the standard way for Augustus to justify monarchy (Rich 2010; 2012), as had earlier been the case with the triumviral assignment (Lange 2009).
[33] Trans. Carter 1996. Lange 2009, 28-38 on Sextus Pompeius and the triumviral assignment.
[34] Murray & Petsas 1989, 76 and 86, with corrections by Zachos 2003, 76.
[35] Lange 2009, 106-123.
[36] Lange 2009, 122.
[37] For a summation of *RG* 1, see now Lehmann 2004; Lange 2009, 14-18. In Late Republican Rome a *factio* was associated with oligarchy: Sall. *Iug.* 31.15; Caes. *B Civ.* 1.22.5; *B Gal.* 6.11.2; Cic. *Brut.* 44.146; *Att.* 7.9.4; *Rep.* 1.44; *Phil.* 6.10-11; 10-14. For the fear of tyranny during the early Empire, see Kneppe 1994, 165-216.
[38] Lange, 2009: 14-18.
[39] Ando 2000, esp. 294.
[40] Suet. *Vesp.* 8.1; Joseph *BJ* 7.119-157; Dio Cass. 65.12.1 mentions an arch being voted to Vespasian. See also Beard 2003, 557: "So Vespasian and Titus could celebrate victory over the Jews as an elegant cover for their victory against the Roman supporters of Vitellius".
[41] Lange *forthcoming* a.
[42] See Rosso, 2009.
[43] Künzl 1988, 19-24, suggests that this was not a triumphal arch, but an honorific arch built to celebrate the *apotheosis* of Titus, clearly visible on a panel (21). This seems an overly rigid interpretation of the monument.
[44] On context see Campbell 2005.
[45] Lichtenberger 2011, 75; Brilliant 1967, 1993; Noreña 2011, 226-227. Geta's name was later removed.
[46] During the reign of Augustus it had figured at least in the *Laudatio Turiae* 2.25.
[47] Lange 2009. *RG*, heading: conqueror of the known world. Echo of Augustan arch: Lusnia 2006, 292; Birley 1988, 155.
[48] So also Beard 2007, 322-323.
[49] Birley 1988, 144-145, 155 is inclined to think that Severus may have held an ovation on return from Africa in 203, but this is taking *SHA* 14.7 *veluti ovans* too literally.
[50] According to Zosimus (1.59; Zon. 12.27) she died and was not paraded in Rome at the triumph, but this is contradicted by the parallel evidence (SHA, *Aurel.* 33.2-34.4; *Tyranni XXX* 30.4.12; 24-7; Fest. 24; Eutr. 9.13.2; Beard 2007, 116).
[51] McCormick 1986, 14; Watson 1999, 179; Beard 2007, 122-3.
[52] Aur. Vict. Caes. 35.5; Epit. 35.7; Eutr. 9.13.2; Watson 1999, 95.
[53] According to Watson 1999, 66 Aurelian portrays an un-Roman Zenobia.
[54] Watson 1999, 177.
[55] In 306 Constantine was proclaimed Augustus by the troops after the death of his father (*Pan. Lat.* 6(7).8.2). There is disagreement whether this amounts to usurpation on Constantine's part (Lactant. *De mort. pers.* 26.4; Zos. 2.11.1). Usurpation: Grünewald 1990, 9, 13, 15,173; Girardet 2010, 63; Lenski 2012, 62; contra Stephenson 2009, 116, 330; Barnes 2011, 63. The title of Augustus was certainly more than was agreed with Galerius. For a strong argument suggesting that Constantine was a usurper, see Humphries 2008.
[56] Lange *forthcoming* a, b.
[57] *Pan. Lat.* 7(6).4.2; 6(7).10-11; 4(10).16.5-18.6; cf. Eutr. 10.3.2.
[58] Invasion of the territory of the Bructeri; *Pan. Lat.* 6(7).12.1; 4(10).18.1ff; *RIC* 6 223.
[59] *Pan. Lat.* 12(9).21.5-22.5; 23.3-4; Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 1.46; *RIC* 7 124, 163f, 166f.
[60] See Nixon & Rodgers 1994, 289-90; Wienand 2011, 238.
[61] Cameron & Hall 1999, 222; contra Nixon & Rodgers 1994, 289-290.
[62] See also Barnes 2011, 71; Lenski 2012, 63.
[63] Barnes 2011, 82, cf. 74-80 on the vision of Constantine. On the ideology of Constantine, see Grünewald 1990; Humphries 2008. Just north of Rome along the Via Flaminia Constantine erected an arch – now called Malborghetto – near where he had defeated Maxentius' forces. It may or may not have been a monument to the victory on the 28th of October. See Holloway 2004, 53-4.
[64] Girardet 2010, 63.
[65] Lactant. *De mort. pers.* 43.4; Zos. 2.14; cf. Girardet 2010, 63.
[66] Lange 2009, 60-70.
[67] Grünewald 1990, 64-71. On *tyrannus* during the Later Roman Empire, see Humphries 2008.
[68] *Pan. Lat.* 4(10).6.2; 7.4; 30.1; 31.4; 32.6; 34.4. Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 9.11.2: *hostis* and *tyrannus*; cf. 9.9.1 on the justification of the war.
[69] *Cod. Theod.* 15.14.3 from the 6th of January. See also 15.14.4 from the 13th of January; 5.8.1 from the 24th of April;

cf. Grünewald 1990, 70. For a possible Christian meaning of *tyrannus* in 312, see Barnes 2011, 82.

70 *Pan. Lat.* 9(12).17ff, 18.3: 10(4).28ff; Zos. 2.17.1; Lenski 2012, 70, n 60 for more evidence; Wienand 2011, 248; Kristensen *forthcoming* on bodily mutilation and civil war in the Later Roman Empire.

71 Beard 2007, 324; Lange *forthcoming* b.

72 Accepting a triumph, see mainly Grünewald 1990, 74-7; Stephenson 2009, 146; Wienand 2011, 248.

73 *Pan. Lat.* 12(9).18.3; Östenberg 2009, 156-159 on the mocking of captives in triumphs.

74 Degrassi 1963, 257, 527; cf. *Pan. Lat.* 12(9).19.6: "ludi aeterni"; cf. McCormick 1986, 36-37.

75 *CIL* 6 1139=*ILS* 694. See McCormick 1986: 84; contra Girardet 2010, 77.

76 Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 4(10).31.1-3, also quoted above. For Constantine's title "*victor et triumphator*", see Bleckmann 2012, 18.

77 The Roman calendar entry for the 29th of October: "ADVENTU(US) DIVI" (Fasti Furii Filocati: Degrassi 1963, 257) is hardly conclusive and much later (AD 354).

78 On Constantine and civil war, see now especially Wienand 2011.

79 Cf. Peirce 1989, 405; Mastino & Teatino 2001.

80 McCormack 1986, 101, n 93; cf. Nixon & Rodgers 1994, 323-324, n 119; Beard 2007, 326 and n 75.

81 I owe this interesting point to Johannes Wienand.

82 Rightly so Straub 1955, 305; cf. Girardet 2010, 77. Dio Cass. 54.25.4 on 14 BC, 55.5.1 on 8 BC; Livy 45.39.10-12 for republican sacrifice. On imperial travels and returns, see Halfmann 1986, esp. 157-244 (tabulation).

83 For *ingressus*, see Girardet 2010, 76. But then the procession and games would be an oddity.

84 Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 1.48; 3.15. See Straub 1955, 298-299; Cameron & Hall 1999, 223-224; Girardet 2010, 79-80.

85 Elsner 2000, 153: "Also, I assume that once the Arch reached its final state under Constantine it constituted a Constantinian monument, whatever the previous history of supposed earlier arches on the site".

86 Girardet 2010: 67-8. Barnes 2011, 83, 99-100 claims there was no triumph, not because Constantine was Christian, but because Romans did not celebrate triumphs in a civil war. Cf. Zanker 2012, 84. Van Dam 2011, 135: "His procession was not so much to celebrate a victory over a rival emperor as to commemorate a victory for the traditional gods" (cf. 216-217). Lenski 2012, 70: "Yet his propaganda only barely admitted this grim truth", that this was a civil war (depicting Maxentius not as a rival emperor, but a *tryrannus*).

87 Stephenson 2009, 147; cf. Straub 1955, 299-300.

88 Lange *forthcoming* b.

89 Contra Zanker 2012, 83: "Der Bezug der Barbaren der Reliefs auf Maxentius wird durch diese Inschriften unmissverständlich nahe gelegt. Der "Tyrann Maxentius" und seine "*factio*" werden so zweifelsfrei mit den Barbaren gleichgesetzt".

90 For the arch, see L'Orange & Gerkan 1939; Capodiferro 1993; Pensabene & Panella 1999; Elsner, 2000; 2012; Holloway 2004.

91 Elsner 2000, 171, n 28; Liverani 2004, 399; Van Dam 2011, 14, 126, 129; Barnes 2011, 18; Zanker 2012, esp. 99-100. Contrary to this view, see now Prusac 2012, who sustains Constantine's agency.

92 Barnes 2011, 19-20; cf. Lenski 2008. Some scholars have pointed out that there is a lack of references to Christianity on the arch and its inscription (Elsner 2012, 259; Peirce 1989, 406; contra Girardet 2010: "*Instinctu divinitatis*" could be Christian (84-85, 88 on religious ambiguity). See also Van Dam 2011, 131 on religious flexibility. On Sol and the arch, see Zanker 2012, 81; Prusac 2012, 150-152, on the ambiguity of symbols.

93 Stephenson 2009, 157; Girardet 2010, 83; Bleckmann 2012, 15; Elsner 2012, 259.

94 Hedrick 2000.

95 See also Faust 2011, 402, discussing the so-called *adventus* of Constantine 312: "Hierdurch wird in der Tat das Prestige, das insbesondere mit der Heimkehr des Kaisers nach siegreichen Auseinandersetzungen mit *äußeren* Feienden verbunden ist, auf die problematischen Vorgänge im Zusammenhang mit dem Bürgerkrieg und der Einnahme Roms übertragen. Wie im übrigen Bildschmuck und in der Inschrift wird der eigentliche Gegner, Maxentius, auf dieser Weise externalisiert und anonymisiert". Faust (402-3) also suggests that a triumph was avoided, as this would be contrary to Constantine's policy of *consensus universorum*. This conclusion is however contrary to the inscription on the arch, blatantly signifying a civil war.

96 Contra Elsner 2012, 258-259; Mayer 2006, 146.

97 Looking at the Constantine panels, they represent the advance from Milan, the siege of Verona, the battle at the Milvian Bridge, entry into Rome, and activities in Rome (L'Orange & Gerkan 1939; Elsner 2000; Holloway 2004. See also Faust 2011, who suggests a narrative reading of the panels; Zanker 2012, 85-99, 88-90 on the soldiers of Maxentius). These are all visible representations of the campaign against Maxentius. Even though Constantine's entry into Rome does not show him in a *quadriga* (Stephenson 2009, 156; Elsner 2012, 258 for the lost statue group on top of the arch, now lost; contra Holloway 2004, 51, suggesting that there was no *quadriga*, as this was a victory in a civil war; Zanker 2012, 92) it seems extreme to suggest that the panel(s) only show an *adventus* (MacCormack 1972, 731; 1981, 36-37). Faust (2011, esp. 402) suggests that the *ingressus* looked like a triumph, but was not. However, this rests solely on the idea that no triumph is (allegedly) shown on the Constantine panels. Furthermore, it does not take into account that rituals change over time (see conclusion below).

98 Holloway 2004, 37; Zanker 2012, 95.

99 Holloway 2004; cf. Elsner 2012. Stephenson 2009, esp. 142, 151 on the building programme. On Constantine and

the building programme of Maxentius, see Marlowe 2010. She points to Constantine's dubious role of slayer of the city's great benefactor, at the same time stressing that Constantine was there for the first time on the 29th of October 312. Cf. Prusac 2012.

[100] Liverani 2004 claims that L'Orange 1939 was wrong to state that Constantine wanted to identify with earlier emperors. See also Faust 2011. Contra Prusac 2012, esp. 129-130, on the importance of earlier imperial architecture/ideology.

[101] Elsner 2000, 152, 170; cf. Peirce 1989, 416 on stylistic continuity.

[102] Nixon & Rodgers 1994, 443. On the spectacle, see also McCormick 1986, 85.

[103] Trans. Bardill 1999. The obelisk of Theodosius in Constantinople also refers to "EXTINCTIS TYRANNIS" (CIL 3.737). He was also victorious over Flavius Victor (384–388) and Eugenius (392–394). See Wienand 2011, esp. 250-251.

[104] The Christian agenda of Lactantius and Eusebius is also rather unhelpful. See Humpries 2008.

[105] Livy *Per.* 116; Vell. Pat. 2.56; Suet. *Iul.* 37; Plin. *HN* 14.97; Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.61; Plut. *Caes.* 56.7; Dio Cass. 43.42.1; Flor. 2.13.88; Sumi, 2005, 63-64.

[106] On spoils, see Östenberg 2009, 19-127, 128-188 on captives.

[107] Lundgreen 2011, 178–253.