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THE UNSOLVED LOYALTY PROBLEM: OUR WESTERN HERITAGE

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A SERIOUS DEFECT in recent discussions of the problem of loyalty has been the lack of any sound historical treatment of the subject.¹ Much that is contained in the records of antiquity reveals a conscious concern of early governments with the problem of loyalty. Royal inscriptions and letters, abundant ritual texts, the fervors of prophets and poets in every age of crisis, betray a desire to incite feelings not of fear and submission alone, but of genuine loyalty in the hearts of subjects and citizens, and might well be studied as propaganda literature. But for the fullest and most illuminating commentary on regimented loyalty one must turn to the rich and revealing records of the Roman world in the fatal years between the victory of Constantine and the sack of Rome by the Vandals in 450 A.D. It is no accident that scholars since World War II have gravitated with unerring instinct and unprecedented zeal to those documents which depict with unrivaled clarity the starts, alarms, and desperate devices of a world empire in disintegration, striving before all things to inspire that general loyalty which alone could arrest "the internal decay of the second half of the fourth century [which] had become as bad as a cancerous growth."²

The purpose of this paper is to consider three significant aspects of the Roman loyalty program in the period designated. These are (1) the attempt to excite loyalty by appealing to the traditions of Western civiliza-

¹ "We are facing an utterly new problem in American life. . . . Others believe that some or all 'loyalty measures' taken to safeguard the nation in the cold war reveal ignorance of the lessons of history and violate fundamental democratic principles." Thus Morris Ernst, in *Loyalty in a Democratic State*, ed. J. C. Wahlke (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1952), p. vi. Cf. *Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 179* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1952), pp. 1-6; H. Westmann, "On Conflicts of Loyalties," *Question Vol. V* (Winter, 1952), pp. 5-15; C. R. Nixon, "Freedom vs. Unity," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. LXVIII (March, 1953), p. 88.

² A. Alföldi, *A Conflict of Ideas in the Late Roman Empire, the Clash between the Senate and Valentinian*, trans. H. Mattingly (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 40. Below, note 6.

tion while emphasizing a world-wide culture-polarization, (2) the attempt to solve the problem of divided loyalty by lumping all good things together in a "one-package loyalty," and (3) the attempt of certain large and important interest groups to use the new loyalty as a club against old opponents, thereby effectively wrecking the whole program. In the course of the discussion it will become clear that we are dealing not merely with the desire of the Imperial government for loyal subjects, but with concrete projects for the implementation of that desire. The present study is essentially a report on the effectiveness of those projects, resembling as they do certain controversial procedures of the present time.

POLARIZED LOYALTIES

In the fourth century A.D. Western civilization was threatened with the greatest crisis — internal and external — in its history.³ When cities (including the capital itself) were as likely to be taken by the operation of traitors and fifth-columnists as by enemy assault, when the fate of the world depended on the loyalty of some Gothic or Hunnish general to an emperor who did not know his own mind, when the armies of many nations could be hurled against each other or united in brotherhood by the force of a single order, when powerful pressure-groups and colorful individuals were bidding against each other for the support of mankind, when the life of prefect or governor could depend on the whim of a military or city mob — at such a time the survival of civilization depended on the possibility of inducing the world at large to declare its allegiance to some specific thing, and of holding it to that allegiance with firm and sacred bonds. To the Roman mind, *fides*, a sense of personal reciprocal obligation, was the key to peace and security in life — the very essence of the social order.⁴ The same concept of loyalty imbues almost every page of Greek tragedy, investing it with a profoundly intimate and domestic atmosphere, which distinguishes the "Western" mind from the aloof ritualism of the gorgeous East. But by the fourth century long years of civil war and world crisis had widely uprooted the old domestic loyalties of Greek drama and Roman legend, and turned the *oecumene* into a world of displaced persons, inevitably drawn towards the Big City.⁵ To take the place of the old lost loyalty — the *prisca fides* — a new super-loyalty was needed to guarantee

³ Joh. Straub goes so far as to call it the most significant crisis in all history; in "Christliche Geschichts-apologetik in der Krisis des röm. Reiches," *Historia*, Vol. I (1950), p. 52; cf. his "Parens Principum," etc., *Nouvelle Clio*, Vols. III-IV (1952), p. 94.

⁴ R. M. Henry, "Pietas and Fides in Catullus," *Hermathena*, Vol. LXXV (1950), p. 63, and Vol. LXXVI, pp. 48-56.

⁵ *Carere patria intolerabile est. Aspice aegedum hanc frequentiam, cui vix urbis immensae tecta sufficiunt . . . ex toto denique orbe terrarum confluerunt.* Seneca *Ad Helviam* vi. Cf. Cicero *pro Balbo* ix. 24 (*libertas id est civitas*); Rutil. Claud. *Namat*. I. 66 (*urbem fecisti, quod prius orbis erat*), etc. The philosophers of the time "addressed themselves to a world of *deracines*. They preached . . . salvation in 'society' regarded as distinct from and independent of political forms." Thus C. N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 30.

the permanence of the social order: men were taught to declare allegiance to a super-thing, a noble abstraction loosely designated as *Romania* or *Romanitas*.

A host of studies has come forth in recent years, showing the concept of *Romanitas* to be something very close indeed to that "Western Civilization" by which one conjures in our own day.⁶ At the end of the fourth century Prudentius repeated what Aelius Aristides had proclaimed at the end of the second: Rome is more than a political or geographical entity, it is Civilization itself, the free world of free men, a new race sprung from the mixed blood of all the nations; its culture is Culture itself, the extent of its rule is the *orbis terrarum*, the *oecumene*, its mission the realization of the Stoic doctrine "that nature intended that all men should as rational beings form a single community under the guidance of divine reason."⁷ Not only was this the blessed assurance of the ruling group, says Vogt, but "the confidence with which the general public glorified the Empire as the world-community is simply astonishing."⁸ Nor was this apparent love for a lofty abstraction a cold and impersonal sort of thing: devout Christian writers display as warm and vital an attachment to their Roman heritage as to the Church itself in the fourth century.⁹

This was the positive appeal to loyalty. But men's passions are more quickly and keenly stirred by opposition than by approbation, and the inevitable corollary to the doctrine of *Romania* was that of *Barbaria*. "Everything that existed outside of the world-unity was viewed by the general public as desolation and barbarism."¹⁰ This again was an abstract and artificial thing — it was the old doctrine of the Two Worlds that has been discussed in this journal before, but, for all its hollowness, a highly effective force in history.¹¹ *Externus timor, maximum concordiae vinculum* was an old Roman maxim — the secret of unity is to find an external foe. Since Republican times Parthia had been "the type and representative of the untamed Orient," the Eastern peril, the symbol of Asiatic barbarism;

⁶ To the works of Alföldi, Straub, and Cochrane, just cited (especially Cochrane's 2nd chap. "Romanitas") add A. Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948); Jos. Vogt, *Constantin der Grosse u. sein Jahrhundert* (Münchner Verlag, 1949); W. Eltester, "Die Krisis der alten Welt und das Christentum," *Ztschr. für die Neutestamentl. Wissenschaft*, Vol. XLII (1949), pp. 1-19; A. Piganiol, "L'Etat actuel de la Question Constantinienne 1939-49," *Historia*, Vol. I (1950), pp. 82 ff.; Aldo Marsili, "Roma nella poesia di Claudiano. Romanita occidentale contrapposta a quella orientale," *Antiquitas*, Vol. I (1946), pp. 3-24, and other studies cited in the course of this paper. For a complete survey of the field and a demonstration of the great increase of interest in it, K. F. Stroheker, "Das konstantinische Jh. im Lichte der Neuerscheinungen 1940-1951," *Saeculum*, Vol. III (1952), pp. 654-80.

⁷ Vogt, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-15; Aristides, ed. Dindorf, Vol. XIV, pp. 206 ff. (360 ff.); pp. 225 ff. (393 ff.); Prudentius *Contra Symmachum* II. 578-633; Rutil. Claud. Namatianus I. 47-66: *fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam*. . . .

⁸ Vogt, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁹ See below, notes 61-64; P. Chavanne, "Le Patriotisme de Prudence," *Revue d'Hist. et de Lit. Religieuses*, Vol. IV (1899), pp. 333 ff., 412-13; Cassiodorus Var. I. 21. G. Bardy, *L'Eglise et les deniers Romains* (Paris: Laffont, 1948), p. 48.

¹⁰ Vogt, *op. cit.*, pp. 12 f.; Marsili, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 17 f., 23.

¹¹ H. Nibley, "The Hierocentric State," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. IV (1951), pp. 244-47.

but when the Parthians were absorbed by the revived and highly centralized Persian Empire, or during the years when *Barbaria* was united under a superman such as Attila, conditions were present for a true world polarization, with the East replying in kind to Western charges of barbarism and aggression.¹² The situation may be illustrated by the story of Priscus on the steppes.

In 448 A.D. a Roman ambassador who had just arrived at the court of Attila, *rex omnium regum*, on the plains between Europe and Asia, came upon a well-dressed Scythian who, to his surprise, spoke Greek. He learned from the man that he had been a successful merchant in Moesia, but when his city fell, to save his business, had joined up with the conquering hosts and soon found in the Scythian community a far better way of life than he had ever known as a Roman.

He said that once the war was over, anyone could live among the Scythians in complete independence, being free to manage his personal affairs exactly as he chose with virtually no interference from anybody. On the other hand, anyone living the Roman way of life stood a very good chance of getting killed in case of war, being forced to rely for his survival on the operations of others, since the mean suspicion of the government forbade anyone to bear arms in his own defense. Furthermore, those entrusted with the business of defense were rendered ineffectual by incompetent and cowardly commanders. And the burdens of peace were actually harder to bear than those of war—the intolerable load of taxation and tribute, the insults and injuries of rascally officials, the unequal application of the laws, by which an offender if he was rich enough got off scot-free, but if he was poor felt the full weight and majesty of the law for even the slightest unintentional slip; and if he lived long enough to see his case through the courts, would find himself utterly ruined by long-drawn-out and expensive legal proceedings. The most disgusting thing about the whole business, he said, was that law and justice were strictly for sale.

“When he had run on this way at great length,” says Priscus, “I finally asked him politely if he would consent to listen to my side of the story for a while.” Then he proceeded to point out that in theory there never was a better system than the Roman, in which each bore his proper burden, whether on the farm, in the army, or in government service. Priscus continues:

We are all bound to obey the laws, and that goes even for the Emperor himself; which is just the opposite of what you say, that the rich can gouge the poor with impunity—though of course there are exceptions. . . . But in general you will find that what applies to the rich also applies to the poor. . . . That is the rule everywhere in the civilized world: every man thanks his private fortune for whatever befalls him as a free man, and is not dependent for it on the will of this or that military despot.

The Romans, he says, treat their house-slaves better than the barbarians do their subjects, “and they certainly do not have the power of life and death over them as your Scythian masters do. By and large, it is a free way of life.”

At this point, Priscus avers, his new friend shed tears and confessed that the laws were indeed fair and the Roman government a good one,

¹² Vogt, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 f.; Priscus *Legatio ad gentes*, in Migne, *Patrol. Graec.*, CXIII, 736; Jordanes *Hist. Goth.* c. 36; Claudian *Get.* 364, 344; Horat *Carm.* I. 12, 53 ff.

“but that the men who administered it had lost the good old Roman spirit, and had corrupted everything.” To this the Roman has no answer, and the conversation is conveniently interrupted.¹³

Gibbon saw in this debate only an effective statement of the case against Rome, to which the “prolix and feeble declamation” of the ambassador was no reply at all.¹⁴ Yet Priscus plainly thinks he has won the argument, and the modern reader, made wise by new experience, knows that this is one of those ideological discussions in which neither side is ever beaten. For all his fine Ciceronian afterthoughts, Priscus does not invent the issue, for Agathias some years later describes a general migration of “Christian philosophers” to the court of the Persian king, which at a distance looked to them like a true Utopia, and Procopius tells how the poorer classes, “the mechanics and handworkers, were naturally compelled to struggle with hunger, and many in consequence changed their citizenship and went off as fugitives to the land of Persia.” Salvian, a contemporary of Priscus, reports from far western Gaul that “people are everywhere going over to the Goths, the Bagaudi or any other ruling tribe of barbarians. . . . For they prefer to live as free men *sub specie captivitatis* rather than to go on living as captives *sub specie libertatis*.” Worst of all, says Salvian, those who have been the most loyal, deserving, and patriotic Romans are the very ones who are now “moved to declare that they wish they were not Romans!”¹⁵ Here again it is the clash between the Two Worlds, each describing itself as the *free* world and its rival as a slave-state. But if the freedom of the West is for Salvian only “so-called freedom,” the case is no better with the vaunted barbarian freedom: the very purpose of Priscus’ mission was to discuss the return to Attila of numerous of his subjects who had fled to the Empire seeking refuge from barbarian “freedom.”¹⁶

On both sides the ancient propaganda of freedom has a singularly hollow ring. Within the over-all polarization of East and West, each of those conflicting spheres was in itself a world of factions and parties, of rival ideologies and rival cultures pitted against each other in deadly conflict, yet so exactly alike in everything but label (and usually the rivals were contending for the possession of some world-commanding label) as to give the impression that one antagonist is simply a mirror-image of the other. A visitor to the field headquarters of any faction during the civil

¹³ Priscus Rhetor, *op. cit.*, CXIII, 725-29.

¹⁴ Ed. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. 34, note 33.

¹⁵ Agathias *History* I. 22, in Migne, *Patrol. Graec.*, LXXXVIII, 1393-95; Procopius *Anecd.* XXV. 25; Salvian *De gubernatione Dei* V. 3 ff., in Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, LIII, 96 f. The same sort of thing was going on 200 years earlier; M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), pp. 348 f.

¹⁶ Priscus, *op. cit.*, 704 f., 708, 716, where each side accuses the other of retaining its subjects, while denying the charge against itself. The Romans were constantly demanding the return of “deserters” who chose to live among the barbarians; E. A. Thompson, “Peasant Revolts in Late Roman Gaul and Spain,” *Past and Present* (Univ. of London) Vol. II (November, 1952), pp. 15-18. Thompson cites a number of texts, including the 5th century comedy *Querolus*, illustrating the degree to which the Romans idealized the free and simple barbarian way of life.

wars that opened the fourth century would have been at a loss to discover from his surroundings whether he was in a Christian or pagan, Roman or barbarian camp:¹⁷ in either case he would find the chief at prayer in his tent, long-robed priests chanting and burning tapers or busily practicing the arts of divination;¹⁸ and if he came at the right time such a visitor might even discover the nature of those signs in the heavens that each commander devoutly claimed as a special manifestation of Providence to himself and his followers.¹⁹ If our visitor toured about among the cities, he might marvel, as did Agathias, that the course of civil life was virtually the same in the Persian and the Roman Empires,²⁰ and if he attended the synods of the Church which made the age illustrious, he would have some difficulty to discern which side was which; for, as Hilary observed, that group which with fierce devotion supported a doctrine at one session might within the month be found espousing the very opposite doctrine with equal fervor.²¹ If he went to the games and shows that consumed almost the whole time and energy of the urban masses, the visitor would be required, as if his life depended on it, to take his stand with one noisy faction or another, with nothing in the world to enable him to distinguish between them save the colors they wore.²² Finally the bemused wanderer, if he went to court on a crown-day and stood in the presence of God's representative on earth, would surely have to ask a bystander whether it was the true ruler of the world he beheld or his depraved counterpart — for the court ritual of the two empires was identical,²³ and it was the custom of the emperors of Rome and Asia to describe themselves in identical terms, while each accused his rival of being nothing but a base forgery and depraved imitation of himself.²⁴

¹⁷ Prof. Henri Gregoire (*Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, Vol. XXXVI [1930/1], pp. 231 ff.; and *Byzantion*, Vol. VII [1933], pp. 152 ff.), has spread consternation among the learned by showing how historians have confused and even reversed the roles of the great protagonists.

¹⁸ Eusebius *Vita Constantini* II. 4-6, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XX, 981-93.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I. 28-31; II. 6, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XX, 944 f, 985. By an interesting coincidence, just such a heavenly manifestation is attributed to Cyrus, the archtype of the divine king, Xenophon *Cyropaed.* IV. 2, 15.

²⁰ Agathias *History* IV. 29, in *Patrol. Graec.*, LXXXVIII, 1532.

²¹ Hilarius, *Ad Constantium Aug.* II. 5, in *Patrol. Lat.*, X, 566 f.

²² L. Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte Roms* (8. Aufl., 1910), Vol. II, pp. 338 f.

²³ "Eine Audienz bei Chosrau mit Vela, strenger Rangordnung der Dignitäre, dem Silentiumsruf des Zeremonienmeisters unterscheidet sich in nichts von der strengen Etikette eines byzantinischen Silentiums." A. M. Schneider, in *Jahrbuch für kleinasiatische Forschung*, Vol. II (1952), p. 163. The Roman emperors were forced to adopt this ritual in the *Prestigekampf* with the East, according to Alföldi, in *Nouvelle Clio*, Vol. X (1950), p. 541.

²⁴ George of Pisidia *De expeditione Persica* II. 40 ff., in *Patrol. Graec.*, XCII, 1226 f.: "He, the General of Error, occupies himself with musical instruments, cymbals, impious din of song, dances of indecent women in lustful nudity. While thou, our General of Wise Panoply, dost take thy pleasure in Psalms played upon mystic instruments, a godly singing rejoiceth thy heart as thou holdest solemn sport with virgins. . . . He puts his hope in the moon, but suffers violent eclipse seeking to eclipse thy sun. . . ." On the exact resemblance of Christ and Antichrist, Romanus *De iudicio extremo* 8 ff. in J. B. Pitra, *Analect. Sac. Spicilegio Solesmensi* (Paris, 1876), Vol. I, pp. 38 f. The antagonist is the perfect image of the hero, but wickedly inverted, as in a mirror: Eusebius *Vit. Const.* II. 4, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XX, 981; Jul. Firm. Maternus *De errore profan. relig.* xxiii, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XII, 1032 f.; Cyrill Jerus. *Catachesis xv de secundo Christi advenetu* xii in *Patrol. Graec.*, XXXIII, 885, 1639. Naturally the painful resemblance of the adversary to the hero was attributed to a clever act of forgery by the demons.

This all-pervading identity of institutions shows that we have not here a real clash of ideologies at all, but only the rivalry of parties animated by identical principles and racing for the same objective.²⁵ Yet loyalty to the West was no glib and superficial thing but a deeply ingrained cultural heritage. The concept of civilization as *liberalitas*, the free way of life, and of civilized man as one engaged in liberal thought and speaking the common language of all free, civilized men, as opposed to the barbarian who was necessarily inferior and necessarily a slave, was deeply felt and clearly formulated in late antiquity.²⁶ It had far deeper roots, in fact, than the copy-desk clichés of our own day, for the permanent proximity of unassimilated barbarians made the idea of the Two Worlds an intimate reality. The age-long struggle to repel, check, or annihilate the perennial enemy from the steppes was once popularly described as “the eternal question,” “the strife between Europe and Asia, between east and west, between Aryan and non-Aryan.”²⁷ But this is only the Western version of the conflict which all the great peripheral civilizations, from China to Britain, have had to wage with the “Heartland,” whose hordes have been dealt with for thousands of years in the same established ways: by subtle and disruptive diplomacy, by the long and costly *limes*, by punitive and deterrent expeditions, and, when all else has failed, by the reluctant absorption of their barbarian conquerors.

The marvelous victories that thwarted the great Persian attacks on Greece in the fifth century B.C. had been to the men who won those victories a plain manifestation of divine power, a sobering and chastening experience that placed all human pretense, Greek and barbarian alike, in its proper and humiliating perspective. But the men of a later age and another mold, viewing those successes in retrospect, preferred a more flattering interpretation of events: Marathon and Salamis were held up to posterity as a brilliant demonstration of the natural superiority of western man over barbarians.²⁸ Whereas Aeschylus and Herodotus have no fond illusions about Greek virtue and Asiatic baseness, the educators of succeeding ages fed upon such pleasing stuff, and made it the mortar of a common sentiment which, to quote Eduard Meyer, “bound the civilized world together from the Rhone to Cyprus, from the Dnieper to the Crimea and Cyrene.”²⁹

²⁵ Thus when Attila came upon a heroic painting in Milan depicting himself at the feet of the Roman Emperor, he simply transposed the faces of the two leaders — the rest was as it should be, the clash being not between “ideologies” but personalities pure and simple (Suidas, cited by Gibbon, chap. 36, note 53).

²⁶ This is fully illustrated by the references given, under the heading of *barbarus* and related words, in any large Greek or Latin lexicon.

²⁷ Thus J. B. Bury, *A History of Greece* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1929), p. 230, who sees in the Persian War “the first encounter in that still unclosed debate.”

²⁸ Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums* (Stuttgart, 1944), Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 222 f., 340 ff., 315 ff., 655 ff.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 342.

Thus Western Civilization was nursed in the schools on a legend of Western Goodness: *Hic est Ausonia*, the Western World of clean, fresh, simple, unspoiled pioneers. This fiction became the very cornerstone of the official Virgilian doctrine of *Romanitas* — Rome was great because Rome was good.³⁰ The emperors who after the second century took the names of Pius and Felix were giving expression “to the old Roman belief in the close association between piety and success,”³¹ while indulging in the ingrained Roman vice, blatantly paraded throughout the whole of Latin literature, of dwelling with a kind of morbid fascination on one’s own simple goodness. School boys have been told for centuries that the Romans were a simple, severe, and virtuous folk, with a near-monopoly on *pietas* and *fides*, because, forsooth, the Romans themselves always said so, though almost every page of the record contradicts the claim.³² What better demonstration for the effectiveness of the official propaganda? Teachers and orators drilled the essentials of Western Goodness into their pupils and auditors until, by the fourth century, when hardly a speck of ancient virtue remained, men could talk of nothing but that virtue.³³ They go right on sinning, Salvian reports, in the sublime conviction that no matter how vilely they may act, or how nobly the barbarians behave, God must necessarily bless them and curse the barbarians for being what they are. Yet Salvian himself shows how well the lesson has been taught when he stoutly affirms that, after all, no barbarian can be really virtuous!³⁴

To the lessons of the schools, carefully supervised by the government,³⁵ was added a more aggressive policy of deliberately widening the gulf between the Two Worlds. For centuries barbarian and Roman, East and West, had been mingling on terms of greatest intimacy, producing a borderline culture in which it was quite impossible to draw the line between one culture and the other.³⁶ Priscus mentions quite casually the presence of people from the West, visiting relatives in the camps of the Asiatics; he notes the busy coming and going of merchants between the Two Worlds, and describes the kind hospitality shown him, a complete stranger, in the homes of the Easterners. But with this he gives us the other side of the

³⁰ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-72.

³¹ Vogt, *op. cit.*, p. 59; Cochrane, *op. cit.*, pp. 188 f., sees in these titles an Oriental borrowing inseparable from the “diadem and jewelled robes instituted by his [Constantine’s] immediate predecessors.”

³² Catullus beautifully illustrates both these points; cf. R. M. Henry, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-68.

³³ E.g., Prudentius *Contra Symm.* II. 488 ff., 503 ff.; A. Marsili, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 ff.

³⁴ Salvian *Gub. Dei* VII. 2 f.; V. 2-4. This reflects the traditional belief that “it is natural for Greeks to rule over Barbarians,” (Euripides *Iph. Aul.* 1400), and that “Barbarian and Slave are identical by nature,” (Aristotle *Polit.* 1252b. 99). The unquestioned acceptance of Roman Goodness remained part of the permanent heritage of the West, Nancy Lenkeith, *Dante and the Legend of Rome* (Suppl. ii of *Med. and Ren. Studies*, Univ. of London, 1952), p. 17.

³⁵ On government patronage and control of literary education, H. W. Garrod, in the Introduction to *The Oxford Book of Latin Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944), pp. xxvi-xxxvii.

³⁶ Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, pp. 458, 123 f., 201, 414; Vogt, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-21; F. Vittinghoff, “Zur angeblichen Barbarisierung des röm. Heeres . . .,” *Historia*, Vol. I (1950), pp. 389-407; Zosimus *Hist.* B 34.

picture — the official side: the ubiquitous activity of spies and agents in Roman pay, the infusion into the very court of Attila of large sums of Roman money to corrupt and divide, the insane and mounting conviction of the rulers of the two halves of the world (*both* barbarians!) each that his was the divine calling to liberate the human race from the intolerable ambition of the other.³⁷ The official attitude to the barbarians was set forth a few years after this in Synesius' instructions to the feeble Emperor Arcadius. According to the good bishop, every Roman household has its Scythian slave, every petty artisan and craftsman his Scythian helper, and every Roman street is alive with Scythian porters and runners, "as if these people thought service in Rome was the only thing."³⁸ As to the moral qualities of these foreigners, Synesius must admit that they surpass the Romans in energy, honesty, reliability, and perseverance.³⁹ Yet for all that they are still barbarians, and as liable to murder citizens in their beds as were ever any of their savage ancestors. "Your father made allies of these Scythians," he tells the young and idiotic Emperor: "He should have known that *there is no virtue in a barbarian*. From that day to this they have simply laughed at us." Lacking the heroic qualities of their fathers, "they are slaves, for they are people without a land of their own. Hence the proverb, 'the empty waste of the Scythians,' for they are always running away from settled life."³⁹ Plainly Synesius thinks that the primordial ways of the nomads are some new sign of degeneracy. So far was one of the learnedest men of his day, an expert advisor on foreign affairs, from comprehending the Asiatic way of life which was impinging upon the Roman world at a thousand points.⁴⁰

For their part, the barbarians, at first enormously impressed by the Empire,⁴¹ became resentful of the snubbing they received and then, through long familiarity, openly and increasingly contemptuous. "We see the barbarians living intermingled with us in our armies, our cities, and our provinces," says Sulpicius Severus, "yet refusing to accept our culture as their own."⁴² In the fifth century, it was impossible, especially in the Western regions, to distinguish between *Romani* and *Barbari*, since they had become completely intermingled; in which state of things, he says, it was the barbarians who insisted on widening the breach, glorying in the name of "barbarian" as the only fit title for free men.⁴³

³⁷ The embassy was almost wrecked when the report reached Attila that one of the Romans had said at dinner that his master was a god while Atilla was only a mortal; the remark nearly produced a riot.

³⁸ Synesius *Sardicus Orat. de Regno* xv, in *Patrol. Graec.*, LXVI, 1093 f.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1132, 1096-97.

⁴⁰ On this attitude, Charles Diehl, *Le Monde Orientale 395 à 1081*, Vol. III of *Hist. du Moyen Age* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1936), Vol. I, pp. 79 ff.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 71 f.; Jordanes *Get.* c. 38.

⁴² Sulpic. Severus *Chron.* II. 3 in *Patrol. Lat.*, XX, 130: *exercitibusque nostris, urbibus atque provinciis permistas barbaras nationes . . . inter nos degere, nec tamen in mores nostros transire, videamus.*

⁴³ Victor Vitensis *De persecutione Vandalica* V, in *Patrol. Lat.*, LVIII, 255b.

There is no need to trace the endless course of this futile and paralyzing game; Nancy Lenkeith has shown how it persisted right into the Middle Ages, when even Pope Gregory would not come to an understanding with the Lombards "chiefly because the pontiff had a feeling of revulsion for the barbarians. . . . The Romans . . . despised Lombard laws, disliked their costumes, customs, and smell."⁴⁴ The crippling effect of the doctrine of the Two Worlds is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in the pathetic doctrine of the Super-Weapon: God has given the civilized world a super-weapon, that all may know where security and right reside. This wishful assurance is another invention of the fourth century, as we gather from the teachings of a later emperor to his son:

This fire [Greek-fire] was revealed and taught to the great First Emperor of Christians, Constantine (as we are fully assured by ancient fathers and divines) by an angel from heaven, who gave him emphatic instructions to the effect that this weapon is only to be manufactured among Christians — nowhere else — and only in that city where they have their capital, and absolutely nowhere else. Under no circumstances is any sample of the substance or the formula for it to be transmitted to any other nation. It was for the purpose of securing this secret under his successors that the same Constantine had placed upon the high altar of the Great Church itself an inscription to the effect that anyone who dares to give a sample of said fire to any other nation forfeits thereby the name of Christian and the right to hold any government office, that such an one should be stripped of any office he holds, be declared anathema forever and ever, and be made a public example — even though he be the Emperor or the Patriarch himself, or any other high official . . . any attempt to break this rule must incur the penalty. And he calls upon all who have the cause and fear of God at heart to treat anyone acting in a contrary way as a Public Enemy and a traitor to this supreme order, and to consign him to the most humiliating and painful death possible. It actually happened once (for there are always criminal types) that one of our generals accepted a huge bribe from a number of foreign (*gentile*) powers to provide them with a sample of this fire; but God, who would not suffer such a crime to be perpetrated, smote the offender with fire from heaven . . . and from that day no one, whether Emperor, prince, commoner, army officer or any other mortal, has ever dared to think of such an act, let alone making any attempt to perpetrate it.⁴⁵

In this little lesson on loyalty, God, Christianity, Civilization, the Empire, the Imperial City, the Government, and the Ministration of Angels are all on the side of the super-weapon, while those to whom the fire is denied are all lumped together as gentiles, foreigners, heathen, traitors, public enemies, criminals, and damned. Nor does it seem to occur to the devout monarch that if God's *own* fires are at the immediate disposal of Western Civilization, there is little need for putting such desperate trust in the virtues of naphthalene and military security, or that an appeal to *loyalty* cannot well be accompanied by hysterical threats that only argue a lack of good faith in the one who is appealing.⁴⁶ Certainly the super-weapon produced a serious weakening of military fiber in the West, and, once

⁴⁴ Lenkeith, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Constantine Porphyrogenitus *De administrando Imperio* chap. 13, in *Patrol. Graec.*, CXIII, 184 f.

⁴⁶ Cf. the hysterical security rules of Valens, given in Ammianus xxx, and discussed by Gibbon, chap. 25, notes 53 ff.

in the hands of the Arabs and Turks, was death to *Western* fleets and cities.⁴⁷

ONE-PACKAGE LOYALTY

The hardest political problem with which the Greeks and Romans had to struggle was that of conflicting loyalties. The holy court of the Areopagus proved the problem insoluble when they deadlocked at the trial of Orestes, and the letters of Cicero set forth in detail the tragic dilemma of the Roman with his immense capacity and hunger for loyalty having to change sides with cynical dexterity in order to survive in the wars of class and faction.⁴⁸ The fourth century was one of those times in Roman history when the tension of divided loyalties had become so intolerable that the world was ready for any settlement that would guarantee a measure of peace, unity, and security.⁴⁹ The exhausted age accepted the same emergency solution that had given Rome the Kingship, the Consuls, and the Principate. The *aureum aevum* of Constantine that put an end to the long reign of civil discord, as that of Augustus had done three centuries before, was formally launched with all the solemn rites and theatrical properties familiar to the Romans since the days of the fabled kings.⁵⁰ The purpose of the gorgeous displays of Diocletian and Constantine, pagan and Christian, as of all royal ritual, was to produce in the beholders a religious experience which would command loyalty—of that the poets and orators give us clear assurance.⁵¹ The great scaffoldings, acres of painted canvas, firmaments of tapers and torches, fabulous displays of jewels and lavish applications of gilt paint left no one in doubt that the glory of the Lord was round about.⁵² Heaven in Our Time was not something to be worked for but something to be accepted; not a hope, but

⁴⁷ Describing the siege of Ancona by the Saracens, a Florentine monk writes: *Ignis hic conficitur tantum per Paganos, / Ignis hic exterminat tantum Christianos, / Incantatus namque est per illos prophanos / Ab hoc perpetuo, Christe, libera nos.* Cited in Du Cange, *Gloss. ad Script. Med. et Inf. Lat.* (Paris, 1733), Vol. III, pp. 1308 f.

⁴⁸ For Cicero the solution of "the problem of leadership in a free state," was the existence of a natural, unforced loyalty—*concensus, concordia ordinum.* Cochrane, *op. cit.*, pp. 58 f.

⁴⁹ Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, p. 449.

⁵⁰ The essence of *Romanitas* is *restoration*, according to Cochrane, who notes of Constantine's program: "Once more, as in the far-off days of Augustus Caesar, the Roman world was stirred by a sense of fresh hopes and fresh beginnings," *op. cit.*, p. 183. In his inscriptions Constantine claims to be restoring the Empire "to its ancient splendor and glory," Eusebius *Vit. Const.* I. 40 in *Patrol. Graec.*, XX, 956. The *Carmen Paschale* of Coelius Sedulius is simply a Christian elaboration of the *Carmen Saeculare* that launched the Principate (*Patrol. Lat.*, XIX, 549-752). Restoration is the normal theme of the panegyrics: even Authulf in taking over *Romania* calls himself *Romanae restitutionis auctor* (Orosius *Hist.* VII. 43, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XXXI, 1172).

⁵¹ For new light on the special terminology which demonstrated the "*lealismo dei Cristiani*" to the old majesty, see L. Alfonsi, "L'epistola I clementina, i papiri magici, i ludi saeculari," *Aegyptus*, Vol. XXVII (1947), pp. 111-14. Cf. Juvencus *De laudibus Domini* in *Patrol. Lat.*, XIX, 385, and his *Triumphus Christi Heroicus*, *Ibid.*, 385 ff., for typical ties between the old loyalty and the new.

⁵² Compare Julian's painted glory (Sozomen *Hist. Eccl.* V. 17), with Constantine's as described in the whole 4th Book of Eusebius' *Vita*. Also St. Basil *De resurr. Christi* xiv, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XXXIII, 841-44; F. Gerke, "Das Verhältnis von Malerei u. Plastik in d. Theodos.-Honorianischen Zeit," *Revista Archaeologica Cristiana*, Vol. XII (1935), p. 140: the new art of *majestas* was the result of a "*politisch gewordenen christlichen Weltanschauung*." The super-ceremonial was no longer mere form, but a "*Wirklichkeit auf einer neuen und höheren Ebene des Seins*," according to A. M. Schneider, in *Jb. f. kleinasiat. Forschung*, Vol. II, pp. 154-63.

a fulfillment, a stupendous miracle, nay, the Christian Emperor was hailed at his coronation as *dominus noster . . . praesens et corporalis deus*,⁵³ and Christian and pagan orators vied in proclaiming the long-awaited blessed age of the prophets and the Sibyl.⁵⁴ Like a man distracted by the claims of a hundred creditors, who turns all his bills over to a lending agency in exchange for one simple, ruinous obligation, so the men of the fourth century lumped all their conflicting loyalties together in one single, unlimited obligation to the Emperor and *Romanitas*. All good things became one vague and luminous whole; whatever could command loyalty was "in the composition of a specious argument . . . artfully confounded in one splendid and brittle mass."⁵⁵

Caecilius in the *Octavius* (iv-viii) had charged the Christians not with contempt of any particular doctrine or practice of the ancients, but with failing to be duly impressed by the whole magnificent agglomeration of antique civilization as a fit object of veneration and awe. To this noble composite the Church in the fourth centuries, as if to atone for her long hesitation and former aspersions, declared passionate allegiance, sustaining the traditional heathen dogma, that *Roma aeterna* was immortal and impregnable, long after the canny pagans themselves had given it up!⁵⁶ Henceforward to be a Christian and to be a Roman were one and the same thing: *ubique patria, ubique lex et religio mea*, cries Orosius, . . . *quia ad Christianos et Romanos, Romanus et Christianus accedo*.⁵⁷ When Christian writers can tell us that the distance between Roman and barbarian is as great as that between quadrupeds and bipeds,⁵⁸ or that the laws of bar-

⁵³ E. Bickermann, "Die röm. Kaiserapotheose," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, Vol. XXVII (1929), p. 21, citing Vegetius ii. 5. Cf. Eusebius *Eccl. Hist.* X. 4, 9; *de laudibus Constantini* chap. 17, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XX, 1429-32, 1357; *Vita Constantini* IV. 23; II. 19, 29. F. Cumont, "L'Eternite des empereurs Romains," *Rev. d'Hist. & Lit. Relig.*, Vol. I (1896), pp. 435-52. The New Order is greater and holier (*timiotera*) than heaven itself, according to John Chrysostom, *Expos. in Ps.* 148, in *Patrol. Graec.*, LV, 122, 483.

⁵⁴ Ammianus XIV. 6, 3 f: Virtus and Fortuna have formed a pact of eternal peace . . . the tranquillity of Numa has returned. Eusebius *Laud. Const.* xvii, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XX, 1429; *Hist. Eccles.* X. 4, 9; I. 3 f.; IV. 7 (quoting panegyric orations); Lactantius *De Justitia* V. 6-7, *Patrol. Lat.*, VI, 569 ff., 590-92; Ephraim *Adv. haeres.* III. ii. 7, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XLII, 784, 776 f.; Jerome *Comment. in Is.* 18:66 in *Patrol. Lat.*, XXIV, 674, 885; John Chrysost. *De sancta Pentecoste* i, in *Patrol. Graec.*, L. 454; *quod Christus sit Deus*, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XLVIII, 829 f., 824 f.; Ambrose *Epist.* xii, *Patrol. Lat.*, XVI, 987 ff.; Cyprian *Epist.* vii, *Patrol. Lat.*, V, 246 ff, and *de lupis* i, in *Patrol. Lat.*, IV, 479; Cyril *In I Cor.* 12:18, *Patrol. Graec.*, XXXIII, 1048, etc.

⁵⁵ The quotation is from Gibbon, chap. 20, describing the legend of Constantine's vision. The justice of its application in this instance may be seen from J. Gagé, "Stauros Nikopoios. La Victoire Imperiale dans l'Empire Chrétien," *Rev. d'Hist. et de Philos. Religieuses*, Vol. XIII (1933), pp. 370-400, on the steps by which conflicting "Mystiques triomphales" were ultimately fused into a single whole in the Christian Imperial Cult. "The Roman world, whether for the moment dazzled by the prestige of the imperial physician or, perhaps because of its sickness ready for the most desperate expedient, appears to have accepted his ministrations without much visible indication of the scepticism which they deserve," thus Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

⁵⁶ Straub, *op. cit.*, in *Historia*, Vol. I, pp. 58 ff., 76 f.; P. Chavanne, *op. cit.*, pp. 349, 385, 400, 412.

⁵⁷ Orosius *Hist.* V. 2.

⁵⁸ Prudentius *c.Symmach.* II. 816 f.: Sed tantum distant Romana et barbara, quantum/ Quadrupes abiuncta est bipedi vel muta loquenti. Cf. Ambrose *Comment. in Rom.* 1:14, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XVII, 57. For the Byzantine emperors "barbarian" is synonymous with "pagan," and intermarriage with barbarians is a crime, Const. Porphyrogen. *De admin. imper.* xiii, in *Patrol. Graec.*, CXIII, 185. A famous Byzantine formula states that there are four mothers of heresy: Barbarism, Scythism, Judaism, and Hellenism, Joh. Damasc. *De haeresibus*, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XCIV, 677 f.; Epiphanius *Anacephaleosis*, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XLII, 840 f., 849; *Chronicon Paschale*, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XCII, 112. A fourth-century wood carving from Egypt depicts the "Vertreibung der Barbaren von der Feste des Glaubens," the Faith and Romania being identical, J. Stryzowski, *Orient oder Rom* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901), chap. III, taf. iii, pp. 81-84.

barian nations “bear the same relation to genuine law — Roman law — as a parrot’s squawk to human speech,”⁵⁹ we have come a long way from the charity of the early Christian writers, who loved, like certain earlier Greek philosophers, to mock the vain and artificial distinction between “Jew and Greek, bond and free” (Galat. 3:28).⁶⁰ But now the Church was wholly committed — dangerously committed — to the program of the Empire: Prudentius boldly throws the challenge to the pagan world, that victory of Christian Rome over the barbarians will be sure proof of the truth of the Christian religion — one can imagine the reaction in both camps when Rome was thoroughly beaten!⁶¹

The complete identity of the interests of the Church with those of the Empire in the fourth century was a complete and revolutionary transfer of loyalty. “The imperial cult remains,” writes Alföldi, “only such forms as offend Christian sentiments are a little veiled.”⁶² The church fathers, diligently reconstructing history in retrospect, made it appear that the Church and Rome had always been one.⁶³ Eusebius, taking the lead, announces that Christianity and the *Pax Romana* “burst upon the world together as if germinated from a single seed: the twin blessing of the universe. . . . In the same moment all error and superstition were overcome and an end put to all war and hostility among the members of the human race. One Empire was set up over all the earth and all men became brothers, having one Father — God, and one Mother — true piety.”⁶⁴ In defense of this new one-package loyalty, philosophy and theology, riding high on the fashionable tide of Neoplatonism, were Aaron and Hor upholding the emperor’s hands: “God is One,” says Lactantius, “therefore there cannot be more than one ruler in this world: there are not many masters in one house, not many pilots in one ship, not many leaders in

⁵⁹ Lenkeith, *op. cit.*, p. 25, citing the twelfth century Pseudo-Irnerius. How Christianity actually deepened the gulf between Barbarian and Roman may be seen from Origen *Comment. in Ep. ad Rom.* 1:14, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XIV, 861; cf. Jerome *Comment. in Galat.* 2:3, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XXVI, 380.

⁶⁰ Thus Tatian *Adv. Graecos* Intd., in *Patrol. Graec.*, VI, 804 f., 865, 868; see esp. the dissertation by R. Mansuetus, in *Patrol. Graec.*, VII, 44 ff.; Clement Alex., *Stromata* I. 15, 16, 17, *Patrol. Graec.*, VIII, 776 f., 784, 792, 796 ff.; Tertullian *De anima* xlix, *Patrol. Lat.*, II, 733 f.; Didymus Alexander *De trinitate* ii. 18, *Patrol. Graec.*, XXXIX, 729. Later writers compared this Christian teaching with like teachings of the Greek Philosophers: Nicephorus Callistus *Eccl. Hist.* IV. 10, *Patrol. Graec.*, CXLV, 1000; Nicephorus Gregor, *Byz. Hist.* VIII. 8, *Patrol. Graec.*, CXLVIII, 569; Theodoretus *Graecarum affect. curatio* v, *Patrol. Graec.*, LXXXIII, 944 ff.

⁶¹ Straub, *op. cit.*, in *Historia*, Vol. I, pp. 63 f.; cf. Claudian, *De iv Consul. Honor.* 98 f.; Marsili, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Lenkeith, *op. cit.*, p. 18: “If Rome were destroyed the physical basis of the legitimacy of both Popes and emperors would be lost together.”

⁶² Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine*, p. 117, cf. 106, 110, 112, 115 f. The fusion of Church and Empire is not without its modern panegyrist, e.g., A. Causse, “Essai sur le conflit du christianisme primitif et de la civilization,” *Rev. de l’Hist. des Religions*, Vol. 78 (1918), pp. 98-142, and Vol. 79 (1919), pp. 175-223.

⁶³ Walter Völker, “Von welchen Tendenzen liess sich Eusebius . . . leiten?” *Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol. IV (1950), pp. 157-80. Roman secular history was also rewritten to prove that the Romans had from the first been God’s people; Lenkeith, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁶⁴ Eusebius *De laud. Constantini* xvi, *Patrol. Graec.*, XX, 1421 ff.; cf. Prudentius *Contra Symm.* II. 578 ff., 620, 634 ff.

one flock or herd, not many kings in one hive, nor either can there be many suns in the sky, nor many souls in one body.”⁶⁵ These are the very terms in which the Khans of Asia have been wont to teach mankind the divinity of their single rule — the West of the fourth century and after speaks with a strong Asiatic accent.⁶⁶

Just as all obedient subjects are embraced in a single shining community, so all outsiders are necessarily members of a single conspiracy of evil, a pestilential congregation of vapors of such uniform defilement that none can be ever so slightly tinged with its complexion without being wholly involved in its corruption.⁶⁷ A favorite passage with the churchmen of the period was that which declared that to err in the slightest point of the law is to break the whole law. To accept the *homoiousios* in place of the *homoousios* is for the enlightened Hilary not just a mistake; it is the commission of every possible crime, the consummation of all that is depraved; it hands the whole world over to the Devil.⁶⁸ By attending a discussion of the *homoiousios* the Emperor has anathemized the holy men of Nicaea; thereby he has cursed all who have ever approved of those men; thereby he has damned his own father and set himself up as the foe of divine religion, the enemy of the saints, and a rebel against all sacred filial obligation. Nay, he is worse than a Decius or a Nero, for they only fought Christ the Son, while he fights both the Father and the Son! Again, the emperor who tolerates heretical groups is not just a dupe and a fool, he is a monster of iniquity, guilty of adultery, theft, and murder — and that not in a mere, crass physical sense, mind you, but in a *spiritual* sense, which is infinitely worse.⁶⁹ If the emperor in question refuses to make a martyr of the churchman who flings the coarsest insults in his face, that does not

⁶⁵ Lactant. *De ira Dei* xi, *Patrol. Lat.*, VII, 110.

⁶⁶ Aristides *Orat.* xiv (*To Rome*) ed. Dindorf, 200 (349), boasts that Rome has achieved what Asia has always attempted to, the rule of one man over all the world; in Rome the Asiatic ideal is realized, *ibid.* 205 (359), 222 (389). “There are not two suns in the heavens; how can the people have two lords?” asks Ghenghis Khan (F. Krause, *Cingis Han . . . nach den chines. Reichsannalen* [Heidelberg, 1922], p. 25). Bayazid’s official pronouncement reads exactly like an excerpt from the Theodosian Code: “The Koran says, ‘Disquiet is worse than death,’ the Sultan, the shadow of God on earth, and the Lord of all true believers, ought to reign in conformity with the ever-to-be-imitated example of God, alone upon the throne, and without possibility of anyone revolting against him.” Ed. Creasy, *Hist. of the Ottoman Turks* (London, 1854-6), Vol. I, p. 50. Typically Asiatic is Basil’s Panegyric to the Pope of Alexandria, who shall trample his enemies under his feet: *Liturgia Alexandrina*, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XXXI, 1632. Though Constantine “rejected the pretensions of the Oriental sacred monarchy,” according to Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 179, he retained and strengthened all that the West had learned from it, *ibid.*, pp. 186, 188 f. The church fathers of the age remind us at times that all the pomp of this earth is mere empty show, “a game for children,” a brief masquerade, etc. (e.g., Eusebius *De laud. Const. Prol.* v, vi, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XX, 1316 ff., 1337, 1340 ff.; Joh. Chrysost. *Ep. ii ad Cor. Homil.* xv, in *Patrol. Graec.*, LXI, 508-09); but these are the commonplaces of the schools, in striking contrast to Hilary’s frank and sorrowful admission that the Church *diligi se gloriatur a mundo, quae Christi esse non potuit nisi eam mundus odisset* (*Patrol. Lat.*, X, 611).

⁶⁷ For Claudian (*Bel. Get.*, *passim*) all who deny humble submission to Rome are faithless destroyers of peace, mad, demented, feeble-minded, insane, *praedones, proditores, scellerati, presuntuosi, superbi, barbari, clienti, audacii falsi inertii, impii, rabiosi, perfidi*, etc., see Marsili, *op. cit.*, pp. 17 f.

⁶⁸ Hilarius *Liber contra Constantium Imp.* xv in *Patrol. Lat.*, X, 593, 586, 602-03; cf. pp. 609 f.: peace is the greatest of blessings, but whoever accepts any peace but ours is the Antichrist.

⁶⁹ Lucifer of Caliaris *De non conveniendo cum haeresibus*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XIII, 774, 786 f., 790 f., 806; Hilary, *op. cit.*, X, 598 f., 583.

soften his guilt but only deepens it — he is only being kind to be cruel, because he knows that such kindness will only put his priestly assailants at a disadvantage.⁷⁰ Yet from the festering depths of unspeakable depravity there is one thing that can save the debauched and unnatural animal — by a single act, in fact, he can redeem himself and become the holiest thing on earth, an emperor under God. And what is the miraculous prescription? It is very simple: *Fac transitum ad nos!*⁷¹ All virtue is comprised in the fact of membership in Our Group, all vice consists in not belonging.⁷²

It can be shown by a most convenient syllogism that since God is on our side we cannot show any degree of toleration for any opposition without incurring infinite guilt.⁷³ In the fourth century everybody was officiously rushing to the defense of God;⁷⁴ but John Chrysostom's pious declaration that we must avenge insults to God while patiently bearing insults to ourselves is put in its proper rhetorical light by the assumption of Hilary that an insult to himself is an insult to God.⁷⁵ Therein lies the great usefulness of the doctrine of guilt and innocence by association that became so popular in the fourth century: one does not need to quibble; there is no such thing as being partly wrong or merely mistaken; the painful virtue of forbearance and the labor of investigation no longer embarrass the champions of one-package loyalty. No matter how nobly and austere heretics may live, for St. Augustine they are still Antichrist — all of them, equally and indiscriminately;⁷⁶ their virtues are really vices, their virginity carnality, their reason unreason, their patience in persecution mere in-

⁷⁰ Hilarius, *op. cit.*, X, 585 ff.

⁷¹ Lucifer, *op. cit.*, XIII, 806.

⁷² Thus Optatus can show that "the true Church cannot be cruel," (*De schismat. Donat.* II. 13, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XI, 966), since *dum sanat, vulnerat* (*ibid.*, p. 1019). Those whom we kill are not martyrs, since only members of *our* church can be martyrs (*ibid.*, 1013-15 and *loc. cit.*); our side cannot persecute, since we are in the right, while anything that displeases us is necessarily persecution (*ibid.*, pp. 1013, 1017); since we have the Scriptures written in our hearts, all Scripture we cite condemns you, while any you may cite against us is void (p. 1101). Pacianus (*Epist.* II. 5, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XIII, 1061-62) assures the Novatians that his side does not persecute, since it attacks only with words: "We deal with you like doves, *ore potius quam dente conflagimus.*" Yet Optatus tells the opposition that when *they* attack with words only they cut more cruelly than any swords, "slaying with the sword of the tongue," (*op. cit.*, 979, 983). St. Augustine says that persecution by the Church is "the persecution of love," (*Correct. Donat.* II. 11), and that as long as the Emperor persecutes on the right side he does well (*Epist.* xciii, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XXXIII, 321 ff.).

⁷³ Lucifer, *op. cit.*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XIII, 768 ff., 774, 777, 787, 791. True, Lucifer is extreme, but Athanasius, who calls him the most inspired voice of the age (*Epist. ad Lucif.* ii, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XIII, 1040 f.), is himself no less severe: *Christus recusat et respuit obsequium tumm*, he writes to a too-tolerant emperor (*Epist.* xvii, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XVI, 1002-05).

⁷⁴ ". . . the common-sense republicanism of Tiberius Caesar had prompted the sentiment *deorum injuriae dis curae*. Constantine, however, undertook to support the prestige of deity by a law which forbade blasphemous utterances under pain of a fine of one-half one's goods." Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁷⁵ John Chrysost. In *Joh. Homil.* iv. 4 in *Patrol. Graec.*, LIX, 301; Hilary *Contra Constant. Imp.* 9, in *Patrol. Lat.*, X, 585: ". . . unigenitus Deus, quem in me persequeris . . ."

⁷⁶ Augustinus In *Ps. lviii enarrat.*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XXXVI, 684-85; *Civ. Dei* XX. xix. 3. "How can we be blessed unless we loathe you utterly?" is Lucifer's refrain, *Patrol. Lat.*, XIII, 770 f.

solence; any cruelty shown them is not really cruelty but kindness.⁷⁷ Chrysostom goes even further: the most grossly immoral atheist is actually better off than an upright believer who slips up on one point, since though both go to hell, the atheist has at least the satisfaction of having gratified his lust on earth. Why not? Is not heresy in *any* degree a crime against God? And is not any crime against God an infinite sin?⁷⁸

The insidious thing about such immoral conclusions is that they are quite logical. The cruelty of the times, says Alföldi, "cannot fully be explained by the corruption of the age . . . the spirit of the fourth century has its part to play. The victory of abstract ways of thinking, the universal triumph of theory, knows no half-measures; punishment, like everything else, must be a hundred per cent, but even this seems inadequate."⁷⁹ Compromise is now out of the question: God, who once let his sun shine upon the just and the unjust, and let the wheat and tares grow together, now insists that the unjust should cease to exist, that only wheat should grow in the earth, and that only sheep should inhabit it.⁸⁰ In all seriousness the Emperor Justinian announced to the churchmen his intention of forcing the Devil himself to join the True Church, and thus achieving in the world that perfect unity "which Pythagoras and Plato taught."⁸¹

SLANTED LOYALTY

We have considered the first two steps in the development of loyalty propaganda in the fourth century, namely the establishment of *Romanitas* as an object deserving the loyalty of all civilized men, and the identification of Christian with Roman loyalty. The third and inevitable step was the employment of this magnificent imperative by various interest groups as a partisan weapon. The partisan groups we shall consider were the church-

⁷⁷ Augustinus *Contra Julianum Pelag.* IV. 30 ff in *Patrol. Lat.*, XLIV, 753-54, 763: "Unbelievers do evil even when they do good." Cf. his *Sermo cxli.* 3 f., *Patrol. Lat.*, XXXVIII, 777; *Epist. cxiii.* in *Patrol. Lat.*, XXXIII, 322; *In Ps. 57,15.* in *Patrol. Lat.*, XXXVI, 684 f. To call the Emperor Antichrist when he is mistaken *non est temeritas, sed fides; neque inconsideratio, sed ratio*, etc. (Hilary, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XIII, 806). When the Emperor puts his official *severitas* at the disposal of the Church, "neither brother, beloved wife, nor friend," should be spared, all loyal subjects being armed "to dismember the sacrilegious," (J. F. Maternus *De errore profan. relig.* xxx, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XII, 1048 ff). Writers of the 4th century sometimes yield to principles of humanity (*nec potest aut veritas cum vi, aut justitia cum crudelitate conjugi*, says Lactantius *Div. Inst.* V: 20, in *Patrol. Lat.*, VI, 615); yet Lucifer can twist this sentiment into a proof that the Church, being true and just, is never cruel (*supra*, n. 72). Jerome must confess a definite conflict between the *justa judicium* of the Church and her *irrationabili (!) clementia* (*Epist. c. 17.* in *Patrol. Lat.*, XXII, 828), while Optatus pays a touching compliment to kindness when he declares that the Donatists should suffer death because they lack charity! (*De schism. Donat.* III, viii, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XI, 1018 f.).

⁷⁸ John Chrysost. *De virginitate v.* in *Patrol. Graec.*, XLVIII, 536-37.

⁷⁹ Alföldi, *Conflict of Ideas* . . . , p. 40.

⁸⁰ John Chrysost. *In Ps. 50.* in *Patrol. Graec.*, LV, 530; *Homil. iv in Is. 6:1.* in *Patrol. Graec.*, LVI, 121; also LVII, 389, and XLVIII, 830 f., 821; Eusebius *Ec. Hist.* X. 4; Zeno *Lib. ii, Tractat. xlv.* in *Patrol. Lat.*, XI, 496: *zizania . . . in laeta frumenta mutavit.*

⁸¹ George Cedrenus, *Hist. Compend.* (Bonn ed., 1838), Vol. I, p. 662.

men, the landowners, and the professors. The story of how the military went their own way and followed their own code of loyalty, co-operating only with governments and individuals who were willing and able to "make a deal," and of how their slanted loyalty brought them and the Empire to a common ruin, has been told often and well since the days of Gibbon. We need not repeat it here.

We have just noted the use of absolutes in clerical polemic. The results were what might have been expected, but the ferocity of party conflict within the Church as described by the writers of the fourth and fifth centuries exceeds the wildest imaginings. Even those men, St. Basil reports, who had fought the uphill fight for decency and striven conscientiously through the years to be just and fair with others, in the end found themselves forced to surrender and become just like the rest, who were all engaged in a frantic game of testing each others' loyalty.⁸² The result, he says, is that the Church is entirely leaderless, everyone wants to give orders, but no one will take them; the self-appointed have grabbed what they could and broken up the Church in a spirit of such savage, unbridled hatred and universal mistrust that the only remaining principle of unity anywhere is a common desire to do harm: men will co-operate only where co-operation is the most effective means of doing injury to others.⁸³ It was characteristic of the Age of Constantine, says Burckhardt, "that a man could be intensely devout and at the same time grossly immoral." There was nothing contradictory in that — men had simply discarded personal integrity for a much easier group loyalty.⁸⁴ "Who can swim against the tide of custom?" cries St. Augustine, who recalls how lightly he surrendered his own conscience to the keeping of the gang. The Emperor's formula for establishing perfect unity and loyalty in the Church and the Empire was that plan which the clergy themselves constantly urged upon him and his successors, importunately demanding that he proscribe, banish, and anathematize whoever withheld allegiance from their particular parties. The *Vita Constantini* tells how the Emperor attempted to end each crisis by outlawing all opposition, thereby inevitably sowing the seeds of the next crisis. But how could one expect a simple soldier to question the proposition that compulsory loyalty is the secret of universal peace, when it was

⁸² Basil, Mag. *De Spiritu Sancto* 76 ff., in *Patrol. Graec.*, XXXII, pp. 213-17. This agrees perfectly with Chrysostom's description, *Adv. oppugnat. vit. monast. iii* in *Patrol. Graec.*, XLVII, 361-65. The fourth-century fathers "cast aside truth and decency (*Anstand*) and converted controversy into the business of questioning personal loyalty," thus M. Schanz, *Gesch. der römischen Literatur* (München, Beck, 1914) Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 534.

⁸³ Basil, *loc. cit.* According to Chrysostom, the spirit of the times is well expressed in the common remark: "I wish an earthquake would come and kill everybody but me; then I would be the richest man in Antioch!" (*In II Tim. Cap. iii, Homil. vii*, in *Patrol. Graec.*, LXII, 638).

⁸⁴ J. Burckhardt, *Die Zeit Konstantins des Grossen* (Berlin, 1929), p. 452. Optatus affirms that if chastity and virginity are found among any barbarian nations it is because something has gone wrong, for that simply cannot be. (*Patrol. Lat.*, XI, 999).

being pressed upon him by all the cleverest men of the age? "The barbarians reverence God, because they fear my power," he had declared, and everyone had applauded his doctrine of compulsory reverence.⁸⁵

But it didn't work. No sooner had Constantine removed his last civil and military opponents than the issue between his Christian and pagan subjects became acute. No sooner had he "given profound peace and security to the Church" by restraining her pagan opponents than the churchmen started accusing each other of heresy with a wild abandon that surpassed — as the Emperor himself observed — any performance of the heathen.⁸⁶ No sooner had his successors removed the last heretic and received the undying thanks of the Church, than the *true* believers were at each others' throats. St. Ambrose notes that it is harder to make orthodox Christians live together in peace than it is to eliminate heretics.⁸⁷ The problem was never solved, for the doctrine of absolute, one-package loyalty would allow no compromise.⁸⁸

Consider next the landowners. The aristocracy living on its great estates (though possessing the wealth of the cities as well) was a characteristic fixture of Roman society throughout historic times; "the personnel of the ruling class might change," as it did under Vespasian and Diocletian, but "that could not have changed the nature of those classes themselves," who always remained true to a type and an ideal.⁸⁹ The victory of the Church only strengthened their hold, for they claimed Latin Christianity as peculiarly their own, and it has recently been argued with some plausibility that the breaking away from the Church of "fundamentalist" sects, beginning with the Montanists, was "a series of peasant movements" protesting the capture of the Church by the propertied classes.⁹⁰

Loyalty was the watchword of the great landowners: *pietas*, *fides*, and *fortitudo* were at all times "the three distinguishing marks of a Roman gentleman."⁹¹ Their typical representative in the fourth century was

⁸⁵ Sozomen *Eccl. Hist.* Vol. II, p. 28. Later churchmen used Constantine's example to spur his successors to acts of increasing violence against unbelievers, P. Petit, "Libanius et la Vita Constantini," *Historia*, Vol. I (1950), p. 581. In the *Cod. Theodos.* XVI. i. 2, all who differ from the Emperor's theology are declared "extravagant madmen" who "must expect to suffer the severe penalties, which our authority . . . shall think proper to inflict on them." (Cit. Gibbon, chap. 27, note 22). Constantine shows an "obvious lack of any sense of the limitations of law," says Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 204; "Ses conseillers l'ont fait vivre dans un monde d'illusions . . ." Pignaniol, in *Historia*, Vol. I (1950), p. 95.

⁸⁶ The Emperor's famous letter is quoted in Euseb. *Vit. Const.* II. 71; Socrates *Hist. Eccles.* I. 7; Sozomen *Hist. Eccles.* I. 16.

⁸⁷ Ambrose *Epist.* xii, in *Patrol. Lat.* XVI, 988 f. Chrysostom (*In sanct. Babylam* viii, in *Patrol. Graec.*, L, 544), says that the Church was better off under pagan emperor, because the members fought less savagely among themselves.

⁸⁸ Gerh. Ladner, "Das Hlg. Reich des Mittelalterl. Westens," *Welt als Geschichte*, Vol. XI (1951), pp. 143-53, esp. 149. See below, note 141.

⁸⁹ E. A. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁹⁰ John Morris, "Early Christian Orthodoxy," *Past and Present*, Vol. III (February, 1953), p. 12, cf. p. 14: "In 500 a.d. the new world was Christian; it was a very different Christianity. The church . . . belonged to the world of the rulers, not of the ruled. . . ." Cf. Jean-Paul Brisson, "Les Origines du Danger Social dans l'Afrique chrétien du iii^e Siecle," *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, Vol. XXXIII (1946), pp. 280, 316.

⁹¹ R. M. Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

“aristocratic, senatorial, traditionalist, anti-oriental.”⁹² But from Cicero it is clear enough that theirs was loyalty to a class alone, and their slanted interpretation reduced the noble abstractions in which they dealt so freely to “merely shopworn catch phrases without real meaning in history.”⁹³ No word was dearer to them than *libertas*, the glory of free-agency, but “the *nobiles* conceived of this popular catchword as meaning freedom for them to exercise their *dignitas*,” and not for people without money.⁹⁴ In the fourth century they “had plenty to say about their *humanitas*, *philanthropia* . . . their mercy, their pious serenity. . . . But such self-praise carries no weight; the choice words are a mere empty form. . . .”⁹⁵ In the Senate they called loudly for arms to defend civilization — when no personal sacrifice was involved; and when the barbarians were at the gates they spent their time not in meeting the foe but in hysterical attacks on possible subversives.⁹⁶ When one considers the magnificently planned and executed defensive installations of the frontier, “one cannot keep from being amazed,” says Diehl, “that they were not more effective than they were, and that this closely-knit network of skillfully deployed fortresses let the invaders pass through it so many times.” This grim defect is attributed (1) to the economies of the government, which, while giving away enormous wealth to individuals, so reduced the personnel of the border forces that “the strong places, badly manned, were simply forgotten, often without garrisons,” and (2) to the low morale and frequent desertions of the underpaid soldiers who remained.⁹⁷ Nobody who could pay for defense was willing to do it.

The great landowners “appreciated civilization and culture very highly,” says Rostovtzeff, “their political outlook was narrow, their servility was unbounded. But their external appearance was majestic, and their grand air impressed even the barbarians. . . . For the other classes they had neither sympathy nor understanding.”⁹⁸ Their fault was not that they would enjoy the good things of the earth, but that they would enjoy them exclusively: “The earth is the mother of all of us,” said the starving field- and factory-workers, “for she gives equally; but you pretend that she is your mother only.”⁹⁹ Their ideal was Cato, whose forthright and uncompromising dedication to his own interests, whose unflinching devotion to

⁹² Marsili, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁹³ C. Wirszubski, “*Libertas*” as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1950), reviewed in *Phoenix*, Vol. VI (1952), p. 28, where the quotation is found.

⁹⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁹⁵ Alföldi, *Conflict of Ideas*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁹⁶ Gibbon comments caustically on this in chapters 30 and 31 especially.

⁹⁷ Diehl, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 86.

⁹⁸ Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, p. 477. Gibbon (ch. 31, apud note 43): “. . . the nobles of Rome express an exquisite sensibility for any personal injury, and a contemptuous indifference for the rest of the human race.”

⁹⁹ Philostratus *Vita Apollonii* I. xv; cf. Zonaras *Hist.* XII. 10.

self and steely resistance to any enervation impulse of sympathy for others had about it something of sublime integrity.¹⁰⁰ Skimming the cream of the world's natural resources on their vast tax-free estates, these men thought of themselves as natural-born leaders of men; they oozed the virtue and loyalty of the prosperous: why should they not be loyal to Rome? They *were* Rome!¹⁰¹ Under the early emperors "the state's sphere of activity had been curtailed to an astonishing degree; the state simply secured peace and law in the world and then turned it over to private exploitation."¹⁰² Deeply loyal to a system that gave them everything, the great owners could not understand why all others should not be just as loyal.¹⁰³ Nor could they, who soon learned that the secret of survival was absolute servility and had made an art of groveling to secure their broad acres, have any patience with those who refused to play the game.¹⁰⁴

But when in the fourth century the Imperial government went after a larger share of the income in order to support the costly wars of defense, the great landowners displayed the quality of their patriotism by resisting savagely and cunningly. They quickly became experts in evading taxation and shifting the expenses of war and government to others.¹⁰⁵ But it was their busy speculation in grain that brought the issue of loyalty into the open with the public threat of the Emperor Julian "to have all gentlemen arrested" for sabotaging his attempts at price control. They in reply accused the Emperor of low demagoguery in trying to fix minimum grain prices in the face of drought and an artificial boom market created by the army; and they not only refused to sell at government prices, but bought up what grain they could at those prices to resell on the black market or outside

¹⁰⁰ Plutarch *Cato* c.5, says the Athenians treat their mules better than Cato did his faithful slaves, but the Roman nobility regularly followed his example (Zonaras *Hist.* XI. 10). Though Cato opposed the *foreign* excesses of the rich (Cochrane, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-32), the "villa-system" and foreign policy he advocated as well as his own acquisitiveness all favored the tendencies he was combatting (*ibid.*, pp. 34 f., 45, 55).

¹⁰¹ Tacitus *Hist.* II. 61, blushes with shame that "a plebeian had the presumption to mix his name with the great events of the time." The *Historia Augusta* reflects the violently partisan spirit of the nobility in the fourth century, according to Alföldi, *op. cit.*, p. 25. Its fierce prejudices are apparent in Plutarch's *Coriolanus*; Ammianus XXVII. 4; Livy *Hist.* VII. 6 f.; Appian *Rom. Hist.* XII. 4; XI. 4; Tacitus *An.* XIV. 45; Zonaras *Hist.* VII. 14, etc.

¹⁰² Vogt, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁰³ They were genuinely shocked when their Scythian house-slaves (who had been captured by trickery and enslaved in disregard of solemn promises) staged a rebellion in Asia Minor — treachery, they called it, base ingratitude! Eunapius *De legat. gent.* vi, in *Patrol. Graec.*, CXIII, 657. The same thing is described centuries earlier by Appian, *loc. cit.* "If it were not for the wealth possessed by the rich," they said, "the poor would have no one to lend them money in time of famine and so starve to death!" Zonar. VII. 14. They believed all things were created for them alone, Seneca *Epist.* I. viii. 5; Symmachus *Epist.* II. 46; even life was given to other creatures as a means of preserving their flesh until they were ready to eat or sell it, Varro *Re Rust.* II. 4,10; III. 5, 3-4, 6, 18 ff.; including human flesh, *ibid.* II. 10, 6; Seneca *Epist.* 95; Philo *De Abrah.* 20 f.

¹⁰⁴ Ruere in servitium consules, patres, eques, quanto quis inlustrior, tanto magis falsi ac festinantes. . . . Tacit. *An.* I. 85, cf. 35. The groveling and timidity of the Senate is a leitmotiv of Roman history: Polybius *Hist.* X. 3; Cicero *Famil.* XI. 1 (vi. 1); Tacit. *An.* XIII. 32; *Hist. August.* Elegab. xx; Commod. xviii-xx; Suetonius *Calig.* xi; Dio, *Hist.* LIII. 20; LXXIII. 20; LXXVII. 8; LXXIX. 20, etc.

¹⁰⁵ E. A. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 12; Salvian *Gub. Dei* IV. 6, 2; A. Hoepffner, "Un Aspect de la lutte de Valentinien Ier contre le Senat: la création du Defensor plebis," *Revue Historique*, Vol. CLXXXII (1939), pp. 225-38.

the price-control zone.¹⁰⁶ Small wonder that bishops, government officials, and the common people blamed “the rich” for deliberately engineering famines that were profitable to themselves.¹⁰⁷ Whether these charges were true or not (and Libanius admits abuses), the grain scandals present a typical large-scale clash of loyalties, with each side accusing the other of treason to the *respublica*.¹⁰⁸

This partisan concept of loyalty poisons the whole stream of Roman history. Curio, says Cicero, was wrong when he pleaded that the demands of the people beyond the Po were just but inexpedient: he should have known that demands cannot possibly be *just* which are not expedient to *our* interests: *non esse aequam, quia non esset utilis rei publicae*.¹⁰⁹ This, the morality of Trimalchio, was death to any true *fides*. At the end of the fourth century when Stilicho remained true to his master though it would have served his interests to betray him, native Romans could attribute his behavior only to a lack of good sense — so completely had they forgotten the meaning of *fides* at a time when loyalty to Rome was on the tongue of every orator.¹¹⁰ Just so the great landowners, failing utterly to recognize real loyalty when they saw it, sent their champion Aetius against the very peasants who in an “amazing” demonstration of loyalty to Rome stopped Attila on the Catalaunian Plain, and in the end forced those peasants to join forces reluctantly with the barbarians whom they might have stopped for good had their loyalty been trusted.¹¹¹ “Whatever the frequency of peasant revolts during the third and fourth centuries,” says a recent investigator, “they reached such a climax in the first half of the fifth century as to be almost continuous.”¹¹² These were not slave-uprisings or barbarian invasions: it was the scorned loyalty of the peasants, “*ces hordes indigènes qui dans leur rage détruisirent tout ce qu’il y avait comme oeuvres de la civilization.*”¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ P. de Jonge, “Scarcity of Corn and Cornprices in Ammian. Marcel.,” *Mnemosyne*, Ser. I, Vol. IV (1948), pp. 238 ff.; on the complex speculations of the corn-dealers, de Jonge, “A Curious Place in Am. Marc., etc.” *Ibid.*, Ser. IV, Vol. I (1948), pp. 73-80.

¹⁰⁷ “The world is turned upside down that a few men may be magnificent. . . .” Salvian *Gub. Dei* IV. 4; see Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, pp. 475-77, 451; St. Ambrose, *De officiis ministrorum* III. 7, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XVI, 169; St. Basil *Homil. tempore famis et siccitatis*, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XXXI, 304 ff., 321, 324; Cassiod. *Var.* II. 12; Philostrate, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰⁸ W. E. Heitland, *The Roman Republic* (Cambridge, 1909) Vol. II, pp. 235 ff., describes the growth of the system in which the owner “took little thought of the horrors perpetrated with his sanction in the country side,” and the only means of protest was rebellion.

¹⁰⁹ Cic. *Offic.* III. xxii. 88.

¹¹⁰ Straub, *op. cit.*, in *Nouvelle Clio* Vols. III-IV(1952), p. 115; E. Nischer-Falkenhof, *Stilicho* (Vienna: Seidel, 1947), pp. 149-52.

¹¹¹ E. A. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 20; cf. pp. 14 f.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 19 f.

¹¹³ W. von Wartburg, *Les Origines des Peuples Romains* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1941), p. 269; Jerome, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XXII, 600 f.; Ammianus XXXI. 6; Sidon. Apollinar. *Epist.* ii. I. 3 f.; *Ep.* VI. iv; Orosius V. 9, 5; Malalas *Chron.* XVII. 420; Diodorus XXXIV-V; Appian *Hist.* III. 1; I. 5, 37; IV. 6, 43; Tacit. *Hist.* II. 51; 61; Zonar. VII. 14. Heitland, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 379 notes that it was traditionally the freemen rather than the slaves who ravaged the great estates.

Last come the leaders of education, which means in the fourth century, the professors of rhetoric. It was, as we have seen, through the activity of professional rhetoricians that "the Greeks became aware of themselves as the makers and bearers of Western Civilization."¹¹⁴ By the fourth century the rhetoricians, by a process that cannot be described here, had gained complete and absolute control of every department of public life.¹¹⁵ It was what Ammianus calls "the yokes of the Empire," i.e., the specialists in words, the fast-talkers, the experts on public relations, the supersalesmen, who by substituting sound for substance in their lush and busy careers completely undermined the rickety structure of the civilization which they claimed to be rescuing.¹¹⁶ The secret of success in these professions lay in their boasted power to command loyalty, a talent for which the world was willing to pay any price.

The ancients defined rhetoric as "the technique of persuasion," "the art of convincing people," or of convincing everybody, of anything — for a fee.¹¹⁷ The art which keeps people stirred up from *necessitas* rather than from *puritas* (disinterested motives), scattering to the public from its overflowing bosom an abundance of delights, and thus leading them to conform to its purposes — that art, according to Augustine, is called Rhetoric.¹¹⁸ The great power of rhetoric lay in its unique ability to create artificial values, "to make unimportant things seem important," in Plato's words or, in those of Clement of Alexandria, "to make false opinions like true by means of words."¹¹⁹ The rhetorician works with words alone: to treat his profession as a science defeats its purpose, Aristotle observes, which is to deal not with real things but with words, and to convince not by evidence, as science and art must do, but by argument;¹²⁰ he is the supersalesman who sells not goods but, in the last analysis, himself: *cupit enim se approbare, non causam*, says the pious Seneca.¹²¹

The secret of commanding and controlling loyalty, rhetoric teaches, is always to give people whatever they want: unlike Pericles, who invariably gave the Athenians what they most needed and least wanted, the Sophist studied to give his public what it most wanted and least needed. The very opposite of a true leader, the rhetorician was by his own confession "the

¹¹⁴ E. Rohde, *Der Griechische Roman* (Berlin, 1900), p. 319.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 316 f., 347; Schanz, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 235.

¹¹⁶ Ammianus III. 4: the four yokes are orating Sophists, lawyers, legal advisers and hack-writers; cf. Philo *de ebrietate* (XV) 79. The good men were snowed under by the fast-talkers, Dio Chrys. *Orat.* xxxii. 6-13; lxxiv. 3; Lucian *de astrolog.*, *Rhet.*, *praec.*; *Nigrinus*.

¹¹⁷ Aristotle *Rhet.* I. i. 14; I. ii. 1; Dio Chrys. *Orat.* xxxv. 7.

¹¹⁸ St. Augustine *De Ordine* II. 13, in *Patrol. Lat.*, XXXII, 1013.

¹¹⁹ Plato *Phaedrus* 267A; Clemens Alex. *Stromata* VIII. 376. It can "exercise persuasive powers on any subject at all," says Aristotle *Rhet.* I. ii. 1.

¹²⁰ Aristotle *Rhet.* I. ii. 11-13.

¹²¹ Seneca *Controv.* IX. Praef. 1. "The beginning of rhetoric is the probable, the process is epicherrema, and the end is persuasion . . . and admiration," Clem. Alex., *loc. cit.*

slave of a thousand masters.”¹²² Philo describes the general public as a harlot and the rhetor as her minion, nay, her lapdog, whose purpose in life is to obey her, wait on her, and do all that gives her pleasure. It would be hard to say who was the more debauched by such a pact of mutual corruption, the lady or her dog, for the rhetor demanded a terrible price for his toadying: by giving the public exactly what it wants, St. Augustine boasts, the orator makes them clay in his hands, a helpless automaton without a mind or will of its own, completely at the bidding of the skillful word-master.¹²³ Dio Chrysostom and Lucian have told how this irresistible predatory profession, jauntily sure of itself in handling the man in the street, the gullible rich, and the lazy student population, always won out because it always pushed downhill¹²⁴—selling whiskey to the Indians was not a surer thing, or a deadlier. Socrates prophesied in the *Gorgias* that a true teacher would have no more chance of holding his own against the smooth-talking Sophists with their easy but flashy and pretentious instruction, than an honest physician would have of winning child patients in competition with a pastry cook who prescribed nothing but dessert. Rhetoric was the ruin of all hard and honest thinking in the ancient world, but it paid big returns and swept all before it, to become the great heritage of the Middle Ages from Antiquity.¹²⁵ Of the orating bishops, the glory of the fourth century, Gibbon says, “the true size and color of every object is falsified by the exaggerations of their corrupt eloquence,” a verdict which subsequent studies have fully confirmed.¹²⁶

The only form of rhetoric that retained any real vitality in the fourth century was the panegyric, a formal set address in which the orator, in the name of the people or Senate, would declare undying devotion to the Emperor or any other leader, civil or ecclesiastical, who had attained to a position of great political importance.¹²⁷ *Fides* was the keynote, ardent protestations of unflinching loyalty, delivered in set, conventional terms whose transfer from pagan to Christian use may be traced on coins and inscrip-

¹²² Philo *De Joseph.* XIII. 64; XIV. 67 (35); cf. Dio Chrys. *Orat.* XXXII. 5; XLVII. 19; Orosius *Ad Imp.* *Introd.*

¹²³ Augustine *De doct. christ.* IV. 6, 29, 37, 51; cf. G. Combes, *Saint Augustin et la Culture Classique* (Paris, 1927), pp. 54 f.

¹²⁴ Chrysost. esp. *Orat.* xxxii, xxxiii, and xxxiv; Lucian *Nigrinus*; *Revivisc.*; *Rhet. Praec.*; *Somnium.*

¹²⁵ F. J. E. Raby, *Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), ch. I. The education of St. Augustine was celle d'un lettré de la décadence formé par le *grammaticus* et le rhéteur, avec en plus la dialectique. Grammaire et dialectique! Mais ce sont là les bases réelles de la scholastique! H.-J. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la Fin de la Culture Antique* (Paris: Boccard, 1938), p. 275. The only difference between Augustine's brand of Christian rhetoric and that of the pagan schools was that his was a simpler, streamlined course, even more superficial than the other, *ibid.* p. 517 f., denoting “cet abaissement du niveau général de la civilization, qui déjà, tout autour d'Augustin, annonce les temps barbares. . . .” p. 518.

¹²⁶ Gibbon, *op. cit.*, chap. 27, note 101. J. Zellinger, “Der Beifall in der altchristl. Predigt,” *Festgabe Alois Knopfler* (Freiburg i/B, 1917), p. 403. Norden (ed.), *Die Antike Kunstprosa* (Leipzig, 1898) Vol. II, pp. 623 ff.

¹²⁷ H. Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'Archaeologie Chretienne et de Liturgie* (Paris, 1937), pp. 1037 f.

tions as well as in the orators.¹²⁸ Augustine, himself a one time professional panegyrist, joyfully announces that the panegyric art, far from being discredited by Christianity, has received a new lease on life; for if rhetoric contributes a much-needed *spice* to the Christian teaching, that doctrine in return offers the exhausted panegyrist in the Christian God what he most needs — a *materia grandis* of unlimited possibilities.¹²⁹ “The pagan emperors had been traditionally devoted to self-advertisement,” says Cochrane, “but it remained for the first Christian sovereign to discover a more effective instrument of propaganda than any hitherto devised,” in the Christian pulpit.¹³⁰

From the capital the vogue for panegyrics spread, under government supervision, to the provinces. A local professor of rhetoric would be chosen to address the emperor as if he were present, and all people would be expected to applaud like mad “to prove their loyalty.”¹³¹ The whole business was carefully controlled: the subject matter was prescribed, the time and place of delivery fixed, and the orator chosen by the very man who was to be acclaimed. M. Leclercq labors to exonerate the panegyrists of the common charges of being flatterers, liars, and pimps, on the grounds (1) that they fooled nobody (however hard, he admits, they tried), (2) that they had no choice in the matter but had to do what they were told (though they loved every minute of it and fought for the opportunity), and (3) that they were really sincere.¹³² Precisely in this last argument lies the most damning charge against the panegyrists, the secret of whose success was to *make* themselves sincere — for a fee. This is the classic dilemma of the rhetorician, who must employ all the exacting devices of his art to persuade his hearers before all else that he has no art.¹³³ The sorriest victims of the dilemma were the fathers of the fourth century who, as has often been noted, use their most lush and artificial rhetoric to condemn the use of rhetoric.¹³⁴

The result of this sort of thing was a ghastly air of unreality that characterized all attempts to win loyalty by formal persuasion. When men tried to bolster up the vast inertia of a sagging civilization with words alone, it was the world that remained unaffected, while the noble words were squashed flat and had all the meaning squeezed out of them by the

¹²⁸ *Idem*; G. Manthey, “Il Significato Primitivo della Legenda ‘Pax Perpetua’ sulle Monete degli Imperator Romani,” *Revista di Archeologia Cristiana An. Vol. XXVIII* (1952), pp. 45-75.

¹²⁹ Augustine *De doct. christ.* IV. 26, 19. On the early Christian abhorrence of rhetoric, Zellinger, *op. cit.*, p. 403 f.

¹³⁰ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, pp. 207 f.; cf. Italo Lana, *Velleio Patercolo o della Propaganda* (University of Turin IV, 1952), pp. 261, 294.

¹³¹ “. . . et les assistants applaudissent avec fureur pour prouver leur fidélité.” Leclercq, *op. cit.*, p. 1043.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 1042-44.

¹³³ Thus in the great prototype of Latin Panegyrics, that of Pliny the Younger to Trajan, the orator protests loudly and repeatedly that this is a sincere, not a rhetorical, discourse: *liv, lxxii-lxxiv.*

¹³⁴ Combes, *op. cit.*, p. 75; Norden, *Ant. Kunstprosa* Vol. II, pp. 623 f.; E.Rohde, *Gr. Roman*, p. 348.

dead weight of reality.¹³⁵ The most successful panegyric of the age was a masterpiece in which "the ordinary reader . . . seeks in vain some glimmer of reasonableness, some promise of sense."¹³⁶ The victory of the decadent rhetoric of the fourth-century schools was complete, and conditioned all the thinking of the Middle Ages.¹³⁷ Typical was the tendency to employ lofty abstractions, which imparts to Christian rhetoric an unmistakably pagan flavor which persists to the present day.¹³⁸ The significant thing, however, is that the most movingly eloquent protestations of loyalty though they did produce thunders of applause, failed to generate genuine loyalty, and the great Chrysostom observes often and with bitterness, that the populace which recognizes him as perhaps the world's greatest orator will not pay the slightest heed to his mildest admonitions, but continues to go about the business of money-getting while he, Sunday after Sunday, speaks to empty walls.¹³⁹ The world remained unconvinced, and to the end of the Middle Ages the darling theme of the rhetoricians, "the dream of a united Christendom . . . was seen to have been a dream."¹⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

Each of the three attempts to foster loyalty in the century of crisis was a conspicuous failure. The disillusionment with the ideological appeal of West versus East is voiced in Jordanes' commentary on the Battle of the Catalaunian Plain which, far from being a cosmic struggle between conflicting ways of life, proved to him only one thing: "When such a slaughter of nations can be caused by the crazy obsession of one man, or when the whim of some arrogant chieftain can undo in an instant what it has taken nature centuries to produce — that proves that the human race lives for the benefit of kings." (*Bel. Goth.* 36). One-package loyalty was, as Alföldi shows, no less a hopelessly artificial concept that could only ruin what it meant to save.¹⁴¹ "Men were aware of the danger that

¹³⁵ Rohde, *loc. cit.*; Dio Chrys. *Orat.* xxxvi. 18; xxxviii. 40; Polyb. VI. 57.

¹³⁶ Raby, *Secular Latin Poetry*, Vol. I, p. 73; Norden, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 652.

¹³⁷ *Supra*, note 124; E. Krebs, in *Römische Quartalschrift*, Vol. XXVII (1913), p. 33. Of a piece with the panegyric was the grandiose monumental architecture, "Panegyric in stone" that the Middle Ages inherited from this period, F. Gerke, in *Revista di Archeol. Cristiana*, Vol. XII (1935), pp. 140, 159 f., 162 f.; K. Felis, "Die Niken u. die Engel in altchristl. Kunst," *Röm. Quartalschr.*, Vol. XXVI (1912), pp. 24 f. It was Gaul, "das Land der Rhetoric" that preserved antique culture through the Middle Ages, Norden, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 631 f.

¹³⁸ Marsili, *op. cit.*, p. 21. The first three pages of Pliny's model panegyric to Trajan contain the abstractions: *castitas, sanctitas, libertas, fides, veritas, humanitas, frugalitas, clementia, liberalitas, benignitas, continentia, potestas, pietas, abstinentia, mansuetudo, divinitas, temperantia, facilitas, amor, gaudium, modestia, moderatio, virtus, gloria, gratiae, laus, severitas, reverentia, concordia, concentus, hilaritas, gravitas, simplicitas, honor, dignitas, and maturitas*. A full-blown "Christian" vocabulary.

¹³⁹ John Chrysostom, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XLVIII, 725; XLIX, 363-65; LI, 143 ff.; LVI, 257, 263; LVII, 384 ff.; LXIII, 461 f, 623-25, 629.

¹⁴⁰ F. M. Powicke, in *Legacy of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 46. The failure of Rome to capture the real allegiance of Europe is the theme of Powicke's essay. See below, note 145.

¹⁴¹ A. Alföldi, "Die Geburt der kaiserl. Bildsymbolik," *Museum Helveticum* (Denkschr. A. von Salis), Vol. VIII (1951), p. 215.

threatened," writes Straub, "they felt that the emergency of the time called for drastic decisions; but the absolute domination of Divine Grace left little margin (*Spielraum*) for any attempts at political reform. It is thus by no means surprising that we are almost never confronted by any concrete suggestion."¹⁴² One does not reform a holy system, and where the social order was God's order, "the human mind," in Bury's words, "was cabined by the Infinite. Thought was rendered sterile and unproductive under the withering pressure of an omnipresent and monotonous idea."¹⁴³ It was an age of "utter incapacity to invent anything new . . . devoid of all creative power and helplessly submitting to current practice."¹⁴⁴

Partisan appeals to universal loyalty completed the crippling process: the whole *Tragik* of the Middle Ages, says Ladner, was the ruling out of all possibility of compromise by a theory of loyalty which was partisanship raised to the *n*th power (*die ins Ungemessene gesteigerten Einseitigkeiten*).¹⁴⁵ "Reverence for Augustine," writes Father Bligh, "forbids me to say that his justification of persecution was wrong; but its fruits were evil in the centuries which followed, and we may suspect that, if he had had as much experience to reflect upon as we have, Augustine would have reverted to his first opinion."¹⁴⁶ On the contrary, it is we who are reverting to Augustine's second opinion.

Rostovtzeff sums up all the evils of the age we have been discussing under one head: oversimplification. "Everywhere we meet with the same policy of simplification, coupled with a policy of brutal compulsion."¹⁴⁷ The "system of the late Empire despite its apparent complexity, was much simpler, much more primitive, and infinitely more brutal" than what had gone before.¹⁴⁸ "In times of crisis," says Alföldi, "when the choice of the Government is simplified down to a plain 'to be or not to be,' the policy that wins is that of the fire-brigade, which elects to destroy the contents of a house in order to save the naked walls."¹⁴⁹ And the ultimate expression of this blunt oversimplification was the army of secret police, *agentes in rebus*, whose business was to check on everybody's loyalty.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² Straub, *op. cit.*, in *Historia*, Vol. I (1950), p. 63.

¹⁴³ J. B. Bury, *Late Roman Empire*, Vol. I, p. 16.

¹⁴⁴ Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

¹⁴⁵ G. Ladner, in *Welt als Geschichte*, Vol. XI (1951), p. 149.

¹⁴⁶ John Bligh, "The 'Edict of Milan'; Curse or Blessing?" *Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. CLIII (1952), p. 309. Origen believed that conversion to Christianity would save the Empire. "Alas!" says Bligh, "Things did not turn out that way . . . corruption and oppression continued unabated, and brought the tottering Empire to its fall." *Ibid.*, p. 313. Have we any guarantee that an even less pristine Christianity can overcome that "corruption and oppression" which earlier Christianity could not even alleviate?

¹⁴⁷ Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 459; cf. pp. 452 f., 457, 473: "There was indeed equality of a negative kind, for no political freedom was tolerated, no remnant of self-government was left, no freedom of speech, thought, or conscience was permitted, especially after the victory of Christianity."

¹⁴⁹ Alföldi, *Conflict of Ideas* . . . , p. 40.

¹⁵⁰ Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, p. 460.

The fourth century is not the twentieth. But loyalty is a timeless thing, and if the experience of the Century of Crisis proves anything, it is that there is no problem of loyalty. *Conformity* can be had by bribery, flattery, or force, but one can no more legislate loyalty than one can legislate love, of which it is a part. "The professed object of Constantine," says Cochrane, "was to legislate the millennium in a generation."¹⁵¹ The legislation of loyalty lay at the core of his plan, and its miserable failure should mean something to a modern world in which no ruler possesses a tenth of the religious, political, and military prestige that Constantine did. Since the essence of loyalty is *disinterested* devotion, there is something distressing in the attempts of the fourth (or any) century to conjure it up by appeals to interest, fear, or expediency.

Yet the "loyalty problem" is no mere question of semantics; the substitution of some such word as "security" or "conformity" for "loyalty" in designating the Executive Order of March, 1947, does not really change the complexion of things. Loyalty is one of the few words in existence about whose meaning dispute is virtually impossible. Everyone knows what loyalty is, and what a desirable, nay, indispensable thing it is to the survival of any community. Like honor and chastity, it is strongest when least talked about, and thrives only in a climate of uncritical acceptance. A virtuous investigation of loyalty is like a noisy oration in praise of silence, and the appearance of loyalty orders and loyalty legislation such as are found in the Theodosian Code and elsewhere is a sign of lost confidence, a desperate groping in empty air for something which groping fingers only push farther out of reach.

Two of the wisest contemporaries of Constantine, reflecting upon his Nicene Council, were not unaware of a serious implication in the holding of formal assemblies to decide upon the nature of God. "For if they believed," writes Athanasius, "they would not be seeking as if for something they did not have," and Hilary says the same: "The Faith must be inquired after, as if we had none. The Faith must be written down, as if it were not in our hearts. . . . We learn about Christ after baptism — as if there could be any baptism without faith in Christ!"¹⁵² Just so, when we start defining loyalty we demonstrate to the world that we no longer know what it is. That is the lesson of the Age of Constantine.

¹⁵¹ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

¹⁵² Athanasius *De Synod.*, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XXVI, 684, 689; Hilary *ad Constant.* II. 6, in *Patrol. Lat.*, X, 566 f, 569; cf. Philostorgius, in *Patrol. Graec.*, LXV, 468; Basil Ep. 82, in *Patrol. Graec.*, XXXII, 452.