profondément convaincante et on ne pourrait que conseiller sa lecture et, dans la mesure du possible, sa traduction en d’autres langues pour en favoriser une plus large diffusion.

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The volume *Constantino, ¿el primer emperador cristiano?* [Constantine, the first Christian emperor?] records the minutes of the same title congress held in Barcelona and Tarragona from 20th to 24th March 2012, coinciding with the commemoration of the 1700th anniversary of Constantine’s victory at the battle of the Milvian Bridge in the year 312 AD. Thus it constitutes a Spanish contribution to the commemoration of such a milestone, in line with numerous academic congresses, such as those which took place in the cities of Perugia, Sofia, Treves, York, Munich and the Vatican. This event has also been remembered in publications such as the Italian *Costantino prima e dopo Costantino / Constantine before and after Constantine* (Edipuglia, Bari 2012), ed. by G. Bonamente, N. Lensky and R. Lizzi Testa, or the German *Konstantine der Grosse: Geschichte - Archäologie - Rezeption* (Trier 2006), edited by A. Demandt and J. Engemann, as well as *Konstantin der Grosse: Kaiser Einer Epochenwende* (Lindenberg, 2007), edited by F. Schuller and H. Wolff, among others works (a summary of all academic activity generated by the ephemeris can be found in R. Lizzi Testa *I Centenarii constantiniani e il peso della contemporaneità*, in *Antiquité Tardive*, 22 (2014), 13-26).

Regarding its size, the volume is rather large (606 pages), collecting more than 40 contributions focused on the figure of Constantine and the transformations that took place during the Constantinian period. Therefore, not only the historical transcendence of Constantine but also the enduring shadows about his conversion make it unnecessary to justify the suitability of the publication. As it is well known, this emperor inaugurated the Late Antiquity and his religious policy was a turning point in the evolution of the Roman Empire and therefore of European history. Nevertheless, the nature of the relationship between Constantine and the religion of the
Cross is still under discussion. “Political pragmatism”, “religious syncretism” or “sincere conversion” have been some of the perspectives handled by the scholars throughout the years to interpret the attitude of Constantine towards Christianity, epicentre of the “Constantinian questions”, the historiography problems—widely debated and still unsolved,— concerning Constantine (some overviews of the general evolution can be found in A. Cameron, Introduction in Constantine: History, Historiography and Legend, edd. S. N. C. Lieu - D. Montserrat, New York 1998, 1-4; The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine, ed. N. Lenski, Cambridge 2006, 5-10; Ch. M. Odahl, Constantine and the Christian Empire, New York 2013, 281-287). These persistent polemics are the best proof of the multifaceted and enthralling figure of this emperor to which historians keep coming back over and over, as is the case with this publication.

In relation to the subject-matter, the volume begins with an introductory prologue where J. Vilella Masana presents the contents (pagg. 11-17). The editor offers there a brief but brilliant synthesis of the main contributions contained in the study while he draws attention to the remaining questions about Constantine in order to clarify that the main purpose of the volume is, in any case, to update the debates.

Then begin the seven sections in which the volume is divided. As one can expect, the first section, « Dos relatores coetáneos de la svolta » (Two contemporary witnesses of the conversion), is dedicated to Constantine’s spirituality. Whereas the brevity of the section (pagg. 21-36) does not match the title of the volume very well, the truth is that this part is composed by two interventions of great quality. In the first, A. Marcone uses the compositional problems of the Divinae institutiones to revise the relationship between Constantine and Lactantius. In the second contribution, R. Farina reintroduces through Eusebius of Caesarea the eternal question of Constantine’s conversion to Christianity, connecting it with the conversion of the Empire itself and considering both a gradual process.

The second section, « “Visiones” y “conversion” » (visions and conversion, pagg. 39-95), is consecrated to examine with new perspectives the visions and supernatural circumstances that framed the controversial “conversion” of Constantine to Christianity. In this block
there are two semiological interventions that deserve to be highlighted. In the first one, J. Janssens offers a profound study about the evolution of the Chi-Rho symbol—the famous *caeleste signum* of the battle of the Milvian Bridge—, including pagan precedents. The second contribution, carried out by L. Canetti and also very well documented, suggests understanding the famous night vision of Constantine through the glass of the divinatory practices of *incubatio*. Otherwise, the remaining contributions of the section have a more political tone. For instance, S. Castellanos García explores the use of lineage as a mean of imperial legitimation and P. A. Barceló Batiste joins Constantine’s aspiration to exercise the power in solitary with Christian monotheism, opposing both with the plurality of tetrarchy and pagan polytheism.

The third section (pagg. 99-180) is dedicated to Italy’s urban world and how it was affected by Constantine’s policies. Consequently, most of the interventions cover urban issues. For example, C. Panella analyses how Constantine’s conversion brought changes about to the topography of the *Villa aeterna*, P. Pensabene explores the reasons behind the iconographic messages on the arch dedicated to this emperor of Rome, and J. Desmulliez tries to show that Constantine may have promoted the first Christian basilicas which were built in the region of Campania. Aside this aspect, the section ends with two interventions that discuss the consequences that Constantine’s decision to fund a new capital in the East had over the city of Rome. On the first, R. Lizzi Testa explores the not very well-known relations between Constantine, the Roman senate and the senatorial aristocracy, pointing out that the foundation of Constantinople implied a significant transference of Roman leaders from Italy to the new capital. Finally, D. Vera closes the section discussing the commercial and administrative consequences that resulted throughout the Italian and North-African areas after the relocation to Constantinople of the Egyptian supply of corn previously sent to Rome.

The fourth section (pagg. 183-268), entitled « Iglesias y eclesiásticos » (Churches and church men), is formally dedicated to the effects that Constantine’s conversion had on the Christian ministers, although most of its contributions deal with the Arian conflict. That is the case of D. Abadias Aurín’s intervention, focused on the confrontation between Arius and the bishop Alexander of Alexandria. The same happens with the articles signed by M. C. Chiriatti,
A. Alba López or P. Maraval, all of them focused primarily on the tortuous relationship between Constantine and Athanasius of Alexandria but also devoted to matters such as the synods, the exiles and the conflicts between Episcopal sees during the period. Maraval’s contribution deserves closer attention. It is a brief but interesting article in which the author questions the accuracy of the main testimonials usually summoned to support the alleged philo-arianism of Constantine during the last period of his life (the testimonies of Athanasius and Jerome), which he considers biased. The Arian controversy is also present in the contribution signed by the editor of the volume, J. Vilella Masana, who presents a revision of the Urkunden related to the pre-Nicene phase of the conflict. His essay, documented and precise, not only suggests a new version of the factual course of the conflict, but also highlights the vast prosopography which derives from it. Lastly, J. Fernández Ubiña ends this part by revising the episcopate’s functions during the time of Constantine, finishing thus a quite exhaustive part in which the only missing topic would be a contribution about monasticism, an issue which is completely absent in the section.

In addition to the aforementioned, the fifth section is dedicated to the relationship between Constantine and paganism. Entitled « Tradición pagano-imperial » (Pagan-imperial tradition), the section is composed by eight contributions which make it the biggest block of the volume (pagg. 271-374). Two essays deal with the Vita Constantini, in which both S. Guillén Arró and G. Bonamente find arguments to defend the image of a Christian Constantine, who marked throughout his life, at least, a slight detachment of the traditional cults. Another two contributions deal with the aeternitas Romae, to which J. Andrés Pérez and S. Benoist dedicate their essays, finding in the monumental propaganda and the epigraphic formulas of Rome elements of continuity between the pagan times and the subsequent Constantinian period. A comparison of these two periods, personified in the figures of Augustus and Constantine, is also the purpose of the contribution signed by E. Galindo López. Besides, S. Montero Herrero provides a curious contribution in which Constantine’s travels act as an excuse to analyze the phenomenon of the holiness of the rivers during Late Antiquity and their implications, whilst D. Gorostidi Pi, O. Olesi Vila and R. Andreu Expósito, in a collaborative work, a search through Constantine’s
epigraphic propaganda in milestones from Hispania for traces of a possible amendment of the road network in the north-east of this territory. However, the most notable contribution of the section is signed by Th. D. Barnes, who proposes that Constantine wanted to re-establish for his succession a system similar to the so-called “Tetrarchy”. Nevertheless, it is not the thesis itself (a Copernican shift away from the established opinion, in favor of interpreting Constantine’s succession policy as clearly oriented to the creation of a new dynasty, e. g. cf. R. Van Dam, The Rome Revolution and Constantine, Cambridge 2009, 130-148) but its consideration of the Tetrarchy as a dynastic system for imperial succession what is really remarkable in Barnes’ view. In fact, Barnes draws attention to the interesting fact that, before being co-opted onto the imperial collegium, each candidate (usually chosen among the relatives of another tetrarch) had been previously linked by marriage to the family of his promoter. It is not possible to offer here a definitive judgement about this refreshing hypothesis, but if it were proven true, undoubtedly we should revise our understanding of the Tetrarchy system and their use of lineage’s bonds.

The sixth section of the volume deals with legislation (pagg. 377-461). Without a doubt, it is one of the most technical parts of the volume. It consist of seven contributions, two dedicated to the laws about repression over dogmatic deviations, two related to the Jewish matters and three associated with the brutal penalties contained in the Constantinian legislation. M. V. Escrı́bano Paño begins the part by analyzing the role played by the Edict of Constantine against the heretics (326 AD) in the process of definition of the heresy as a legal category in Late Antique legislation. After that, E. Moreno Resano retakes a well-known topic, the use of the crimen magiae in Late Antiquity, as a means to attack political and religious rivals. Then come the two contributions on Judaism. Both authors R. González Salinero and C. Lillo Botella reach the same conclusion: Constantine’s politics undermined the previous privileges for the Jews, although Lillo, in fact, dedicates most of his essay to the description of the comes Joseph (Joseph of Tiberias). Finally, the last three interventions are focused in more specific topics. Firstly, J. A. Jiménez Sánchez tries to deny that Constantine abolished the gladiator games through the reinterpretation of some documents. Secondly, M. Marcos Sánchez finds in the brutal penalties suffered by Christians
during the “Great persecution” the origins of the toughness of later punitive legislation. And finally, while offering an exhaustive review of the symbolism of the Christian cross, A. Di Berardino suggests the beginning of the 4th century as the date in which it was abolished as a torture within the Empire.

Finally, the seventh and last section of the volume (pagg. 465-548), significantly entitled « Fortleben », is dedicated to the transcendence and legacy of Constantine. Among all it’s contributions R. Teja Casuso’s explanation for Constantine’s idealization in Christian texts from Late Antiquity must be highlighted. In his opinion, this exceptional image was due to the filo-Arianism of Constantine’s son, Constantius II, a negative feature which made the former ruler appear to the Nicene writers as the best emperor possible. Moreover, M. Di Marco and R. Franchi both dedicate their essays to investigate Constantine’s image in the historical narratives of the period, Di Marco among the Latin historiography and Franchi in their Greek counterparts. Additionally, the contributions of M. Vallejo Girvés and P. Maymó Capdevila also appear connected. In this case, both authors explore the reception of Constantine’s image in the Mediterranean world. Therefore, exploring the image of Constantine in the writings of John the Lydian, Vallejo gives a glimpse of the uneven fortune that the Emperor’s remembrance had among the Byzantine elites of the 6th century A.D. For its part, Maymó points out that in the Western part of the Mediterranean just the opposite happened, since Constantine was promoted as an example of the best ruler by Church writers like Pope Gregory the Great. More specific are the contributions of L. Pietri, dedicated to the biblical archetypes associated with Constantine, and R. Villegas Marín, who maintains that the providential approach adopted by Saint Augustine regarding human history made him underestimate the historical significance of Constantine’s support towards the Church. Finally, J. A. Molina Gómez finishes the block using the relations between Rome and Persia to expose the divergence between the pompous declarations of the ecclesiastic propaganda and the much more restrained Realpolitik practiced by Constantine during his reign. At last, the volume ends with the list of the bibliography cited by the scholars in their contributions (pagg. 549-606).

Once exposed the contents, with regard of the significance of the work, it is necessary to acknowledge that its interest is more
remarkable on the field of the updating of academic postures than concerning the innovation of results. In this regard, the volume constitutes an update of discussions about Constantine and his time, since most of the contributions are clearly conceived to refresh the topics more than to explore new lines or offer definitive solutions. Likewise, another handicap to mention is that the volume as a whole maintains quite a conservative approach with regard to the sources. Essentially, all contributions are based on Graeco-Roman documents, paying no attention at all to the Coptic, Syriac or Armenian texts. Even recognizing the peripheral character of these testimonies, it cannot be denied that sources written in regional languages remain largely unexplored in relation to the Constantinian questions, so they can cast new light upon them and perhaps provide new perspectives for its study (e.g. How Constantine’s progressive approach to Christianity was perceived by the already converted kingdom of Armenia?). Nevertheless, these drawbacks do not spoil the value of the work. In fact, the volume’s international character is quite remarkable. For instance, although being a Spanish work almost half of the contributions are signed by foreign scholars who write their essays in English, French and Italian. Therefore, the global purview of the volume looks clear as well as the unquestionable interest of the contributions for specialized historiography, both Spanish and international. For all these reasons, it can be concluded thus that Constantino, ¿el primer emperador Cristiano? is a deserving and recommendable reading not only for scholars but also for postgraduate students interested in Constantine and Late Antiquity.

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