

# JULIAN ON THE SONS OF FAUSTA

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IN THE PANEGYRIC ON CONSTANTIUS which he delivered in November 355, the Caesar Julian praised Fausta, the mother of Constantius, as the mother not of a single emperor but of many:

ὦν ὁ μὲν τις τῷ πατρὶ συγκατειργάσατο τὸν πρὸς τοὺς τυράννους πόλεμον, ὁ δὲ τὴν πρὸς τοὺς Γέτας ἡμῖν εἰρήνην τοῖς ὅπλοις κρατήσας ἀσφαλῆ παρεσκεύασεν, ὁ δὲ ἐτήρησεν ἄβατον τοῖς πολεμίοις τὴν χώραν, αὐτὸς ἐπιστρατεύων ἐκείνους πολλάκις ἕως ἐπέτρεπον οἱ μικρὸν ὕστερον τῶν εἰς ἐκείνους ἀδικημάτων δίκην ὑποσχόντες.

(Orat. 1, 9D)

The three emperors can hardly be Crispus, Constantinus, and Constans, as the standard edition of the speech asserts.<sup>1</sup> Since Crispus was not the son of Fausta, but of Minervina, the first wife of Constantine,<sup>2</sup> the trio should comprise Constantinus, Constantius, and Constans. The three brothers were indeed sons of Fausta, and Julian alludes to them, as was proper, in order of age and seniority: Constantinus was born in the summer of 316, probably on 7 August, and his *dies imperii* was 1 March 317; Constantius, born on 7 August 317, was proclaimed Caesar on 8 November 324, and Constans, born in 320 or 323, entered the imperial college on 25 December 333.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>J. Bidez, *L'Empereur Julien: Oeuvres Complètes* 1.1 (Paris 1932, Budé) 20. Surprisingly, Bidez propounded this identification even though he held that Constantinus too was not a son of Fausta, but of a concubine. The Loeb editor (W. C. Wright, 1913) had observed a discreet silence on the identity of the first two of the three emperors.

<sup>2</sup>*Epitome* 41.4; Zosimus 2.20.2, cf. T. D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1982) 42 f.

<sup>3</sup>The official *dies imperii* of the sons of Constantine are well attested: *Chr. min.* 1.232; *CIL* 1<sup>2</sup> p. 276; *Chr. min.* 1.234 (day); R. S. Bagnall and K. A. Worp, *Regnal Formulas in Byzantine Egypt* (BASP Supp. 2, 1979) 2 ff. (year). Their dates of birth cause more difficulty.

The day and month of Constans' birth are unknown, and the evidence for the year is inconsistent: Eutropius *Brev.* 10.9 and Zonaras 13.6 imply 320, while *Epitome* 41.23 and Malalas, p. 325 Bonn imply 323. For Constantius, the day and month are well attested (*CTH* 6.4.10; *CIL* 1<sup>2</sup> pp. 255, 270), and the evidence for his age at the time of his death on 3 November 361 points to 317 as the year (Eutropius *Brev.* 10.15.2; *Epitome* 42.17; Socrates *HE* 2.47).

As for Constantinus, the sole manuscript of the *fasti* compiled by Polemius Silvius in 449 records *natalis Constantini minoris* on 7 August (*CIL* 1<sup>2</sup> p. 271), while *Epitome* 41.4 and Zosimus 2.20.2 state that he was proclaimed Caesar with Crispus a few days after his birth at Arles. T. Mommsen, *CIL* 1<sup>2</sup> p. 302, followed by A. Degraffi, *Inscr. Ital.* 13.2 (1963) 271, and most recent scholars, emended *Constantini* to *Constanti* or *Constantii*. With the only ancient evidence for the date and month of Constantinus' birth thus removed, it appears to follow that Constantinus was born in February 317, and hence either that

On the correct identification, the passage quoted yields two substantive historical inferences. Admittedly, no new facts emerge from Julian's allusions to Constans' defence of the imperial frontiers, his expeditions against Rome's enemies, and his death at the hands of Magnentius ("those who paid the penalty for their crimes against him shortly afterwards"). The allusions to Constantinus and Constantius, however, do increase the sum of knowledge. Constantinus "aided your father in waging his war against the tyrants:" in other words, he accompanied Constantine during his campaign against Licinius in 324. That fact, though easy enough to surmise, seems not to be otherwise explicitly attested, and the evidence of Julian is not registered in a recent reconstruction of the movements of the Caesar Constantinus between 317 and 337.<sup>4</sup> Constantius "made the peace between us and the Getae permanent through defeating them by force of arms." Julian's words imply that Constantius defeated "the Getae" on the field of battle, that he thereupon concluded a formal peace, and that the peace had remained unbroken until November 355. The passage, therefore, may be construed as confirmation of the hypothesis that Constantius campaigned on the Danube in 352—a hypothesis originally formulated to explain when he might officially have assumed the title of *Sarmaticus maximus* for the first time.<sup>5</sup> In Julian's mouth, the name "Getae" will be a mark of Atticism rather than a precise description: it does not exclude the possibility that it was Sarmatians whom Constantius defeated and with whom he then concluded peace.

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Constantinus cannot have been a son of Fausta (O. Seeck, *RE* 4 [1901] 1026; *PLRE* 1.223), or that Constantius was born on 7 August 318 rather than 7 August 317 (F. Paschoud, *Zosime* 1 [Paris 1971, Budé] 211 f.). However, two facts unknown to the author of the *Epitome* and to Zosimus, who both presumably reproduce Eunapius, put the whole matter in a different light. First, although the official *dies imperii* of Crispus and Constantinus was 1 March 317, both had previously been styled Caesar on the coinage of Constantine in the winter of 316/7 (*RIC* 7.172 ff. [Trier]; 243/4 Arles 104–113; 370 Ticinum 62–66). Second, Constantine was in Arles during August 316 (*CTh* 11.30.5,6). The *Epitome* and Zosimus, therefore, have run together the initial proclamation of the two Caesars during the War of Cibalae, which began in September 316, and the official proclamation of Crispus, Constantinus, and Licinius' son at Serdica, which marked the end of hostilities between Constantine and Licinius—and it may be argued that Constantinus was born exactly twelve months before his brother, on 7 August 316: see E. Stein, *ZNW* 30 (1931) 183 f.; J.R. Palanque, *REA* 40 (1938) 249 f. (arguing for summer 316, but disallowing Polemius Silvius); T. D. Barnes, *JRS* 63 (1973) 38; *New Empire* (1982) 44. The hypothesis that Constantinus was born in or about August 316 has the further advantage that it permits an elucidation of the obscure antecedents of the War of Cibalae (T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* [Cambridge, Mass. 1981] 66 f.).

<sup>4</sup>*New Empire* (1982) 84 f.

<sup>5</sup>T. D. Barnes, *ZPE* 52 (1983) 235.