

MINT AND FISCAL ADMINISTRATION UNDER DIOCLETIAN, HIS COLLEAGUES, AND HIS SUCCESSORS A.D. 305-24

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In a short article in the *Zeitschrift für Numismatik* for 1887, entitled 'Die fünfzehn Münzstätten der fünfzehn diocletianischen Diöcesen',¹ Mommsen drew attention to what he considered to be a parallelism confirming his conclusions on the date of the *Laterculus Veronensis* and the origins of the diocesan system.² It was not, in its details at least, one of his more distinguished contributions, and its shortcomings were mercilessly exposed by Mispoulet in a communication to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1908.³ Mispoulet's verdict—that no parallelism between mint and diocese had existed under Diocletian, and was indeed not to be expected—was accepted by Seston in 1946 in his monograph on Diocletian and the tetrarchy,⁴ and despite the occasional subsequent comment implying limited support for Mommsen⁵ this verdict seems to have won general acceptance. The possible existence of such a parallelism seems, for instance, to have been ignored by both Sutherland⁶ and Bruun⁷ in their respective treatments of the coinage from Diocletian to Maximinus and of Constantine and Licinius. The present writer has nevertheless had occasion to restate, and it is hoped confirm, the general principle of a relationship between the production of coinage and the pattern of fiscal administration in a recent article on the administrative basis of the Byzantine coinage c. 400-c. 900.⁸ A brief further examination of the origins of that relationship during the reigns of Diocletian, his colleagues, and his nearer successors, therefore seems in order.

The relationship between coin production and fiscal administration to be postulated below is not that of an absolute correlation between mint and diocese. The praetorian prefecture, the diocesan vicariate of which seems to have formed its major unit of regional administration, was only one—although increasingly the most important—of three fiscal institutions in the later empire, the other two being the *res summa* (or *sacrae largitiones* as it came to be called) and the *res privata*. It seems clear that both these other institutions possessed a regional structure that conformed largely, but not entirely, to a diocesan pattern: the diocesan tier of fiscal administration was therefore effectively not a single, but a threefold one. Despite the importance of the prefecture, responsibility for the physical production of coinage lay with the *res summa*. The extent to which the latter's regional structure conformed to or diverged from the diocesan pattern was therefore liable to be of significance for the production of coinage, and should be taken into account in an attempt to determine the existence and nature of any relationship between mint and fiscal administration. Nor should the equivalent structure of the *res privata* be ignored: it seems a plausible enough supposition that, where a divergence from the diocesan pattern on the part of the *res summa* was accompanied by a similar one on the part of the *res privata*, then their combined significance is likely to have been all the greater. The relationship that emerges is both less absolute and more complex than either Mommsen or Mispoulet anticipated: but its existence seems clear.

The first part of Mispoulet's case against Mommsen was that, in assuming the existence of fifteen dioceses under Diocletian, he had anticipated the division of Moesia and Oriens each into two, and that there was in any event only one Italian diocese not two. There were thus only twelve Diocletianic dioceses. The second part was more numismatic in content. This was that not only had Mommsen anticipated developments in the diocesan system, but that he had also failed to take account of the appearance or disappearance, or both, of certain mints other than the fifteen of his list. It was thus only by a combination of these

¹ *ZfN* xv (1887), 239-50.

² *Abh. d. Königl. Akad. der Wissensch., Berlin* (1862), 489-531.

³ *CRAI* (1908), 254-66.

⁴ W. Seston, *Diocletien et la Tétrarchie* (1946), 339.

⁵ Cf. J.-P. Callu, *La politique monétaire des empereurs romains de 238 à 311* (1969), 389, n. 2.

⁶ C. H. V. Sutherland, *Roman Imperial Coinage* vi (1967), 88-93.

⁷ P. M. Bruun, *RIC* vii (1966), 13-24; also *Eranos* 1962, 93-100.

⁸ *Univ. of Birmingham Hist. Journ.* xii (2), 1970, 129-54. These two articles should be read in conjunction, for each complements the other. For the intervening period, 324-c. 400, see: *Numismatic Chronicle* viii² (1972, forthcoming).

means that Mommsen had been able to obtain that exact correlation of mint to diocese which both scholars seem to have regarded as essential to prove any relationship between the two. With the additional observation that mints were established in order to facilitate exchanges and to act as instruments of imperial propaganda, rather than to perform fiscal functions within an administrative framework, Mispoulet's case was complete.

It now seems generally agreed that the *Laterculus Veronensis* as a whole cannot be later than about 324, and that its twelve dioceses represent survivals from the reign of Diocletian.⁹ Moesia seems in fact to have been divided into Dacia and Macedonia only under Constantine,¹⁰ and Egypt to have been formally split off from Oriens as late as the reign of Valens¹¹—although there are good reasons for treating it as an effectively independent fiscal unit even prior to that reign.¹² To this extent, then, Mispoulet's criticisms were justified. On the other hand, the division of Italy into two dioceses—Italia and Suburbicaria—is now recognized as an early and probably original, if unofficial, feature.¹³ There were thus neither fifteen nor twelve Diocletianic dioceses, but thirteen. If account is also taken of the quasi-independent status of Egypt within the diocese of Oriens, there were fourteen major fiscal units. The reformed coinage of Diocletian, the silver and copper components of which were first issued in *c.* 294, was the product of fourteen main mints, each under the supervision of a *procurator monetarum*. Dioceses or equivalent fiscal units, and main mints, are tabulated below. An asterisk indicates a mint actually established during the period *c.* 294–*c.* 324, and in this case the third column gives the date of its inception.¹⁴ The mint of Arles was formed, ultimately, by the migration of the mint of Carthage, as will be seen below: they are therefore better treated statistically as one mint. Their entries are bracketed in the table.

	Diocese or Fiscal Unit	Mint	Comment
Partes occidentis	Britanniae	London	(see below)
	Galliae	Trier * Lyons	<i>c.</i> 293
	Viennensis	(Arles *)	<i>c.</i> 313 (ex Carthage)
	Hispaniae	—	—
	Africa	(Carthage *) ¹⁵	<i>c.</i> 296 (to 307 only)
	Italia { Italia	Aquileia * Ticinum ¹⁶	<i>c.</i> 294
	Suburbicaria	Rome	—
	Pannoniae	Siscia	—
Partes orientis	Moesiae	Thessalonica *	<i>c.</i> 298/99
	Thracia	Heraclea *	<i>c.</i> 292/93(?)
	Asiana	Cyzicus	—
	Pontica	Nicomedia *	<i>c.</i> 294/95
	Oriens { Oriens	Antioch	—
		Aegyptus	Alexandria

Of the mints listed above, London was in fact established as late as *c.* 286/87 during the usurpation of Carausius, and was noticeably the only one of three or four set up by Carausius and Allectus to have been continued in operation for any length of time after the

⁹ A. H. M. Jones, *JRS* XLIV (1954), 21–9; A. Chastagnol, *La Préfecture Urbaine à Rome sous le Bas-Empire* (1960), 3–4.

¹⁰ A. H. M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* (1964) III, 17 (n. 66)—citing *CTh.* XI, 3, 2 (327).

¹¹ A. H. M. Jones, *JThS* NS, v (1954), 224–7.

¹² It had long acted as an independent unit for the purposes of both *res summa* and *res privata*: see p. 79 below.

¹³ Jones, *LRE* III, 4 (n. 16); cf. n. 34 below. Use of the term 'Suburbicaria' is parachronistic but convenient.

¹⁴ For the mints: Sutherland, *RIC* VI, 5–6; Bruun, *RIC* VII, under mint headings. For the dioceses: *Laterculus Veronensis* (ed. Seeck, *Notitia Dignitatum* (1876), 247–51). A Constantinian *proc(urator) s(acrae) m(onetae) u(rbis)* occurs in *CIL* VI, 1145. *Not. Dig. Occ.* XI, 38–44 represents the modified Diocletianic situation. *Monetae* tended to be accompanied by *thesauri*, under *praepositi*, for

obvious reasons of convenience (*Occ.* XI, 21–37). cf. Jones, *LRE* III, 104–5 (n. 44), 112–3 (n. 62).

¹⁵ The much reduced province of *Africa Proconsularis* in which Carthage itself stood was of course not subject to the *vicarius Africae* (nor to the praetorian prefects for that matter) but to its proconsul, the vicar being, in theory at least, forbidden entry (e.g. *CTh.* I, 15, 10). This would not inhibit the use of its mint by both and, since many of the laws in *CTh.* addressed to the vicar were (where recorded) accepted or posted at Carthage, he must in fact have been as frequently resident there. The administrative boundaries of both *res summa* and *res privata* remained unaffected by this anomaly: see below and, for the position of proconsuls, Jones *LRE* III, 5 (n. 17). The situation seems to have had much in common with that existing between the *praefectus* and the *vicarius urbis (Romae)*.

¹⁶ Tarraco in Mommsen's list. The attribution to Ticinum is now universally accepted: cf. Sutherland, *RIC* VI, 6–7.

recovery of the area by the central authorities (296).¹⁷ Alexandria had, it is true, an unbroken tradition of minting from Ptolemaic times onwards, but it was only in *c.* 294 that its denominational system had begun to be brought into line with that of the remaining imperial mints.¹⁸ There is little doubt that this formed part of the same phenomenon as led not only to the reform of the coinage but also to the inception of several new mints—among which Alexandria might therefore virtually be counted. With the exception of London and Alexandria, and the further one of Tripolis to be mentioned below, the earlier pattern of mints upon which the Diocletianic foundations were now superimposed was basically that which had achieved its final form during the reign of Aurelian.¹⁹

Between the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian in 305, and the final triumph of Constantine over Licinius at Chrysopolis in 324, Diocletian's own pattern of mints underwent minor change only.

In 303/04 a mint was opened at Serdica (Moesia) and operated there until 308. Over much the same period the mint of Thessalonica remained dormant, and its reactivation seems in turn to have coincided with the closure of Serdica. The suspicion that the mint of Thessalonica had merely been moved northwards temporarily to Serdica seems confirmed by the existence of pronounced similarities between their products.²⁰

In 307 the mint of Carthage (Africa) was closed, and when the revolt of Domitius Alexander against Maxentius broke out there in the following year it is clear—from the consistently poor quality of the coinage produced—that the services of a regular mint were no longer available. The closure itself has every appearance of having been an act of political precaution rather than one with a fiscal or economic motivation.²¹ In 308/09 a mint was opened at Ostia (Suburbicaria): it seems to have been composed of staff withdrawn from Carthage in 307. In 313 Ostia was itself closed, but during the course of the same year a mint was opened at Arles (Viennensis). It has, unsurprisingly, been found to have been formed out of the staff withdrawn from Ostia. Its location at Arles proved permanent.²²

The frequent presence of Constantine at Sirmium (Pannonia), which he was using as a main base for political and later military operations against Licinius over the years 319–24, provides the obvious, and satisfactory, explanation for the opening of a mint there in 320, continuing until a closure sometime in 325/26. Its abnormal status is confirmed by a marked concentration upon the production of gold coin.²³

Despite occasional interruptions or anomalies,²⁴ the list of mints operating (particularly for the production of copper coin) on a basis other than obviously temporary in 324 therefore differed from that obtaining in 305 only in so far as the diocese of Africa had lost the mint of Carthage, to the ultimate gain of the diocese of Viennensis in the form of a mint at Arles. That it was changes such as those described in the three preceding paragraphs which were concentrated upon by Mispoulet, and which have subsequently turned out to be of minor or temporary significance only, goes far towards diminishing the weight of the purely numismatic aspects of his case against Mommsen's parallelism.

¹⁷ Carausius and Allectus: R. A. G. Carson, *Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc.* (1959), 33–40; id., *Mints, Dies and Currency* (1971), 57–65. Diocletian: Sutherland, *RIC* vi, 113, 115.

¹⁸ Sutherland, *RIC* vi, 645–7: which account is to be preferred to those of Schwarz and Callu arguing for 296 (cf. Callu, *op. cit.* 190–3, 386–7).

¹⁹ P. H. Webb, *RIC* v(1) (1927), 256–62.

²⁰ Sutherland, *RIC* vi, 486, 501, 505. A brief issue of gold coin was also struck at Serdica by Licinius in 313–4: Bruun, *RIC* vii, 478.

²¹ According to Aurelius Victor (*Lib. de Caes.* 40, 17) Alexander was 'apud Poenos pro praefecto gerens'. He was thus *vicarius Africae*. This is confirmed by Zosimus (*Hist.* II, 12), who adds that Maxentius had demanded that Alexander send his son to him as hostage, for fear that he would otherwise revolt. The closure of the mint of Carthage is further evidence of this attitude. For the reign of Alexander see, in the last instance, R. Andreotti in *Afrika und Rom in der Antike* (edd. H.-J. Diesner, H. Barth, H.-D. Zimmerman, 1968), 245–76. Sutherland (*RIC* vi, 411) emphasizes the extra-

ordinary nature of the mint of Carthage. Certainly it was set up either shortly before or shortly after Maximian's arrival on campaign against the *Quinquegentiani* (297–8), and it consistently used variant designs on its products. But its continuance until 307 argues the fulfilment of more permanent needs. Seston (*op. cit.* 116–7) is sceptical of the military necessity for Maximian's visit, but (325–31) supposes several of the administrative rearrangements of the period to have resulted from it. This is not incompatible with what has been suggested of the mint.

²² Carthage-Ostia: Sutherland, *RIC* vi, 393–4. Ostia-Arles: Bruun, *RIC* vii, 227, and *The Constantinian Coinage of Arelate* (1953), 5–16.

²³ Bruun, *RIC* vii, 462–6; cf. n. 58 below.

²⁴ The production of gold and silver was never continuous (cf. n. 58 below), but even that of copper was occasionally interrupted for reasons that are not always now apparent: Sutherland, *RIC* vi, 37–73; Bruun, *RIC* vii, 87 (for copper only). It is over the longer term that the continuity of these mints becomes apparent.

It is nevertheless clear, from the table above, that the particular case for an absolute correlation between mint and diocese, or even between mint and major fiscal unit, is out of the question. Of a total of thirteen dioceses, eight possessed a single mint, three possessed two mints, and two no mint at all. Of fourteen major fiscal units ten possessed a single mint, two possessed two mints and two no mint at all.²⁵ The figures do, on the other hand, seem to lend a substantial degree of support to the case that some parallelism between mint and major fiscal unit did exist, even if it fell short of an absolute correlation.

The precise cause of this parallelism remains, and is likely to remain, problematical. The two main possibilities seem to be either that it was the result of a conscious policy, or that it was merely the result of convenience working within the framework of the existing fiscal administration. That the Diocletianic system of mints arose not only out of the creation of new mints, but also out of the closure of old ones, might be taken as supporting the first possibility. That the parallelism was, as it were, an imperfect one—not an absolute correlation—might be taken as supporting the second. Various intermediate and largely composite possibilities of course exist, but their solution would require more evidence than in fact remains, and a more sophisticated treatment than is really possible at this distance in time.

As mentioned above, certain mints were closed at much the same time as others were opened, giving the whole an air of deliberation. The case of London as the only survivor of three or four mints set up by Carausius and Allectus has already been noted. Although the appearance of the mints of Rouen and perhaps Boulogne seems to have been a response to a particular emergency, their disappearance probably therefore following naturally on from the termination of the same,²⁶ the closure of the second British mint that is often identified as Colchester could well have been the result of administrative policy. A somewhat more convincing case is provided by the closure of the Aurelianic mint of Tripolis (Oriens). The exact date at which this occurred remains uncertain. The mint struck a fair amount of pre-reform coinage for both Diocletian and Maximian but failed to participate in the reform itself, and even to strike for the Caesars Constantius and Galerius subsequent to their creation in March 293.²⁷ A date somewhere between 290 and 293 has therefore been suggested.²⁸ The continuance of a mint at Tripolis, so near to that of Antioch, and within not only the same diocese but even the same fiscal unit, would certainly have stood out as an anomaly in any scheme in which mint and fiscal unit were consciously related. Although some degree of policy might therefore seem to have been involved, two cases are obviously insufficient to lead to a definition of its character and limits.

It would seem logical to assume that, although the formation of the Diocletianic mint system might have either accompanied or succeeded that of the fiscal structure which it paralleled, it is most unlikely to have appreciably anticipated it.²⁹ Since the fiscal structure in question seems largely (but not entirely) identical with the diocesan vicariate, the problem arises whether the latter can have been in existence, or can have been coming into existence, by c. 292/93—the date at which the mint system seems to have commenced its evolution. Seston, while stressing the indecisive nature of the evidence, supposed the vicariate to have been created in 297–98.³⁰ Clearly, if the proposed parallelism is to stand, the creation of the vicariate must be redated in consequence. The documentary and epigraphical evidence is in fact not incompatible with, and may even support, such a redating. Aurelius Agricola was certainly *agens vices praefectorum praetorio* in Spain in November, 298,³¹ and the new fiscal structure seems to have been already well established in Egypt by

²⁵ Carthage and Arles being treated as one mint.

²⁶ The successful campaigns of Constantius. See n. 17 above.

²⁷ It is immaterial to the present treatment whether or not the Caesars were created simultaneously; cf. Jones, *LRE* III, 3 (n. 4).

²⁸ P. H. Webb, *RIC* v (II) (1933), 218. It would not be surprising if there were some connection between the closure of Tripolis and the opening of the mint of Heraclea.

²⁹ The ancient—and for the most part mediaeval—world lacked monetary policies: monetary events did not anticipate but reacted to situations. See:

A. H. M. Jones in *Essays in Roman Coinage Presented to Harold Mattingly* (1956), 26; M. H. Crawford, *JRS* LX (1970), 40–8.

³⁰ Seston, *op. cit.* 337.

³¹ *Acta Marcelli, Anal. Boll.* xLI (1923), 262. The equation of *agens vices* with *vicarius* was established in its essentials by E. Michon in an article still useful as a collection of sources: *Mém. Soc. Nat. Ant. de France* LXXIV (1914), 244–99. The latest treatment of the question—by M. T. W. Arnheim, who seems unaware of Michon's article—merely reaches the same conclusion: *Historia* XIX (1970), 593–606.

September of the same year.³² But an inscription dated by the fourth consulship of Maximian (i.e. to 293–96) records Septimius Valentio as *v. p. a. v. praef. praett. cc. vv.* at Rome.³³ In order to preserve his dating, Seston was obliged to dismiss Valentio merely as another of the deputy praetorian prefects occasionally met with during the third century.³⁴ This, in a reign that demonstrably saw a fundamental extension in the role of the *agens vices praefectorium*, seems quite unjustified in default of decisive evidence. Such evidence was not forthcoming, as Seston's case relied on a faulty dating of the division of Italy into provinces.³⁵ It is true, for instance, that the area over which Valentio acted for the prefects is not specified, but then nor is it in the case of Valerius Alexander who is termed *v. p. agens vic. praef. praet.* in an African inscription of 303.³⁶ A redating of the vicariate would allow Valentio to be an early *vicarius urbis* as Alexander was an early *vicarius Africae*.

It is of equal significance for the case being argued that the two other fiscal institutions, the *res summa* and *res privata*, should also be proved to have possessed an equivalent regional structure at an early date—if only because it was within the competence of the *res summa* that the striking of coinage lay. Although Seston doubted the Diocletianic origin of this equivalent structure,³⁷ the evidence of Lactantius is very strongly in its favour. Describing Diocletian's administrative policies the latter claims the provinces to have been in 'frusta concisae: multi praesides et plura officia item rationales multi et magistri et vicarii praefectorum.'³⁸ The passage carries with it the strongest implications of the creation of *rationales rerum summarum* and *magistri privatae* at an early date, if indeed not more or less simultaneously with the diocesan vicariate, the jurisdictional boundaries of all three being very much the same.³⁹

Egypt, for all its abnormality, provides a case in point. There, by September, 298, the old province had already been divided in two—(lower) Egypt, which continued under the prefect, and the Thebaid, which fell to a *praeses* (ἡγουμένος). At an uncertain stage, quite possibly at the same time as the Thebaid, Libya was also split off. And yet, despite this fragmentation, the *rationalis rerum summarum* (καθολικός) had not only retained his authority over the whole of the old province, but had even been given powers—such as the appointment of nome *strategoi*—formerly belonging to the prefect. A μάγιστρος τῆς πριουάτης with the same extensive jurisdiction as the *rationalis*, is recorded at the same time.⁴⁰

Several points follow. The administrative structure just described confirms—if it needed confirming—each detail of Lactantius' evidence. It has been suggested that the *praefectus Aegypti*, reduced as he was in power, continued to hold at least a vestigial authority over the several *praesides* of the area forming his previous jurisdiction.⁴¹ If this was so he will effectively have occupied an intermediate position between the normal *praeses* and *agens vices praefectorum*—in this case the *vicarius* (later *comes*) *Orientis*.⁴² But whatever the validity of this suggestion, involving the regional structure of the praetorian prefecture, there can be no doubt from a variety of sources that Egypt as a whole possessed independent status for the purposes of both *res summa* and *res privata*.⁴³ Given the former, at least, the

³² See n. 40 below.

³³ *ILS* 619. For a list of early vicars see Jones, *LRE* III, 5 (n. 17).

³⁴ Seston, op. cit. 337, n. 4. See also Chastagnol, op. cit. 26 (n. 1)—to whose account of the *vicarius urbis* (or *vicarius in urbe Roma*) and *vicarius praefecturae urbis* that of Jones (*LRE* III, 4–5 (n. 16)) is to be preferred.

³⁵ Seston's proposed dating was 297/98 (op. cit. 333). But T. Flavius Postumius Titianus can be shown to have held the posts of both *corr. Campaniae* and *corr. Italiae reg. Transpadanae* before his ordinary consulship in 301 and his proconsulship of Africa in 295. See Chastagnol, op. cit. 21–5, where a date of 290/91 is suggested.

³⁶ *AE* 1942–3, 81. Alexander was still vicar under Maxentius (edd. J. M. Reynolds, J. B. Ward-Perkins, *The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania* (1952), 464). In view of the information in n. 21 above, it seems worthwhile asking whether Valerius and Domitius

Alexander might not be the same person. On this see A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* I (1971), pp. 43–4, nos. 17, 20.

³⁷ Seston, op. cit. 339, n. 3.

³⁸ Lactantius, *De Mort. Pers.* VII, 4.

³⁹ For a list of early *rationales* see Jones, *LRE* III, 5 (n. 18), and 104 (n. 43); for early *magistri* ibid. 5 (n. 19), 95–6 (nn. 1, 2); also ibid. 344–6 (Appendix I), cf. n. 49, below.

⁴⁰ P. Beatty *Panop.* I (Sept. 298), 2 (Jan.–Mar. 300).

⁴¹ C. Vandersleyen, *Chronologie des préfets d'Égypte de 284 à 395* (1962; *Coll. Lat.* 55), 110–4.

⁴² Jones, *LRE* III, 16 (n. 61). The status of Aemilius Rusticianus ὁ διασημ(ότατος) διαδεχόμενος τὰ μέρη τῶν ἐξοχωτάτων ἐπαρχῶν of P. Oxy. 1469 (298) remains uncertain. He was just possibly an early *vicarius Orientis*.

⁴³ To n. 40 above, add Jones, *LRE* III, 104 (n. 41).

survival—through adaptation—of a mint at Alexandria becomes far less of an anomaly than might at first sight have appeared.

How long had this structure been in existence? Suggestions have been made that elements of it are traceable as far back as March, 297, February, 295, or January of any of the years 293–97.⁴⁴ Taken in conjunction with the evidence of the Valentio inscription and the division of Italy into provinces, it provides a strong presumption that the existence of the new administrative structure can be taken appreciably further back than proposed by Seston. The case being argued is therefore not incompatible with documentary and epigraphical sources.

Concerning the nature of the process by which the vicariate was brought into being, evidence seems to be lacking, and the coinage has nothing positive to offer. Seston, while again stressing the indecisive nature of the evidence, supposed a single act to have sufficed,⁴⁵ but this may be at least partly explained by his having considered the vicariate in isolation. If it were to seem probable that the creation of a threefold administrative tier (that is including *res summa* and *res privata*) was beyond the capacity of a single act, the development of the coinage would, once again, not be incompatible.

It is of interest, and possibly even of significance, that the coincidence of mint and fiscal unit is less marked in the west than in the east. Since each Augustus at least possessed a complete administration of his own,⁴⁶ and slight divergences in administrative emphasis have already been detected, the west perhaps exhibiting a slightly less monolithic structure,⁴⁷ a further example of such a divergence is not in itself improbable. But even this example is probably less clear-cut than it appears at first. For the evident duplication of the mints of Lyons and Trier in the diocese of Gaul is tempered by the fact that at no time during this period did the former strike coinage in precious metal, the latter holding an absolute monopoly.⁴⁸

If the evidence of the *Notitia Dignitatum* for the regional structure of the *comitiva sacrarum largitionum* can be used as a valid source for that of the Diocletianic *res summa* (as certainly seems the case where independent evidence acts as a control), then the dioceses of Pannonia, Suburbicaria, and Africa—units for the purposes of the other fiscal institutions—were all halved.⁴⁹ The division of Suburbicaria might plausibly be held to explain the functions of the short-lived Maxentian mint of Ostia, in transit between Carthage and Arles. For while Rome would be well placed to supply the mainland suburbicarian regions (under the *rationalis summarum urbis Romae*⁵⁰), Ostia would be equally well placed to supply or to share in supplying the islands of Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica (under the *rationalis summarum trium provinciarum*), and even Africa after its recovery in 311.⁵¹

Of the three fiscal institutions of the later empire it seems to have been the praetorian prefecture that, to an increasing degree, became the main instrument of public revenue and expenditure—to the detriment of the *comitivae sacrarum largitionum* and *rerum privatarum*.⁵² The production of coin betrays no unmistakable sign of this, presumably because the regional structure of all three being so similar, any shift in responsibility or importance

⁴⁴ Vandersleyen, op. cit. 113–4; ed. T. C. Skeat, *Papyri from Panopolis* (1964), xviii, 153–6 (*P. Lond.* 1260).

⁴⁵ See n. 30 above.

⁴⁶ Jones, *LRE* III, 5 (n. 22), 6 (n. 24).

⁴⁷ Constantius possessed a defined territorial jurisdiction: it remains uncertain whether Galerius did. The documentary evidence seems negative, although his extensive building operations in Thessalonica might be taken as implying the opposite. The coinage argues for the kind of administrative distinction between Constantius and Maximian that may have derived from the former's possession of his own chief *rationalis* as well as his prefect; cf. Jones, *LRE* III, 3 (n. 7), 6 (n. 24).

⁴⁸ Sutherland, *RIC* VI, 229; Bruun, *RIC* VII, 121. Curiously, and probably significantly, the same tended to happen later at Alexandria which was formally in a comparable administrative situation:

RIC VII, 698; J. W. E. Pearce, *RIC* IX (London 1951), 296.

⁴⁹ C.s.l.—*Not. Dig. Or.* XIII, 5; *Occ.* XI, 10–20. C.r.p.—*Not. Dig. Or.* XIV, 4; *Occ.* XII, 6–15. Jones (*LRE* I, 19) supposes the *rationalis r. p. per Siciliam* of *Occ.* XII, 10 to have been a late addition. The early division of the suburbicarian diocese for the purposes of the *res summa* is confirmed by *CTh.* XII, 6, 2; XII, 7, 1 (both 325 and addressed *Ad Eufrasium rationalem trium provinciarum*), and by XI, 30, 14 (327, *Victori rationali urb. Rom.*); cf. n. 39 above.

⁵⁰ *Not. Dig. Occ.* XI, 13.

⁵¹ *Not. Dig. Occ.* XI, 14. For hoard figures see Callu, op. cit. 455; P. Salama, *Libya Antiqua* III–IV (1966–7), 21–7.

⁵² E. Stein, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Reiches* (1919), 144–7; J. P. C. Kent in E. Cruikshank Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps* (1961), 36–7.

would tend to have been masked.⁵³ The existence of this factor should nevertheless warn against too simple an equation between coinage and *largitiones*. Thus, although there is no good reason to believe that the responsibility for the physical production of coin was removed from the *largitiones* before the whole fiscal structure underwent drastic reorganization in the course of the seventh century, the metal involved would have been provided to an ever increasing degree by the prefecture and its subordinate structure. Production was not, as Lactantius would rather wildly have it, a haphazard affair.⁵⁴ It might, and probably did in the long run, both reflect and influence the general economic situation, but it was at least not primarily geared to meet the demands of the general public, still less to propagandize it.⁵⁵ The three identifiable influences upon the production of copper coin were: first, the pattern of the fiscal administration; second, the immediacy and extent of the military establishment; and third, political considerations. Of the first enough has been said. The second is nowhere better seen than in the history of the mint of Sirmium and in the slightly divergent mint system of the western half of the empire. At various times the dioceses of Africa and Viennensis lacked a mint: Spain never possessed one. Yet, according to Lactantius⁵⁶—whose evidence seems plausible enough in this case—it was specifically Africa and Spain that were amongst the richest areas of the empire. What Gaul and Italy (which both possessed two mints) had, and which Africa, Viennensis and Spain all lacked, was of course not wealth but a permanently heavy military establishment.⁵⁷ As for the third, one need look no further than the curious interlude of the mint of Carthage. For the production of gold and later gold and silver coin a somewhat different consideration applied, involving the residence of the emperor and his *comitatus*. This was evidently already a dominant influence, although not the virtually exclusive one it later became.⁵⁸ It was no doubt a consideration that had originally affected the precise siting of several mints within their particular fiscal unit, but was one upon which the subsequent production of copper coin never depended to the same degree as that of precious metal.⁵⁹

To sum up. A strong case can be made out for the existence of a close parallelism between the production of coinage, particularly copper coinage, and the pattern of fiscal

⁵³ Although it is noticeable that the provisions of a procedural reform of Valentinian and Valens, resulting in the minting of precious metal being confined to the comitatensian *largitiones*, seem subsequently to have been relaxed to allow minting at prefectural headquarters—even if it was performed only by moneyers seconded for the purpose. See J. P. C. Kent in *Essays in Roman Coinage Presented to Harold Mattingly*, 199–203; Hendy, *op. cit.* 142–3.

⁵⁴ Lactantius, *De Mort. Pers.* vii, 9, describing Diocletian's 'infinita quaedam cupiditas aedificandi': 'Hic basilicae, hic circus, hic moneta, hic armorum fabrica, hic uxori domus, hic filiae.'

⁵⁵ Jones, in *Essays in Roman Coinage Presented to Harold Mattingly*, 15–6. Not invalidated (in particular for the late Roman period) by C. H. V. Sutherland in *JRS* XLIX (1959), 46–55, and LIII (1963), 14–20. Propaganda on Roman coinage can, at best, never have been more than a secondary consideration. To the extent that the production of coinage was not primarily geared to the needs of the general public it was equally not so for its propagandizing. It was precisely those denominations that were least liable to (socially) wide, rapid circulation (i.e. gold and silver) that had the most rapidly changing design.

⁵⁶ Lactantius *De Mort. Pers.* viii, 3: 'opulentissimae provinciae, vel Africa vel Hispania'.

⁵⁷ The military establishment in Africa was considerably increased at this period, probably as a result of Maximian's visit. But it could, even so, not compare with that of the Rhine, Danube or East. And it should be pointed out that Africa had, in fact, originally been provided with a mint—its closure being due to political reasons (cf. n. 21 above). The establishments in Spain and Viennensis seem to have been minimal. D. van Berchem, *L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme constantinienne* 37–49 (Africa); Jones,

LRE III, 374 (table IX, Africa), 379 (table XIV Africa), 377 (table XI, Spain and Tingitania). A large proportion of the African military seem to have been tribal *limitanei* (Jones, *LRE* III, 201, nn. 103–4, 106). For the Diocletianic calculation (and presumably payment) of military *stipendia* and *donativa* etc. in denarii (i.e. copper coin) see P. Beatty Panop. 2. For commentaries: ed. Skeat xxvi–xxx; Jones, *LRE* III, 187–9 (n. 31). For a Constantinian example: P. Oxy. 1047.

⁵⁸ On the developed theory of the comitatensian (and therefore 'travelling') mint for the production of precious-metal coinage at this period, see: P. M. Bruun, *Studies in Constantinian Chronology* (1961), 23–77, and *RIC* vii, 13–8; M. R. Alfvöldi, *Die constantinische Goldprägung* (1963), 12–20. For a more sceptical view: P. Bastien's review of *RIC* vii in *JRS* LVIII (1968), 281; and, for Diocletian, Sutherland, *RIC* vi, 54–5. While a strong tendency towards a comitatensian pattern is undeniable, even at this stage, its elevation into a virtually exclusive rule is unwarranted—and is moreover disproved by fourth-century accessional and quinquennial issues. It was only with the measures described in n. 53 above that the regular existence of comitatensian mints such as Milan and Ravenna, which were both outside the earlier structure and which produced coinages that were virtually confined to the precious metals, was rendered possible.

⁵⁹ Of the new mints Trier was the main residence of Constantius, Nicomedia that of Diocletian, and Thessalonica probably that of Galerius. The presence of a ruler at these mint cities doubtless influenced even their production of copper coin, but that it was not the predominant influence is seen by their continuing in production not only in the absence—often prolonged—of the ruler, but also into periods when they were no longer residences.

administration under Diocletian and his successors. This did not extend to an absolute correlation between mint and diocese as proposed by Mommsen, or even between mint and major fiscal unit: indeed its precise cause remains uncertain. It was probably inevitable that, as the product of one of three similarly organized fiscal institutions, the coinage should conveniently reflect their regional structure: there is, however, some reason to believe that a deliberate policy was being followed. Whether this policy was any more complex than a general one of rationalization is impossible to say. Although the coinage can provide no detailed information on the date or the method by which the new fiscal structure was introduced, its general evidence is not incompatible with other sources. There does seem to have been a divergence between east and west as to the extent to which the coinage reflected the fiscal structure, but an examination of this divergence reveals useful supplementary information on the reasons for the issue of coinage.

The real strength of the case for the parallelism suggested above is that both its elements were coterminous. The production of coinage took on a particular shape under Diocletian in the few years after *c.* 292/93: it lost what was basically still that shape under Heraclius in *c.* 628/29.⁶⁰ Within a very few years of the first date the diocesan vicariate of the prefects, with its equivalent organization in the two other fiscal institutions, can be shown to have been created. Within a few years of the second its formal remnants can be shown to have been dismantled. The production of coinage during the period after *c.* 628/29 reflected, in turn, a pattern of fiscal administration dominated by the metropolitan *sekreta* that bore a resemblance to the various groups of *scrinia* within the *officium* of the praetorian prefecture of the East, from which they appear to have been ultimately descended, in the names they bore only.⁶¹

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

⁶⁰ Hendy, *op. cit.* 147–52.

⁶¹ Stein, *Studien* 149–50.