Abstract
The era of Constantine posed a challenge to the church to redefine herself in association with a Christianized emperor, who openly favoured Christians and proved himself ready to accommodate Christianity as the official religion of the empire. It was Eusebius of Caesarea (d. 339) who responded to this challenge on behalf of the Christian church. In the sixteenth chapter of his De Sepulchro Christi, he develops a full argument for positive church-empire relations, addressed to both the representatives of the Roman Empire and the church, who, in the Constantinian era, were facing the reality of an intimate engagement between the church and the empire. According to the argument, after having experienced a long term of taming and adjustment, divine providence had ripened the historical circumstances for both parts—Roman Empire and the Christian Church—to realize this engagement as a culmination of salvation history. The entire progress of human civilization in the political and religious realms had been providentially brought to this point. Therefore, it was a historical necessity that the Roman Empire and the church come together and cooperate in concord and friendship for the sake of humankind. It is the aim of this paper to analyze Eusebius of Caesarea’s paradigm for positive church-empire relations through a detailed analysis of his De Sepulchro Christi and to shed light to some important questions in relation to his political theology.

Key Terms: Constantine, Eusebius of Caesarea, political theology, Roman Empire.
Prior to the fourth century, Christians always defined the Christian society, the representatives of the kingdom of God on earth, to be the church and never seem to have entertained the possibility of a Christian empire under the rule of a Christian emperor. The era of Constantine, then, posed a new challenge to the church to redefine herself in association with a Christianized emperor, who openly favoured Christians and proved himself ready to accommodate Christianity as the official religion of the empire. The problem of redefining Christian society required a new ecclesiology on the part of the churchmen who were facing the new reality. The importance of Eusebius of Caesarea lies in the fact that he responded to this new challenge with a sophisticated theological argument to prove to both his fellow churchmen and to the emperor and the Roman intellectual elite that the time had come for the Roman Empire and the church to unite and cooperate in providing humanity with universal salvation and peace, which were the ultimate goals of human civilization. Therefore, the main issue that the orations addressed was to define a universal Christian society that embraced both the empire as the body politic and the church, as well as outlining the principles of church-empire relations within this Christian society.

Among his vast literary output, the Tricennial Orations—comprised by the Laudibus Constantini (LC) and De Sepulchro Christi (SC)—constitute an exposition of Eusebius’s “Imperial Theology” and his argument for positive church-empire relations. Eusebius’s conviction concerning the indispensable role of the Roman Empire for the universal salvation of humanity is the backbone of his entire argument.2

2 In his In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius’s Tricennial Orations (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 30-2, H.A. Drake discusses the question of unity of the LC. Some facts, such as that the present LC is too long to be delivered as an oration and that many of the manuscripts either contain only a part of the LC or assign a second title to its second half, along with critical differences in subject, locale, terms of address, and style, led some scholars, including T. D. Barnes (see his article: “Two Speeches by Eusebius” in his Early Christianity and the Roman Empire (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984): 341-345), to distinguish
The 16th chapter of the Sepulchro Christi illustrates the common roots and goals of the political and religious histories of humanity within a salvation-historical perspective. Eusebius gives an overview of salvation history, in which he joins the political and religious history as two separate lines, which had been together in the beginning of time and, after a long period of separation, were again joined together in the age of Constantine. The main argument of the orations is that the progress in the political history from all forms of polyarchy to monarchy (or from the principle of ethnicity to the principle of universality), and the progress in the religious history from polytheism to monotheism were not accidental, but the results of the same divine providence. According to Eusebius, these parallel developments were the decisive proofs that the political and religious histories of humanity had always been under the guidance of the divine providence. Eusebius begins his exposition as follows:

Now formerly all the peoples of the earth were divided, and the whole human race cut up into provinces and tribal and local governments, states ruled by despots or by mobs. Because of this, continuous battles and wars, with their attendant devastations and enslavements, gave them no respite in countryside or city. Hence the topics of countless histories—adultery and rape of the womenfolk—in particular the evils of Ilium and tragedies of the ancients, so well remembered among all men. If you ascribe the reason for these evils to polytheistic error, you would not miss the mark. (SC, XVI, 2-3).

Eusebius begins his salvation-historical construction with a description of the political situation of the ancient period. He alludes to the times of Trojan war and the foundation of Rome as narrated by Homer, Thucydides, Herodotus, and Livy. As Eusebius portrays it, the period was marked by severe political instability and insecurity caused by rivalries between the contend-
ing political powers. Political division and strife resulted in long-term wars, political chaos, and insecurity. Eusebius refers to the period to support his monarchical view, pointing out that division in political power was the cause of political strife and the ensuing evils. However, his next sentence gives this phenomenon a new dimension: “If you ascribe the reason for these evils to polytheistic error, you would not miss the mark.” The evils that are previously ascribed to political division are similarly ascribed to a different cause: polytheism. The orator seems to attempt to equate these two causes—polyarchy and polytheism—as similar twins. For him polytheism and polyarchy—division in divinity and division in politics—corresponded to each other; in fact, Eusebius presents the two sometimes in a relation of cause and effect, and sometimes in a relation of mutual representation; in this way he creates an inseparable pair from polytheism and polyarchy, with a view to emphasize their unbroken co-existence, in such a way that one’s existence brings the other’s unavoidable company.

Eusebius’s combination between polyarchy and polytheism as inseparable twins implies that the Roman consolidation of power under the control of one emperor in the form of absolute monarchianism, and its ensuing benefits for humanity, will not reach to its perfection as long as paganism remains as the religion of the empire. Eusebius seems to address to the Roman intellectual elite, reminding them the Pax Romana and its positive results in securing a universal peace, and creating a common hope that a universal monarchy could provide humanity with the benefits of an ideal political establishment. Eusebius seems to share, with his audience, the conviction of the official ideology of the Roman Empire, that the political well-being of the empire and the religious life of the Roman society and that of the emperor himself affected each other. On this common ground, Eusebius claims that the monarchical argument and polytheism are naturally contradictory and incompatible. For this reason, argues Eusebius, a universal monarchy cannot fully yield its benefits for humanity as long as it supports a polytheistic belief. Eusebius acknowledges that polyarchy was the cause of all political strife, wars, and all kinds of evils that befell upon humanity throughout history. However, he also argues that the root cause of polyarchy itself was polytheism. As a Roman citizen, Eusebius alludes to the fundamental concept of the Roman religion that the earthly empire was sustained by an overall structure of cosmic order, and that the stability of the empire was provided by the gods. Eusebius argues that a multiplicity of gods (“demons,” according to his Christian perspective) cannot sustain a universal monarchy, simply because they always

4 Vergil was the most articulate witness of the Pax Augusta who, with great enthusiasm and optimism, promoted the principles of the Augustan project. For a detailed exposition of Vergil’s views on the Pax Romana see Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 27 ff.
6 Mitchell, History of the Later Roman Empire, 3-4.
conflict with each other. As a matter of fact, it is impossible for many gods to agree upon a universal monarchy’s rule on earth.

The Eusebian argument brings the *Pax Romana* and the incarnation together in the following manner:

If you should ascribe the reason for these evils to polytheistic error, you would not miss the mark. For once the salutary instrument—that is, specifically, the All-Holy Body of Christ—had been seen to be stronger than all demonic error and the adversary of evil-doing, whether by deed or word; once it had been raised as a victory trophy over the demons and a safeguard against ancient evils, then at once all the acts of the demons also were undone. No longer were there localized governments and states ruled by many, tyrannies and democracies and devastations and sieges that resulted from these, but One God was proclaimed to all (SC, XVI, 3).

The orator presents the political and social consequences of *Pax Augusti* as the immediate effects of Christ’s resurrection, and the resultant political stability and general security as the working of the divine *Logos*, in order to pave the way for the proclamation of Christianity to all. According to Eusebius’s presentation, Christ’s victory over demons in the celestial realm was corresponded with the *Pax Romana* on earth. Therefore, argues Eusebius, Christians and pagans should realize that the historical coincidence of the *Pax Romana* and the incarnation was in no way a coincidence, but a deliberate plan of divine providence. Therefore, the argument addresses two groups of audience: on the one hand, Christians should be aware of the fact that their mission and progress had only been possible with the political stability of the Roman Empire, and thus an appreciation of the empire as an essential building block of divine providence was a theological necessity on their part. On the other hand, Romans should notice the fact that the *Pax Romana* was only a result of the advent of Christ and his victory against the works of demons in the celestial realm, so the maintenance of political stability had only been possible through the monotheism proclaimed by Christianity. This being the case, the Roman Empire and the church had been predestined for mutual existence in cooperation and symbiosis. Just as an inseparable co-existence is created between polytheism and polyarchy, Eusebius forms another pair between monarchy and monotheism, as a strategy of amalgamating the religious and political discourses by means of a comprehensive theological principle, the *Logos* of Christ. In the same vein, we also notice that he uses the political or military jargon to describe theological principles of Christianity, as in the above case when he illustrates the resurrection of Christ “as a victory trophy over the demons and a safeguard against ancient evils... (SC, XVI, 3)”

The argument for providential coincidence between the *Pax Romana* and the advent of Christ is by no means original. Formerly, in his effort to refute
the notorious anti-Christian polemic that Christians were responsible for all the evils inflicting the Roman society, such as earthquakes, famines, and the like, Melito of Sardis (d. ca. 190) remarked as follows:

And a most convincing proof that our doctrine flourished for the good of an empire happily begun, is this—that there has no evil happened since Augustus’ reign, but that, on the contrary, all things have been splendid and glorius, in accordance with the prayers of all.7

Though Melito of Sardis was not directly concerned with the argument for the providential coincidence between the Pax Romana and the advent of Christ, this remark is still important as a first step to the argument. Similarly, Origen (ca. 185-254), in dealing with the eschatological concerns, comments on Psalm 72:7-8 that reads: “In his days may righteousness flourish, and peace abound, until the moon is no more. May he have dominion from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth!”8 Origen underlines that this peace had begun with the birth of Jesus and that God had prepared the nations for His doctrine by uniting them under the reign of one emperor so that the apostles could accomplish the mission given them by Christ in Matthew 28:19: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”9 Origen’s contribution to the argument is highly significant for, in this coincidence, he points to the divine interference in history to the effect that the political stability and peace are explained as a preparation for the mission of the Christian religion. Origen and many of his contemporaries considered Rome as a divine instrument to provide an environment of stability, in which Christians could easily travel and preach their gospel, although the political realm for them was essentially secular and as such had nothing to do with the church.10

This being the case, prior to Constantine’s era, Christians offered their civic loyalty to the Roman Empire, which was essentially a secular institution. Therefore, Eusebius’s presentation of the Roman body politic as an essential instrument of Christian salvation can be considered a radical move. Indeed, Eusebius shapes this contention into a complete argument for the providential unity and concord between the Roman Empire and the Chris-

8 For his argument see Origen: Contra Celsum, translated with and introduction and notes by Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), II, 30.
10 See Kurt Aland, “The Relation Between Church and State in Early Times: A Reinterpretation,” Journal of Theological Studies 19:1(1968), 124: “For the Christians of the early period, the Roman State is their state; that which damages the State, also damages them; that which is beneficial to the State, is beneficial to them also. Out of this there emerges, beside the theological concept of the State as God’s instituted system and instrument, a second more utilitarian view of the State, which was mentioned earlier. The Christian desire to be loyal towards the State arises from both these concepts, though the first carries the most weight.”
tian Church. He does so by creating a new pair, the inseparable twins of the church, as the provider of the teaching of one God, and the empire, as that of universal monarchy. Eusebius points to their simultaneous onset on the stage of history and similarity of their historical progress to prove their common origin and goals:

At the same time [ἐν τάυτῳ δὲ], one empire [βασίλεια μία] also flowered everywhere, the Roman, and the eternally implacable and irreconcilable enmity of nations was completely resolved. And as the knowledge of One God [Ενός Θεού γνώσις] was imparted to all men and one manner of piety (τρόπος εἰς εὐσεβίας), the salutary teaching of Christ, in the same way at one and the same time a single sovereign arose for the entire Roman Empire and a deep peace took hold of the totality. Together, at the same critical moment, as if from a single divine will, two beneficial shoots [ἀγαθῶν δύο βλαστοί] were produced for mankind: the empire of the Romans [Ρωμαίων αρχή] and the teachings of true worship [εὐσεβής διδασκαλία] (SC, XVI, 4).

Eusebius emphasizes the similarity of the Roman Empire and the church on the basis of their simultaneous onset on the stage of history. “A single divine will” is the common source of the two. They are “two beneficial shoots” of the same seed. The metaphor of shoots is deployed to describe the empire and the church as two parallel entities, originated from the same “root” and “seed,” and directed to the same goal—to bear the same “fruit” of peace and salvation. The two were predestined to have a symbiotic existence in relation to each other, and, for this reason, they were inseparable. Detachment of one shoot from the other would only be possible by taking it apart from its root, in which case the separated shoot would die. By the same logic, Christian monotheism, as represented by the church, and the universal monarchy, as represented by the Roman Empire, are described as being complementary to each other. The Roman Empire and the church thus were twin institutions that shared the same goal and destination in relation to humanity, i.e., producing the good fruit of peace and salvation. The twins of monarchy and monotheism have their stark contrast in the pair of polyarchy and polytheism. At this point, many examples of polyarchy are given in order to prove that polyarchy always brings chaos and inflictions upon humanity:

Before this, at least, independently, one dynasty ruled Syria, while another held sway over Asia Minor, and others yet over Macedonia. Still another dynasty cut off and possessed Egypt, and likewise others the Arab lands. Indeed, even the Jewish race ruled over Palestine. And in city and country and everyplace, just as if possessed by some truly demonic madness, they kept murdering each other and spent their time in wars and battles (SC, XVI, 5).

Eusebius refers here to the political situation before the Pax Augusti when the Hellenistic kingdoms were constantly fighting against each other for power, a situation that had brought dreadful consequences upon hu-
Manity. One important feature of the Hellenistic kingdoms was their ethnic prejudices: the former generals of Alexander, who divided his empire, had abandoned Alexander’s attempts to produce a fusion of Greek and Barbarian, and established military tyrannies on the premise of the superiority of Greeks over other ethnic groups.\(^{11}\) Since the rulers based their sovereignty on a principle of ethnic superiority of Greeks over barbarians, they lacked the social support which was the essential component of solidarity in any political establishment. In other words, the political ideology of the Hellenistic kingdoms did not correspond to the political reality of their subject societies, which consisted of various ethnic and cultural elements; hence the political power struggles, wars, and the resulting difficulties that inflicted manity throughout the period.\(^{12}\)

The example of a Jewish state is a striking one to be mentioned amongst the polyarchies. During the same period, the Palestinian Jews believed monotheism and yet, according to Eusebius, in structuring of their state, they could not avoid ethnicity. Eusebius once more points out the substantial political problem of the conflict between the ethnic prejudices of the rulers and their multi-ethnic and multi-cultural subjects. The Palestinian Jews defined the concept of Israel so as to be limited to the Jews by blood; thus their monotheistic belief could only serve political division. For Eusebius, all kinds of particularism—ethnic, political, or theological—are evil and should be avoided. He claims that the remedy for particularism came as political universalism through the Pax Romana, on the one hand, and as universal monotheism through Christ, on the other:

But two great powers—the Roman Empire, which became a monarchy at that time, and the teaching of Christ—proceeding as if from a single starting point [υόσσης μίας], at once tamed and reconciled all to friendship [Φιλίαν]. Thus each blossomed at the same time and place as the other. For while the power of Our Savior destroyed the polyarchy and polytheism of the demons and heralded the one kingdom of God to Greeks and barbarians and all men to the farthest extent of the earth, the Roman Empire, now that the causes of manifold governments had been abolished, subdued the visible governments, in order to merge the entire race into one unity and concord (SC, XVI, 5-6).

The Greek word υόσσης means a pole which marks the starting point in a hippodrome, and is chosen here deliberately as a similar metaphor to the two ‘shoots.’ This time the illustration compares the Roman Empire and Christian-ity to two race horses, each running in the same direction towards a common goal. The shoot metaphor alternates to emphasize the simultaneous development of the empire and the church: “thus each blossomed at the same time


\(^{12}\) For the political situation of the period see Sabine, *History of Political Theory*, 125-140; Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 252-275.
and place as the other." That polyarchy and polytheism were abolished by the cooperation of Christ and the Roman Empire and that “all are tamed and reconciled to friendship” are compared to the blossoming of the two shoots.

Eusebius refers to Stoic concepts of unity, concord, and friendship as the outcome of collaboration between Christianity and the Roman Empire:

Moreover, as One God and one knowledge of this God was heralded to all, one empire waxed strong among men, and the entire race of mankind was redirected into peace and friendship as all acknowledged each other brothers and discovered their related nature. All at once, as if sons of one father, the One God, and children of one mother, true religion, they greeted and received each other peaceably, so that from that time the whole inhabited world differed in no way from a single well-ordered and related household (SC, XVI, 7).

According to Eusebius’s interpretation, monotheism and monarchy together united all humanity into one unit, a family, wiping out all the causes of division and strife. This universal harmony and concord was not a new reality but a returning to the pristine state of pre-lapsarian humanity as “... the entire race of mankind was redirected into peace and friendship.” The divine providence acts in history in such a way as to diffuse the principle of unity everywhere. It was the result of such action, argues Eusebius, that the knowledge of one God was proclaimed to all, and simultaneously political unity and human concord were realized through the Roman Empire. In the meantime, the entire human race acknowledges each other as friends and kin because of the recognition of their common nature. As a result of the simultaneous rise of the universal monarchy and monotheism, humanity became as one household. Therefore, the unity of humanity in recognizing one God, and in coming under one universal political body, resulted in the establishment of the principles of love, friendship, and peace on earth.

In the above passage, there are noticeable references to some important Stoic principles. The passage alludes to the diffusion of the principles of the Middle-Stoic ethics among the Roman intellectuals such as Cicero and Seneca, prior to and during the Pax Romana. Stoic concepts of natural reason (logos), kinship of humanity, and friendship best suited the project of the Roman Empire as the political gospel of universality, which found its expression in the concept of Romanitas, which meant to the Romans that:

...while local and racial differences continued to exist, citizens of the empire discovered a bond of community with one another on the plane of natural reason. It was on this account that the Roman order claimed universality and a finality to which alternative systems of life could not pretend.
As explained above, the main basis on which the Romanitas built its political universality was the Stoic concept of *logos*. The concepts of “kinship of humanity,” “friendship,” and “humanity as one single household” all receive their justification from the notion that the reason of every individual is considered a part of this universal mind or *logos*. The emperor Marcus Aurelius describes this concept as a basis for a universal law and universal state as follows:

If we have intelligence in common, so we have reason which makes us reasoning beings, and that practical reason which orders what we must or must not do; then the law too is common to us and, if so, we are citizens; if so, we share a common government; if so, the universe is, as it were, a city—for what other common government could one say is shared by all mankind?16

Eusebius’s argument refers to that this concept of natural theology, which was commonly used in the Roman political ideology and the Christian soteriology, as the basis of their respective claims of universality. In other words, the Stoic concept of universal *logos* was a junction point and a common ground, on which the Roman Empire justified its ideology of a universal rule over the entire humanity and the church, based its gospel of universal salvation. The striking similarities between the thoughts of the Middle-Stoic philosopher Seneca (ca. 3 B.C.—65 A.D.) and that of the early church fathers, especially that of St. Paul, reveals that the Stoic natural theology was the most fertile soil, on which the church and the Roman Empire could grow their respective claims of universality. Many concepts used by Seneca such as the ‘city of God’, the ‘fatherhood of God’, ‘brotherhood of man’, and ‘law of charity or benevolence’ were similarly used by Christian fathers. Several of the fathers claimed Seneca as a Christian, and a purported correspondence between him and St. Paul was assumed to be genuine by prominent figures of the Christian tradition such as St. Jerome. In his discussion about the similar views of Seneca and the church fathers, G. Sabine remarks as follows:

In general, it may be said that the Fathers of the church, in respect to natural law, human equality, and the necessity of justice in the state, were substantially in agreement with Cicero and Seneca. It is true that the pagan writers knew nothing of a revealed law, such as Christians believed was contained in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, but the belief in revelation was in no way incompatible with the view that the law of nature also is God’s law.19

Eusebius reminds both the churchmen and the emperor that the gospel of political universalism of the *Pax Romana*, and the church’s gospel of universal salvation both depended upon the same principle of natural theology.

15 Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 165-166.
and that this situation could not be a pure coincidence. On the contrary, this common principle was an actualization of the divine will, which had predestined the co-existence and cooperation of the church and the empire to bring universal salvation and peace upon humanity. They were the two shoots of one root, as it were, which blossomed at the same time; two race horses that run towards the same destination with a similar will and enthusiasm. The metaphors imply that, as a natural unfolding of the divine economy of salvation in history, the fruits of these two shoots were garnered in Constantine’s conversion and in Christianity’s becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire. The bottom-line of the argument is that the co-existence and cooperation of the church and the Roman Empire was a historical necessity, as it represented a natural unfolding of the economy of the divine Logos in history.

Given the historical circumstances of his day, when the great persecution was still fresh in the church’s collective memory, and the dominantly pagan character of the Roman Empire still remained, Eusebius’s claim about the place and role of the Roman Empire in divine history sounds rather revolutionary and radical particularly when he even designates the Roman Empire as the fulfillment of the Scripture:

Thus the predictions of the ancient oracles and utterances of the prophets were fulfilled—countless of them not time now to quote, but including those which said of the saving Logos that “He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth.” And again ‘In his days shall the righteous flourish and abundance of peace.” “And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (SC, XVI, 7).

According to the above passage, the new imperium of the Christian empire is presented as the fulfillment of the Scripture: it is Isaiah’s ‘peaceable kingdom’. Eusebius is arguably the first church father to claim that the Old Testament prophecy had been fulfilled in Constantine’s Christian empire and such a claim implied the inclusion of the empire within the limits of Christian salvation history. By assigning the Roman Empire the role of promoting the true piety and leading people to their true lord, a mission which had previously been considered to be an exclusive function of the church, Eusebius actually assigned the body politic a position in Christian salvation virtually as important as that of the church. In point of fact, the involvement of Constantine in the Donatist and Arian conflicts marked the beginning of a new era of church-empire relations, where the empire had been given a religious mission, and the Roman politics and Christian religion had become interrelated. This engagement of the church and empire was destined to continue for the next millen-
nium of Byzantine theocracy, and Eusebius was the one who established the theological ground for this unity. For him, such cooperation and symbiosis of the church and empire were the culmination of salvation history.

The overall consent of the bishops for the imperial involvement in the council of Nicea might be taken as a proof of a general positive attitude towards the emperor. Such a consensus on the part of the majority of the bishops might provide us with a reasonable ground to speculate that, through his positive evaluation of the empire and the emperor’s involvement in church’s internal matters, Eusebius’s position actually represented that of the majority of his fellow churchmen. Consequently he became their spokesperson, to openly express the bishops’ tacit acknowledgement of a Christian Emperor’s involvement in doctrinal matters of the church. However, Eusebius’s contribution should not be limited to his being the spokesperson for his fellow-churchmen’s tacit approval of Constantine’s active involvement in church matters. On the contrary, his importance primarily derives from the fact that, in his two orations, Eusebius developed a complete political theology to justify the Christian Roman Empire, where he assigned the empire an essential soteriological position within a larger theological paradigm. The radical approach of Eusebius’s attempt might be better appreciated when we compare it to the previous church fathers’—such as Origen—positive evaluations of the Roman Empire.

For instance, Origen defined the Roman Empire in terms of expediency: it was a divinely established secular institution to prepare the necessary conditions of order and security for the church where she could easily promote and preach Christianity. As for Eusebius, on the other hand, expediency cannot be an adequate characteristic to define the empire. He defined the body politic on a theological principle as a mimesis of the divine imperium, and he thus rendered the empire an explicitly Christian institution, vested with both secular and religious functions. In Eusebius’s new construction, the empire was a fellow institution of the church, assuming an important portion of the church’s primary functions. From the church’s point of view, Eusebius’s positive evaluation of the empire required radical modifications in the traditional notions of ecclesiology. In fact, Eusebius’s new paradigm demanded an entirely new ecclesiology. Eusebius pre-

22 According to the available sources, almost all the bishops responded positively to Constantine’s invitation to the council of Nicea, and participated in the proceedings that were undertaken under the personal supervision of the emperor. We contend that the bishops’ positive attitude points to their tacit approval of Constantine’s involvement in the process of this doctrinal conflict. For a brief survey of the proceedings and theology of Nicea see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 2nd edition (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1960), 231-237.
23 For an insightful and detailed exposition of the previous church father’s evaluations of the Roman Empire see Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 219 ff.
24 See above pages, 48-49.
25 In the second chapter of the *Laudibus Constantini*, Eusebius argues that Constantine’s qualities were similar to those of the Logos and thus the emperor made his realm a copy of the heavenly kingdom.
sented this new ecclesiologia not as a model of compromise but a necessary corollary of salvation history: the church and the empire were meant to be and had been prepared to evolve into this unity and symbiosis ever since their simultaneous appearances on the stage of history.

On the basis of the findings of modern scholarship, we have mentioned that Eusebius’s “Imperial Theology” was not an original model of sovereignty, and that he undertook a new synthesis of the previous constructions of political theory, especially that of the Hellenistic models of kingship.26 However, Eusebius defined the empire on a specifically Christian principle, that is, the divine kingdom of God, and vested this sovereignty with exclusively Christian missions of promoting and protecting this religion. The orator thus hails the Constantinian era as the realization of the ideal of a universal and permanent order:

It thus appears that what Eusebius looked for in the age of Constantine was nothing less than a realization of the secular hope of men, the dream of universal and perpetual peace which classical Rome had made her own, but of which the Pax Romana was merely a faint and imperfect anticipation; and it is important to note the grounds of this convictions. These lie in the fact that Christianity provides a basis, hitherto lacking, for human solidarity.27

On the grounds of his conviction that Christian monotheism provides a new basis for human solidarity, Eusebius considers the age of Constantine as the realization of the ideal of universal and perpetual peace. In other words, the Constantinian era realized the fulfillment of the dreams of classical political philosophy, thanks to the new principle of universal solidarity: Christian monotheism. One should notice that this is only one part of the Eusebian double-claim, the part which was specifically addressed to the Roman world. In addition to the fulfillment of the secular hopes of humanity, Eusebius also saw, in the age of Constantine, the fulfillment of the prophetical hopes of Christianity; to Eusebius, Constantine’s Christian empire was at the same time the fulfillment of the Scripture. The orations are full of biblical quotations to this effect. It is this convergence of the fulfillments of political and prophetical expectations, which convinced Eusebius that, in this new era, cooperation and symbiosis of the church and the Roman Empire was a necessity of divine providence.

To summarize, in the 16th chapter of his Sepulchro Christi, Eusebius develops a full argument for the providential coincidence of the Pax Romana and the incarnation of Christ, or of the proclamation of universal monarchy and of universal monotheism. Structuring his argument within a paradigm of salvation history, Eusebius begins with a description of the Hellenic and Hellenistic ages, when the dire consequences of polyarchy—political instability, incessant wars, murders, rapes, etc.—afflicted humanity. Moreover, the oration presents polyarchy as a direct result of polytheism.

26 See chapter 1, footnote 34.
27 Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 185.
According to Eusebius, the providential simultaneity of the establishment of a monarchy through the Pax Romana and the establishment of the universal monotheism through the resurrection of Christ, have defeated the two most formidable enemies of humanity: polyarchy and polytheism. Eusebius develops a full-fledged argument for this providential coincidence in a salvation-historical perspective. According to the argument, the root cause of all division is locality, which translates into local deities in terms of belief, and into ethnicity in terms of political disposition. Christianity and the Pax Romana brought the self-same solution against these problems, which was universality. By abolishing the root causes of all evils, the two actually realized the secular and religious hopes of humanity.

Eusebius argued that both the Roman Empire and the church claimed their respective ideals of universality on the same principle, that is, the Stoic notion of the friendship and equality of all humanity, which transcends all kinds of ethnic and class divisions. Eusebius claims that his arguments were based on historical realities rather than intellectual speculations. He concludes that all these proofs lead to one fact: the divine providence has predestined the Roman Empire and the church to cooperate and live together in mutual support to procure the twin benefits of material well-being and salvation for humanity.

From the audience’s point of view, Eusebius’s argument was addressed to both the representatives of the Roman Empire and the church, who, in the Constantinian era, were facing the reality of an intimate engagement between the church and empire. We can thus read the argument as addressed to two groups of audiences: to his imperial audience, Eusebius stated that unless the Roman Empire accepted the principle of universal monotheism, it would have never be able to realize the secular hopes of humanity; to his ecclesiastical audience, on the other hand, he observed that the prospect of universal salvation could only be realized through a cooperation between the Roman Empire and the church. Eusebius’s proposal to his fellow churchmen also implied that they had to revise and reshape their ecclesiology in accordance with the new circumstances.

The bottom-line of the Eusebian arguments was a salvation-historical observation: after having experienced a long term of taming and adjustment, divine providence had ripened the historical circumstances for both entities—Roman Empire and the Christian Church—to realize this engagement, as a culmination of salvation history. The entire progress of human civilization in the political and religious realms had been providentially brought to this point of convergence. Therefore, it was a historical necessity that the Roman Empire and the church come together and cooperate in concord and friendship for the sake of humankind.
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