

**Aesthetic Argument as a Tool of Persuasion in
Early Letters of Constantine on the 'Arian Controversy' (324-328)**

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As Constantine engaged with ecclesiastical division among Christians in the east following his victory over Licinius in 324, he began using 'aesthetic arguments' to articulate, explain, and justify his imperative statements that were generally softened through reliance on a vocabulary of possibility. Aesthetic arguments as a type of persuasive speech appears with considerable frequency in Constantine's letters addressing eastern Christians between A.D. 324-328. This paper will examine a sampling of these letters from this period in order to demonstrate the emperor's use of two types of aesthetic argument (normative and imitative), as well as revealing their structural pattern. (124 words)