The Political Face of Late Roman Empresses: Christian Symbols on Coins from the Late Fourth and Early Fifth Centuries

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THE POLITICAL FACE OF LATE ROMAN EMPRESSES: CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS ON COINS FROM THE LATE FOURTH AND EARLY FIFTH CENTURIES

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the issues of gender roles and political influence of Roman empresses in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Three Late Antique empresses—Flaccilla (r. 383-386 CE), Eudoxia (r. 400-404 CE), and Galla Placidia (r. 421-450 CE)—sought to affirm their political roles as Augustae, Christians, and dynasts through issuing coinage. In this thesis, coins are the primary medium of political expression, through elements such as the inscriptions of titles on the obverse and pictorial personifications and descriptive inscriptions on the reverse. Reverse images, such as the personification of Victory and the laurel wreath of victory, communicated the messages of dynastic continuity and religious legitimacy for these Late Antique empresses. Both messages came to the fore as avenues through which the Theodosian emperors and empresses could establish themselves as political and religious heirs to the Constantinian dynasty. The imagery on the coins issued during the reigns of Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia reflected the efforts of these Theodosian empresses to assert their ownership of a political identity that was linked with one another and linked with the first recorded Christian Roman empress, Helena.

I argue in this thesis that, regardless of whether Helena was Christian, Eusebius’ textual account of her provided Late Antique empresses with a model of expected behavior for a Christian empress. Helena’s coins also provided a pictorial representation of a Roman consort later used by the Theodosian empresses. The reverse imagery of Helena’s coins, though secular, reappeared on the coins of Late Antique empresses. In order to establish their influence over religion in the Eastern and Western empires, Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia combined the imagery from Helena’s coins with Christian symbols employed in the reverse imagery of coins of emperors from the Constantinian and post-Constantinian years. The secular imagery on Helena’s coins was refashioned by the Theodosian empresses to include the Chi-Rho or cross, and thereby expressed the potency of religious and dynastic legitimacy for the Theodosian empresses. This thesis presents a study of the propagandistic meaning of the imagery in order to discover what relationships existed between pagan and Christian imagery, the offices of the Augustus and Augusta, and the Eastern and Western empires in the Late Antique period.
INTRODUCTION

Imperial art and ceremony glorified [victory], the Roman army’s passwords and battle cries echoed it. Roman coinage, an ubiquitous and revealing mirror of government thinking, is covered with slogans like ‘Eternal Victory’ or ‘Victory of the Augusti’.

-Michael McCormick, Eternal Victory, 1986

The symbol of the cross signaled victory for the Constantinian dynasty in the fourth century CE. Prior to the fourth century, the cross was not a prominent symbol of Christianity, but became so through the legendary association of the Chi-Rho symbol with Constantine and the True Cross with his mother Helena. Future emperors and empresses utilized these potent

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2 Patrick Bruun, Roman Imperial Coinage, vol. VII: Constantine and Licinius, A.D. 313-337 (London: Spink and Son, Ltd., 1966), 62. The victory Bruun makes reference to is both militaristic and dynastic. Also, the cross marked the triumph of Christianity as the imperial religion. In the following chapters, a lowercase cross will indicate the use of sign of the cross, and references to the True Cross will have either the full title or an uppercase spelling of Cross.
3 Jan Willem Drijvers, Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding of the True Cross (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1992), 81. Drijvers comments on the development of the symbol of the True Cross as the legend of Helena developed into the later fourth century. The Chi-Rho became associated with Christianity even before Constantine’s reign. And, in 312 CE at the battle of the Milvian Bridge, Constantine’s civil war with Maxentius in 312 CE, Constantine supposedly placed a Christogram on the shields of his soldiers to ensure victory in battle. The Greek letters became symbolic of Constantine’s victory over Maxentius and Christianity’s victory in the fourth century. The legend of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge established continued imperial promulgation of the religion. See Timothy D. Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 42-43. The battle at the Milvian Bridge was both a historical and legendary event. The battle, while entirely real, was later interpreted to favor the means of victory. That is, as an ardent Christian supporter, Constantine’s victory over Maxentius represents the triumph of the symbol of the Chi-Rho. Acknowledging that the battle of the Milvian Bridge is in part mythologized shades our understanding of its import to fourth century Christians and modern scholars. It is worth noting that this exaggeration of the real events of the battle, however, synthesizes for modern scholars how the battle was to be interpreted by contemporaries. Similarly, the discovery of the True Cross by Helena in the Holy Land was a mythologized event that spread later in the fourth century. Both the battle of the Milvian Bridge and the legend of the True Cross function in a similar fashion whereby the historical context is exploited to participate in a religiously propagandistic dialectic. Interestingly, both of these ‘legendary’ histories center on symbols of Christianity, and stress the appearance and incorporation of the symbols by the imperial figures. Drijvers, Helena Augusta; Jan Willem Drijvers, “Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City,” in Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, edited by J. den Boeft, J. van Oort, W.L. Petersen, D.T. Runia, C. Sholten, and J.C.M. van Winden, vol. 72 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill
early Christian symbols as echoes of the military and dynastic glory of the Constantinian dynasty. The cross and Chi-Rho became images indicative of military victory, and, through the exploitation of the legends of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge and Helena’s discovery of the True Cross, mid to late fourth century imperial figures sought to draw a closer tie between the Chi-Rho symbol and their military prowess. The cross and Chi-Rho were also legitimizing symbols of political victory for Constantine and Helena, and subsequent use of the symbols attempted to reiterate the political stability of the Constantinian lineage. In order to announce imperial propaganda through the vehicle of politicized Christianity, post-Constantinian emperors and empresses used the Chi-Rho symbol on their coins to recall the memory and legends of Constantine and Helena.

It is the cross and Chi-Rho as image-signs that I wish to explore in this thesis. André Grabar defines the term “image-sign” as a laconic visual representation meant to convey narrative or symbolic meaning. Both the image-signs of the cross and the Chi-Rho appeared on coinage from the fourth century, and helped to disseminate the imperial message of

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4 For Constantine see Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, 42-43. For Helena see Drijvers, “Cyril of Jerusalem”, 168-169, and Drijvers, Helena Augusta, 131. The battle of the Milvian Bridge and the legend of the True Cross associate these figures with the symbols of Christianity. Because the image of the Chi-Rho on the shields of Constantine’s soldiers, and Helena’s search and discovery of the relic of the True Cross and titulus are likely not factual, the most significant piece of these stories is the seed of history they imply. If, in actuality, these legends are propagandistic at best, then the intent that developed or propagated these legends is key to their understanding. The purpose behind developing legends that associated Constantine and Helena with symbols of Christianity may have bolstered the leanings and political agendas of others.

5 I shall argue for this in chapter 3. Coins of Constantius II and Constans, both sons of Constantine, recycle the images of the personification of Victory and the symbol of the Chi-rho.


7 Grabar, Christian Iconography, 8, “It is enough to indicate one or two salient features, in order to designate a specific person, event, or object. These few traits do not define the images at all, but the informed viewer is invited to make use of the summary indications to divine the subject. In other words, the paintings are schematic—that is, they are image-signs, which appeal above all to the intellect and which imply more than they actually show. Since the value of a sign is commensurate with its brevity, there are no limits to its use except those imposed by the necessity of remaining understandable. It is imperative that the sign be unequivocally decipherable.”
Christianity’s victory to the whole of the empire.\textsuperscript{8} The images of the cross and Chi-Rho also came to support the role of imperial women in the later fourth century. Empresses of the Theodosian dynasty (c. 380-450 CE) looked back to the textual persona of Helena as a model for constructing their own identities. By extending the use of the image of the cross to their coinage, these empresses drew direct influence from the Helena legend.\textsuperscript{9} I argue that the empresses Flaccilla (r. 383-386 CE), Eudoxia (r. 400-404 CE), and Galla Placidia (r. 421-450 CE) all used politicized images of the cross and Chi-Rho on coinage to champion their position/role as Augustae. In this thesis, I argue for the integration of Christianity with imperial symbolism, especially through art production. Coins are objects often relegated to a supporting role as comparative objects in art historical analyses, but in this thesis I seek to produce a critical, visual analysis of the production of Late Antique coins and the images minted on them. It is my intention to show that the coins of Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia “mirror” the legitimizing political and Christian ideology of these empresses.\textsuperscript{10} Through an analysis of coins of Constantine and Helena and coins of mid fourth century emperors, I argue that the coins of Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia appropriated Christian reverse imagery to articulate a politicizing and legitimizing Christian faith.\textsuperscript{11}

In the following chapters, my focus is on the symbols of the cross and Chi-Rho on fourth- and fifth-century coins. The initial appearance of these image-signs on the coins of Constantine provided the groundwork for the inclusion of the image-signs on the coins of late fourth and early fifth century empresses.\textsuperscript{12} I argue that the imagery on the coins of Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia established an iconographic continuity from the Constantinian to the Theodosian

\textsuperscript{8} Drijvers, “Exemplary Empress”, 88.


\textsuperscript{10} McCormick, Eternal Victory, 4. See quote at the beginning of the introduction.

\textsuperscript{11} I argue in this thesis for the threads of Constantine and Helena that existed in the later fourth century which impacted the Theodosian empresses. I do not want to preclude other threads from my discussion, but the textual prevalence of Constantine and Helena make their coin imagery a logical source for the coin imagery of the Theodosian Augustae. Other influences may include the impact of Late Antique emperors on Late Antique empresses (see my discussion about the image of the manus dei in Chapter 3).

\textsuperscript{12} See J.P.C. Kent, Roman Coins, (London: Thames and Hudson Press, 1978), for images of coins from emperors such as Constantius II, Constans, Magnentius, Jovian, Valens, and Valentinian II.
dynasty. The symbol of the cross associated with both Constantine and Helena, and the image of victory became multivalent signs of the Constantinian dynasty. Specifically, I believe that by coupling the symbols of the cross and Chi-Rho with victory on their coinage, Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia strove to bolster their political ties to the Constantinian dynasty. Further, through the consistent endorsement of victory through Christianity, Constantine set an imperial precedent that afforded ardent Christians such as Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia the ability to formulate political careers that embraced imperial power, and the extension/use of that power.\footnote{Brubaker, “Memories of Helena,” 53, 60-61.}

Current scholarship about the empresses Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia focuses on their individual participation in and support of Christianity in the fourth and fifth centuries.\footnote{Current scholarship about the empresses Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia focuses on their individual participation in and support of Christianity in the fourth and fifth centuries. Through their interactions and intercessions with church leaders, these Late Antique empresses exerted political influence. Also, following in the footsteps of Livia, the first Roman empress, Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia commissioned architectural structures. Providing a bridge between earlier Roman empresses and the Theodosian empresses is Helena, Constantine’s mother. As the influence of Helena’s textually mythologized persona became codified in the mid to late fourth century, the perception of Helena as an imperial patron of Christian churches and liaison to church officials impacted the later fourth and fifth century empresses. They began to regard Helena’s model behavior as a template for the political role a Christian Augusta.}

Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia were Nicene or ‘universal’ Christians. Although many imperial emperors and empresses in the mid-fourth century were Arian supporters, it is through consistent promulgation of Orthodoxy that Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia claimed legitimacy. The Theodosian dynasty enforced the acceptance of the Nicene faith through battling and banning Arian leaders throughout the empire.\footnote{Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia were Nicene or ‘universal’ Christians. Although many imperial emperors and empresses in the mid-fourth century were Arian supporters, it is through consistent promulgation of Orthodoxy that Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia claimed legitimacy. The Theodosian dynasty enforced the acceptance of the Nicene faith through battling and banning Arian leaders throughout the empire.}


Examples of this are Eudoxia’s constant feud with the Arian bishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom. He spoke and wrote against the imperial ‘Jezebel’, and she banned him from Constantinople twice. See \textit{Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in late Antiquity} (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1982), 7-78. \textit{Galla Placidia Augusta: A Biographical Essay} (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1968), 170-213.

See the conclusion for further detail about the historical bridge that the Theodosian empresses provide. It will become clear that the efforts made by Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia are not motivated solely by the Theodosian empresses’ wish to express their devout faith. In many ways, commissioning churches was one outlet Roman empresses had available to them in exerting a public influence.\footnote{See the conclusion for further detail about the historical bridge that the Theodosian empresses provide. It will become clear that the efforts made by Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia are not motivated solely by the Theodosian empresses’ wish to express their devout faith. In many ways, commissioning churches was one outlet Roman empresses had available to them in exerting a public influence.}
The first chapter of this thesis explains the historical context of the minting and issue of coins in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. After the death of Constantine in 337 CE and before 378 CE, the Roman Empire lacked political stability. The Theodosian dynasty aimed to fulfill the need for political stability through asserting religious unity by establishing Orthodoxy as the imperial religion. The second chapter starts with the coins of Constantine and Helena. I analyze the Christian imagery on coinage of the early fourth century as it originates with Constantine. In the third chapter, I examine the Christian imagery as it appears on the coins of emperors after Constantine, including Constantius II, Constans, Magnentius, Julian, and Valentinian II. In 383 CE, the minting of coins of empresses began again during the reign of Flaccilla; the last coins of an empress minted in the fourth century were during Helena’s reign. The reverse images minted of later fourth century empresses changed to show the new political and Christian aspirations of Late Antique women.¹⁷

Ultimately, my thesis argues that the reverse images on the coins of Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia shaped the idiom of Roman imperial coinage for Christian empresses. Through imprinting their legitimacy on the reverse of their coins, these women established their connections with, and imitation of, the virtues of a model Christian empress. Through reliance on the textually mythologized importance of Helena to early Christians, and the Christian imagery on coinage that began to appear in 315 CE, Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia developed a new iconographic language.

State of the Literature

My study of the coins of late Roman empresses incorporates many facets of scholarship. First, I must include the primary research on the coins as objects. Inscriptions, mintmarks, obverse and reverse images, and dates all contribute to the reading of these objects. Second, the

¹⁷ This statement summarizes my argument in this thesis, which is not found in any of the literature included in the bibliography. The biographies of late Roman Augustae have led scholars to narrow in on the relationship later Roman empresses developed with their faith and the leaders of that faith. The expression of Orthodoxy for legitimacy, too, is comparable to Livia’s commission of the shrine of Concordia; see Diana E. E. Kleiner, “Imperial Women as Patrons of the Arts in the Early Empire,” in I, Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome, edited by Diana E.E. Kleiner and Susan B. Matheson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery; Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1996) 32-33. It is the remarkable change in iconography on coinage that signals a new discussion of contextual evidence that would necessitate this change.
issue of the gendered power and position of late Roman empresses shapes my understanding of the minting of the coins of these late Roman empresses. The inclusion of the title *Augusta* and the selected imagery on the reverse of the coins suggests an imperial authority specific to the role of an empress. Third, the imperial commission of Christian art provides a framework for how the coins of empresses worked within an established idiom. What images were suitable for a late Roman empress to mint on coins? Numismatists and scholars are unsure. However, there are clear indications that a lineage of power passed from empress to empress through minting established images such as Victory.

*The Roman Imperial Coinage* is seminal to numismatic scholars. This encyclopedic collection draws on a variety of museum and hoard collections to provide a comprehensive study of the types, weights, mints, and historical context for all coinage minted during the Roman Empire. Yet, even in the extensive detail provided in the ten volumes of this work, the limited discussion of the coins of Roman empresses is surprising. In particular, in volumes nine and ten, which span the reigns of emperors from Valentinian I through the year 491 CE in the Eastern and Western empires and provides much of the material for this thesis, the inclusion of coins of empresses often take a secondary role to the coins of emperors. Scholars such as J.P.C. Kent, R.A.G. Carson, J.W.E. Pearce, and P. Bruun group the coins in volumes seven through ten such that the coins of the empresses are footnotes to the coins of emperors with similar images or dates. For example, the coins of Flaccilla are only under the heading ‘Theodosius I’.

Kent, Carson, and P. Grierson and M. Mays provide supplementary, more focused, numismatic studies in which the coins of late Roman empresses are independent of the coins of

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20 This assessment of *RIC* is entirely my own. It is worth noting that instead of ignorance to or exclusion of the coins of later Roman empresses, *RIC* pays meager attention to these objects.
21 Pearce, *RIC IX*, 153, 194, 196. Each section begins with the list of emperors who reigned during specified dates at an imperial mint. Flaccilla is not listed amongst the reigning group, and in a parenthetical remark *RIC IX* notes “In the East, Flaccilla, wife of Theodosius, had received the title of Augusta at the elevation of their son Arcadius.”
22 Pearce, *RIC IX*, 153, 194, 196. The inclusion of Flaccilla’s coins is always under the heading of Theodosius I, and listed last in the obverse legends for each section.
emperors. The purpose of numismatic studies is to catalogue information, and similar to most of these studies, Kent, Carson, and Grierson and Mays refrain from drawing meaning from these objects. These studies include issues of consistent imagery throughout a historical context, although agency of the emperor or empress, and the messages imbedded in the imagery or inscription on these coins is absent. I am using coins from these studies to focus my thesis on the unaddressed issues.

More useful for my thesis are studies such as Carlos Noreña’s recent discussion of the communicative power of coins. He argues that the images minted on the reverse of a coin during the imperial period give particular stress to the virtue of the emperor shown on the obverse. These reverse images vary widely and include personifications, deities, inanimate objects, narrative scenes, members of the imperial family, and provinces, cities, or rivers. Personifications are the most prominent reverse images, more popular than images of the emperor or deities. Though Noreña’s study does not address the coins of empresses, his discussion supplies the methodology for my study of the perception of victory on the coins of Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia.

Art historians Kenneth Holum and Liz James include coins in their works on late Roman empresses. They offer subtle readings of the historical connections that originated under the Constantinian dynasty. Holum’s *Theodosian Empresses*, in particular, offers the first study of these coins as art objects as well as a means of political expression via the inclusion of the title *Augusta*. Liz James’ chapter, “The Stamp of Authority” argues that late Roman coins of empresses establish a pictorial model for Byzantine empresses. According to James, the empresses who followed the Constantinian dynasty strove to assert their position of power

26 Noreña, “Emperor’s Virtues”, 146-47.
throughout the empire via the medium of coins. Both authors address issues of gender roles and the power of women in the late Roman Empire. Both discuss the inclusion of the title Augusta on the coins of Flaccilla and Eudoxia and the usefulness of the medium of coins to commemorate the elevation of an empress. However, both authors limit their discussion of reverse imagery, and they provide little insight into the context of the minting of Late Roman coins. The broad audience that these coins reached makes them an obvious tool for the inclusion of political propaganda. An empress’s accession to the title Augusta asserted a newly-gained power and standing. Not every empress in the fourth and fifth centuries received the status of Augustae, and thus the title carried extraordinary clout and status.

A subset of research for this thesis involves issues of gender power and position in the reign of Galla Placidia. Many texts describe the patronage of Galla Placidia in Ravenna, and perhaps in Rome. These acts of patronage, and the power they established for Galla Placidia, paralleled acts by Eastern empresses. Similarly, the coinage of Galla Placidia in the West is akin to, and derived from, the coins of earlier Eastern empresses, such as Flaccilla. I include the coins of Galla Placidia in this thesis in order to broaden the analysis of the inclusion of Christian symbols on the coins of Augustae, showing that both Eastern and Western empresses strove to announce and project their legitimacy as Augustae and as leaders of Christianity.

30 James, Empresses and Power, 101-132.
31 Holum, Theodosian Empresses, 29-31; James, Empresses and Power, 117-123.
32 Holum, Theodosian Empresses, 29-31; James, Empresses and Power, 117-123.
33 Holum, Theodosian Empresses, 29-31; James, Empresses and Power, 117-123.
34 Authors such as Kenneth Holum and Liz James focus on the development of the Byzantine Empire through the careers of Eastern empresses. To balance this study, I have included Galla Placidia as a model of comparison and continuity from the fourth to the fifth centuries. The Theodosian dynasty was present in both the East and the West, with the coins of Galla Placidia reflecting her links to Theodosius and her imperial family in the East during her tenure in the West.
35 Still one of the most useful, and complete, studies of Galla Placidia is Stewart Irvin Oost’s Galla Placidia Augusta. For Galla Placidia’s patronage in Rome see Sible de Blaauw, “Jerusalem in Rome and the cult of the True Cross,” In Pratum Romanum: Richard Krautheimer zum 100 (1997): 55-73.
37 This is a strong statement I am making about the coins of Galla Placidia. Numismatic studies, such as J.P.C. Kent’s Roman Coins, correlate the imagery on the coins of Galla Placidia with Eastern Theodosian counterparts, such as Theodosius I and Theodosius II (p. 341), but avoid the issue of origin or intent.
Integral to the present thesis is the rise and integration of Christianity during the fourth century within the Roman Empire.\textsuperscript{38} Constantine’s legalization of Christianity with the Edict of Milan in 313 CE,\textsuperscript{39} and his continuing political sensitivity to Christians, initiated imperial support of Christianity that lasted to the end of the empire.\textsuperscript{40} Scholars such as Leslie Brubaker and Kenneth Holum stress the importance of Christianity to imperial women.\textsuperscript{41} As with numismatists, most modern historians retell the history of the late Roman Empire through the acts and events of Roman emperors.\textsuperscript{42} The limited consideration of late Roman imperial women in these works recount only acts or events that in some way emphasize their religiosity.\textsuperscript{43} This is based almost entirely on the churches they commissioned.\textsuperscript{44} The commissioning of churches and the correspondence with church officials show the influence empresses such as Galla Placidia and Eudoxia had on Christianity.\textsuperscript{45} For this thesis, in particular, the biographical sketch provided by Eusebius of Helena in the \textit{Vita Constantini} produced a prototypical model for the acts and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{38} Anne Yarbrough, “Christianization in the Fourth Century: The Example of Roman Women,” \textit{Church History} 45, no. 2 (1976): 149.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Cameron, \textit{Later Roman Empire}, 61.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Brubaker, “Memories of Helena,” 52; see also Cameron’s \textit{Later Roman Empire}, 72.
\item \textsuperscript{44} The study of the religiosity of late fourth and early fifth century empresses (and early Byzantine empresses) is vast. Almost all of the scholarship in this thesis in some way references the works and commissions of the empress Helena, Constantine’s mother. Given that most of this material acknowledges that the legend of the True Cross and the commissions of Helena in the Holy Land are mythologized, it is important to recognize here that the mythology surrounding Helena is virtual fact in the late fourth century. See Jan Willem Drijvers, “Exemplary Empress”, 85-86; Drijvers, \textit{Helena Augusta}, 95-145; Brubaker, “Memories of Helena”, 52. Anne McClanan, “The Empress Theodora and the Tradition of Women’s Patronage in the Early Byzantine Empire,” in \textit{The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women}, ed. June Hall McCash, (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 50-72.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Take for example the exile of John Chrysostom by Eudoxia in 403 CE, Cameron, \textit{Later Roman Empire}, 72.
\end{itemize}
events of post-Constantinian empresses. Acts of goodwill to the poor and needy, the commissioning of Christian monuments and churches, and pilgrimage became duties both required and expected of a true Christian empress. The later Augustae were able to pronounce a political and religious legitimacy that recalled the persona and “memory” of Helena. The influence of early Christian empresses can be navigated through an analysis of the imagery that sought to propagate, exemplify, and imitate the legendary virtues of Helena. Art historians knew the coins of these same empresses, but due to the nature of most numismatic studies, which detail the type of minting and distribution of types, coins are often ignored as an important medium. On the contrary, coins are objects that document the public personae of Roman emperors and empresses.

In this thesis, the coins of the Theodosian empresses engage the manner of representation and the historical connections these women achieved. Through minting the same reverse imagery as it appears on the coins of Constantine and Helena, Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia sought to forge a historic, dynastic, and iconographic lineage. Reverse imagery that included two potent depictions of victory—the personification and the laurel wreath—and Christian symbols—the Chi-Rho and cross—pronounce a newly Christianized imperial legitimacy for the

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46 Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 125-129; Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius*, 137-139, 291-297. Eusebius’ account of Helena’s pilgrimage to the Holy Land continues to cause a stir among scholars. Factual or propagandistic is generally how the account is understood. It should be noted that while these might seem like divergent descriptions, Eusebius’ account may fall somewhere in between them. Though certainty will always be lacking on this subject, it is important to stress the impression the account had. Jan Willem Drijvers has written most extensively on this issue and provides the clearest historical analysis of the development of the legend that surrounds Eusebius’ account, and the legend’s import after 351. See Drijvers, *Helena Augusta* for a lengthy discussion. Also, Drijvers’ “Cyril of Jerusalem” is incredibly specific about the origins of the legend in the East, and its perhaps earliest use as propaganda by Cyril.


48 Drijvers, “Exemplary Empress”, 85-86.


empresses who minted them. *Augustae* became powerful political forces through their involvement in Christianity, thus strengthening the personae of later Byzantine empresses.
CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Understanding the historical milieu in which Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia lived is a vital part of understanding the significance of the coins in this study. The last quarter of the fourth century was a period of greater political stability when compared to the preceding decades. The Theodosian era marked a reinstitution of a single dynasty; a new legacy was created when one emperor with one empress produced heirs who ruled simultaneously in the East and the West. The Theodosian dynasty reestablished the solidity of power that was missing over the course of the mid-fourth century.

The deterioration of the Constantinian dynasty’s foundations began in 337 CE with the death of Constantine and the battling of his sons as they challenged one another for superiority and control of the divided empire, leaving the imperial seat weakened at their deaths. In the years after the death of the last Constantinian emperor, Julian (d. 363 CE), officials elected strong military commanders to replace a fallen emperor with a new appointee. In 364 CE, Valentinian I established a dynastic lineage, and though he represented a strong military force through his own merit, the election of his controversial brother Valens as co-emperor created religious tensions and led to political unrest in the East. The unexpected death of Valentinian I (d. 375 CE) in battle left his four-year-old son Valentinian II as heir to the Western empire. In 378 CE, the Western emperor Gratian elevated Theodosius to the office of emperor in the East, and with Gratian’s murder in 383 CE, Valentinian II was left as the sole emperor in the

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51 Cameron, *Later Roman Empire*, 102. “During [the mid-fourth century]...the Roman state was not for the most part held together by the policies or personality of a single ruler.”
52 Cameron, *Later Roman Empire*, 112.
53 Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 36-37. This will be discussed further in Chapter 3. Constantine’s sons by his second wife Fausta included Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans I. Constantine II died shortly after his elevation to *Augustus* in 340 CE and Constans I was murdered by Magnentius in 350 CE. Constantius II ruled as sole ruler until his death in 361 CE.
54 Cameron, *Later Roman Empire*, 5. The emperors who were elected to rule after Julian’s death include Jovian (r. 363-364 CE) and Valentinian I (r. 364-375 CE).
55 Cameron, *Later Roman Empire*, 99-100; Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 37. Valens was an Arian Christian, which was the favored sect of Christianity in the East, but not in the West. Valens was also forced to contend with Persian revolts and the accusation of treason.
56 Cameron, *Later Roman Empire*, 100.
Through careful manipulation of Valentinian II, Theodosius forced the boy emperor to relinquish control of the Western empire. Such a strategic approach ended the political life of Valentinian II, permitting Theodosius to engineer his own imperial claim to the entire empire. From 392-395 CE, Theodosius I ruled as sole emperor of the Roman Empire. Upon his death, the empire was once again bifurcated, leaving the West in the hands of his son Honorius and the East to his elder son Arcadius.

Flaccilla married Theodosius between 376 and 378 CE, and arrived with him in Constantinople in 380 CE bringing two children with her from the West, Pulcheria and Arcadius. In January 383 CE, Theodosius conferred the title Augustus on his young son Arcadius, and shortly after, conferred the title Augusta on Flaccilla. This event is the first proclamation of an Augusta since Helena’s proclamation in 324 CE, marking a revival in the use of the title. The title of Augusta was not bestowed on an empress between the years 326-383 CE. Helena received her title in 324 CE along with Constantine’s second wife Fausta. In 326 CE, Fausta and her stepson Crispus (son of Constantine’s first wife Minervina, See Fig. 1) were put to death under mysterious circumstances, though it is suspected they were plotting against Constantine. Based on this speculation, scholars assume that this incident of Fausta’s actions made Constantine’s successors wary of elevating an empress to an Augusta. While bestowing the title would appear to reflect a newly elevated political status for Flaccilla, her early coins show her reticence to announce a political voice. The imagery on Figures F1 and F2 show that Flaccilla employed established coin reverse personifications on her coins with little variation.

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57 Cameron, Later Roman Empire, 100-101. Gratian was Valentinian I’s son by his first marriage. Valentinian I names Gratian as his heir in 367 CE and elevated his son to co-Augustus. Upon Valentinian I’s death in 375 CE, the army felt that Gratian was still not a competent military leader and proclaimed Valentinian I’s second son, Valentinian II by his second wife, Augustus. Gratian ruled Britain, Gaul, and Spain, while Valentinian II ruled Italy, Africa and Illyricum.
58 Oost, Galla Placidia Augusta, 38-51.
60 Cameron, Later Roman Empire, 1; Oost, Galla Placidia Augusta, 66.
61 Holum, Theodosian Empresses, 10, 17, & 22. Flaccilla, like Theodosius, hailed from Spain. Holum suggests that they were married in Spain, and she moved to the East when he was conferred as Augustus, taking up residency in Constantinople.
63 Holum, Theodosian Empresses, 31.
64 Drijvers, Helena Augusta, 25, 60-62; Pohlsander, Empress and Saint, 22.
from earlier empresses’ coins. Holum asserts that the title *Augusta* did not generate a new role for Flaccilla at court, but reflected the empowerment of political influence. As Constantine had conferred the title *Augusta* on his mother Helena, so too Theodosius’ attempt to highlight Flaccilla’s role as imperial consort had the intent of cementing dynastic control over the empire. It was in 384 CE, with the addition of images of victory on Flaccilla’s coins, that she expressed a political statement about her role, indicating her intentions to exercise her political influence on the issue of Christianity within the empire (Figures F4 & F5).

Gregory of Nyssa’s funerary oration for Flaccilla claimed that four virtues signaled her imperial character and role as empress: piety, humility, generosity, and child bearing. The four virtues listed in Gregory’s oration are intentional. The Helena Legend provided the textual foundations for Gregory’s speech, in which he drew on the virtuous behavior Helena demonstrated while on pilgrimage in Jerusalem. Giving money to the needy, feeding the poor, visiting the sick and caring for them, and acting as a caregiver or handmaiden, all under the guise of Christian goodwill and humility, honored Helena’s character. Further supplementing Helena’s kind acts was the impetus for traveling to the East, which was recorded to be due to her devout faith and pledge to search out and bring back the True Cross of Christ to her son Constantine. Also, being the mother of the most controversial and influential emperor since Augustus reflected on Helena the attribute of fortuitous offspring. These elemental traits of

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65 “It was influence, not power, that permitted [Flaccilla] to demonstrate imperial *philanthropia.*” Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 30.
66 “Flaccilla’s new rank must have impressed contemporaries as a dramatic innovation and as reversion to the prestigious Constantinian practice.” Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 31.
67 The conflict between Arianism and Nicene Orthodoxy is highly relevant here. It is suggested that Flaccilla, as a Nicene Christian, was strongly opposed to Arianism, though imperial women from Helena down to Flaccilla’s reign supported it. To exorcise Arian influence in Constantinople and within the empire, Flaccilla’s assertion of her role as a Christian leader may have been to reinforce imperial support for Orthodoxy. See Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 24-25.
72 Child bearing is one of the four virtues that came under study in Holum’s discussion of Gregory of Nyssa’s eulogy. Some empresses could claim to having produced a male heir suitable for the dynasty, while others could not. In the case of Eudoxia, she was honored as an *Augusta* after she had given birth to two children. “For Theodosius and his friends, the great men of the
Helena’s legendary character created the public persona for Roman *Augustae*, and these traits were not lost on the Theodosian empresses as they cultivated their public personae. Flaccilla, as the first empress in the new dynasty, represented more than her status of *Augusta*, she also represented the return of a Constantinian-like dynasty. Emulating a similar character to the textual Christian and Roman figure of Helena rejuvenated the role of imperial women. In a typically Roman fashion, looking to the successes of the past and repeating them highlighted and reinforced the rulers who originated them. In carrying on the tradition of Helena’s legendary Christian faith and goodwill, imperial women such as Flaccilla became recognizable legitimate heirs to the first Christian *Augusta*.

Eudoxia’s active role as the ecclesiastical figurehead of the imperial pair further evidenced the pursuit of legitimate influence for *Augustae* within the empire. Eudoxia developed and maintained her political persona through her outreach to the faith, including such acts as her rejection of Arianism in favor of imperial support for Orthodoxy, her intercessions with the emperor on behalf of church officials who appealed for imperial intervention, and her

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73 Holum remarks on the exceeding importance of Flaccilla’s role as the first Theodosian empress because, “the same virtues [that] manifested themselves publicly in Flaccilla’s career and received enough approval among contemporaries [suggested] deliberate creation of an imperial image for women, an image that Flaccilla would pass, like her *nomen* Aelia, to other empresses of the Theodosian house.” Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 24.

74 I would make a point here to recognize the lack of central power between the Eastern and Western portions of the empire prior to 380 CE and the disjuncture of the imperial seat. Other imperial women, including Justina, Valentinian II’s mother, made power plays for religious rights and traditions, but the Theodosian empresses wielded much stronger influence in religious matters because they were one-half of an imperial pair with suitable male counterparts. See Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 24-25 for Justina’s fight; also Cameron, *Later Roman Empire*, 102. Also, Drijvers asserts that, “Helena Augusta became for many empresses and queens of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages the perfect Christian empress whose life of humble piety was an example to them. The commemoration of Aelia Flaccilla, wife of Theodosius the Great, was modeled on that of Helena.” Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 182.

75 Arcadius, Eudoxia’s husband, and son of Theodosius, is often recounted as being the dim-witted of the imperial pair. His bureaucracy easily influenced him, and Eudoxia acted more on calculated instinct. While Arcadius’ dullness aided Eudoxia in getting what political aid she needed from her husband, she often stood on the forefront of any ecclesiastical matter; she was prepared with a solution and a political maneuver.
importation of relics into Constantinople. A well-known dispute between Eudoxia and the bishop John Chrysostom, due to his defamation of her character in a public oration, led her to spurn the bishop in 403 CE. Also, a recorded protestational procession against Arianism described Eudoxia marching with other followers of Orthodoxy, disrobed of her imperial dress. She consistently placed herself in the political light of devotion and dedication to the Nicene faith. Therefore, it is no surprise that the two representations on Eudoxia’s coins show Christian imagery (Figures E1 & E2). The victorious imagery that dominated Eudoxia’s reverse imagery heralded the empress’ political persona with unambiguous reliance on faith as the endowment of her political influence.

Galla Placidia impacted Late Antique history through consistently cultivating a public persona similar to Eudoxia. Galla Placidia was the daughter of Theodosius I and his second wife Galla. Her dynastic claim to the throne should have been recognized. Instead, Galla Placidia only enjoyed political leverage as regent from 425-437 CE, during the reign of her young son Valentinian III (r. 425-455 CE). In 421 CE, Galla Placidia was conferred the title Augusta by her half-brother Honorius and her second husband Constantius III. The Eastern court did not recognize her title until it became necessary to install a dynastic ruler of the house of Theodosius in the West; in 425 CE the Eastern court recognized Galla Placidia’s title. Despite the seeming lack of control over her own political career, Galla Placidia made considerable efforts to advance her political persona through her involvement in the power struggle in the Western court. Textual and architectural evidence of Galla Placidia’s efforts record her sponsorship of bishops and commissioning of churches.

Galla Placidia’s coins express one role for her that was not contested: devout Christian. The religiously charged images on the four issues minted in the Western mints were remarkably different from the coins of Galla Placidia’s Eastern counterparts, showing the remaining ties that paganism had in the West notably through the vota (pagan prayers) inscription on Figure GP2. Galla Placidia’s coins were also derivative of the coins of Flaccilla and Eudoxia. Repeating

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76 Holm, *Theodosian Empresses*, 54-58; 69-78.
77 Holm, *Theodosian Empresses*, 54-58; 69-78.
78 Holm, *Theodosian Empresses*, 54.
details from the latter, such as the manus dei (hand of God) and victory laurel wreath encircling a Chi-Rho symbol, aided Galla Placidia in commanding a religious public persona that drew on dynastic and familial connections. Because the Eastern empire formed the power base for the Theodosian dynasty, Galla Placidia used her coins to assert her presence in the West for stability, and her imperial claim in the East for legitimacy.

Why would Augustae need to signal victory on their coins? The Theodosian Augustae replaced the vota symbols on the Victory’s shield and the eight-sided star within a laurel wreath with a Chi-Rho. Liz James concludes that the reverse compositions of a seated Victory were generally militaristic in meaning, though the image must have been acceptable for use by imperial women on coins. I think the intent of using the seated Victory and the laurel wreath, rather than repeated images from earlier reverse content, is summed up in Kenneth Holm’s statement: “victories, peace, and the well-being of the state would always be secured by the piety of the ruler.” This is evident as early as Constantine’s reign, when the Chi-Rho is placed in prominent positions on the obverse and reverse of his coins. Emperors, from Constantine to Theodosius, used the symbols of the Chi-Rho to signal their military victory believing that the favor of the Christian God guaranteed triumph—a belief heavily influenced by the Battle of the Milvian Bridge legacy, to be discussed in Chapter 2.

The Theodosian empresses, like Helena before them, utilized the image of Salus, meaning salvation or security, on the reverse of their coins to signal their secure piety, while they turned to the images of the seated Victory and laurel wreaths to demonstrate their triumphant religiosity and legitimacy. The propagandistic messages of the reverse compositions opened a

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83 I think the placement of the Chi-Rho on the shield is intentional, though it may not have been standard military practice to place the Chi-Rho on the shields of soldiers. The image on the shield of Victory is reminiscent of the legend associated with Battle of the Milvian Bridge.

84 James, Empresses and Power, 109. James’ generalist statement is problematic. In chapter 7 (“The Stamp of Authority”) she begins to explain that the personification of Victory and other personification figures are prominent on the coinage of Theodosian and early Byzantine empresses, with the repetition of Victory and of Salus representing continuity, but she fails to explain why these messages would benefit the image of the empress on the obverse. It is as if James’ text is an extension of Kenneth Holm’s original study of Theodosian empresses that outlines the many threads of cloth that forged the imperial character of Late Antique/early Byzantine empresses. However, in using coins as a means to explain the imperial ‘stamp’ of an empress, Holm’s study only considers the obverse of coins, and James’ study only considers what Holm had previously asserted.

85 Houm, Theodosian Empresses, 50.
window that allowed the viewer to assume there would be future and foreseeable victories of empresses and emperors. The Theodosian *Augustae* thus conveyed in a public medium their intended political role as guardians and mediators of Christianity. They would be triumphant, and if in no other capacity, they would assert their influence over the politics of the faith.

The coins of Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia established the religious identity of these *Augustae*. The Helena Legend created a textual Christian model that these later empresses emulated. Through the mythologized importance of Helena’s Christian goodwill and her virtues of piety, humility, generosity, and child bearing, empresses like Flaccilla (r. 383-386), Eudoxia (r. 400-404), and Galla Placidia (r. 421-450) saw themselves as heirs to the first imperial Christian empress. Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia, by continually refashioning their individual personae to re-present the image and character of Helena, created a paradigm for later Byzantine empresses. While magisterial affairs were beyond the duties of an empress, and their influence was not politically absolute in range and power, Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia used Christian imagery on their coins to assert their dynastic and religious legitimacy, thus increasing the magnitude of their role as empresses.

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88 Drijvers, “Exemplary Empress”, 88. “Helena is here clearly considered the perfect example of imperial womanhood and the defender of the orthodox faith.”
89 In particular the reference of later Byzantine empresses as ‘New Helenas’ speaks to the profound importance the Helena Legend maintained in Byzantium. Drijvers here comments on the first appearance of a ‘New Helena’ in the fifth century: “Aelia Pulcheria, sister of Theodosius II, was cheered by the bishops at the council of Chalcedon (451) as the ‘New Helena’, while her husband Marcianus whom she had lately married, was applauded as the ‘New Constantine.’ The comparison of a ruling couple with Helena and Constantine occurred regularly in Late Antiquity on, as in the case of the Byzantine emperor Justin II (565-578) and his wife Sophia, or that of King Ethelbert and Queen Bertha of Kent, whose conversions are compared by Pope Gregory the Great with those of the first Christian emperor and his mother.” Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 183.
CHAPTER 2: THE COINS OF CONSTANTINE AND HELENA:

THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN IMPERIAL ICONOGRAPHY

“In the original version of the legend of the discovery of the Cross Helena is portrayed as the perfect Christian empress, the feminine counterpart of the perfect Christian emperor, Constantine.”
– Jan Willem Drijvers, 1997

This chapter will discuss the origin of Christian symbols or images as they appear on imperial coinage under Constantine. Particular coins will be selected to serve as early fourth century examples of the incorporation of Christian imagery into the imperial rhetoric through politicized and militarized propaganda. The coins discussed in this chapter will demonstrate the complex nature of Constantinian imagery, where pagan and Christian symbols appear together on the obverse and reverse of early fourth century coins. While textual evidence purports the conversion of Constantine and Helen from paganism to Christianity, the composite coin imagery that remains, and the message in the imagery, is indistinct. It is my intention to demonstrate that coins minted during the reign of Constantine and his mother suited their imperial personae, and whether that public image was Christian or pagan, the imagery that appears on their coinage is indisputably dynastic in nature. The pagan and Christian imagery on the coins of Constantine and Helena, as a means to express their legitimacy and dynasty, had a significant impact on the coins of later emperors and empresses.

History

Constantine was the son of Constantius I Chlorus and Helena, born c. 272/3 CE in Naissus (Serbia). His elevation to Augustus occurred in 305 CE at the death of his father in York, but he received the title Augustus in 307 CE in Trier from Maximian. In 312 CE, Constantine defeated the usurper Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, over the Tiber

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91 Drijvers, Helena Augusta, 181.
92 Cameron and Hall, Eusebius, 39-41.
93 Cameron and Hall, Eusebius, 40.
River in Rome, and then ruled as co-emperor with Licinius until 324 CE. Constantine defeated Licinius at Chrysopolis in 324 CE and, until his death in 337 CE, ruled as sole emperor.

Helena’s origins are less certain, but the following history is accepted. Helena was born in Drepanum in the region of Bithynia around the year 248 CE. She never legally married Constantius I Chlorus, though they lived together, and produced their son Constantine during their union. Scholars assume that Helena lived with Constantine’s father in or around Naissus, the place of Constantine’s birth, or in Dalmatia. In 289 CE, Constantius I left Helena to marry Theodora, Maximian’s daughter, as part of his accession to the office of Caesar in the West under Diocletian’s new Tetrarchic system. Constantine, meanwhile, stayed in Diocletian’s court in Nicomedia, while Helena is not heard from until Constantine’s elevation to Augustus. Helena came to Trier, the location of Constantine’s court in 306 CE, and moved later to Rome with her son (c. 312 CE). After living in Rome as part of the imperial court, Helena took a journey through the empire towards the Holy Land in 326/7 CE.

Scholars have suggested that Constantine is the embodiment of a Christian ruler based on textual evidence provided by Eusebius, the Constantinian biographer, in his Vita Constantini. And while the textual evidence may conclude that in perpetuity and throughout his reign

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94 Cameron and Hall, Eusebius, 40-41.
95 Cameron and Hall, Eusebius, 39-41.
96 The most current and complete history of the life of Helena is Jan Willem Drijvers, Helena Augusta. Through evaluating the primary sources that recount, or hint at, the major events in Helena’s life, Drijvers authored a biographical record that weighs all of the various references and claims to Helena’s presence during and after her life. As much of the details, including dates and locations, have dubious veracity, or vary depending on the primary author, there is bound to be some degree of variation among scholarly records of Helena’s life. The dates and locations included in this chapter are cited from Drijvers and are subject to the same degree of fallacy.
99 Drijvers admits that the certainty of the location of the cohabitation of Constantius I and Helena is indeterminable. There is a possibility that Constantius and Helena made their home in Dalmatia, Constantius’ homeland. Constantine’s birthplace, Naissus, is also a reasonable suggestion for the location of Constantius and Helena’s home. There is no proof that Constantius and Helena produced any other children, which suggests that they lived in the area where Constantine was born.
100 Drijvers, Helena Augusta, 19.
102 Drijvers, Helena Augusta, 21; 34.
Constantine may be perceived as the first Christian *Augustus*, contextual art historical evidence indicates that a conclusive understanding of the emperor is elusive. T.D. Barnes argues against the notion that until death Constantine remained a pagan and upon death was baptized, thereby making a full conversion to Christianity. Instead, Barnes argues that the moment of conversion was right before, or right after, the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312 CE). With Christian bishops in his accompanying entourage, and a public declaration of Christian faith before the battle, it is difficult to refute the date of 312 CE.\(^{104}\) He also claims that Helena converted to Christianity during the early years of Constantine’s reign.\(^{105}\) The contemporaneous, fourth century perception of Constantine and Helena as Christians seemed of greater importance than the moment of conversion. In fact, the imperial production of art that integrated Christianity, such as coin imagery and church building, expressed the perception of Constantine and Helena as Christians in a public forum. Works of art from the fourth century, such as the coins that follow, represent a blended character for both Constantine and Helena.\(^{106}\) The Christian aspects of the coins of Constantine are found imbedded in pagan representations because “there was no independently Christian artistic tradition. The Christian ideas now about to conquer the State had

\(^{104}\) T.D. Barnes, *Constantine & Eusebius*, 43. In Barnes’ strong language about Constantine’s conversion, and the duty Constantine felt to promote and convert the whole of the Roman Empire [p. 275], is imbedded the author’s sense of personal conviction towards such a claim. The exact moment of conversion is indeterminable, but it is clear that Constantine felt sympathetic towards Christianity, if for no other reason than military victory appeared to be ruled by the whim of the Christian God (or perhaps Sol, depending on context). See Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius*, 44-46.

\(^{105}\) Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 35; T.D. Barnes, *Constantine & Eusebius*, 43, 75, 269, & 275. Both Drijvers & Barnes want to date Constantine & Helena’s conversion to Christianity in 312 CE, right before or right after the Battle of the Milvian bridge. Likely or not, art historical evidence including churches, sculpture, and coins paint a very blended conception of a Christianized Roman emperor.

\(^{106}\) See Figure CM1. Simultaneously, Constantine was producing art works that reflected both his Christian and pagan personae. The cameo from the Hermitage Museum shows a standing image of Constantine being crowned by a tyche of Constantinople. Constantine is wearing a military cuirass and holding a spear in his right hand and a sword in his left hand. The contrapposto stance and the military dress are similar to another famous pagan monument, *Augustus of Prima Porta*. In this image, instead of calling on his hereditary lineage (through the image of the dolphin and cupid next to Augustus’ foot), Constantine is being crowned with a diadem by a Romanized personification of his capitol. Also, compare Figure CM1 to Figure CM12. The latter is a remarkable cameo of Augustus, where the first Roman emperor is wearing a diadem (which is covered by the jeweled headband) and wearing a cuirass.
to employ old means to express new conceptions”. Eusebius further textually represented Constantine and Helena as Christians through involvement in the Church councils, church building campaigns, and contributions to Christians and Christian sites in the Holy Land. As textual evidence provides much of the posthumous information about the religious beliefs of both Constantine and Helena, the visual evidence that remains accounts for the contemporary public perception of these reported beliefs.

Thus, I have chosen coins to map the continuous development of the public personae of Constantine and Helena. Often, the following examples will speak to pagan and Christian spheres, while also reacting to historical milestones in the careers of mother and son. The coinage that accompanies their careers reflects the slow, and sometimes apprehensive, integration of Christian symbols into the imperial rhetoric in the early fourth century. Individual examples in this study cannot in total represent the breadth of meaning in Constantinian coinage, but they can impart insight into the messages Constantine and Helena communicated via coins.

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111 Bruun, *RIC VII*, 61. “Other signs, artistic representations and expressions may appear to be equally vague, hovering between paganism and Christianity. This is the natural state of affairs. There was no independently Christian artistic tradition. The Christian ideas now about to conquer the State had to employ old means to express new conceptions…Thus Constantine’s victorious sign, his personal standard, his helmet, his seeming cross-sceptre and the aura around his head were adopted by posterity as Christian symbols, Christian signs of power.”
112 The following Constantinian examples are precursor images to the narrowed field of imagery employed by later fourth century empresses. While these coins, as previously noted, do not cover the extensive number of coins and messages of Constantine, they are useful, foundational selections. The coins of Helena, to my knowledge, represent the range of imagery of the empress. The same issue from another mint may exist to broaden the number of the type of coin, but no other imagery was minted of Helena.
Constantine

The coins of Constantine prove that within his own lifetime, Constantine was conscious of the importance of the symbol of the cross.\(^{113}\) The inclusion of the image-sign of the Chi-Rho appears on coins of Constantine beginning in 315 CE.\(^{114}\) While seemingly appropriate, given that Constantine legalized Christianity in 313 CE, these symbols are minted in a familiar Roman idiom that often coupled them with imperial or pagan imagery. One example of this is Figure C1, a silver miliarensis minted in Ticinium c. 315 CE with the inscriptions IMP(erator) CONSTANTINUS P(ius) F(elix) AUG(ustus) on the obverse and SALUS REI PUBLICAE on the reverse. Most notable about this coin is the small, encircled Chi-Rho symbol on Constantine’s helmet, in the first roundel on the front of the helmet.\(^{115}\) As the first numismatic presence of any Christian symbol, Figure C1 is an important Constantinian coin that has received much scholarly attention.\(^{116}\) A few features of Figure C1 are significant for the discussion in chapter 3. The first is the early date of the coin, 315 CE, and the second is the Christogram symbol on Constantine’s helmet. This early date indicates Constantine’s correlation of the symbol of the Chi-Rho with Christianity.\(^{117}\) The Greek letters Chi (X) and Rho (P) did not formulate a meaningful or Christian symbol until the fourth century.\(^{118}\) Thus, Constantine’s use of the Christogram in coin

\(^{113}\) And, apparently, acutely aware of his public image during his reign. Cameron, *Later Roman Empire*, 64.

\(^{114}\) As quoted in the Introduction: André Grabar, *Christian Iconography*, 8. “…image-signs, which appeal above all to the intellect and which imply more than they actually show. Since the value of a sign is commensurate with its brevity, there are no limits to its use except those imposed by the necessity of remaining understandable. It is imperative that the sign be unequivocally decipherable.”

\(^{115}\) Kent, *Roman Coins*, 331.


\(^{117}\) Bruun, *RIC VII*, 61.

\(^{118}\) Bruun, *RIC VII*, 61. “The sign, at the moment of its creation, was ambiguous. In essence it was a monogram composed of the Greek letters X P, and, while the monogrammatic combination of these two letters was by no means unusual in pre-Constantinian times, the occurrence of X P with a clearly Christian significance is exceedingly rare. At least Greek-speaking Christians were therefore probably in a position to realize the possibilities of interpretation when confronted with the new sign. To others \(^{R}\) or \(^{P}\) was a powerful heavenly
imagery is significant, especially because the mint of the coin is a short time after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312 CE) and the Edict of Milan (313 CE). Moreover, the placement of the Chi-Rho symbol on Constantine’s helmet suggests that the emperor wanted to convey a personal message. The symbol’s position on the obverse is unlike later coinage where the Christogram is only present on the reverse of the coin and never on the dress of the bust likeness (See Figures C2 & C5). Numismatists have rightfully shied away from interpreting the intentionality of placing the symbol on Constantine’s helmet on the obverse of Figure C1 because any assertion would be circumspect. However, Figure C1 depicts a victorious Constantine on the reverse of the coin, and other examples will demonstrate victory and Christianity, or a victorious Christian religion, to be common themes throughout Constantinian and post-Constantinian coinage.

The third significant feature is the celebratory scene on the reverse with the inscription SALUS REI PUBLICAE. Salus is a prominent personification in reverse imagery, though here the inscription indicates that the central figure, Constantine, is the salvation of the republic. And lastly, the mint is Ticinium and the material is silver. It is possible that this coin commemorates a specific event in Constantine’s reign, such as Constantine’s uncovering and foiling of Licinius’ plot to overthrow him in 315 CE, which prompted Constantine to move his headquarters to

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119 Bruun, RIC VII, 62. “As a symbol of Constantinian victory the... appears on the coins, most frequently in a subordinate position, employed as a mark of issue or imperial rank.”

120 McCormick, Eternal Victory, 101. “By almost all accounts, Constantine’s commitment to his new religion was inextricably bound up in his own understanding of his military success, in his ‘vision’ before the battle for Rome, in the Christian God’s promise of victory: hoc signo unices.”

Bruun, RIC VII, 62. “The [miliarensis type] is a case of the ἑραμ στρατηγικός decorating the helmet and thus being an integral part of the sign of the potency inherent in the imperial portrait. [p. 63] The ἑραμστρατηγικός is here set in a badge just below the root of the crest... No doubt, therefore, persists about the meaning of the new emblem: the emperor had adopted his own victorious sign as an emblem of power.”

Barnes, Constantine & Eusebius, 13-14, 43, 263-265. A few other inferences can be made about the temporal connection between Constantine and the Christogram. Lactantius’ On the Deaths of the Persecutors (c. 315 CE) recounts a slightly different version of the legend that developed about the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. In Eusebius’ account (published c. 339 CE), Constantine saw a vision of a cross in the sky before the battle. Lactantius remarks that Constantine had a dream the night before the battle in which he saw a Chi-Rho symbol.

121 Noreña, “Emperor’s Virtues”, 154. Carlos Noreña has argued that the reverse inscription of a coin is a dimensional representation of the figure on the obverse. The personification or inscription on the reverse acts as an aspect of the issuer that is portrayed on the obverse.
Ticinium. A rare material such as silver used to produce the miliarensis would permit the coin to commemorate Constantine’s victory over Licinius’ undermining and to act more as a historical record than money.

Another early example is Figure C2, a bronze billon centenionalis (AE3) minted in Constantinople c. 327 CE with the inscriptions CONSTANTINUS MAX(imus) AUG(ustus) on the obverse and SPES PUBLIC on the reverse. A billon centenionalis is a low-grade bronze issue minted in large quantities for large-scale usage, meaning that this coin had a widespread audience throughout the empire. Fittingly, this coin, too, is a commemorative issue that celebrates Constantine’s confidence in the ability of the imperial army, under Christian guidance, to achieve victory. Instead of an intricate composition that includes multiple figures, the reverse image of the billon centenionalis reveals a military banner, called a labarum, stabbing a serpent. Three circles appear on the labarum, and Kent suggests that the three circles are symbolic representations of Constantine and his two sons Constantine II & Constantius II. Prominently above the labarum is a Christogram image-sign. In this position, the Christian symbol is coupled with the announcement of military victory. The mintmark CONS for Constantinople is significant for the dating of the coin to 327 CE, shortly after Constantine moved to the new capitol. The staff of the labarum splits the inscription SPES PUBLIC (hope of the republic) signifying future hope for military victory. Consequently significant about this early Constantinopolitan issue is the billon metal composition of Figure C2. Ultimately, the

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122 Bruun, RIC VII, 65.
123 Bruun, RIC VII, 47. Bruun makes reference to Maria R. Alföldi’s work Die constantinische Goldprägung: Untersuchungen zu ihrer Bedeutung für Kaiserpolitik und Hofkunst (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz in Kommission bei R. Habelt, Bonn, 1963) in which Alföldi suggests that gold reverse imagery is comparable to historical reliefs. And while Figure C1 is made of silver, Bruun also comments on the rarity of gold and silver coins. Most issues of gold and silver were minted under the direct supervision of the emperor and his court, and usually struck as “donatives” for a specific audience within society.
124 Grierson and Mays, Late Roman Coins, 39-41.
125 Kent, Roman Coins, 331.
126 Bruun, RIC VII, 64. “Here again we find the vexillum, the standard of the emperor with his personal victorious sign on top, piercing his foremost foe, the internal enemy Licinius, symbolized by the dragon (or serpent).”
127 Kent, Roman Coins, 331.
propagandistic message of Constantine’s hope for future imperial power and military strength would be circulated throughout the Empire on the reverse of this issue.\textsuperscript{128}

The next two examples of Constantinian coinage (Figures C3 and C4) provide foundational information for later coins of Theodosian empresses and do not have Christian symbols represented on them. Figures C3 is a gold solidus minted in Constantinople c. 326 CE with the inscriptions \textit{CONSTANTINUS MAX(imus) AUG(ustus)} on the obverse and \textit{VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AUG(usti)} on the reverse, and Figure C4 is a gold solidus minted in Constantinople c. 336 CE with the inscriptions \textit{CONSTANTINUS MAX(imus) AUG(ustus)} on the obverse and \textit{VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AUG(usti)} on the reverse. Both show a winged Victory sitting on a Roman cuirass inscribing four \textit{vota} symbols on a shield that is supported by the knee of the personification and a winged genius.\textsuperscript{129} Figure C3 from 326 CE and Figure C4 from 336 CE are identical in representation, type, and inscription. Both solidii were minted in Constantinople approximately ten years apart, which explains the duplication of images and inscriptions. The Victory is indicative of military triumph, and Figures C3 and C4 denote a new visual representation of victory that is different from the representations in Figures C1 and C2. The \textit{vota} symbols that the Victory figure is inscribing represent prayers for forty more successful years of rule.\textsuperscript{130} While Christianity played a pronounced role in the imagery on the obverse of Figure C1 and the reverse of Figure C2, the Victory on Figures C3 and C4 coupled with the genius, cuirass, and \textit{vota} symbols are pagan symbols. Unlike Figures C1 and C2, which were either minted prior to or contemporary with Figures C3 and C4, Christian symbols are not seemingly integral to the depicted message of victory.

Another Constantinian example demonstrates further the simultaneous production of pagan and Christian imagery on coinage. Figure C5 is contemporary with Figure C4.\textsuperscript{131} It was minted in Antioch in 336 CE with the inscriptions \textit{CONSTANTINUS MAX(imus) AUG(ustus)} on the obverse and \textit{VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AUG(usti) LXXII} and a Victory on the reverse. Standing instead of sitting, the winged Victory is holding a staff that is topped with a small

\textsuperscript{128} This will be discussed in greater detail in the latter portion of this chapter, but it should be noted here that Constantine, according to Eusebius’ \textit{Vita Constantini}, interpreted God as Savior who grants salvation in battle, i.e., military victory. Cameron and Hall, \textit{Eusebius}, 45.

\textsuperscript{129} Kent, \textit{Roman Coins}, 331.

\textsuperscript{130} Kent, \textit{Roman Coins}, 331-32.

\textsuperscript{131} Bruun, \textit{RIC VII}, 695, no. 98.
cuirass and to the left of the staff is a small Chi-Rho symbol. In addition to their contemporaneous dating, both Figures C4 and C5 are gold solidii. The reverse inscriptions on both Figures C4 and C5 are very similar, with Figure C5 having the addition of the issue number (LXXII). The inclusion of the Chi-Rho symbol on Figure C5 continues the precedent of Figures C1 and C2 with the personified representation of Victory from Figures C3 and C4.

The coupling of Victory with a Chi-Rho symbol is the starting point for this study. Coins, by nature, are characterized by the individual on the obverse, making the art both personal and political. Later in the fourth century, both the seated and standing Victory from Constantinian examples came to dominate the reverse imagery of the Theodosian dynasty, which in turn signaled the acceptance and perpetual imperial ownership of Christian symbols in reverse imagery. Successor coins of Constantine’s sons and the Theodosian dynasty carried the stamp of dynastic, familial, and political continuity through the repetition and reuse of Christian symbols.\(^{132}\)

**Helena**

Unlike Constantine’s coins, the coins of Helena do not span the length of her career. In fact, it is not until after Helena had been at court (c. 306-328/9) for over a decade that the minting of coins with her likeness began.\(^{133}\) From the initial through a posthumous mint, Helena’s coins present the empress as an ideal Roman consort, rather than a Christian.\(^{134}\) The imagery on the following examples introduces a persona of Helena that gave her a growing political influence as a Roman empress. None of the four examples below have Christian imagery on them.

Helena’s coins show two distinguishing types. The first type was minted before Helena’s elevation to the status of *Augusta* in 324 CE. Figure H1 is a bronze billon centenionalis (AE3) minted in Thessalonica c. 318 CE with the inscription *HELENA N(obilissima) F(eminam)* on the

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\(^{132}\) See Figures CS1, CS2, CII 1, CII 2.

\(^{133}\) Helena was likely in Rome, as part of Constantine’s court, after his rise to Augustus, c. 306 CE. Her role at court is unknown, but she was given property in the SW section of the city, where the Sessorian Palace was constructed.

\(^{134}\) Consort is a term usually reserved for the wife of an emperor. However, the term also refers to the emperor’s companion. Helena was Constantius I Chlorus’s consort during their union. After Fausta’s mysterious death in 326 CE, the relationship between Constantine and his mother was emphasized, and Helena’s role at court became akin to a consort.
obverse and no inscription on the reverse. The obverse likeness of Helena on the billon centenionalis depicts the future empress plainly, wearing a stola and with a simple bun in her hair. It is clear from the lack of a diadem or the title Augusta in the obverse inscription that this coin dates before 324 CE. Encompassing the entire field of space on the reverse is an eight-sided star encircled by a laurel wreath. The wreath is bound near the bottom with a centerpiece joining the two ends near the top shaping an arrangement that replicates a victory crown. The star in the center of the laurel crown is an ambiguous symbol in coin imagery.\(^{135}\) The placement of the eight-sided star in reverse compositions is often interchangeable with the placement of an image-sig\(^{136}\).

The second type of Helena Augusta shows three varying personifications (Figures H2, H3, & H4). First, Figure H2 is a gold double-solidus minted in Ticinium in 325 CE with the inscriptions FL(avia) HELENA AUGUSTA on the obverse and SECURITAS REI PUBLICAE on the reverse. The newly fashioned obverse bust portrait of Helena wearing the imperial robe, paludamentum, and diadem crown reflects her elevation to empress. Helena’s full name now circles the edge of the obverse with the inscription FL(avia) HELENA AUGUSTA. An image of Securitas is minted on the reverse, wearing a flowing, traditional stola, looking to her right, and holding an “emblem of peace”, likely an olive branch.\(^{137}\) Surrounding the figure is the inscription SECURITAS REI PUBLICE, thereby identifying the image. Most personifications as reverse images are meant to present an aspect of the issuer;\(^{138}\) in this case, SECURITAS REI PUBLICE suggests that Helena is the security or safety of the republic. The issue of this coin marks a

\(^{135}\) The star symbol has not been traced to a specific representation or numismatic legend. While the image is sometimes coupled with the mintmark, no specific meaning has been read from the presence of the star. It is clear, though, that the star is frequently present in pagan coinage.

\(^{136}\) Compare C5 to CS2; J1 to F3, F4, E1, & GP1; H1 to F5, E2 & GP3. The placement of an eight-sided star will often coincide with the same placement of a Chi-Rho symbol on a coin, and sometimes they appear together. It should be noted that as the Chi-Rho became an increasingly popularized Christian symbol, progressing through the mid to late fourth century, it began to replace the appearance of an eight-sided star in particular reverse imagery. Take for example Figure J1 c. 361 CE, Julian’s coin, where a seated Victory was seen inscribing a Chi-Rho onto a shield in previous coins, Julian’s coin has intentionally replaced the Chi-Rho with an eight-sided star.

\(^{137}\) Kent gives this general description of the branch held by the personification. As an “emblem of Peace” the branch is probably an olive branch. Kent also infers that Securitas is holding an emblem of peace to represent the peace after the defeat of Constantine’s co-emperor Licinius. Kent, Roman Coins, 330.

\(^{138}\) Noreña, “Emperor’s Virtues”, 154.
historical transition in both Constantine’s reign and the political persona of Helena. Though coins were minted with Helena’s likeness, the history of their issuance will often include Constantine’s involvement in the development of Helena’s political role. Reportedly, Constantine conferred the title of *Augusta* on his mother in celebration of the finality in the civil war with Licinius.\(^{139}\) This coin commemorates and preserves Helena’s new status in a very rare mint of gold that only circulated amongst elite circles. The rarity of this mint signals the importance of the announcement imbedded in the images, and the symbol of peace that is held by *Securitas* on the reverse simultaneously promotes Helena’s stature and the end of the war. In turning the event of Helena’s elevation to *Augusta* into a propagandistic message of peace, it seems Constantine has turned the public’s focus away from the recent civil war and toward the centralization of power within his family.\(^{140}\)

Minted in the same year, 325 CE, Figure H3 represents Helena in a similar way to Figure H2. Figure H3 is a bronze medallion minted in Rome with the inscriptions *FLAVIA AELENA AUGUSTA* on the obverse and *PIETAS AUGUSTES* on the reverse. The bronze medallion depicts Helena on the obverse wearing a diadem and surrounded by the inscription of her full name. The personification on the reverse of Figure H3 is *Pietas*. Figure H2 stressed Helena’s role as the security of the empire, Figure H3 equates Helena with the virtue of piety. *Pietas* is standing in the center of the reverse holding a young boy on her left, while looking to her right and handing an apple to another young boy.

Lastly, a third, posthumous example of the personification type is Figure H4. Figure H4 is a bronze follis (AE1) minted in Constantinople c. 337-40 CE with the inscriptions *FLAVIA HELENA AUG(usta)* on the obverse and *PAX PUBLICA* on the reverse. Repeating the two previous examples, Figure H4 represents an imperial likeness of Helena on the obverse, surrounded by her inscribed name. The personified figure on the reverse changed to a representation of *Pax*, or peace. As this issue was minted in Constantinople c. 337-40 CE, after Helena’s death, it is impossible that Helena commissioned this coin. Instead, it is probable that the likeness of Helena and the message of peace were meant to recall the ideal persona of Helena and perpetuate her virtue in legacy. Later in the fourth century the historical person and textual

\(^{139}\) Brubaker, “Memories of Helena”, 57.
persona of Helena diverged from one another. Later imperial women relied on Eusebius’ account and perceived Helena to be the first Christian empress.

Later imperial empresses, however, were not able to draw Christian imagery from the coins of Helena. As Figures H1 through H4 demonstrate, Helena’s coins present idealistic virtues for Roman women, much like the coins of Livia. Supporting and promoting the reign of the emperor was an integral responsibility of the political role of an ideal Roman empress. Helena’s coins reflect her public persona as complementary to the emperor’s public persona.

Legacy

The actual lives of Constantine and Helena are irrelevant for early Byzantium. By the later fourth century both figures achieved fame in perpetuity that overshadowed what factual details may have survived from the early fourth century. Constantine was recognized as the first Christian emperor who legalized the religion, playing a large part in spreading the practice of Christianity in his church building campaigns throughout the Empire and through his calling of Church councils for theological debate. Constantine’s commitment to Christianity, seen through his commissions of early Christian art, promoted his public persona to outwardly favor the religion, if not practice it, and resulted in a formidable and legendary textual and pictorial persona. Eusebius’ account of Constantine’s vision before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge also enhanced the textual persona by propagating Constantine as a true follower of the sign of the cross, and the manifestation of the victorious image in his coinage only proved consistent with that view.

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142 Numismatists often infer that Constantine mindfully dictated or encouraged the minting of Helena’s coins and the imagery on them. Because Helena does not assert any sense of independence in her role prior to 325 CE as the mother of the emperor, and after 325 CE as empress, there is no indication that the intentionality of the imagery on Helena’s coins is solely her own.
143 Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius*, 45-46.
144 Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius*, 45-46.
145 As Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall point out, Eusebius’ description of the vision incorporates Sol symbolism into the description of God’s presence in the sky, making such an event a haply amalgam of Constantine’s beliefs. From the account given by Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius*, 45, Eusebius is no more painting Constantine as a Christian than as a worshipper of heavenly, or solar, deity.
Helena lived a relatively unremarkable life at court in Rome. It is Eusebius’ record of Helena’s pilgrimage to the Holy Land (Vita Constantini published c. 339 CE) that constructed a Christian-inspired, textual persona of the empress who sought to prove her sense of charity and goodwill to the needy as her devotion to the religion. In the same visit, Helena reportedly commissioned the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem to memorialize the life of Christ.\footnote{Rufinus suggested in 403 CE that she also commissioned the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the site of the tomb of Christ; Drijvers, Helena Augusta, 79-80.} Further embellishment of Helena’s pilgrimage developed in the mid to late fourth century with the insertion of Helena’s ulterior motive for traveling to Jerusalem in 328 CE: she was in search of the True Cross, titulus, and nails.\footnote{Drijvers, Cyril, 168-169; Drijvers, Helena Augusta, 131.} Originating in Palestine, the Helena Legend recounts the empress’ search and eventual discovery of the True Cross of Christ, of which Helena sent relics and the nails to her son in Constantinople.\footnote{Drijvers, Cyril, 168-169; Drijvers, Helena Augusta, 131; Lynn Jones, “From Anglorum basileus to Norman Saint: the Transformation of Edward the Confessor,” Haskins Society Journal 14 (2003): 71-90.} Unfortunately, the only discernable fact buried in these two stories is the journey that Helena made to the Holy Land in 328 CE.\footnote{It has been suggested in recent scholarship that Eusebius’s account of Helena’s impetus for traveling on an imperial itinera principum toward Jerusalem may have been a diversionary and calming tactic used by Constantine to deflect attention away from the execution of Fausta and Crispus in 326 CE. Holum, “Hadrian and St. Helena”, 67, 71. Also, Helena may have engineered the mysterious executions of Fausta and Crispus. Drijvers, Helena Augusta, 62; Pohlsander, Empress and Saint, 22.} The development and timing of these textual embellishments is highly significant because they reveal a newly constructed textual persona of Helena that was not evidenced in her coins. In developing any argument for later Roman empresses, scholars have often relied upon the Helena legacy of faith and virtue from the latter half of the fourth century to establish what current seeds of knowledge imperial women had available to them to create their own political personae. While no works of art survive as a testament to the textually recorded devout faith Helena possessed, Helena did leave a set of coins that prove that she possessed virtue as a Roman consort.\footnote{There are textual references to Helena’s patronage of churches, in the Holy Land and in Rome, as noted above. However, the veracity of the claims to Helena’s patronage are questionable, leaving the coinage as the only remaining art object with a definitive inscription possessing Helena’s likeness.}
Determining the religious beliefs of Constantine and Helena has not been the focus of this chapter, though coinage minted during their reigns as emperor and empress have led to a discussion of their political personae, and what role Christianity played in these personae. In a public forum, Constantine outwardly marketed himself as a Roman Christian leader who endeavored to mount a successful military career. With most of the Christian imagery on Constantinian coinage appearing as military symbols, it is clear that Constantine believed in the power of God’s presence in his victories. Eusebius’ description of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge may therefore present an accurate account of Constantine’s submission to the sign of the cross, because without it victory was uncertain. Eusebius’ account of Helena’s political career may also have more accuracy in detailing the empress’ pilgrimage. Through implying that Helena traveled to the Holy Land on a Christian expedition, Eusebius also states that she prayed for the well-being of her son and his sons.\textsuperscript{151} In acting as a mother and imperial consort, Helena’s political career reflects her avid support of her son at court.\textsuperscript{152} The imagery minted on Helena’s coins depicts the empress as possessing a set of ideal Roman virtues that supported her role as empress and as court companion. Together, Constantine and Helena initiated a new visual and historical imperial production of coins. They sought to mint their political achievements on the obverse and reverse of their coins, successfully staging political personae that influenced their successors.

\textsuperscript{151} Holum, “Hadrian and St. Helena”, 71. Holum suggests that the penitent nature of Helena’s actions while on ‘pilgrimage’ in Jerusalem is a response to the political turmoil that arose after the execution of Crispus and Fausta. See Chapter 1 for an explanation of the events of 326 CE. Eusebius’ account of Constantine and Helena’s spirituality hides under a thin veil of propaganda, whereby the faith and expression of faith by Constantine and Helena are exaggerated.

\textsuperscript{152} Drijvers, \textit{Helena Augusta}, 64-65.
CHAPTER 3: COINS OF THE EMPERORS AND EMPRESSES FROM 330-450 CE

The Theodosian Augustae—Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia—used Christian images from the coinage of Constantinian dynastic emperors as prototypes for the images they would mint on their coins. Reusing and refashioning Constantinian imagery, Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia inserted Christian symbols where pagan symbols had once appeared. Inscribed vota symbols expressed prayers for the continuance of the imperial line. As such, the Theodosian Augustae were expressing prayers for the continuance of their dynasty through the power of Christian symbols. Asserting their role as the first Christian Augustae, Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia sought to establish their independence as rulers through leading idealistic, honorable, and Christian regencies, which was reflected in the minting of their coins. I argue that the coins of Flaccilla, her daughter-in-law Eudoxia, and Eudoxia’s half-sister Galla Placidia attempted to forge an identity of imperial women in the later fourth century that is revealed through the reverse images of Christian victory that draw from the Helena Legend, as well as the Christian imagery of Constantine’s coins.

A Comparison of Their Coins

To clearly understand the development of Christian symbols as key to the mode of representation and transmission of the identity of Late Antique empresses, I must start with the manifestation of these image-signs on coins of post-Constantinian Augusti. Not every emperor from 330 to 380 CE minted Christian imagery on coins. However, the Chi-Rho symbol appeared prominently on the coinage of two particular dynasties of emperors: the Constantinian emperors and the Theodosian emperors. The coins of emperors from 330-380 CE progressed through the transitional period of the mid-fourth century and represented a transitory state in coin representations. Emperor coins minted from 330-380 CE changed and molded the iconography of the reverse image of a seated Victory to eventually include the image of the Chi-Rho (See Figure VII 1). The coupling of a Chi-Rho symbol with a seated Victory became the standard representation of the Theodosian Augustae.

First, it is my intent to draw specific historical connections between the use of Christian symbols and the assertion of political control/power using the coins of emperors between 330-380 CE. These coins are direct successors to the Christian reverse imagery that appears on the coins of Constantine discussed in the previous chapter. Second, a study of the coins of each
empress from 380-450 CE will establish a similar political, as well as dynastic, repetition of Christian reverse imagery. The importance of Christian imagery to these Late Antique Augustae is twofold: 1) the elevation of an imperial wife to the status of Augusta signifies political clout for the empress; and 2) the manifestation of this political voice for Theodosian empresses was through articulation of the imperial endorsement of Christianity.

In the following discussion, I focus on only one of each type of coin of each emperor and empress. Many issues were made of each type, but my intent will be to show the consistency in iconography of coin reverse imagery, not to explore the distribution or the volume of each coin minted. It should be noted that every figure included in this study shows a bust portrait in profile on the obverse, while the dating of each issue is approximate. The discussion of the reverse images of the emperors is limited to the coins that predate the iconography on the coins of the Theodosian empresses. I do not intend to imply that post-Constantinian emperors were only minting Victories or Christian imagery. The coins of the mid-fourth century emperors included in this chapter provide insight into the continuity of reverse imagery that was minted in the gap between the reigns of Helena and Flaccilla.

**Emperors 330-380 CE**

**Constantine’s Sons**

In the tumultuous years after Constantine’s death, his three sons Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans I divided his unified empire among themselves. In September 337 CE, the three Constantinian heirs met in Pannonia (in Illyricum) to delineate the boundaries of

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153 Other issues of coins before, during, and after the minting of the coins in this study show facing and three-quarter facing obverse bust portraits. Of the selection chosen for this study, I did not stay away from including facing and three-quarter facing obverses, but these issue types seemed to diminish in number during the chronology of this study. Also, the coins of each emperor or empress are discussed in chronological order based on the approximate date, and then similar imagery is coupled together. For most issues during the mid to late fourth century, the date given is a range that often coincides with the reign dates of the emperor or empress on the obverse. While the dates of these issues may prove to be problematic, it is also important to note that most of the emperors or empresses during the mid to late fourth century reign for only a short time, making exact dating difficult. Roman coin values also fluctuated during the fourth century; it is recorded that Constantine was forced to levy taxes that were only paid in gold coinage simply to rejuvenate the circulation of gold coins. The coin types included here reflect the rise in bronze coin types, while silver coins are rarer.
the three divisions of the empire and were elevated to Augusti by the army. In hopes of replicating the command and military might of their father, each of Constantine’s sons engaged in military careers that ultimately led to the death of all three. Vying for power, and defending their own territory against rivals, including one another, forced the brothers to assert their dynastic and legitimate claims to the Constantinian dynasty. With Constantine II’s career lasting from only 337 to 340 CE, the remaining brothers were left to continue their father’s Christian and military triumphs. Through the issue of identical victory imagery as their father on the reverse of their coins, Constantius II and Constans I propagated his messages of dynasty and legacy.

Constans I (r. 337-350 CE)

Constans I was the youngest and third son of Constantine I and Fausta. He came to power on the 25th of December 333 CE as Caesar around the age of 12, later rising to Augustus in 337 CE. The division of the empire by Constans I and his two brothers awarded him the territories of Italy, Africa, Illyricum, Macedonia, and Achaea. Though engaged to Olympias prior to 337 CE, Constans neither married nor produced an heir. Instead, from the beginning of his reign in 337 CE until his death in 350 CE Constans I spent his career as Augustus in battle, and even his death resulted from the usurper Magnentius’ revolt.

It is evident from Constans’ coinage that he wished to display himself as heir to the military legacy of his father. Two solidii show replicated reverse imagery from Constantinian coinage that communicate victorious messages. Figure CS 1 is a solidus minted in Nicomedia c. 337-40 CE with the inscriptions D(ominus) N(oster) CONSTANS P(ius) F(elix) AUG(ustus) on the obverse and VICTORIA CONSTANTIS AUG(ustus) on the reverse. The reverse shows a

155 Kent, RIC VIII, 3-16; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 113. Constantine II died in 340 CE, Constans I died in 350 CE, and Constantius II died in 361 CE.
156 Kent, RIC VIII, 7-8; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 112.
157 Kent, RIC VIII, 8.
158 Kent, RIC VIII, 5; 6; 8; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 112.
159 Kent, RIC VIII, 6; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 112.
Victory seated on a cuirass, inscribing *vota V* (prayers for five successful years) on a shield that is supported by her knee and a genius figure, similar to Figures C3 and C4. Figure CS 2 is a solidus minted in Antioch c. 337-340 CE with the inscriptions *CONSTANS AUG(ustus)* on the obverse and *VICTORIA AUG(usti)* on the reverse. The Victory on the reverse of Figure CS 2 is standing holding a military standard in her hand. To the left of the figure is a star and to the right of the figure is LXXII=72, the number of issuance for this coin.

These two representations of Victory are successor images to the coins of Constantine. Through minting these two types, Constans I was drawing on the military imagery of his father. Both coins were struck in the East (Nicomedia and Antioch), which suggests that they were not issued by Constans I himself, whose territory included the Western empire, but were likely issued by his brother Constantius II. While Constans I’s eldest brother, Constantine II, invaded his territory, Constantius II politically supported his youngest brother through commissioning coins with Constans’ likeness. The familial and dynastic promotion of the imperial line promoted its continuity by Constantius and Constans on opposite sides of the empire.

**Constantius II (r. 337-361 CE)**

Constantius II was the second son of Constantine I and Fausta, named for his grandfather Constantius I Chlorus.161 With the longest political career of Constantine’s sons, Constantius II outlived both of his brothers Constantine II (d. 340 CE) and Constans I (d. 350 CE), and eventually inherited their imperial territories making him the sole ruler from 350 to 361 CE.162 Originally, Constantius II was ruler over the Eastern empire, excluding Thrace, Achaea, and Macedon, which belonged to his brothers. Similar to his brothers, Constantius II spent the bulk of his reign engaged in war with foreign and domestic foes.163 He lived in Antioch for most of his reign, only moving to Sirmium (Achaea) and Mediolanum (N. Italy) in the West during the years of internal turmoil with competing usurpers.164 Constantius II passed away while en route

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161 Kent, *RIC VIII*, 3; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 112.
162 Kent, *RIC VIII*, 14; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 113; Cameron, *Later Roman Empire*, 70.
to prevent his Caesar, and relative, Julian from being proclaimed Augustus. He married twice, with the second marriage yielding a daughter, Constantia, posthumously (See Figure 1).

The first three examples of Constantius II’s coinage show a progressive attempt to establish his succession from his father and his legacy of military triumph. Similar to his brother Constans I, Constantius II minted three issues of the seated Victory type. Figure CII 1 is the earliest mint; it is a solidus minted in Aquileia c. 337-340 CE with the inscriptions CONSTANTIUS P(ius) F(elix) AUG(ustus) on the obverse and FELICITAS PERPETUA on the reverse. The seated Victory appeared on the reverse, sitting on a cuirass and inscribing vota XXXXXX on a shield supported by her knee and a winged genius. The inclusion of the inscription FELICITAS PERPETUA, meaning ‘perpetual happiness’, became an integral part of later inscriptions for both emperors and empresses. It acts as a blessing over the emperor and the empire. Later occurrences of the inscription appear as part of the obverse inscription to reflect the title of the figure. It is generally P(ius) F(elix).

Figure CII 2 is also a solidus minted in Aquileia c. 340-350 CE with the inscriptions CONSTANTIUS AUGUSTUS on the obverse and VICTORIA DD NN AUGG(usti) on the reverse. The seated Victory reverse image duplicated the previous examples, though this time she is inscribing Vota XX MULT XXX on the shield that rests on her knee. Figure CII 3, unlike Figures CII 1 & CII 2, is a bronze medallion without a mintmark, estimated to date c. 340-47 CE, with the inscriptions CONSTANTIUS P(ius) F(elix) AUG(ustus) on the obverse and VICTORIA AUG(usti) NN on the reverse. The reverse personification is very similar to Figures CII 1 & CII 2 though the detailing is minimized. The Victory figure is seated on an obscured object, but it shows a consistency of shape to the cuirass seats from previous and later coins. She is holding the shield in her lap and inscribing vota X on it. The disappearance of the winged genius may or may not be significant for this coin, but it marks a transition in representation. Later coins that continue the seated Victory figure show the shield as it rests atop a stool or stand.

The fourth example of Constantius II’s coins is starkly different from the consistent imagery of the previous three. Figure CII 4 is a bronze maiorina (AE2) minted in Trier in 353 CE with the inscription D(ominus) N(oster) CONSTATNTIUS P(ius) F(elix) AUG(ustus) on the reverse.

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165 Kent, *RIC VIII*, 5; 14; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 120.
166 Kent, *RIC VIII*, 5; 14.
167 See Figures CII 3, CII 4, M1, M2, M3, VII 1, GP1, GP2, GP3, & GP4.
168 See Figures C3, C4, CS1, CII 1, CII 2, M3, J1, VII 1, & A2.
obverse and "SALUS AUG(usti) NOSTRI" on the reverse. Prominently displayed on the reverse of this coin is a Chi-Rho flanked by the Greek letters Alpha and Omega. Contemporaneous with this coin are coins of Magnentius that show identical reverse images (See Figures M1 & M2).

Magnetius contested Constantius II for this throne, and Constantius II was ultimately victorious over Magnentius in 353 CE. All three of Constantine’s sons were raised as Christians, with Constantius II and Constans I promoting Christianity as the imperial religion throughout their reigns. I suggest that the motive behind minting a coin such as Figure CII 4 might be to establish the legitimacy of the Constantinian dynastic claim. The coin was struck in Trier, a Western mint that was not part of Constantius II’s power base in the East, and Constantius only traveled to the West to defend his family’s dynastic claim to the throne against the usurper Magnentius. The competitive images that appear on the coins of Magnentius might have solicited a challenge to Constantius II to prove his own political and religious legitimacy in the West. Trier is linked with the Constantinian court from 306-312 CE, providing an obvious place for Constantius II to proclaim his ties to the West.

Magnetius (r. 350-353 CE)

Magnetius, the usurper, reigned from January 18, 350 CE until his suicide on the 10th or 11th of August 353 CE. Born in Gaul, Magnetius served in the army and was elevated by his troops to the status of Augustus during a banquet in Autun in 350 CE. By the end of 350 CE, Magnetius acquired the realm of Constans I, including territory once ruled by Constantine II, to rule over the areas of Gaul, Italy, Africa, and Spain. Constantius II decided to march on Magnetius, who resided in the West. At the Battle of Mursa both Constantius II and Magnetius

169 In the fourth and fifth centuries the image of a Chi-Rho flanked by the Greek letter Alpha and Omega appears to be very common, see Figures CM2 and CM3 as comparative images on cameos. Figure CM2 is a pendant with a loop where a string would be threaded to be worn around the neck. The original function of Figure CM3 is not known. Currently, the cameo is one of many cameos collected and encased on the façade of the Dreikönigenschrein. A similar image appears on Figure CM4, where instead of Chi-Rho there is a Latin cross flanked by Alpha and Omega. This cameo is also on the façade of the Dreikönigenschrein, making its original function unknown.

170 Kent, RIC VIII, 11-12; Barnes, Athanasius and Constantius, 106.

171 Kent, RIC VIII, 9; 10; 11; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 112-13; Barnes, Athanasius and Constantius, 101. Magnetius’ revolt relied on timing. Upon hearing of military setbacks in Constantius II’s Eastern campaign, Magnentius planned his usurpation, and sent assassins to execute Constans I who had fled to Helena, a city in the Pyrenees Mountains.
suffered great losses, after which Magnentius fled to Italy and then to Gaul. Constantius II chased him back to his native soil where, under the stress of defeat, Magnentius murdered his family and committed suicide.¹⁷²

Two particular traits are specific to Magnentius’ coins that indicate his provenance and his illegitimate reign. All three examples of Magnentius’ coins depict the usurper’s profile bust portrait on the obverse of the coin without a diadem crown, and the mintmark for each example indicates these coins were struck in Gaul. The lack of crown immediately signals the non-dynastic rise of Magnentius to Augustus. Instead, the short, sculpted haircut of the likeness is reminiscent of third century coinage—a time when many military leaders rapidly rose to power and fell just as quickly to another competitor. By birth, Magnentius was part Frankish, and his base of power originated in that area of the empire, meaning that he likely had control over the mints in Gaul, including specifically Amiens and Paris.¹⁷³

Figures M1 is a bronze follis (AE1) minted in Amiens c. 350-53 CE with the inscriptions D(ominus) N(oster) MAGNENTIUS P(ius) F(elix) on the obverse and SALUS DD NN AUG(usti) ET CAES(ari) on the reverse. Comparable to its contemporary, Figure CII 4, a Chi-Rho symbol flanked by the Greek letters Alpha and Omega appears on the reverse. The mention of the virtue Salus in the reverse inscription is important because it appears later as a primary virtue of empresses, and the inclusion of Caesar in the reverse inscription indicates that the coin was struck after Magnentius elevated Magnus Decentius to Caesar in the winter of 350/1.¹⁷⁴

The reverse of Figure M2 is identical to Figure M1. The only distinction between the two coins is material. Where Figure M1 is an AE1, Figure M2 is a bronze maiorina (AE2), which is a slightly lesser grade of bronze coin than an AE1, which was minted in Amiens in 353 CE with the inscriptions D(ominus) N(oster) MAGNENTIUS P(ius) F(elix) on the obverse and SALUS DD NN AUG(usti) ET CAES(ari) on the reverse. The reverse shows a Chi-Rho symbol flanked by the Greek letters Alpha and Omega.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Kent, RIC VIII, 11; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 113.
¹⁷³ Barnes, Athanasius and Constantius, 101.
¹⁷⁴ Barnes, Athanasius and Constantius, 102.
¹⁷⁵ As mentioned in a prior note, the image of the Chi-Rho flanked by Alpha and Omega is not limited to coin reverse imagery. Figures CM2 and CM3 demonstrate the broad use of this image. The large Chi-Rho that appeared on the reverse if Magnentius’ coins is also translated to the medium of cameos. Figures CM5 and CM6 show two representations of the dominant image of a Chi-Rho. Figure CM5 is a magical amulet made to protect its owner Archeboulos. Figure CM6 is
Figure M3 repeats a familiar image, but one that is different from Magnentius’ coinage minted at Amiens. Figure M3 is a miliarensis minted in Paris c. 350-53 CE with the inscriptions \(D(\text{ominus})\) \(N(\text{oster})\) \(MAGNENTIUS\) \(P(ius)\) \(F(\text{elix})\) \(AUG(\text{ustus})\) on the obverse and \(VICTORIAE\) \(DD\) \(NN\) \(AUGG(\text{usti})\) on the reverse. A seated Victory appears on the reverse of Magnentius’ coin. Under her is a cuirass used as a seat and she is inscribing \(VOTA\) \(V\) \(MULT\) \(X\) on the shield that rests in her lap. This type is similar to Constantius II’s coin minted in Aquileia c. 340-50 (Figure CII 2). In his usurpation, Magnentius would have looked to prior examples of coins of \(Augusti\) as legitimizing prototypes for his coinage.

Julian (r. 361-363 CE)

As one of two surviving members of the Constantinian line after the “massacre of the princes”, Julian ruled as the last member of the Constantinian line and as a pagan.\(^{176}\) Julian was the son of Julius Constantius, the half-brother of Constantine, and was a cousin to Constantine’s sons (See Figure 1).\(^{177}\) He rejected Christianity for belief in Neo-Platonism.\(^{178}\) Julian came to power on November 6, 355 CE when Constantius II made him Caesar.\(^{179}\) Though Julian preferred to focus on his education in ancient Greek and Roman philosophy,\(^{180}\) Constantius II was left with few familial options after the purging of most of the male members of the imperial family in 337 CE,\(^{181}\) being forced to call on Julian for military and imperial duty. Tensions swelled between the two cousins when Julian’s troops proclaimed him \(Augustus\), to the dismay of Constantius II, due to his achievements in battle in Gaul. In 361 CE, both Julian and Constantius II headed from the West and the East, respectively, to engage in a civil war. En route, Constantius II died unexpectedly and named Julian as his successor on November 3, 361

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\(^{176}\) Kent, \textit{RIC VIII}, 16. The “massacre of the princes” occurred in 337 CE when Constantius II ordered the purging of all male family members except his brothers Constantine II and Constans I. Julian was born in 331 CE, and was 6 at the time of the purging, and it is speculated that he survived because of his young age.

\(^{177}\) Kent, \textit{RIC VIII}, 5; Jones, \textit{Later Roman Empire}, 113.

\(^{178}\) Kent, \textit{RIC VIII}, 16.

\(^{179}\) Kent, \textit{RIC VIII}, 14; Jones, \textit{Later Roman Empire}, 117.

\(^{180}\) Kent, \textit{RIC VIII}, 16; Jones, \textit{Later Roman Empire}, 119.

\(^{181}\) Kent, \textit{RIC VIII}, 16.
Over the next three years, Julian felt threatened by the political and social stability Christianity had within the empire. He devised a strategy to reassert his own pagan beliefs as competitive with Christianity, as well as to weaken the legitimacy of Christianity. Julian’s command over the bureaucracy of the empire proved to be difficult for him during his reign as sole emperor. So, he decided to rely on his military accomplishments as evidence for his legitimate leadership. However, this aim brought Julian’s inevitable downfall. In 363 CE, he marched to the East to battle the Persians, and in a surprise skirmish with a guerrilla force, Julian was pierced with a spear through his abdomen and died on June 26, 363 CE.

Minting coinage that represented military triumph would only seem appropriate for Julian, given his ability to impress the army with his leadership. Figure J1 is a bronze 9-Siliqua minted in Antioch c. 355-361 with the inscriptions IULIANUS CAES(ar) on the obverse and VICTORIA AUGUSTORUM on the reverse. This coin was minted prior to Julian’s ascension to Augustus in 361 CE, which is reflected in the absent diadem on the obverse bust portrait. The reverse image is familiar, with a Victory seated on a cuirass while balancing a shield on her knee and with the support of a winged genius figure. The difference between Figure J1 and previous types is the missing vota symbols on the shield. Not being an emperor, the missing vota symbols are not surprising on Julian’s coin. In their place is an eight-sided star; as an ambiguous symbol, the eight-sided star lacks a numismatic legend. The praise of the Augusti in the inscription on the reverse of this coin similarly signals the continuance of the Constantinian line from prior examples, suggesting that Constantius II minted Julian’s coin. Julian, even in his reign as Caesar, was not given to supporting the policies of his cousin though he was a member of the imperial line. Another trait suggests that Constantius II issued this coin: the mintmark of Antioch. Julian spent his life of study in Greece and his military campaigns were mostly in Gaul. The only record of Julian going to the Eastern empire was late in his regency, 363 CE, when he marched toward Antioch to engage the Persians in battle. Thus, Julian’s reverse imagery is similar to Constantinian coins. Later Julian coins would better reflect the ideological break of the pagan emperor.

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182 Kent, RIC VIII, 15; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 120.
183 Kent, RIC VIII, 17; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 120-24.
184 Kent, RIC VIII, 17; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 124.
185 Julian was proclaimed Augustus by his troops in 357 CE and refused the elevation. He relented in 361 CE, when he felt it was the blessing of the gods.
Valentinian II (r. 375-392 CE)

The life and reign of Valentinian II was short and tragic. Raised to the purple at the age of four, after the sudden death of his father Valentinian I, Valentinian II held only a tenuous control over his subjects, policies, and his throne. Valentinian II’s mother Justina, Theodosius (who would become Theodosius the Great), and the usurper Maximus all pursued their own political agendas during the boy emperor’s reign. Justina’s Arian beliefs influenced Valentinian II’s promotion of Arianism in an empire that favored Orthodoxy. Theodosius’ insinuation of control over foreign and military policy engaged Valentinian II in precarious agreement with Maximus, forcing Valentinian II to seek refuge and protection from Theodosius when Maximus violated the agreement. Without the support of a Caesar or co-emperor such as Valentinian II’s half brother Gratian, whom Maximus killed, the weight of defending himself and the empire against internal and external strife was too much for the young emperor. At the age of 21, the emperor Valentinian II committed suicide.

As Valentinian II found himself embroiled in the religious conflict of the later fourth century, his promotion of Christianity over the revival of paganism by Roman senators was the only political statement he made as emperor. Figure VII 1 demonstrates Valentinian II’s commitment to his promotion of Christianity. Figure VII 1 is a solidus minted in Antioch c. 378-83 CE with the inscriptions D(ominus) N(oster) VALENTINIANUS IVN P(ius) F(elix) AUG(ustus) on the obverse and VICTORIA AUGUSTORUM on the reverse. Depicted on the reverse is a seated Victory on a cuirass inscribing VOTA V on the shield that rests on her knee. Below the shield in the right field is a small Chi-Rho. The estimated date of this issue was a time

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186 Pearce, RIC IX, xxxviii; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 158; Oost, Galla Placidia Augusta, 38.
187 Pearce, RIC IX, xx-xxii; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 158-59; Oost, Galla Placidia Augusta, 45.
188 Pearce, RIC IX, xx-xxii; Oost, Galla Placidia Augusta, 46.
189 Pearce, RIC IX, xxi; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 159; Oost, Galla Placidia Augusta, 46-47.
190 Pearce, RIC IX, xx. Jones, Later Roman Empire, 159; Oost, Galla Placidia Augusta, 45.
191 Pearce, RIC IX, xxii; Jones, Later Roman Empire, 159; Oost, Galla Placidia Augusta, 51.
192 Valentinian II’s regent was his mother Justina, an outspoken Arian who is best remembered for her conflict with Ambrose Bishop of Milan in which she wanted to replace Ambrose with an Arian bishop. Her influence over her son was likely the source of Valentinian II’s religious policies.
of relative peace in Valentinian II’s reign. It is also during this time that Valentinian II’s imperial image was developing, necessitating the inclusion of imperial and Christian symbols to stress the policies of the boy emperor. Also, the mintmark for Antioch denotes Valentinian’s political presence in the East, where Arianism came into favor. Following the end of the Constantinian line, Julian’s campaign to support paganism during his reign and to support Judaism in the East, along with the pagan senatorial uprisings in Rome, challenged Christianity’s stability throughout the empire. Valentinian I, his brother Valens, and his son Valentinian II all had to contend with the growing religious unrest in the West and the East. Imperial policy towards Orthodoxy began to strengthen the religious unity within the empire, especially when Theodosius came to power in 378 CE.

Empresses 380-450 CE

Flaccilla (r. 383-386 CE)

After Helena’s death in 328/9 CE, the production of coins with the imprint of Augusta stopped. Fifty years later, during the reign of Theodosius I, coins are once again minted for Augustae. The reverse imagery on Flaccilla’s coins draws on two distinct iconographic traditions: first, personifications, such as piety, salvation, security, and peace, which frequently occur on imperial coinage for both emperors and empresses; and second, symbolic representations of victory, including seated personifications and laurel wreaths. These images reflect the earlier use of similar imagery on coins of Helena and Constantine. As previously noted, the coins of Constantine and emperors from c. 330-380 CE also minted images of personifications and symbolic representations of victory. The coins minted during Flaccilla’s reign are the first use of this imagery on the coins of an empress. More importantly, Flaccilla’s

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193 Pearce, *RIC IX*, xx-xxii. During these years, Valentinian II held the office of consul twice (376 and 378 CE) with his uncle Valens, with two more terms remaining in his career.
194 Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 16.
196 Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 16.
197 Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 32.
198 See Helena’s coins for earlier examples of personifications, and Carlos Noreña’s discussion of the popular use of personifications in coin reverse imagery.
199 Later, with the coins of Galla Placidia, the images of victory are expanded to include a standing personification of Victory holding a cross-like staff.
coins were not struck until her elevation to Augusta in 383 CE. The coins of Flaccilla represent two major shifts in the perception of imperial women at the end of the fourth century. First, Augustae were able to issue their likeness on coins with politically charged reverse messages. Second, being an Augusta was a politically significant and elevated status.

Flaccilla minted two coin types with personifications, both with the reverse image of Salus (Figures F1 & F2). Both bronze maiorina (AE2) coins were minted in Nicomedia (mintmark SMN) in c. 383 CE with the inscriptions AEL(ia) FLACCILLA AUG(usta) on the obverse and SALUS REI PUBLICAE on the reverse. The obverse likeness of Flaccilla is similar on both coins revealing a bust portrait in profile of the empress wearing a diadem and imperial garb, the paludamentum. Encircling the portrait on the obverse is the inscription of Flaccilla’s full name, Aelia Flaccilla Augusta, underscoring Flaccilla’s elevated rank to Augusta. On the reverse of these coins is an image of Salus. The image of Salus represents Flaccilla as the well-being of the empire. The image of Salus is similar on both coins; the personification stands in the center of the reverse, looking to her left, and holding her hands together in front of her chest. Specific additions to the depiction of Salus make Figure F2 different from Figure F1. Two smaller symbols flank the Salus of Figure F2; to her left is a cross, and to her right a six-sided star. Prior to 383 CE, Christograms appeared on coins of emperors wishing to communicate their Christian faith, and the presence of a cross on Figure F2 is a representation of the True Cross.

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200 Holum, Theodosian Empresses, 28-29.
201 This status was one that was bestowed on imperial women infrequently and marked a level of political leverage.
202 While Carlos Noreña does not discuss the reverse imagery of the coins of Flaccilla, he makes a generalization about the intent minted in the personifications on the reverse of other imperial coinage. Here, I am extending his argument to include the coins of Late Antique empress because, as I will discuss in the text, coins of the Theodosian empresses follow predictable and standardized minting practices.
203 See the examples of Constantius II, Magnentius, and Valentinian II in the previous discussion of coins of emperors minted from 330-380 CE in this chapter. Christograms, or Chi-Rhos, are prevalent coin images throughout the fourth century.
204 The Cross is also a powerful image of Victory for the reverse of coins, possibly signifying the perception of the early Christians of their victory over Judaism and paganism. Drijvers, “Exemplary Empress”, 88. There is no numismatic legend for representations of the True Cross, and the symbol does not appear as a Christian symbol before Figure F2. Later coins of Eudoxia and Galla Placidia use the Cross as a Christian symbol, and here I suggest that Figure F2 is the introduction of this image.

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Figure F3 is a bronze maiorina (AE2) minted in Thessalonica c. 383-387 CE and Figure F4 is a gold solidus minted in Constantinople c. 384 CE. Both coins repeat the inscriptions from Figures F1 and F2 with AEL(ia) FLACCILLA AUG(usta) on the obverse and SALUS REI PUBLICAE on the reverse. The discussion of coins of emperors in this chapter showed that the image of the seated Victory inscribing vota symbols on a shield features prominently. On Figures F3 and F4 a Christian image-sign replaced the pagan symbols. The reverse of both Figure F3 and Figure F4 show the familiar seated Victory, but in place of the vota symbols there is an inscribed Chi-Rho on the shield, the whole reverse encircled by the inscription SALUS REI PUBLICAE. The poor condition of Figure F3 obscures some of the imagery, but the AE2 shows Flaccilla on the obverse wearing a diadem crown, and the paludamentum similar to Figures F1 & F2. The Victory on the reverse of Figure F3 is sitting on a shortened column while inscribing a Chi-Rho on a shield supported by a post. Figure F3’s Constantinopolitan counterpart, Figure F4, is in much better condition, as it is made of gold and circulated less, subsequently the figure of Victory is better defined. A slight difference appears in Figure F4’s depiction of Victory where the shield rests on the knee of the personification instead of sitting atop a post, similar to Figure VII 1. The reverse type maintains the same iconography of imperial victory as the coins of previous emperors, though the replacement of the vota symbols with a Chi-Rho is meant to announce the Christian faith of Flaccilla. The coins of Helena included personifications of virtues associated with her persona: peace, piety, and security. The multivalent iconography of Flaccilla’s coins included the virtue, salvation, with the pronouncement of the imperial victory in Christianity. Further, through including her rank on the

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205 See Figures C3, C4, CII1, CII2, CII3, CS1, M3, J1, & VII1.
206 The impetus for this study can stem from this quote by Kenneth Holum in *Theodosian Empresses*, 32: “The reverse will not bear much interpretation. The designer employed the commonplace legend SALUS REI-PUBLICAE (‘well-being of the state’) with the throned goddess Victory from contemporary VOTA issues of the Augusti, replacing the VOTA numbers of the latter with the chi-rho to create a distinct but trivial reverse type for an empress.” His lengthy discussion of the importance Christianity had in the political personae of Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia, as well as Pulcheria and Aelia Eudocia, cannot be validated without the numismatic reverse imagery. His stresses the familial and dynastic images on the obverse, including dress, inscription, and title, but fails to see the innovation of the reverse.

207 Bruun, *RIC VII*, 47. Gold coinage did not circulate widely.
coins with her title *Augusta* in the obverse inscription, Flaccilla announced her new and rare political rank.\textsuperscript{208}

Flaccilla minted a third type of reverse image comparable to a type of Helena, Figure H1. Figure F5 is a bronze siliqua minted in Constantinople c. 383-388 CE with only one inscription on the obverse: *AEL(ia) FLACCILLA AUGUSTA*. The reverse shows another powerful symbol of victory: the laurel wreath encircling a Christogram.\textsuperscript{209} Figure H1 shows the same laurel wreath surrounding an eight-sided star. As previously noted, the star was an ambiguous symbol. Here a Christogram seamlessly replaced the star. Figure F5 demonstrates that standard reverse mints were recast to represent the imperial promotion of Christianity. The laurel wreath on Figure F5 is identical to the wreath on Figure H1 where the leaves radiate from a central rounded branch, the two stems are bound together on the bottom of the coins, and a ring, or centerpiece, joins the two ends of the branches at the top of the reverse. The only difference to the image is the center object; Helena’s coin contains a star, Flaccilla’s coin shows a Christogram. This reuse of this reverse image is significant because it demonstrates that Flaccilla’s coins were using the images on the Helena’s coins as models for representations of victory. Another minor addition to the reverse of Flaccilla’s coin is the inclusion of the mintmark (CONS for Constantinople).

The evolution of Flaccilla’s coinage demonstrates the empress’ origins as a Roman consort and her elevation to *Augusta*. The personifications of *Salus* and Victory reflect Flaccilla’s growing understanding of her role as an empress. Flaccilla used Helena’s coins as models for reverse imagery in order to express her emulation of the empress before her.\textsuperscript{210} Through minting the refashioned Constantinian image of a seated Victory inscribing a Chi-Rho on her shield, Flaccilla visualized a new expression for Byzantine empresses: the Christian role of an empress. This detail changed the manner of representation for imperial women in the late fourth century, shaping the public persona of Flaccilla and her successors.

\textsuperscript{208} No empress from 337 until 383 CE was conferred the title *Augusta*; Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 31.

\textsuperscript{209} See Figures CM5 and CM6 for representations of Chi-Rho symbols on other media.

\textsuperscript{210} The implication of this statement is that Flaccilla’s reverse imagery is an imitation of Helena’s reverse imagery. Flaccilla chose to emulate the persona of Helena through her benevolent acts, and in the reverse imagery, to pick up where Helena left off.
Eudoxia (r. 400-404 CE)

The coins of Eudoxia emulate the newly fashioned likeness of a Christian empress as expressed on Flaccilla’s coins, adding a new detail that emphasizes Eudoxia’s dynastic and religious affiliations with Flaccilla. Figure E1 is a gold solidus and Figure E2 is a gold tremissis, both dating to c. 400 CE and minted in Constantinople after Eudoxia’s elevation to Augusta in 400 CE. Both include the inscription \textit{AEL(ia) EUDOXIA AUG(usta)} on the obverse. Figure E1 also includes the inscription \textit{SALUS REI PUBLICAE} on the reverse, while Figure E2 does not show a reverse inscription. Both coins utilize familiar obverse and reverse images. The reverse of Figure E1 shows the image of a seated Victory inscribing a Chi-Rho on a shield with the inscription \textit{SALUS REI PUBLICAE}. The obverse shows the bust profile portrait of Eudoxia dressed in the \textit{paludamentum} and diadem surrounded by the inscription of her full name, Aelia Eudoxia Augusta.\footnote{Holm, \textit{Theodosian Empresses}, 24.}

Formal continuity from Figure F4 is obvious in the reverse imagery of Figure E1. Both coins show the shield resting on the knee of the Victory with inscription of the virtue \textit{Salus}, newly associated with Eudoxia, and both coins are gold solidii minted in Constantinople. The striking similarities between the coin of Flaccilla and the coin of Eudoxia suggests that this particular representation of Victory intentionally associates these Theodosian empresses with one another, while simultaneously linking these imperial women with Christianity.\footnote{Drijvers, “Exemplary Empress”, 88.}

One formal iconographic difference between E1 and F4 is the object Victory sits on. On Eudoxia’s coin the Victory figure sits on a Roman cuirass similar to the seated Victory images seen on coins of emperors.\footnote{See Figures C3, C4, CII1, CII2, CS1, M3, J1, VII1, A2.} The obverse inscription on both Figures E1 and E2 names the empress \textit{Ael\text{ia} Eudoxia}, recognizing the importance of Ael\text{ia} as a cognomen. Often only recorded as Flaccilla, the empress’ full name was Aelia Flaccilla. Eastern empresses took Flaccilla’s first name as an honorific title, similar to \textit{Augusta}, to promote their dynastic relations to the first Theodosian empress.\footnote{Holm, \textit{Theodosian Empresses}, 24. Examples include Aelia Eudoxia and Aelia Eudocia. Galla Placidia’s coins minted in the East include Aelia as a cognomen, appearing as Aelia Placidia.}

As a new innovation, the obverse image of Figure E1 shows the \textit{manus}
dei crowning the empress. Similar to her husband Arcadius, Eudoxia’s coins reflect a divine right to rule that was not bestowed on the empress by the army or her husband. The manus dei expands the visual vocabulary of Christian symbols on the coins of Theodosian empresses. Until this image appears on the coins of Eudoxia, the expression of divine favor was reserved for coins of emperors that expressed the divine favor given to them through triumph in battle.

This vocabulary expands again with the introduction of a cross encircled by a laurel wreath on the reverse of Figure E2, Eudoxia’s gold tremissis. Similar to this image are Helena’s coin (Figure H1) with an eight-sided star encircled in a laurel wreath and Flaccilla’s coin (Figure F5) that features a Chi-Rho encircled in a laurel wreath. Here, on Eudoxia’s coin, the image-sign that appears in the center of the wreath is a cross. A cross first appeared in reverse imagery on the 383 CE coin of Flaccilla (Figure F2) to the right of the image of Salus. Coupled with a laurel wreath, the cross and the Chi-Rho denote the same imperial promotion of Christianity communicated in Figure F5. Repeating the reverse image of the laurel wreath established a formal lineage beginning with Helena and the pagan image of an eight-sided star and continuing

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215 Kent, Roman Coins, 340. In other scholarship, the image of the manus dei apparently has no Christian meaning at all. Arcadius came to the title of Augustus at a very young age through the bestowment of his father Theodosius. The title Augustus was traditionally bestowed on the emperor by the army. The explanation of the manus dei on the coins of Arcadius explains the divine right to rule, as opposed to his elevation by the army. Thus, Eudoxia included the image on her coinage to signify her elevation to Augusta. I do not entirely agree with the implication that Eudoxia minted any image on her coinage that did not directly speak to her highly cultivated political persona. I would argue the inclusion of the manus dei is intentional.

216 See Chapter 2 for Constantine’s belief in his military triumphs as due to the favor of the Christian God, and the subsequent use of this belief by Constantine’s sons in the prior discussion in this chapter.

217 Figures CM4 and CM8 also show representations of crosses. On Figure CM4, the Latin cross is flanked by Alpha and Omega. On Figure CM8, the cross appears between two figural portraits, said to be imperial figures. The latter resembles a marriage cameo where a man and wife are depicted together, either facing each other or facing forward. The inscription on the bottom of the cameo remarks that the cameo is ‘a blessing of Paul’. Figure CM7 shows a similar representation. The double portrait on Figure CM7 does not have an inscription. Here, the two figures are facing one another with a Chi-Rho appearing above their heads, in the space between them. These Christian symbols in these cameos act as blessings over the couple in the image. Later, narrative scenes on cameos would act as blessings for the possessor. Figure CM9 shows a praying figure of Daniel in the lion’s den. The cameo is meant to be worn like a pendant to protect the wearer like God protected Daniel in the face of danger. See Grabar, Christian Iconography, 10; Gary Vikan, “Byzantine Pilgrims’ Art”, in Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium, ed. Linda Safran (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 229-266.
through the Theodosian empresses as a message of Christian victory. The similarities between Helena’s coins and those of Flaccilla and Eudoxia mark the appropriation and continuity of reverse images to stress imperial and dynastic continuity.

Galla Placidia (r. 421-450 CE)

By 420 CE, during the regency of Galla Placidia, the iconography of reverse images on coins of empresses expanded once again. Figure GP1 is a gold solidus minted in Ravenna c. 421-22 CE with the inscriptions D(ominus) N(oster) GALLA PLACIDIA P(ius) F(elix) AUG(usta) on the obverse and SALUS REI PUBLICAE on the reverse.218 The earliest coin of Galla Placidia shows the same Victory figure as seen on the coins of Flaccilla (Figures F3 & F4) and Eudoxia (Figure E1). Figure GP1 included the same reverse inscription as Flaccilla and Eudoxia: SALUS REI PUBLICAE. Two new letters flank the Victory figure, R and V, signifying the location of the mint.219 It is significant to note the mint of Galla Placidia’s coin is Ravenna, the capitol of the Western empire. The coin of Galla Placidia proves that the seated Victory figure became a standardized image for imperial women of both Eastern and Western empires. The appearance of the seated Victory represents Galla Placidia’s intent to recall and repeat the imagery previously associated with her Eastern counterparts. Further, on the obverse of GP1, Galla Placidia has included the manus dei crowning the likeness of herself as Augusta to indicate that Galla Placidia was imbued with a divine right to rule similar to that of Arcadius and Eudoxia. Both Western adversaries and the Eastern court contested Galla Placidia’s reign.220 To establish Western recognition of the status of Augustae, Galla Placidia minted the familiar obverse and reverse

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218 The appearance of this obverse inscription is unusual for an empress. Prior examples in this chapter show the same form in obverse inscriptions on coins of emperors minted in both the East and the West.

219 COMOB + R + V is the mintmark for Ravenna. While COMOB, minted below the groundline, generally marks coins from the mint in Rome, the addition of R and V indicate the new Western imperial capitol in Ravenna.

220 Barbarian invasions and internal struggles amongst military leaders vying for power in the Western court disrupted the reign of Valentinian III and his mother Galla Placidia. The Eastern court contested Galla Placidia’s reign on the basis of the lack of central power in the West. Eastern emperors and empresses, while related to Galla Placidia, saw the Western court as weakened and desired to shore up dynastic control in the East from the power base of Constantinople.
images used by her Eastern half-sister Eudoxia, who followed in the footsteps of her mother-in-law Flaccilla.

Figure GP2 is a gold solidus minted in Aquileia c. 425-430 CE with the inscriptions \( D(ominus) \ N(oster) \ GALLA \ PLACIDIA \ P(ius) \ F(elix) \ AUG(usta) \) on the obverse and \( VOT \ XX \ MULT \ XX \) on the reverse. The reverse shows a standing Victory on the viewer’s right side, holding a staff in the shape of a cross. A standing Victory holding a staff also appeared on the reverse of coins of Constantine (Figure C5) and Constans (Figure CS2) and Theodosius II during his reign in the East (r. 402-450 CE).\(^{221}\) Victory’s stance suggests that the figure is in motion moving across the groundline. The staff is slightly taller than Victory. A star appears above the staff, while the two letters A and Q flank the figure of Victory, indicating mintmark for Aquileia. Again, the provenance for this coin is notable. Earlier examples from Eastern mints include Figure C5, Constantine’s coin c. 336-337 CE, and Figure CS2, Constans’ coin c. 337-340 CE, both minted in Antioch, as well as Theodosius II’s coin from c. 420 CE minted in Constantinople.\(^{222}\) Through bringing reverse imagery from the Eastern court to the West, Galla Placidia validated her political legitimacy via her Eastern family and political counterparts. A surprising change in the reverse inscription is the replacement of the virtue \( SALUS \ REI \ PUBLICAE \) with \( VOT \ XX \ MULT \ XX \). As we have seen, \( vota \) symbols were common in reverse imagery from the coins of emperors where the symbols appeared on the shield of the seated Victory.\(^{223}\) Instead of including the \( vota \) symbols as part of the central image, the message of prayer appears as the reverse inscription.\(^{224}\) Also, similar to Eudoxia (Figure E1) and Eudoxia’s husband and Galla Placidia’s half-brother Arcadius, the image of the \textit{manus dei} appears again on the obverse of Figure GP2.

Figure GP3 is a gold semissis minted in Rome c. 430-440 CE with the inscriptions \( D(ominus) \ N(oster) \ GALLA \ PLACIDIA \ P(ius) \ F(elix) \ AUG(usta) \) on the obverse and \( SALUS \ REI \ PUBLICAE \) on the reverse.

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\(^{221}\) Kent, \textit{Roman Coins}, 341.

\(^{222}\) As Kent notes in his description of this coin, “the reverse is copied from one of Theodosius II and his family, and along with the ‘Cross in wreath’ tremissis was brought to the West in 425. It was, however, restricted to Placidia and Honoria.” Kent, \textit{Roman Coins}, 341.

\(^{223}\) See Figures C3, C4, CII1, CII2, CII3, CS1, M3, VII1, A2.

\(^{224}\) Remnants of Roman paganism were present in the West as evidenced by Figure GP2’s \textit{vota} inscription. Studies of Galla Placidia’s architectural commissions have proven similarities exist in imperial Roman architecture and Placidia’s Ravenna commissions. Coins minted in or architecture constructed in Constantinople, which was founded as a Christian city, have little or no remaining presence of paganism in the fourth century.
PUBLICAE on the reverse. On the reverse is the image of a Chi-Rho encircled by a laurel wreath. This image was previously associated with the imperial family in the East and was minted only for Galla Placidia and her daughter Honoria in the West. Galla Placidia’s semissis copies the central reverse image as it appears on Flaccilla’s coin from 383-388 CE (Figure F5).

The addition of the inscription SALUS REI PUBLICAE surrounding the laurel wreath also marks a significant intent to appropriate the virtue of Flaccilla. Figure F5, a clear prototype for Figure GP3, does not include the virtuous inscription, though it appears on Figures F1, F2, F3, and F4. The image of the manus dei is not included above the obverse bust portrait as it appears on Figures GP1 and GP2. The model for this coin is Figure F5, a mint for Flaccilla, where the image of the manus dei did not appear above the obverse bust portrait. It is clear from Figure GP3 that Galla Placidia utilized obverse and reverse coin imagery from both Flaccilla and Eudoxia.

The last example of coinage of Galla Placidia includes a reverse image of a cross. Figure GP4 is a bronze half-centenionalis (AE4) minted in Rome c. 435 with the inscriptions D(ominus) N(oster) GALLA PLACIDIA P(ius) F(elix) AUG(usta) on the obverse and SALUS REI PUBLICAE on the reverse. The cross on the reverse of Figure GP4 reuses the cross on the reverse of Eudoxia’s coin (Figure E2), but stands alone without a laurel wreath. The power of this single image is comparable to the single Chi-Rho on the coins of Magnentius (Figures M1 & M2) or Constantius II (Figure CII 4). No numismatic legend exists for this reverse type, meaning that the reverse image of a cross is not borrowed or reused from earlier examples. Earlier images of a cross in reverse imagery included Figures F2 and E2. The reverse images from the coins of Flaccilla and Eudoxia that included a cross also included images of imperial or victorious promotion of Christianity. Figure GP4 does not show any other images than the cross, suggesting that the single image is an ‘image-sign’ meant to imply the imperial promotion of victory through Christianity.

This last coin is also significant because it adds a new type to the varied images that appear on the coins of the Theodosian empresses. The multiplication of reverse images suggests the importance of propagating political and legitimate control as an empress, especially for Galla

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225 Kent, Roman Coins, 340-41.
226 Grabar, Christian Iconography, 8.
Placidia. The two borrowed types from the East (Figures GP1 & GP2) and the addition of two new types in the West (Figures GP3 & GP4) strove to reinstitute the legitimacy of Galla Placidia’s title of *Augusta*, and its political influence, through minting images that pronounced her promotion of Christianity.

Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 128; Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 192-193. The political legitimacy of Galla Placidia’s reign in the West was circumspect and was often implemented through the power of her son, the emperor Valentinian III. The Eastern court was upset over Galla Placidia’s elevation to *Augusta*; thereby, I would read the coins minted in her likeness as politically charged.

Similar representations to Figures GP3 and GP4 appear on cameos. Figures CM2, CM3, CM5, CM6, and CM7 all show the use of the Chi-Rho in varying ways to communicate similar messages similar to Figure GP3. Figures CM4 and CM8 show the use of a cross to stand as Christian symbols in the fourth century.

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CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters, I have shown that in the late fourth and early fifth centuries the Theodosian empresses Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia asserted their political and dynastic legitimacy through the pronouncement of their religious faith. The symbols of victory in the fourth century were the Chi-Rho and cross; reverse imagery on the coins of the Theodosian empresses recognized the import of these symbols. By including Chi-Rho and cross image-signs on the reverse of their coins, Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia expressed the victory of their dynasty and their religion. Combining the Chi-Rho and cross symbols with the images of the seated Victory and the laurel wreath connected these later Roman Augustae with their fourth century predecessors, Constantine and Helena.

The change in iconography on coins of later empresses reveals two conclusions about these Augustae: 1) Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia took agency in the minting of coins during their reigns; and 2) Christianity in the later fourth century necessitated a new means of expressing the integral virtues and characteristics of a Roman Augusta. The virtue *pietas* was an instrumental aspect of the role of a Roman consort, and the shift from paganism to Christianity did not alter that aspect. Most of Late Antique art historical scholarship focuses on the expression of piety through the construction of religious architecture because such commissions required status and wealth; the permanency of such objects is obvious.\(^229\) For these reasons, this thesis sought to demonstrate that the expression of piety was not bound to architectural commissions, but was evident in the actively political medium of coins as well. Moreover, the reverse imagery on coins minted in the later fourth century change within the span of a few

\(^{229}\) The expression of imperial piety is not an original concept during the Late Antique period as many predecessor temples and shrines exist from Republican and imperial Rome as evidence of earlier expressions. However, because Late Antique is the beginning of the Medieval period and because most of the art that remains from the Late Antique era is architecture, art historians have concentrated on these structures. Architectural works from the fourth and fifth centuries often have inscriptions or mosaics that help in dating and attributing these structures. Sculptural remains are less likely to have inscriptions to help determine attribution (See Holum’s discussion, *Theodosian Empresses*, end of chapter 1). Current scholarship is also an outgrowth of Richard Krautheimer’s earlier twentieth century work on Early Christian and Byzantine architecture, resulting in many Late Antique architectural historians. I selected coins for my thesis because I found many architectural studies utilized coins as comparative imagery or dating for the patron of the architectural work, though studies of coin imagery were relegated to the work of numismatists.
years, meaning that more than one expression of piety exists for each empress. The comparison of the coins of one empress to the others, and to the coins of other empresses, reveals that victory through piety was a message passed from empress to empress in the Theodosian dynasty.

The frequent change in reverse imagery during the reign of one empress and the repetition of reverse imagery from empress to empress also speaks to the issue of audience. I have shown that coins are a medium of political propaganda in the fourth century. Michael McCormick’s statement that coins are “an ubiquitous and revealing mirror of government thinking” leads me to stress the importance of the imagery minted on the reverse of the coins of the Theodosian empresses.\textsuperscript{230} The addition of: 1) a seated Victory inscribing a shield; and 2) a Chi-Rho or cross symbol to the vocabulary of pictorial representations minted on coins of empresses demonstrates the development of a new iconographic language. The imagery minted on the reverse of the coins of the Theodosian empresses reached a broad audience of Roman citizens. The varying weights and issues of the coins of Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia reveal that gold coinage and bronze coinage were equally important means of expression. Emperors and empresses used the same imagery on gold coins, which circulated amongst aristocrats, as they did on bronze coins, which circulated to a broader, less-educated audience. While coins are generally small objects, minting Christian imagery on coins in prominent positions, or with recognizable images of victory, placed significance on the messages communicated by the Chi-Rho and cross. Illiterate Roman citizens were not able to travel throughout the empire to visit empress’s architectural expression of piety. Instead, concise visual representations of empress’s religious and legitimate claims as seen on coins are more important than the accompanying inscriptions.\textsuperscript{231}

The Theodosian empresses were not the first imperial consorts to use coins as political media. Predecessors such as Livia, Augustus’ wife, similarly projected a political influence through commissioning coins, cameos, and architectural works. The coins and cameos of Livia presented the first likeness of a Roman empress crowned by a diadem. The coins with Livia’s

\textsuperscript{230} \textit{Eternal Victory}, 4.
\textsuperscript{231} Grabar, \textit{Christian Iconography}, 8. The impetus for studying the semiotic signage in catacomb paintings is applicable here. The narrative or layered meaning of an ‘image-sign’ is communicated via the visual representation to the (assumed) illiterate audience.
likeness on the obverse complement the coinage of her husband Augustus.\textsuperscript{232} The importance of cameos in their presentation of a bust likeness of an imperial figure is reflected in the material and audience of the objects. Made of precious stone, the bust portrait cameos of Livia pronounced the most important role of the empress’s career: Roman consort.\textsuperscript{233} Cameos defined the political persona of an empress, though for a smaller, more private audience consisting of the imperial court and aristocrats. The architectural commissions of Livia emphasized the empress’ public persona. Porticoes, markets, and imperial shrines were works that showed Livia’s patronage in Rome.\textsuperscript{234}

Post-Theodosian imperial women were similarly exercising their ownership of a political persona. Anicia Juliana, daughter of the Western emperor Olybrius (r. 472), commanded the power and finances to rival the emperor Justinian. Two prominent works reflected her status: the church of St. Polyeuktos (c. 524-27 CE) and the Vienna Dioskurides (c. 512 CE). The church of St. Polyeuktos was a palace church adjoining Anicia Juliana’s residence in Constantinople. It was decorated in lavish detail with carved marble and delicate mosaic work. The legend of the construction of St. Polyeuktos suggests that Anicia Juliana wished to both establish her hereditary claim to the imperial throne (see Figure 1 for Anicia Juliana’s relationship to the houses of Theodosius, Valentinian I and Constantine) and challenge the upstart lineage of Justin I.\textsuperscript{235} The grandiose plan, scale, and décor of St. Polyeuktos cemented the public persona of the would-be empress, which were reportedly only overshadowed by the construction of Justinian’s Hagia Sophia (c. 532-37 CE).\textsuperscript{236} The Vienna Dioskurides is an elaborate, luxurious herbal manuscript. The manuscript was a gift to Anicia Juliana from monks for whom she had built a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{232} See Kleiner, “Woman on the Coins of the Realm”, 56. Livia’s coins show representations of early imperial imagery. Personifications and propagandistic messages are minted on most of Livia’s coins.
\item \textsuperscript{233} For examples of Livia’s cameos see the Hermitage Museum collection. Figures CM10 and CM11 are good examples. Both cameos are made of sardonyx and show Livia wearing a diadem. It is not clear whether she is wearing the *paludamentum* on either cameo, but in Figure CM11 she is wearing a veil to suggest her piety. The latter attribute is again obvious on Figure CM13, where both Augustus and Livia are wearing veils that are fitted with crowns. Figure CM13 also reflects Livia’s support of her husband’s adoption of Nero. Livia was best known for her piety and her unwavering support for Augustus’ politics.
\item \textsuperscript{234} Kleiner, “Imperial Woman as Patrons”, 32; Brubaker, “Memories of Helena”, 53.
\item \textsuperscript{235} Harrison, *Temple for Byzantium*, 36-40.
\item \textsuperscript{236} Harrison, *Temple for Byzantium*, 40.
\end{itemize}
church.\textsuperscript{237} The dedicatory miniature of the manuscript shows an enthroned Anicia Juliana dressed in purple flanked by two personifications, Magnanimity and Prudence. The likeness of the Constantinopolitan princess reflected her influence and status, while the purple garb of the miniature of Anicia Juliana affirmed her rightful claim to the imperial seat. Because of the delicate nature of manuscripts where intrinsic value is evident in the parchment and gold used in miniatures and frontispiece images, the scope of the audience would be limited.

Without known objects such as precious engraved gems or illuminated manuscripts, we are forced to evaluate the gold coins of the Theodosian empresses as an expression of dynastic, legitimate, and religious continuity. Flaccilla reportedly never commissioned a building, though textual and physical records remain of the structures commissioned by Eudoxia and Galla Placidia.\textsuperscript{238} The church of St. John the Evangelist, the church of Santa Croce, and a so-called mausoleum, all in Ravenna, are notable commissions by Galla Placidia.\textsuperscript{239} The magnitude of these architectural structures is significant working in conjunction with coins to provide a sweeping survey of the public and private personae of the Theodosian empresses.\textsuperscript{240} The development of gold coin imagery as an integral part of the cultivated, private persona of a Late Antique Augusta was akin to the production of Livia’s cameos or Anicia Juliana’s manuscript. The gold coins, the cameos, and the manuscript worked to promote each individual empress as capable of independently exerting her influence. The Helena Legend presented a similar identity for Helena, and the mythologized expression of Helena’s independence formulated a model of imperial responsibility that was bequeathed to Late Antique empresses. The tradition of empresses expounding their political influence \textit{vis-à-vis} their piety was not a new vehicle of transmission for imperial women. The means and the messages through which Flaccilla,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{238} To my knowledge, there is no record for Flaccilla commissioning a church. According to Mark the Deacon in his \textit{Vita Porphyry}, Eudoxia funded and drew a ground plan for a church built in Gaza. Likewise, an inscription in the Chapel of St. Helena in the church Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome purports dedication of the chapel by Galla Placidia.
\item \textsuperscript{239} Oost, \textit{Galla Placidia Augusta}, 273-277.
\item \textsuperscript{240} I should note here that freestanding sculptural likenesses of Flaccilla are other evidentiary objects. However, the attribution of the Flaccilla’s likeness in these works is more questionable than the attribution of architectural commissions by Eudoxia and Galla Placidia. The coins are the only remaining evidence from late antiquity that have reliable attribution due to the inscriptions.
\end{itemize}
Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia were able to carry on the tradition provided a historical bridge from the first empress to later empresses in the Roman Empire.

The historical context and audience for the coins of Flaccilla, Eudoxia, and Galla Placidia provide a framework for understanding the use of Christian imagery. The relationship of paganism to Christianity—specifically the use of pagan imagery in a Christian context—explains the blended tradition that developed in the fourth century where vota symbols appear on, or are replaced by, Christian imagery. Similarly, the coin reverse imagery that appears on the coins of emperors from 330-380 CE forms the basis of victory imagery on the reverse of the Theodosian empresses’ coins. Constantine’s initial inclusion of the image-sign also provided a pictorial vocabulary that impacted the coinage of the Theodosian empresses. As all of the examples in this study reveal, Late Antique empresses were minting coins that always included image-signs. Furthermore, as the reverse imagery vocabulary expanded from the fourth to the fifth century, it becomes apparent that the reverse imagery was intended to have a wide impact. The various mint types reveal that the images on the coins were not limited to local audiences. The greater number of issues, varied reverse imagery, and varied mint types of the fifth century enhanced the historical import and political responsibility of an empress to express her dynastic and legitimate identity. This is especially obvious in the political relationship of the Western and Eastern courts. Late Antique empresses in both the Eastern and Western empires formulated similar, and competing, political claims to a divine right to rule. Christianity provided the outlet for these empresses to express their dynastic and political claims. Coins provided the medium through which this message reached Roman citizens in the East and the West.\(^{241}\)

\(^{241}\) I hope to continue the study of the relationship between paganism and Christianity, the offices of Augustus and Augusta, and the Eastern and Western court through the medium of coins in future studies.
Fig. 1
Dynastic Stemma from the Constantinian dynasty to the Theodosian dynasty
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constantine I</td>
<td>Constantine I</td>
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<tr>
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<td>r. 330-337 CE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helena</td>
<td>Constans I</td>
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<tr>
<td>r. 324-328 CE</td>
<td>r. 337-350 CE</td>
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<td>r. 375-392 CE</td>
<td>r. 361-363 CE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honorius</td>
<td>Theodosius I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. 395-423 CE</td>
<td>r. 379-395 CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galla Placidia</td>
<td>Flaccilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. 421-450 CE</td>
<td>r. 383-386 CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentinian III</td>
<td>Arcadius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. 425-455 CE</td>
<td>r. 383-408 CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licina Eudoxia</td>
<td>Eudoxia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. 439-455? CE</td>
<td>r. 400-404 CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancius Olybrius</td>
<td>Theodosius II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. 472 CE</td>
<td>r. 408-450 CE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 2**
Reign Dates of Western and Eastern Emperors and Empresses
c. 306-472 CE
Fig. C1
Ob: IMAP CONSTANTINUS P F AUG,
Rev: SALUS REI PUBLICAE,
Silver miliarensem, Ticinium, 315 CE
(Source: Weitzmann, Age of Spirituality, n. 57)

Fig. C2
Ob: CONSTANTINUS MAX AUG,
Rev: SPES PUBLIC,
Bronze billon centenionalis, AE3, Constantinople, 327 CE
(Source: Alfoaldi, Bild und Bildersprache, n. 239)
Fig. C3
Ob: CONSTANTINUS MAX AUG,
Rev: VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AUG,
Gold Solidus, Constantinople, 326 CE
(Source: www.dirtyoldcoins.com)

Fig. C4
Ob: CONSTANTINUS MAX AUG,
Rev: VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AUG,
Gold solidus, Constantinople, 336-37 CE
(Source: Bruun, RIV VII, PL. 19, n. 108)
Fig. C5
Ob: CONSTANTINUS MAX AUG,
Rev: VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AUG LXXII,
Gold solidus, Antioch, 336-37 CE
(Source: Bruun, RIC VII, PL. 24, n. 100)

Fig. H1
Ob: HELENA N F,
Rev: Eight sided star encircled in a wreath
Bronze billon centenionalis, AE3, Thessalonica, 318 CE
(Source: Boyne, Manual of Roman Coins, PL. XVIII, n. 10)
Fig. H2
Ob: FL HELENA AUGUSTA,
Rev: SECURITAS REI PUBLICAE
Gold double-solídus, Ticinium, 325 CE
(Source: Holum, Theodosian Empresses, n. 3)

Fig. H3
Ob: FLAVIA AELENA AUGUSTA,
Rev: PIESTAS AUGUSTES
Bronze medallion, Rome, 325 CE
(Source: Kent, Roman Coins, n. 640)
Fig. H4
Ob: FLAVIA HELENA AUG,
Rev: PAX PUBLICA
Bronze follis, AE1, Constantinople, 337-40 CE
(Source: Bastien, Le Buste, PL. 178, n. 5)

Fig. CS1
Ob: D N CONSTANS P F AUG,
Rev: VICTORIA CONSTANTIS AUG,
Gold solidus, Nicomedia, 337-40 CE
(Source: Kent, RIC VIII, PL. 23, n. 2)
Fig. CS2
Ob: CONSTANS AUG, Rev: VICTORIA AUG, LXXII on the right
Gold solidus, Antioch, 337-40 CE
(Source: www.dirtyoldcoins.com)

Fig. CII 1
Ob: CONSTANTIUS P F AUG, Rev: FELICITAS PERPETUA,
Gold solidus, Aquileia, 337-40 CE
(Source: Kent, RIC VIII, PL. 13, n. 5)
Fig. CII 2
Ob: CONSTANTIUS AUGUSTUS,
Rev: VICTORIA DD NN AUGG,
Gold solidus, Aquileia, 340-50 CE
(Source: Bastien, Le Buste, PL. 193, n. 3)

Fig. CII 3
Ob: CONSTANTIUS P F AUG,
Rev: VICTORIA AUG NN,
Bronze medallion, 340-47 CE
(Source: Carson, Coins of the Roman Empire, n. 754)
**Fig. CII 4**

Ob: *D N CONSTANTIUS P F AUG*,
Rev: *SALUS AUG NOSTRI*,
Bronze maiorina, AE2, Trier, 353 CE  
(Source: [www.coinarchives.com](http://www.coinarchives.com))

**Fig. M1**

Ob: *D N MAGNENTIUS P F AUG*, (no diadem)
Rev: *SALUS DD NN AUG ET CAES*,
Bronze follis, AE1, Amiens, 350-53 CE  
(Source: Grant, *Roman History*, PL. 21, n. 7)
Fig. M2
Ob: *D N MAGNENTIUS P F AUG*, (no diadem)
Rev: *SALUS DD NN AUG ET CAES*,
Bronze maiorina, AE2, Amiens, 353 CE
(Source: Mattingly, *Roman Coins*, PL. LVI, n. 14)

Fig. M3
Ob: *D N MAGNENTIUS P F AUG*, (no diadem)
Rev: *VICTORIAE DD NN AUGG, VOT V MVLT X on shield*
Silver miliarensis, Paris, 350-353 CE
(Source: www.coinarchives.com)
Fig. J1
Ob: IULIANUS CAES, (no diadem)
Rev: VICTORIA AUGUSTORUM,
Bronze 9-Siliqua, Antioch, 355-61 CE
(Source: Carson, Coins of the Roman Empire, n. 801)

Fig. VII 1
Ob: D N VALENTINIANUS IVN P F AUG,
Rev: VICTORIA AUGUSTORUM,
Gold solidus, Antioch, 378-83 CE
(Source: Pearce, RIC IX, PL. XIII, n. 8)
Fig. F1
Ob: *AEL FLACCILLA AUG*
Rev: *SALUS REI PUBLICAE*,
Bronze maiorina, AE2, Nicomedia, 383-88
(Source: Pearce, *RIC IX*, PL. XVI, n. 9)

Fig. F2
Ob: *AEL FLACCILLA AUG*
Rev: *SALUS REI PUBLICAE*,
Bronze maiorina, AE2, Nicomedia, 383
(Source: Virtual Catalog of Roman Coins)
**Fig. F3**

Ob: *AEL FLACILLA AUG*
Rev: *SALUS REI PUBLICAE*,
Bronze maiorina, AE2, Thessalonica, 383-87
(Source: James, *Empresses & Power*, PL. 8)

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**Fig. F4**

Ob: *AEL FLACCILLA AUG*,
Rev: *SALUS REI PUBLICAE S.*,  
Gold solidus, Constantinople, c. 384 CE  
(Source: Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, n. 6)
**Fig. F5**

Ob: *AEL FLACCILLA AUG*,
Rev: Christogram encircled by a wreath
Bronze siliqua, Constantinople, c. 383-88 CE
(Source: Boyne, *Manual of Roman Coins*, PL. XX, n. 4)

**Fig. E1**

Ob: *AEL EUDOXIA AUG, manus dei*
Rev: *SALUS REI PUBLICAE*,
Gold solidus, Constantinople, c. 400
(Source: Kalavrezou, *Byzantine Women & World*, n. 29)
Fig. E2
Ob: *AEL EUDOXIA AUG*, no *manus dei*
Rev: A cross encircled by a wreath
Gold tremissis, Constantinople, c. 400
(Source: Kalavrezou, *Byzantine Women & World*, n. 32)

Fig. GP1
Ob: *D N GALLA PLACIDIA P F AUG*, *manus dei*
Rev: *SALUS REI PUBLICAE*,
Gold solidus, Ravenna, c. 421-22
(Source: Grierson & Mays, *Late Roman Coins*, n. 817)
Fig. GP2
Ob: D N GALLA PLACIDIA P F AUG, manus dei
Rev: VOT XX MULT XXX,
Gold solidus, Aquileia, c. 425-30
(Source: Grierson & Mays, Late Roman Coins, n. 825)

Fig. GP3
Ob: D N GALLA PLACIDIA P F AUG,
Rev: SALUS REI PUBLICAE,
Gold semissis, Rome, c. 430-40
(Source: Kent, RIC X, PL. 51, n. 2054)
Fig. GP4
Ob: *D N GALLA PLACIDIA P F AUG*,
Rev: *SALUS REI PUBLICAE*
Bronze half-centenionalis, AE4, Rome, c. 435
(Source: Kent, *RIC X*, PL. 53, n. 2113)

Fig. CM1
Constantine the Great and the Tyche of Constantinople
Remade by Benedetto Pistrucci
4th century
Sardonyx; retouched in the early 19th century; 18.5 x 12.2cm
(Source: www.hermitagerooms.com)
Fig. CM2
Cross flanked by Alpha and Omega
4/5th century
Image area: 1.44 X 1.49cm
(Source: Author)

Fig. CM3
Christogram with 3 gold plated circles
c. 4th century
Lapis lazuli; 20.5 X 16.8cm
(Source: Zwierlein-Diehl, *Dreikönigenschreines*, n. 287)
Fig. CM4
Office seal with Latin Cross flanked by Alpha & Omega
Syrian c. 5-6th century
Image area: 14 X 11.5cm
(Source: Zwierlein-Diehl, Dreikönigenschreines, n. 286)

Fig. CM5
Amulet w/ Christogram w/ the monogram of Archeboulos
c. 3-4th century
1.5 X 1.2 X 0.55cm
(Source: Zwierlein-Diehl, Siegel und Abdruck, n. 111)
**Fig. CM6**
Upside down Chi-Rho symbol gold ring
3rd Century
Carnelian stone; Image: 0.80 X 0.70cm
(Source: Author)

**Fig. CM7**
Double portrait of a man & woman w/ Chi-Rho
4th Century
(Source: Neverov, *Antique Intaglios*, n. 145)
**Fig. CM8**
Double imperial portrait of a man & woman w/ Latin cross
6th Century
1.95 X 2.04 X 0.38cm
(Source: Zwierlein-Diehl, Kunsthistorischen, n. 2526)

**Fig. CM9**
Daniel in the Lion’s Den
4-5th Century
Yellow-brown stone; 2.08 (with loop) X 1.76 X 0.25cm,
(Source: Zwierlein-Diehl, Kunsthistorischen, n. 2500)
Fig. CM10
Portrait of Empress Livia
Early 1st century
Sardonyx; 4 x 3.1cm
(Source: www.hermitage.ru)

Fig. CM11
Portrait of Empress Livia, Master Eutyches
Early 1st century
Sardonyx; retouched. 3.1 x 2.5cm
(Source: www.ancientrome.ru)
Fig. CM12
Portrait bust of Augustus; 'The Blacas Cameo'
c. AD 14-20 CE
Sardonyx; headband was added in the medieval period
(Source: www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk)

Fig. CM13
Augustus, Livia and Young Nero, Master Skylax (?)
Mid-1st century
Sardonyx; Diam. 8.3 cm
(Source: www.hermitage.ru)
APPENDIX B: LIST OF COINS

Constantine & Helena:

C1) Silver miliarensis: Constantine, Rome, 315 CE
O: IMP CONSTANTINUS P F AUG, bust of Constantine in armor
R: SALUS REI PUBLICAE, Constantine victorious

C2) Bronze billon centenionalis, AE3: Constantine, Constantinople, 327 CE
O: CONSTANTINUS MAX AUG, bust of Constantine
R: SPES PUBLIC, labarum w/ Christogram,

C3) Gold solidus: Constantine, Constantinople, 326 CE
O: CONSTANTINUS MAX AUG, bust of Constantine
R: VICTORIA CONSTANTINUS AUG, Victory seated on cuirass,

C4) Gold solidus: Constantine, Constantinople, 336-37 CE
O: CONSTANTIUS MAX AUG, bust of Constantine
R: VICTORIA CONSTANTINUS AUG, Victory sits on a cuirass inscribing the *vota* on a shield

C5) Gold Solidus: Constantine, Antioch, 336-37 CE
O: CONSTANTIUS MAX AUG, bust of Constantine
R: VICTORIA CONSTANTINUS AUG LXXII, Victory stands holding staff topped with a cuirass

H1) Bronze billon centenionalis, AE3: Helena, Thessalonica, 318 CE
O: HELENA N F, bust of Helena
R: Eight sided star encircled in a wreath

H2) Gold double-solidus: Helena, Ticinium, 325 CE
O: FL HELENA AUGUSTA, bust of Helena
R: SECURITAS REI PUBLICAE, personification of Securitas

H3) Bronze medallion: Helena, Rome, 325 CE
O: FLAVIA AELENA AUGUSTA, bust of Helena
R: PIETAS AUGUSTES, personification of Pietas holding a child, and handing an apple to another child

H4) Bronze follis, AE1: Helena, Constantinople, 337-40 CE
O: FLAVIA AELENA AUGUSTA, bust of Helena
R: PAX PUBLICA, personification of Peace

Mid-Fourth Century Emperors:

CS1) Gold solidus: Constans, Nicomedia, 337-40 CE
O: D N CONSTANS P F AUG, bust of Constans
R: VICTORIA CONSTANTIS AUG, Victory sits on a cuirass inscribing *vota V* on a shield
CS2) Gold solidus: Constans, Antioch, 337-40 CE
O: CONSTANS AUG, bust of Constans
R: VICTORIA AUG, Victory holding a staff, a star on the left, and LXXII on the right

CII 1) Gold solidus: Constantius II, Aquileia, 337-40 CE
O: CONSTANTIUS P F AUG, bust of Constantius II
R: FELICITAS PERPETUA, Victory sits atop a cuirass inscribing the vote XXXXXX on a shield

CII 2) Gold solidus: Constantius II, Aquileia, 340-50 CE
O: CONSTANTIUS AUGUSTUS, bust of Constantius II
R: VICTORIA DD NN AUGG, Victory sits on a cuirass inscribing vote XXMUITXXX on a shield

CII 3) Bronze medallion: Constantius II, 340-47 CE
O: CONSTANTIUS P F AUG, bust of Constantius II
R: VICTORIA AUG NN, Victory sits on a cuirass inscribing vote X on a shield

CII 4) Bronze maiorina, AE2: Constantius II, Trier, 353 CE
O: D N CONSTANTIUS P F AUG, bust of Constantius II
R: SALUS AUG NOSTRI, chi-rho flanked by an Alpha and Omega

M1) Bronze follis, AE1: Magnentius, Amiens, 350-53 CE
O: D N MAGNENTIUS P F AUG, bust of Magnentius (no diadem)
R: SALUS DD NN AUG ET CAES, chi-rho flanked by an Alpha and Omega

M2) Bronze maiorina, AE2: Magnentius, Amiens, 353 CE
O: D N MAGNENTIUS P F AUG, bust of Magnentius (no diadem)
R: SALUS DD NN AUG ET CAES, chi-rho flanked by an Alpha and Omega

M3) Silver miliarensis: Magnentius, Paris, 350-353 CE
O: D N MAGNENTIUS P F AUG, bust of Magnentius (no diadem)
R: VICTORIAE DD NN AUGG, Victory sits on a cuirass inscribing vote V MVLT X on a shield

J1) Bronze 9-Siliqua: Julian, Antioch, 355-61 CE
O: IULIANUS CAES, bust of Julian (no diadem)
R: VICTORIA AUGUSTORUM, Victory sits on a cuirass inscribing a star on a shield

VII 11) Gold solidus: Valentinian II, Antioch, 378-83 CE
O: D N VALENTINIANUS IVN P F AUG, bust of Valentinian II
R: VICTORIA AUGUSTORUM, Victory sits on a cuirass inscribing vote V on a shield, chi-rho on the right

Theodosian Empresses:
F1) Bronze maiorina, AE2: Flaccilla, Nicomedia, 383 CE  
O: AEL FLACCILLA AUG, bust of Flaccilla  
R: SALUS REI PUBLICAE, Salus personification  

F2) Bronze maiorina, AE2: Flaccilla, Nicomedia, 383-88 CE  
O: AEL FLACCILLA AUG, bust of Flaccilla  
R: SALUS REI PUBLICAE, Salus personification, cross on right, star on left,  

F3) Bronze maiorina, AE2: Flaccilla, Thessalonica, 383-87 CE  
O: AEL FLACCILLA AUG, bust of Flaccilla  
R: SALUS REI PUBLICAE, Victory sits on a shortened column inscribing a chi-rho on a shield  

F4) Gold solidus: Flaccilla, Constantinople, c. 384 CE  
O: AEL FLACCILLA AUG., bust of Flaccilla  
R: SALUS REI PUBLICAE S., Victory inscribing a chi-rho on a shield  

F5) Bronze siliqua: Flaccilla, Constantinople, c. 383-88 CE  
O: AEL FLACCILLA AUG., bust of Flaccilla  
R: Christogram encircled by a wreath  

E1) Gold solidus: Eudoxia, Constantinople, c. 400 CE  
O: AEL EUODOXIA AUG., bust of Eudoxia crowned by manus dei  
R: SALUS REI PUBLICAE, Victory sits on a cuirass inscribing a chi-rho on a shield  

E2) Gold tremissis: Eudoxia, Constantinople, c. 400 CE  
O: AEL EUODOXIA AUG., bust of Eudoxia no manus dei  
R: A cross encircled by a wreath  

GP1) Gold solidus: Galla Placidia, Ravenna, c. 421-22 CE  
O: D N GALLA PLACIDIA P F AUG, bust of Galla Placidia crowned by the hand of God  
R: SALUS REI PUBLICAE, Victory sits inscribing a chi-rho on a shield  

GP2) Gold solidus: Galla Placidia, Aquileia, c. 425-30 CE  
O: D N GALLA PLACIDIA P F AUG, bust of Galla Placidia crowned by the hand of God  
R: VOT XX MULT XXX, standing Victory holding a (jeweled) staff in the form of a cross, a star appears above the cross  

GP3) Gold semissis: Galla Placidia, Rome, c. 430-40 CE  
O: D N GALLA PLACIDIA P F AUG, bust of Galla Placidia  
R: SALUS REI PUBLICAE, a Christogram encircled by a wreath  

GP4) Bronze half-centenionalis, AE4: Galla Placidia, Rome, c. 435  
O: D N GALLA PLACIDIA P F AUG, bust of Galla Placidia  
R: SALUS REI PUBLICAE, a cross
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lesley A. Langa will receive her Master of Arts in art history in the fall semester of 2006 from Florida State University. Ms. Langa also has two Bachelors degrees from Florida State University. In the spring semester of 2004, she was awarded a Bachelor of Science in International Affairs and a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities.

From 2001 to 2006, Ms. Langa was a Research Associate at the Information Use Management and Policy Institute at Florida State University. From 2004 to 2006, she was also a Graduate Assistant at Florida State University’s Visual Resource Center. Upon completion of the requirements for her Master of Arts degree, Ms. Langa plans to begin the process of applying to doctoral programs in art history.

In collaboration with colleagues at the Information Institute, Ms. Langa has co-authored a number of journal articles, book chapters, and reports since 2002:

Journal Articles


Book Chapters

Reports
