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## GLORIA ROMANORUM

Patrick Bruun



2:1

Our knowledge of the classical world must necessarily be very deficient; the amount of new source material discovered at an evergrowing rate shows the hazards which seem to have dictated the survival of the texts and objects known to us. When a new find requires to be duly classified and assigned its proper place within the sequence of related objects, we may be forced to review the whole context it belongs to.

*Gloria Romanorum*, an appropriate catchword for the scholar to whom this brief note is dedicated, is the reverse legend of an unpublished Roman gold multiple put on sale in Basle in October 1984.<sup>1</sup> The obverse legend FL IVL CONSTANTIVS AVG indicates the third son of Con-

<sup>1</sup> Monnaies et médailles S.A.. Vente publique 66, 22 et 23 Octobre 1984, catalogue, N:o 863.

stantine the Great, and the time of issue is consequently within the period A.D. 337—361. The mint mark in the exergue, TR is an abbreviation of Augusta Treverorum, i.e. Trier.

The description of the coin is as follows:

obv. FL IVL CONSTANTIVS AVGV, bust laureate, draped and cuirassed, turned r.

rev. GLORIA ROMANORVM, Roma helmeted seated, turned to the l, a shield at her feet, leaning on a sceptre with her l. hand, holding a globe, surmounted by a *Victoriola* with a palm branch and a wreath, in her r. hand. In the exergue the letters TR; weight 6.63 gr. (1½-solids).

The obverse naming and depicting the ruler gives the approximate date of the coin. Constantius II, son of Constantine the Great, assumed the rank and title of Augustus after the death of his father, in September A.D. 337 (he ruled until his death in A.D. 361). The iconography of the ruler assists us in referring the coin to the early years of his reign. Constantine the Great had during the ten last years of his reign abandoned the laurel wreath, the wreath of victory, as an *insigne* of rulership and assumed the diadem<sup>2</sup> as a mark of his rank. His sons followed his example in their coin portraiture after the death of their father in all mints, excepting Trier, the westernmost of them all.<sup>3</sup>

When the Empire was divided between the three brothers Constantine II, Constantius II and Constans,<sup>4</sup> the western part with Trier as imperial residence had been allotted to Constantine, the eldest of them. His seniority as a ruler<sup>5</sup> was expressed, iconographically, by depicting him as wearing laurelled and rosette diadems,<sup>6</sup> whereas the younger rulers wore laurel

wreaths as Constantius on the medallion above. Such busts do not occur after the death of Constantine II in the spring of A.D. 340.<sup>7</sup> The time of issue of the Treveran *Gloria Romanorum* would thus be A.D. 337—340.

Now, *Gloria Romanorum* is not a very uncommon catchword or reverse legend during the rule of the House of Constantine, but pictorially the *Gloria* of the Romans could be expressed in many different ways.<sup>8</sup> In most cases the *Gloria* seems to reflect the heroic deeds of the ruler depicted triumphant on the reverse. Our particular case is different. Here the *Dea Roma* herself plays the main part as the giver of world rulership symbolized by the Victory standing on a globe she is holding in her hand. The Emperor on the obverse is, of course, the worthy receiver of power.

This type of *Gloria Romanorum* with *Dea Roma* in the centre was created by Constantine at a time when the second capital of the Empire, the *Nea Roma*—*Constantinopolis* had been founded. It was first issued in the eastern imperial residence of its time, Nicomedia in A.D. 325, when the decision concerning the new capital had been taken;<sup>9</sup> when the mint of Constantinople was opened, the type was one of the four special reverses issued by the new mint in *aer*.<sup>10</sup> About the same time this reverse was struck in gold at Nicomedia.<sup>11</sup> Finally, almost ten years later, the reverse reappeared on gold multiples of Constantinople<sup>12</sup> and, very surprisingly, at Trier.<sup>13</sup>

It is hard not to see a connection between these parallel issues, which in addition also shared the equally rare type PIETAS AVGVSTI NOSTRI.<sup>14</sup> Again, this suggests that the administrations of Trier and Constantinople were in touch with one another. In political terms this would imply that the two elder Caesars may have conspired against the third Caesar, who

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the coin lists of RIC viii, 139—145.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Index II of Patrick Bruun, *Roman Imperial Coinage* vii, Oxford 1965, 740 recording three main types, and RIC viii, index of Legend/type in Gold, 559, recording six types.

<sup>9</sup> RIC vii, 616.

<sup>10</sup> RIC vii, 567, 572f.

<sup>11</sup> RIC vii, 622.

<sup>12</sup> RIC vii, 585.

<sup>13</sup> RIC vii, 219.

<sup>14</sup> RIC vii, 149.

<sup>2</sup> A further development of the wreath of golden leaves interspersed with pearls and jewels, or of the simple fillet of Hellenistic rulership.

<sup>3</sup> J. P. C. Kent, *Roman Imperial Coinage* (= RIC) viii, Oxford 1981, 125, 139f, cf. also Pl. 1, 4 and 14.

<sup>4</sup> This division was simply a confirmation of a division carried out in the lifetime of Constantine himself, in A.D. 335.

<sup>5</sup> He had attained the imperial rank of Caesar in A.D. 317, Constantius in A.D. 324 and Constans in A.D. 333.

<sup>6</sup> RIC viii, Pl. 1, 4.

resided in Rome, Constans, Constantine II and Constantius II in their coin imagery actually made Rome, the *Dea Roma* herself, their mouth-piece, maintaining that the rulers of Trier and Constantinople were equally good representatives of the *Romanitas* as Constans in Rome. It should be remembered that the question of Rome versus Constantinople was a very topical one during the decade following the inauguration of the new capital (A.D. 330—340) as evidenced by the ranging of the personifications of the capitals (VRBS ROMA and CONSTANTINOPOLIS) with the members of the ruling dynasty in the *aer* coinage of all the Empire.<sup>15</sup> The same political pattern seems to have been maintained after the death of Constantine the Great, as the newly discovered Treveran medallion suggests. It has some counterparts in the East, i.e. multiples issued by Constantius II.<sup>16</sup> One, incompletely recorded in a sale catalogue,<sup>17</sup> was issued at Thessalonica, the other, a double solidus, at Antioch<sup>18</sup> with an obverse of Constantius. It belongs to the first series of coins issued at this mint after the death of Constantine the Great.<sup>19</sup>

The travels of the rulers during the first year after their father's death are of some interest to us in this context.<sup>20</sup>

Having celebrated the Easter of A.D. 337 in Constantinople, Constantine the Great was taken ill. When the news reached the Caesar Constantius, then preparing his Persian campaign in Antioch, he hurried to the sickbed of his father, but when he arrived Constantine had passed away (on May 22). Constantius now took the care of having the body of the

<sup>15</sup> Cf. RIC vii, all *aer* issues after A.D. 330, and the corresponding series of RIC viii.

<sup>16</sup> One is obviously a case apart. It was struck at Antioch in the period of A.D. 347—355, giving Constans the epithets *PERP(etuitas) AVG(austus)*, RIC viii, 517, N:o 74.

<sup>17</sup> RIC viii, 403, N:o 19, reference given as *Mediobarbus* p. 477, obv. FL. CL. CONSTANTINVS PIVS FELIX AVG, mint mark TES. A multiple of unknown size.

<sup>18</sup> RIC viii, 511, N:o 1.

<sup>19</sup> RIC viii, *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> For detailed documentation, see Otto Seeck, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n.Chr.*, Stuttgart 1919 (Nachdruck Frankfurt/Main, 1964), 184—187 covering the years A.D. 337—339.

dead emperor brought to Constantinople, and celebrated the funeral in the Church of the Twelve Apostles.

During this summer a massacre of the descendants of Theodora, second wife of Constantius I and stepdaughter of Maximianus Herculius took place.<sup>21</sup> The details and reasons for this are unknown. On September 9, the three sons of Constantine assumed the title of Augustus, presumably accepting the division of the Empire carried out in A.D. 335.<sup>22</sup> Subsequently, Constantine II is known to have been in Thessalonica on December 6.<sup>23</sup> This winter the Thessalonican mint coined extensively.<sup>24</sup> Considering that gold coins were mainly issued during a sojourn of an emperor in the mint city,<sup>25</sup> this appears to have been a very appropriate time for striking the *Gloria Romanorum* of the Macedonian metropolis.

The whereabouts of Constantine II cannot be established with any degree of certainty during the winter and spring of A.D. 338, but in

<sup>21</sup> When Constantius was elevated to the imperial rank of Caesar in A.D. 293, he had to repudiate his wife Helena (mother of Constantine) and, according to the rules established by the tetrarchic system, to marry a daughter of his own superior, Maximian, Augustus of the Herculian dynasty, i.e. Theodora, cf. further The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire I, Cambridge 1971, 895 and Dr. Kent in RIC viii, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Excepting, of course, the share allotted to Delmatius, who had been killed in the massacre. Uncertainty prevails with regard to the time and the manner of this agreement of the three sons of Constantine. Violence of the kind that swept away the descendants of Theodora is not easily quelled although originally it might have been unleashed for a limited and specific purpose only. The three brothers must have been if not present at least close to the scene. The restoring of order together with the final division of the Empire is hard to conceive of without a personal encounter of the three heirs. In agreement with Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Mass.—London 1981), 262 and *The New Empire* (Harvard U.P. 1982), 86 with reference to Julian, *Orat.* I 19a, I believe that this encounter took place somewhere in Pannonia in September A.D. 337.

<sup>23</sup> Seeck, *op.cit.*, 185.

<sup>24</sup> Kent, RIC viii, 395.

<sup>25</sup> Bruun, RIC vii, 14f.

June Constantius II and Constantine II may have met in Viminacium.<sup>26</sup> Subsequently Constantius travelled East in order to restore the Armenian king Arsaces to his throne, and to ward off the Sasanians, who had laid siege to Nisibis. In October Constantius returned to Antioch. This, or rather, the last month of the year seems to have been the time of issue of the Antiochene double solidus *Gloria Romanorum*. At the same time the Syrian mint issued a very puzzling gold multiple, the reverse of which was inscribed FELIX ADVENTVS AVG N with the obverse CONSTAN-TINVS AVG showing a laurelled and rosetted/laurelled, draped and cuirassed bust.<sup>27</sup> This ferial coin confirms that Constantius still entertained friendly relations with his eldest brother.<sup>28</sup>

Together the Antiochene gold multiples, i.e. the reverse type of *Gloria Romanorum* and the obverse of *Felix adventus avg n* testify to the same thing, the political co-operation of Constantine II and Constantius II as regards the third brother, Constans, master of Illyricum, Italy and the Eternal city. As pointed out above, the political axis Constantinople—Trier was no novelty, it constituted in fact a continuation of policies

<sup>26</sup> See Seck, *op.cit.*, 186f. and Kent, *RIC viii*, 19. The evidence for this rests mainly on the letter of Codex Theodosianus (= CTh.) X 10.4 *Celino proconsul Africae*, given in Viminacium and issued by Constantius. As the dating of the constitution is in order (cf. Seck, *op.cit.*, 116) as is suggested by what we know of the addressee (Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire I, Cambridge 1971, 192), the legislator named in the preamble of the constitution, Constantius, is not correct for the years A.D. 337—340, i.e. until the death of Constantine II because the name of Constantine II as the senior ruler should have been named, and put first. Moreover, in a constitution addressed to an official in Africa, ruled by Constans, his name should also have appeared in the preamble. It is well known that the compilers of the Theodosian code erred most frequently in rendering this element of the old constitutions (Seck, *op.cit.*, 111f.). Consequently, because of the assumed two omissions, the letter has been adduced as evidence for an encounter of the three emperors in Viminacium in June A.D. 338. A confirmation of the assumption that Constans was in the Danube area in the summer of A.D. 338 is given by CTh. XV 1.5 (mentioning Constantius II and Constans). Barnes refers Constans' Sarmatian campaign to the year A.D. 338 with Naisus as principal residence, cf. the *New Empire*, 86 and n. 170.

<sup>27</sup> *RIC viii*, 512, No. 2, with reference to the sale catalogue of Münzen und Medaillen XIX, June 5, 1959, No. 266. A 1½-solidi piece.

<sup>28</sup> For further comments, see Appendix below.

initiated after Constantine's division of the Empire in A.D. 335, and it was expressed now as once before by the imagery of the coin reverses.

The chance discovery of the Treveran gold multiple thus enables us to grasp better the intricacies of collegiate rulership at a time when the literary sources are reticent or at least not very explicit.

#### Appendix: An Antiochene FELIX ADVENTVS of Constantine II

The travels of the emperors were accompanied by festivities; the arrival of an emperor, and his entry into a town (*Adventus*) was marked by appropriate ceremonies and public rejoicings, and so was his *Profectio*, his departure. On his return, say, from a successful military campaign, *Fortuna Redux* had her share of thanksgivings, but a coin type may also refer to prayers to the *Fortuna* when the emperor set out on his journey.<sup>29</sup>

The Antiochene *Felix adventus* with an obverse of Constantine II is of importance in this context because it reflects the continuing friendship between the two eldest sons of Constantine, possibly at the expense of the third, Constans.

The factual background of the *adventus* reverses has been the object of some dispute.<sup>30</sup> As the ceremonial aspect of *adventus* was originally connected with the crossing of the sacred boundary (*pomoerium*) of the city of Rome and with the emperor's change of dress, *adventus* has at times been thought to refer exclusively to Rome.<sup>31</sup> It is this author's contention that all the Constantinian *adventus* coins were struck to celebrate the actual arrival of the emperor to the mint city or to a city in its

<sup>29</sup> See R. A. G. Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, vol. vi. Severus Alexander to Balbinus and Pupienus, London 1962, 76—79.

<sup>30</sup> For the notion of *adventus* generally, cf. A. Alföldi, *Die Ausgestaltung des monarchischen Zeremoniells am römischen Kaiserhof*, *Römische Mitteilungen* 49 (Munich 1934), 88ff.

<sup>31</sup> Bruun, *RIC viii*, 53 and n. 2.

neighbourhood.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, there is always the possibility of some emperor breaking away from the tradition and from common usage.

Looking at the employment of *adventus* during the later part of the third century, when the emperors spent most of their time in the field, trying to ward off the onslaughts of the barbarians, one gets the impression that the pictorial language of the reverses, though regularly maintaining the set type of the ruler mounted, raising his right hand in a gesture of greeting, nevertheless seems to pay attention to the factual circumstances connected with the arrival of the ruler.<sup>33</sup> That Postumus (Robertson, p. xciii f.), Carausius (pp. cciii, ccv and further 253, 259, 271, 277) and Allectus (pp. ccxi, ccxiii) cannot be connected with any imperial entry into Rome goes without saying. Looking at the varieties of type and the different places of issue (see particularly Probus<sup>34</sup>) it seems natural to take the *adventus* issues and their typological variations as references to specific incidents in the life of the ruler in question.

Against this background, the Antiochene *Felix adventus* with the obverse of Constantine II is difficult to explain. The coin cannot commemorate the entry of Constantine II into Antioch. First of all, the chronology of the *Regesten* of the year A.D. 338<sup>35</sup> would scarcely permit this; note that Constantine II was back in Trier by January 8.<sup>36</sup> Had he gone East in the autumn of A.D. 338, Constantius and Constantine II would have visited Antioch together, because a visit of the senior Augustus Constantine II alone — and not in the company of the regional sovereign, his brother — would have been an infringement of protocol, and could not have resulted in the elder brother's employment of the mint at Antioch. That would have been tantamount to Constantine's ordering about the administrative personnel who were Constantius' subordinates. Again,

<sup>32</sup> RIC vii, 664 and note 2, where the coinage of Antioch after A.D. 324 is discussed.

<sup>33</sup> For the survey, Anne Robertson, *Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet*, University of Glasgow, IV, Valerian I to Allectus (Oxford 1978), has been used and particularly the "Introduction to reigns and conspectus of obverse and reverse legends and types", pp. xxxi—ccxiv.

<sup>34</sup> For the reign of Probus and for the coinage of the emperor, see Harold Mattingly in *Cambridge Ancient History XII* (Cambridge 1956), 313—320.

<sup>35</sup> Seeck, *op.cit.*, 186f.

<sup>36</sup> Seeck, *loc. cit.*, and CTh XII 1.27.

had the brothers jointly visited Antioch, the reading of the reverse would have been AVGG NN.

Unless the coin reverse was due to a mistake somewhere in the long chain of operations leading up to the final product of the mint, i.e. the 1½-solidi-piece *Felix adventus avg n*, we should be able to conclude

- (1) that the medallion does not refer to a visit of Constantine II to Antioch, and
- (2) that the medallion, nevertheless, was issued in conjunction with an imperial visit to the city — Constantius'. His presence in Antioch is attested twice during the autumn of A.D. 338, on October 11 and December 27.<sup>37</sup>

It now remains to explain the obverse.

A unique gold piece does not give the scope of the entire issue in the course of which it was struck. Without any doubt we may be permitted to assume the issuing of obverses of Constantius also, whose advent must have been the real object of the issue, to accompany those of Constantine II. The second explanation required concerns the question why obverses of Constantine II were issued at all in conjunction with Constantius' *adventus* — a most unusual case. It is reasonable to assume that Constantine here employed a means of showing that he set great store by friendly relations with his eldest brother. During the Persian campaign which was going on, he urgently needed to have his back covered during the military operations. Constantine II could be a guarantee against Constans, who was residing in the Balkans. Constantius therefore took recourse to an exceptional expedient in order to demonstrate this to his own entourage.

<sup>37</sup> Seeck, *op.cit.*, 186. The sale catalogue states that this is the only gold medallion known of Constantine II as Augustus. The writer points out that as the medallion was issued in one of the mints of Constantius, it is clear that a similar medallion with an obverse of Constantius must have been coined. If this assumption is correct, the reverse should be regarded as a reference to the encounter of the three emperors in Viminacium during the first half of the year A.D. 338. There the seniority of Constantine II as ruler was confirmed, the catalogue concludes. The present writer cannot concur with these conclusions.