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LÖFSTEDT

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Roman Imperial Administration as mirrored in the IV Century Coinage.

By

Patrick Bruun.

Helsingfors Universitet.

A study of the late Roman financial administration based on the coins themselves is a much neglected field of research and yet the obvious approach to the problem. The reason for this omission is, probably, that the proper structure of the coinages has remained obscure despite many a scholarly effort. For the Constantinian epoch JULES MAURICE's monumental *Numismatique Constantiniene I—III* has loomed high above the average student, stimulating because of its wealth of information yet discouraging because of its inaccessibility; the lack of indices has more than anything else contributed to the stalemate in this respect.

¹ This communication was read to the Int. Hist. Congr. 1960 at Stockholm (a summary in *Communications* p. 66 f.). Immediately before the author of these pages, Prof. KONRAD KRAFT, Frankfurt, presented his almost sensational „*Stadt- oder Städte-Prägung im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien*“ (summary *ibid.* p. 63 f.). The results of his researches suggested to me, as I tried to stress when presenting my own contribution to the Congress, that the temporary uniformity of the bronze coinage of certain (changing) areas, may be indicative of changes and reforms of the provincial administration rather than of appointments of *rationales summarum* out of financial reasons. Prof. KRAFT's ideas thus open entirely new vistas, the possibilities of which should be explored in the light of the co-ordination of the bronze coinages against the background of the Verona list and of *Notitia Dignitatum*.

Within the framework of this paper it is impossible to treat of any of the Constantinian coinages in detail. Generally speaking the centrally directed bronze coinage is most easy to cope with. The disappearance of the local coinages during the reign of Diocletian was a prerequisite to the mint organization developed in the last years of the third century A. D. The basic fact is the continuous output of a uniform bronze coinage, within certain geographically restricted areas determined by the extension of power allotted to each individual ruler. As the tetrarchic system breaks down and the territory dominated by a single ruler increases, the practical administrative difficulties redouble. The period of particular interest covers the years of rapid expansion of Constantine's realms, from the battle of the Milvian Bridge to the battle of Chrysopolis. The need for adaptability, for improvised solutions in the administrative field must have been considerable. As I already suggested in the summary of this paper distributed before the start of the Congress, the Sol coinages and the vota coinages of Constantine suggest appointments of officials like the *rationalis summarum* to direct the coining of several mints, in some instances belonging to different dioceses. The output of such groups of mints has its own characteristics within the frame of the bronze coinage as a whole, directed by the *comes sacrarum largitionum* or, more directly, by the *scrinium a pecuniis*. May it suffice here to record just a few examples:

The plain vota coinage, DN CONSTANTINI MAX AVG/VOT XX with corresponding types for Licinius and the Caesars, started with undecorated reverses recording simply the reverse legends. This type was struck at Arelate, Lugdunum, Siscia and Thessalonica, but not in Italy nor at Trier and Londinium, and there is, as far as I can see at the present moment, no indication that the other mints were closed at that time (except Aquileia). This clearly indicates that some authority gave the same instructions to these four mints despite their being widely separated geographically.

A case in point is the BEATA TRANQVILLITAS/VOTIS XX coinage of the three mints Lugdunum, Trier and Londinium — without counterparts elsewhere. This coinage was superseded by

the type SARMATIA DEVICTA and exclusively, the *vota decennialia suscepta* even the obverse legends for Crispus were

A third instance is found in the str EXERCIT/VOT XX in the mints of possibly, Siscia, where we have the same striking the issues, first T F and then the sign of the Milvian Bridge, $\frac{P}{\uparrow}$.

These were three instances only, brought forward. On the whole, however, obscure, and extensive research is required to see the whole picture.

The gold coinage presents quite a different state the main point immediately, in most cases were the gold issues contemporaneous were successive. As a rule gold was struck in the presence of the Emperor, and that implies that the gold coinage was a *comitiva* in the mint. Only in special cases, e. g. when the Emperor was absent and would have been hampered by business of the civil administration, was the gold struck at the residence of the court left behind. In the issues are known, the most important is Trier after Civil War I, but in this case it is that Crispus was in charge of Gaul and was trusted *praefectus praetorio*. Parallel striking in the same area in the years 319—320, Ticinum reflects the military preparations of the Emperor.


Now the notion of a travelling mint is even if the idea never has been connected with the period. We remember GEORG ELMER's theory for the late IV century, later developed by him to remind you that Prof. PINK was not aware of the survey of the tetrarchic gold coinage. The travelling mint remained obscure, and that is a block of subsequent research. My point

of this paper it is impossible to treat of coinages in detail. Generally speaking bronze coinage is most easy to cope with. The gold coinages during the reign of Diocletian mint organization developed in the last century A. D. The basic fact is the continuous bronze coinage, within certain geographically defined by the extension of power allotted to the tetrarchic system breaks down and by a single ruler increases, the practical problems redouble. The period of particular problems of rapid expansion of Constantine's from the Milvian Bridge to the battle of Adrianople, for improvised solutions would must have been considerable. As I summarize in this paper distributed before the conference the Sol coinages and the vota coinages and the appointments of officials like the *rationalis* and the joining of several mints, in some instances the dioceses. The output of such groups of coinages within the frame of the bronze coinage by the *comes sacrarum largitionum* or, *praeefectus a pecuniis*. May it suffice here to say:

1. DN CONSTANTINI MAX AVG/VOT XX
types for Licinius and the Caesars,
reverses recording simply the reverse
struck at Arelate, Lugdunum, Siscia and
Italy nor at Trier and Londinium, and
even at the present moment, no indication
is closed at that time (except Aquileia).
at some authority gave the same instructions
despite their being widely separated

2. BEATA TRANQVILLITAS/VOTIS XX
at Lugdunum, Trier and Londinium —
everywhere. This coinage was superseded by

the type SARMATIA DEVICTA and the vota coins recording, exclusively, the *vota decennalia suscepta* of the sons of Constantine; even the obverse legends for Crispus were uniform here.

A third instance is found in the striking of the type VIRTUS EXERCIT/VOT XX in the mints of Aquileia, Thessalonica and, possibly, Siscia, where we have the same series of marks distinguishing the issues, first T F and then the Christogram, or rather, the sign of the Milvian Bridge, .

These were three instances only, but many others could be brought forward. On the whole, however, the pattern remains obscure, and extensive research is required before we shall be able to see the whole picture.

The gold coinage presents quite different problems, and to state the main point immediately, I maintain that in very few cases were the gold issues contemporaneous. All the main series were successive. As a rule gold was struck at the temporary residence of the Emperor, and that implies that the administrator of the gold coinage was a *comitiva* in the true sense of the word. Only in special cases, e. g. when the Emperor was campaigning and would have been hampered by bringing with him also a part of the civil administration, was the gold coining concentrated to the residence of the court left behind. Some instances of filial issues are known, the most important being those struck at Trier after Civil War I, but in this case the probable explanation is that Crispus was in charge of Gaul under the supervision of a trusted *praefectus praetorio*. Parallel striking at three mints in the same area in the years 319—320, Ticinum, Aquileia and Sirmium, reflects the military preparations of these years.

Now the notion of a travelling mint is not an entirely new one, even if the idea never has been connected with the Constantinian period. We remember GEORG ELMER's provocative suggestion for the late IV century, later developed by Dr. KENT. I may also remind you that Prof. PINK was not alien to this idea in his survey of the tetrarchic gold coinage. Yet the mechanics of the roving mint remained obscure, and that has been the stumbling block of subsequent research. My point is that the gold minting

travelled but not the mint itself. Thus the expression "the travelling mint", an excellent slogan in my opinion, actually covers the fact that the Emperor, when travelling, employed the mint of his temporary residence. Models of reverses and of Imperial portraits were brought along and executed and struck by the employees of the local mint. Thus the style of the local mint was preserved.

This contention can be substantiated by an analysis of the gold coins, but before dealing with the coins themselves, a few words should be said with regard to the Emperor's itinerary. The generally accepted time table was worked out some fifty years ago by that great scholar OTTO SEECK and presented in his "Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste". It has rarely been challenged; nevertheless, with the readjusted date of Civil War I as a starting point, a great many revisions appear necessary. Without going into details I propose to confine myself to the main results; Constantine celebrated his initial *decennalia* in Trier and left Gaul after August 3 the same year. His stay in Rome in 315 was a very short one, we might even doubt whether he visited the old capital at all at this juncture — despite the *vota* inscription on the triumphal arch. Northern Italy, Milan and Ticinum, was the residence of the court to the end of 316 though the Emperor travelled in Gaul during the eight first months of the year. Early in 317 the court broke up and followed the Emperor to the Balkans by way of Siscia, to settle down for some time in Thessalonica. The *processus consularis* 319 took place in Aquileia, that city having been the Imperial residence almost the entire year 318. Early in 319 the Emperor travelled north once more and spent, generally speaking, all the year 319 in Sirmium and 320 in Serdica to return in early 321 to Sirmium where the *quinquennalia* of his sons were celebrated. During the two years 319–320 Constantine and the central administration were apart. When Constantine was in Sirmium 319/320 Ticinum was the central mint, and when he was in Serdica in 320/321 the administration was in Sirmium. In this way I would like to precise the statements made in the already distributed summary of this paper.

Sirmium obviously remained the residence of Constantine until the eve of Civil War II when Thessalonica became his operational

headquarter. From Thessalonica the army was launched. On September 18, 324 Licinius fled to Chrysopolis and Constantine was free to move. It is my opinion that he did so and after his return he conferred honours upon Constantius II on November 11, 324, as to Antioch during the winter 324–325. Constantine was present at the Antiochene Council and discussed about the change with regard to the capital from the summer 325.

The following year he travelled to Thessalonica, Sirmium and Ticinum, and celebrated his *decennalia* at the Tiber on July 25, 326. He then passed Siscia and Thessalonica and, it is generally assumed, arrived in Nicomedia in the summer of 327. The dates of the emperor's movements are uncertain, the crucial point is his stay in Thessalonica in the autumn. I have to confess myself uncertain on this point, i. e. whether the emperor's stay in Thessalonica is recorded in the *Code de Justinien* recording a stay in Trier in 328. On his way back, if he really had visited Thessalonica, the summer 329 were spent on the Danube frontier and he moved to the regions of the Bosphorus.

For the remaining years of Constantine's reign the dates are known. The main point to stress is that the *decennalia* were celebrated at Nicomedia and not at Thessalonica. Before his second tricennial celebration he made a final visit to Siscia and travelled home to Thessalonica. The all-important question is whether the Emperor visited Antioch in 328 for the preparations for the Sasanian war. The literary sources are silent on this point, but the question is open. On the other hand the new start of Antiochene minting coincides with the beginning of the first *comes Orientis*, according to the dateable as 335.

If we now concentrate on the coins, the system adopted is given by a number of "chronistic" reverse legends. The most common

itself. Thus the expression "the tra-
 ogan in my opinion, actually covers
 en travelling, employed the mint of his
 of reverses and of Imperial portraits
 ecuted and struck by the employees
 style of the local mint was preserved.
 stantiated by an analysis of the gold
 h the coins themselves, a few words
 o the Emperor's itinerary. The gene-
 as worked out some fifty years ago
 EECK and presented in his "Regesten
 s rarely been challenged; nevertheless,
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 ear necessary. Without going into
 myself to the main results; Constan-
 cennalia in Trier and left Gaul after
 stay in Rome in 315 was a very short
 whether he visited the old capital at
 the vota inscription on the triumphal
 and Ticinum, was the residence of
 though the Emperor travelled in Gaul
 s of the year. Early in 317 the court
 Emperor to the Balkans by way of
 e time in Thessalonica. The *processus*
 Aquileia, that city having been the
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 ed the residence of Constantine until
 Thessalonica became his operational

headquarter. From Thessalonica the attack against Licinius was
 launched. On September 18, 324 Licinius was utterly defeated at
 Chrysopolis and Constantine was free to invade Asia Minor. It
 is my opinion that he did so and after having conferred princely
 honours upon Constantius II on November 8, he advanced as far
 as to Antioch during the winter 324-325; quite possibly he was
 present at the Antiochene Council and at that juncture brought
 about the change with regard to the Church Council summoned
 to the summer 325.

The following year he travelled to Rome by way of Thessa-
 lonica, Sirmium and Ticinum, and celebrated his second *vicen-*
*nal*ia at the Tiber on July 25, 326. Returning to the East he
 passed Siscia and Thessalonica and, it seems, spent the later part
 of 327 in Nicomedia. The dates of the year of the Gothic war
 are uncertain, the crucial point is his supposed sojourn in Gaul in
 the autumn. I have to confess myself unable to say anything
 definite on this point, i. e. whether the subscriptions of the Theo-
 dosian Code recording a stay in Trier in 328 are correct or not.
 On his way back, if he really had visited Gaul, the spring and
 summer 329 were spent on the Danube frontier before he returned
 to the regions of the Bosphorus.

For the remaining years of Constantine's life very few fixed
 dates are known. The main point to stress is that his initial *tri-*
cennalia were celebrated at Nicomedia and not in Constantinopel.
 Before his second tricennial celebration Constantines made a
 final visit to Siscia and travelled home by way of Aquileia and
 Thessalonica. The all-important question of the last two years
 is whether the Emperor visited Antioch in order to supervise the
 preparations for the Sasanian war. The coinage suggests that
 he did, but the literary sources are silent, so I prefer to regard
 the question as open. On the other hand, it is feasible that the
 new start of Antiochene minting coincided with the appointment
 of the first *comes Orientis*, according to GLANVILLE DOWNEY
 dateable as 335.

If we now concentrate on the coins, the first indication of the
 system adopted is given by a number of what we could call "ana-
 chronistic" reverse legends. The most conspicuous ones are some

specimens struck at Antioch and recording the second consulships of the sons of Constantine in a year when they held the consulate for the third time. All these coins were struck at solidus standard. This phenomenon could possibly be explained by the fact that the coins were struck very soon after Civil War II and that the legends were influenced by the Antiochene *Fasti* where, during Licinian times, only one previous consulship of Crispus and Constantine II had been recorded, had there not been other examples even if of less striking character. We find the type CONCORDIA AVGG NN with an observe of Crispus struck at Nicomedia and Cyzicus after the war, the outdated VICTORIB AVGG ET CAESS NN/VOT XX similarly appearing in the East at a time when there was one Augustus only. Both these types were issued for the first time at Ticinum in 320, the *Concordia avgg nn* with additional observes of both Licinius and Constantine. The vota coins clearly show the date, Constantine's quinquennial celebrations. At the time of issue the conception of the reverses was correct, but already the following year the friendly relations between Constantine and Licinius were broken. It is quite clear that these types travelled with the Emperor or with the army and were repeated, as an emergency, I believe, in conquered territory before there had been time to design and execute new up-to-date types. In fact, the three first series of gold coins of Antioch all had counterparts in the Sirmian coinage of the years 321–323, and, significantly enough, only one observe of Constantius II is known from these issues in gold.

The principle of the travelling reverse types is illustrated in numerous instances, regularly showing that the first coins struck at a new minting place were repetitions of the types struck at the previous residence of the Emperor. The consistent rule is: first old types, then new creations. It would carry too far to enumerate all the instances; may it suffice to point out that the first Constantinian gold in Italy faithfully reflects the previous issues of Trier, that Ticinum in 315 first reproduces the Treveran types of 314 and the early part of 315 before modifications and alterations were introduced, that the first Constantinian gold of Thessalonica repeats the types of Ticinum from the time before the war

of 316. It is equally easy to find instances where Constantine was sole ruler in the Roman Empire. In the vicennial year the wellknown types SEPTIMO SEVERO MANVS travelled from Nicomedia to Thessalonica. A solar bust indicating the year 326 was struck at Rome. Particular attention should be paid to the observe; only at Thessalonica, Rome and Antioch do we find the peculiar way of breaking the word STANTINVS along the upper left edge of the bust, to right under the chin.

On Constantine's return journey from the East a series of multiples carrying the reverse legend STANTINI AVG was introduced at Siscia. The type was to be continued at different stages of the journey. Constantine stayed away from the mint at Nicomedia, the central mint of the day, and issued multiple VOTIS/X/CAESS NN to celebrate the return of the Caesars. The type was forwarded to Thessalonica issued together with the *Gloria Constantini*. The constantine's stay in the Macedonian capital was his permanent residence. You will remember that the time of issue had been altered to VOTIS XXIIII, the time Crispus had been put to death.

I hope this has shown you beyond reasonable doubt that the system worked. It is now quite easy to reconstruct the itinerary not only with the aid of the legends but also with reference to the gold issues, and to the time of many of the gold series in question. The coins with a maximal margin of some months between the issue and varying vota coins issued.

This is not the place to interpret the significance of the revisions of the dates or to discuss the implications of the Imperial itinerary with far greater accuracy than before. My aim is to show the imperial administration.

It should be tempting to plunge into a discussion of Constantine's reform of the Imperial administration

ch and recording the second consulships in a year when they held the consulate these coins were struck at solidus standard. This possibly be explained by the fact that they soon after Civil War II and that the copy by the Antiochene *Fasti* where, during the previous consulship of Crispus and is recorded, had there not been other striking character. We find the type N with an obverse of Crispus struck at after the war, the outdated VICTORIB OT XX similarly appearing in the East as one Augustus only. Both these types at the time at Ticinum in 320, the *Concordia* observes of both Licinius and Constantine. Now the date, Constantine's quinquennial of issue the conception of the reverses the following year the friendly relations Licinius were broken. It is quite clear and with the Emperor or with the army in an emergency, I believe, in conquered had been time to design and execute new, the three first series of gold coins of parts in the Sirmian coinage of the years lately enough, only one observe of Constantine these issues in gold.

travelling reverse types is illustrated in clearly showing that the first coins struck were repetitions of the types struck at the Emperor. The consistent rule is: first issues. It would carry too far to enumerate suffice to point out that the first Constantine faithfully reflects the previous issues of 315 first reproduces the Treveran types of 315 before modifications and alterations at the first Constantinian gold of Thessalonica of Ticinum from the time before the war

of 316. It is equally easy to find instances from the time when Constantine was sole ruler in the Roman Empire. During his vicennial year the wellknown types SENATVS and EQVIS ROMANVS travelled from Nicomedia to Thessalonica (where a consular bust indicating the year 326 was employed) and further to Rome. Particular attention should be paid to the execution of the observe; only at Thessalonica, Rome and Siscia in the year 326—7 do we find the peculiar way of breaking the legend with CONSTANTINVS along the upper left edge of the coin and with AVG to right under the chin.

On Constantine's return journey from Rome to Nicomedia the series of multiples carrying the reverse legend GLORIA CONSTANTINI AVG was introduced at Siscia and repeated at Thessalonica to be continued at different stages at Nicomedia. When Constantine stayed away from the residence of the court, Nicomedia, the central mint of the day, issued the exceptional multiple VOTIS/X/CAESS NN to celebrate the decennalia of the Caesars. The type was forwarded to Thessalonica where it was issued together with the *Gloria Constantini aug* during Constantine's stay in the Macedonian capital on his way back to his permanent residence. You will remember that the type at the time of issue had been altered to VOTIS/X/CAES. N. for at that time Crispus had been put to death.

I hope this has shown you beyond reasonable doubt how the system worked. It is now quite easy to reconstruct Constantine's itinerary not only with the aid of the literary sources, but also with reference to the gold issues, and fortunately enough the time of many of the gold series in question can be pinned down with a maximal margin of some months because of the numerous and varying vota coins issued.

This is not the place to interpret the political and religious significance of the revisions of the dates of the Theodosian Code, nor the implications of the Imperial itinerary now established with far greater accuracy than before. My main problem has been the imperial administration.

It should be tempting to plunge into theories regarding Constantine's reform of the Imperial administration, the introduction

of the *comitivae*, and particularly the office of the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, but it is by no means certain that the fact that the central financial administration in practice was in charge of a *comitiva*, implies that the reorganization had been carried through when we for the first time are confronted with a "travelling mint" and with travelling reverse types. It is quite feasible that Professor Pink's suspicions as regards the tetrarchic gold coinage prove correct and that the same kind of mobile gold coining can be traced for the pre-Constantinian epoch. On the other hand, the new insight won concerning the system of gold minting undoubtedly sheds some light on the economic life of the later Roman Empire; what has been said about the gold coining is equally valid for the silver coining; what has been proven true for the Constantinian period, is likely to apply to the later IV century as well. It is remarkable that we can trace no tendencies to cater equally for all parts of the Empire. In large parts of the Empire no gold at all was struck in Constantinian times, and the areas which were supplied with minted gold were those where the Emperor and the court happened to travel. One would have expected the central mint to have organized regular transports of minting gold to far away parts of the Empire, but it is obvious that the mobility of the gold minting increased the difficulties of regular service if, indeed, there was one during the reign of Constantine. Should we, therefore, regard the bronze coinage as sufficient to satisfy the local need of currency and cash? With this challenging question I conclude these brief notes on the fourth century Imperial administration.

Miscellan

ἔρπυα: Thuc

"Controversy has long raged round by the Greeks" (Iliad II).¹ "The wall part of the tradition familiar to the p other poems [about Troy]. (That such is strongly suggested by the allusion wall . . . which is plainly not the wall these poems were forgotten did it be for something not previously mention was introduced at a somewhat awkward

On the contrary, the building of Th the "plot". Zeus decreed victory for th Achaeans come to the *ships*" (θ 474, cast fire on the ships and so fulfil al of Thetis" (O 596). There was obviously of Achilles was granted (A 530). Its produced a horrid complication. The d able, Achilles cannot return to the fig has reached the *ships* — but how is Embassy?³

The "controversy" dates from HER Earle⁵ puts it, "Thucydides used an I

¹ LEAF, W., The Iliad. I, p. 297. London,

² LORIMER, H. L., Homer and the Montim

³ I 650—655 is quite explicit.

⁴ HERMANN, J. G. F., Philologia, I, p. 367

⁵ MURRAY, G., The Rise of the Greek E 1911; quoting EARLE, M. L., Collected Essays