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The victorious signs of Constantine

A seventh-century Syrian hoard of coins, by MARCUS PHILLIPS AND

Fatimid and post-Fatimid glass at Prague, by VLASTIMIL NOVÁK

A large hoard from the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, Henry I of Cyprus (1218–53),

Local bronze tokens issued in Jaffa, by WANG

The Alexander-Eagle hoard: The

More pseudo-Rhodian drachms

On the bridge on a coin of Sfax

A Sponsian re-discovered, by JAN

A hoard from the Blois region around c. 920/40, by JENS CHRISTIAN

Countermarked Islamic gold coins

The Scottish thirty-shilling piece

COINS

ANCIENT HOARDS

A 1971 group of Rhodian coins

BOHRINGER

Britain
The Victorious Signs of Constantine:
A Reappraisal

PATRICK BRUUN

[PLATES 17–19]

THE CONSTANTINIAN SIGNS

The Constantine signs discussed in the text below are, generally speaking, a series of signs and designs preserved by different kinds of sources from different periods of time, differently interpreted, and identified with the heavenly signs reported to have been observed by the emperor Constantine before the impending battle of the Milvian bridge on 28 October AD 312 outside the walls of Rome. Constantine’s victory made him master of the western part of the Roman empire. At the same time it was a victory for Christianity as literary sources fairly close to the event testify (Lactantius and Eusebius). All this is common knowledge, well established. However, there is doubt concerning the shape of the heavenly sign observed by the emperor, a sign which, according to Lactantius (de mortibus 44.5), Constantine transversa X littera, summo capite circumflexo, Christum in scitis notat. Eusebius in his Church history confirms that there was a sign (Hist. Eccl. IX.9.10: τοῦ σωτηρίου τρόπαιου πάθους, and IX.9.11 τοῦτο τῷ σωτηριώτερον σημεῖῳ), without describing it in detail. Only later, in Vita Constantini, does he testify to a heavenly vision of a sign and of an inscription ‘τοῦτον νίκα’ (1.28), but the context is different and the location somewhere in Gaul. However, Eusebius continues and describes a military standard (labarum) which he had seen with his own eyes. On the top of the standard, above the drapery, was a wreath within which were two letters referring to Christ (obviously the Greek Χ [chi] and Ρ [rho]; the X was located with its centre in

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1 This paper was read at the meeting of the Royal Numismatic Society, 12 December 1994. Its revision for publication has been delayed by the author’s ill health. He is grateful to Dr John Kent for his assistance with regard to the coin material. When the paper was written, RIC X had not yet been published. Dr Roger Bland of the British Museum read and adjusted the original text, and eliminated errors of numismatic relevance. The following abbreviations have been used:
SICV Sylloge Inscriptionum Christianarum Veterum, see AIRF.
the middle of the vertical axis of P. By this time, however, a quarter of a century had elapsed since the battle of the Milvian bridge.

All this is common knowledge today, the only point of controversy being the exact shape of the sign seen in the Constantinian vision. Closest topographically and chronologically, and indisputably connected with Constantine’s victory is, however, the sign depicted on a silver medallion issued by the mint of Ticinum, most likely in the year 315. The sign was located on the front of a new type of helmet (3/4 facing) at the root of a high, bushy crest (see Pl. 19, 6; RIC VII, p. 364, no. 36).

With so much being well known, what is the specific purpose of this reappraisal? The contention is that in a wider and longer perspective, a close analysis of the numismatic material of a century after the Milvian bridge illustrates different opinions and attitudes prevailing within the Church, which are also reflected by the literary sources. These attitudes suggest that the prime element connected with the sign of the Milvian bridge was not the name of Christ, nor the Christian creed, but the force of the divinely inspired Constantine. The heavenly intervention in his favour before the battle is differently described by contemporaneous sources. Therefore ‘Constantinian’ appears to be a proper designation of the signs which appeared to safeguard his victory, a prerequisite for the religious toleration codified by the emperors Constantine and Licinius in Milan in February 313. Only later did the undisputable Christian significance of the victorious sign become clear beyond doubt.

The fact that Constantine, in spite of his apparent interest in ecclesiastical matters, can rarely be seen to employ the wondrous sign of AD 312, is surprising. Before the inauguration of Constantinople it appeared only exceptionally and in the 330s mostly in connection with military standards depicted on bronze coins. This does not appear to be consistent with the emperor’s self-assertive references to the blessings he had bestowed upon the Empire with the coming of the new religion.

With the passing of time the Constantinian sign(s) were named ‘Christograms’, i.e. monograms or compendia scripturae of the name Christos (a translation to Greek of the Hebrew Messiah, the Anointed One in the New Testament), but when the signs were first understood and read in such a way is uncertain. Lactantius (de mortibus 44.5) writes Christum in scutis notat, which may be correct as a general expression signifying that under the protection of this sign Constantine fought the battle. We have, however, no evidence of shields marked with the name of Christ. We should, therefore, regard the expression as a manner of speaking. Lactantius, who wrote very soon after the event, but after the meeting of the emperors Constantine and Licinius in Milan, where they agreed on the religious toleration, clearly could see the Constantinian victory as a victory of Christ. Hence he could have said, figuratively, that Constantine had used Christ as a shield. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Eusebius did not mention any of the particulars given by Lactantius except for the fact that Constantine had had a vision.3

The monogrammatic signs ☧, ☦, ☧ and the like were at the outset regarded as Constantinian signs, the chief elements of which appear to have been the letters X and P, the Cross at this juncture being alien to Constantinian and his counsellors. With Magnentius’ rebellion we move on to solid Christological ground with the sign flanked by the biblical letters Λ and Ω, where the sign represents Christ. Again, Magnentius’ coin reverses appear to be a counterstroke to Vetranio’s reverses inscribed HOC SIGNO VICTOR ERIS,4 a translation of the Eusebian expression τῷ οὗτῳ νικᾷ. As a parallel development one should interpret epigraphical formulae in funerary inscriptions where ☧ (and similar monograms) were employed syntactically, i.e. in expressions like IN PACE ☧ (to be read in pace Christi; consequently the symbolic function of the sign has disappeared, cf. Pl. 17, 2). The earliest example of the epigraphical ☧, securely dated, is found in an epitaph, where the sign appears twice, in a symbolic as well as in a syntactic function in an inscription of AD 331 (Pl. 17, 4).5

On the pre-Constantinian occurrence of monogrammatic signs, there is little to report.6 Most of the inscriptions are impossible to date. Generally speaking, it is natural that, in an era characterized by persecutions, and consequently by cryptography, transparent references to the Saviour would have been rare. Nevertheless, as instances of funerary inscriptions where the monogrammatic ☧ occurs, three epitaphs, now in the Vatican Galleria Lapidaria are illustrated here. They represent three stages of ‘Christianization’, of the understanding and acceptance of the message of the Church. Certain things should, however, be considered when trying to identify the deceased and his or her socio-cultural background. On the one hand, it is logical that most of those who paid for the burial place (for instance a loculus in the catacombs) and employed a lapidica to cut the text into the stone would have been fairly well-to-do, although not necessarily

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3 This interpretation is basically the same as the one presented by the author in RIC VII (pp. 61f.).
5 ICVR I, 59 = E. Diehl, Inscriptiones Latinarum Christianarum Veterum I (Berlin, 1925), no. 1545. The reproduction shows, and de Rossi remarks, that Boldetti in a publication of 1710 could read the entire inscription, part of which later had been erased by the public walking across it. For the consular date, see A. Degrassi, I fasti consulari (Rome, 1952), p. 80.
6 The author is restricting himself to the epigraphic material presented earlier (Bruun, AIRF I, 2) although impressive volumes of the Corpus inscriptionum and Sylogue inscriptionum Christianarum Veterum have been published during the last decades. However, three cases of crucial importance are nevertheless reviewed below because the readings and the contexts in the light of recent research have necessitated some re-interpretations.
literate. The *lapicidae* were certainly equipped with models, both pictorial and textual. External factors, and not necessarily religious, may have decided the choice of symbols and formulae. Customs may have varied in different catacombs, or in the offices of different masons. It is, therefore, very hard to reconstruct the backgrounds of single epitaphs. The three slabs illustrated should show the workmanship of the stonemasons to compare with the technical aptitude of the die-cutters working in the imperial mints.

The three inscriptions (Pl. 17, 1–3) are presented according to the presumed internal chronological order, with *AIRF I*, 1, no. 274 of uncertain provenance coming first, then no. 250, also of uncertain provenance, and finally no. 115 from the catacomb of Cyriaca.

No. 274. The inscription is topped by ☂, and ends with the formula *IN PACEM*. The sign is clearly symbolic (but of what?)? The opening reference *ETERNAM DOMO REQUIVI (excit)* represents a pagan tradition, whereas *IN PACEM* is Christian. Whether ☂ belongs to the mundane or the heavenly sphere is uncertain.

No. 250. The opening formula *IN PACEM* ☂ should probably be read *in pace Christi*.

No. 115. The Christogram with the apocalyptic letters corresponds to a Magnentian coin reverse, cf. *Pl. 17, 14*.

Three cases of crucial importance for the analysis of the development should, in addition to those above, be reviewed in this context. The first concerns a monogram discovered under the foundations of the baptistery of St Giovanni in Laterano, the second a Greek cross in the catacombs named Hypogeum Aureliorum in a fresco painting in a vault, and the third the remnants of a mosaic in the necropolis located along the Via Triumphalis running from the Castel St Angelo at the Tiber through the Vatican area (*in Vaticano ad Circum*). The mosaic showed a young male with a nimbus with a cross (nimbus cruciger), obviously standing in a chariot. It has been regarded by many highly respected scholars as the earliest likeness of Christ.

All these interpretations have been shown to rest on faulty knowledge of their contexts. Modern excavations of the baptistery have shown, with regard to the first case, that the Lateran area, part of which had been donated by Constantine to his wife the empress Fausta (*Domus Faustae*), had been insufficiently known, and that the constructions of the basilica started only after 317, when the emperor allotted funds and domains in areas conquered in the Civil War of 316/17, to pay for the enterprise, and that in the second case, the cross in the catacombs proved to be, by recent examinations with the aid of modern technical equipment, a well preserved fragment of an intricate pattern of vines and garlands. The third case, the ‘nimbate Christ’, has been discovered in three synagogues in the Galilee, and the figure has been identified as Helios (*Pl. 18, 5*). The Christ of the Vatican necropolis is consequently the sungod Helios in an astrological setting, which is made clear by the script and the context.

Thus we are left with the problem of why Constantine would have chosen, in a Latin-speaking area, a monogram composed by two Greek letters, a *compendium scripturarum* alien to the epigraphical conventions in Italy. Today the answer seems to be that, whatever the sign originally meant in the eyes and in the mind of Constantine, it underwent a long development until it was accepted as a Christian sign and symbol, and until it achieved the distinction of a Christogram. As we are using the coinage as a yardstick, we move in the highest strata of the Roman society, the administration and the Imperial court.

When trying to follow the Constantinian sign on its way to full Christian glory, we have to accept that the sign might have varied a little and could have been interpreted as XP, XI or a *crux monogrammatica*, but the victorious *vexillum* or standard could also be marked with a cross (Greek, Latin or oblique, i.e. the cross of St Andrew).

In the Constantinian coinage it is impossible to find anything explicitly Christian, or anything crypto-Christian, but at the disposal of the mint officials there was always an array of signs and marks to serve administrative or decorative purposes. This repertory was in the post-Milvian era increased by varieties of the Constantian signs. Significantly, that happened first in the mint of Ticinum, where the well known silver medallion with the helmeted 3/4 facing portrait of Constantine included the sign of Pons Milvius on the front of the helmet, just below the crest (*Pl. 18, 6*). The next mints to display the same sign, although now as a serial mark on coins, were Ticinum (*RIC VII*, pp. 366, 376ff.), Aquileia (*RIC VII* pp. 400ff.) and Siscia (ibid., 440ff.) on Sol and *VIRTUS EXERCIT* coin types.

The first time the sign appeared as an integral part of the imagery is on the Constantinopolitan *SPES PUBLICA* reverse depicting a vexillum piercing a serpent on the ground. The vexillium staff is topped by the XP-monogram (*Pl. 19, 7*), and the banner is decorated by three discs (*imagines elipeatae*) mentioned in Eusebius’ description in the *Vita Constantini* (I.28–31). They stand for the portraits of the emperor and his two sons. The labarum was this time tantamount to the emperor’s own personal standard. The serpent on the

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ground was the defeated Licinius, the internal foe within the realm, destroyed by Constantine. The time of issue was about 327.

After the dedication of the eastern capital in 330 a new reverse was introduced to be struck by all the mints of the Empire, GLORIA EXERCITVS. The reverse depicted two soldiers facing, each leaning on a spear held in the outer hand and with their inner hand resting on a shield. Between them two military standards display very small banners, in most cases decorated by a disc, probably representing the image of the emperor (Fig. 1). Certain mints, mainly the western ones, had additional marks on the reverses, among them the Constantinian sign, employed as one of the six signs at Arles.

Five years later, in connection with a new reduction of the coin module, the reverse legend was maintained, but the design this time depicted two soldiers with a single standard between them (Fig. 2). Now the banner was larger. The Constantinian sign decorated the banner at first at Trier (later M), Lyons (later Y, I) and Siscia, whereas Arles had X. (later G, I), and Aquileia a wreath (later A). In this context, however, it should be remembered that the year 335 marked also a reorganization of the administration of the Empire. Each one of the three sons of Constantine was put in charge of a praefectura of his own, with Constantine II in the West, Constans in the Central empire with Italy, Africa and the best part of the Balkans, and Constantius with the entire East. After the death of Constantine a difference of opinion appeared within the college of brothers, visible in the coinages also. How far the young rulers as early as 335 could have voiced their individual views in opposition to the others is not quite clear, but certain signs could be interpreted that way prior to the death of the father.

After the death of Constantine II in 340 there was a marked decrease in the employment of the Milvian sign. The survival of the sign at Aquileia (Pl. 19, 8–9), facing, as it were, the realm of Constantius II in the East, is interesting. The fact that the sign appeared together with obverses of Constantius could be construed as a challenge by Constans, since the aes coins of the East avoided the sign altogether. Also Siscia, bordering on the realm of Constantius, insistently hoisted the Constantinian banner, and here the sign was given a new function: independent of changing mintmarks, the XP remained on the banner (Pl. 19, 10–11; Fig. 2). It was now, thanks to Constans, an integral part of the standard (RIC VIII, pp. 355, nos 85–104). However, Constans’ first issue at Aquileia, comprising double- and sesquisolidi, may have been struck after the death of Constantine II (RIC VIII, pp. 314f., nos. 1–3, cf. also pp. 306f.). On these coins the emperor had
THE STRUGGLE FOR THE CONSTANTINIAN HERITAGE

The fifteen years after the death of Constantine could be labelled 'the struggle for the Constantinian heritage.' The prelude was, of course, the massacre in the summer of 337 of all the relatives who were regarded as potential threats by the imperial brothers, Constantine II, Constantius II and Constans. In September 337 all three assumed the title of Augustus. The continuation of the struggle was the rivalry of the brothers, which brought about the death of Constantine II in 340. Religious views and ecclesiastical affairs played here an important part. Constantius being a devoted Arian, whereas Constans' views were orthodox (Nicaean), possibly because he was the only brother who had been baptized.11

An essential part of the aes coinage up to the mid-340s was the consecration and memorial series showing Constantine as Divus Constantinus and Pater augustorum issued by the two eldest sons, whereas Constans refused to recall the memory of his father in this fashion (Fig. 3).12 On the other hand, he was the first ruler to attribute to the Constantinian sign a strictly confessional value, as his issues of Siscia (PL 19, 10–11) and Aquileia (PL 19, 8–9) show. Constantius' Arianism may explain why he declined to follow suit. The thought that the Constantinian sign could be interpreted in a Christian way, as a compendium scripturae of Χριστός, and that Christ could have died on the Cross, was contrary to the Arian concept of his divine nature (οὐδά).13

The controversies on the confessional level appear to provide an explanation for the heavy and varied issues of aes coins celebrating the millennial jubilee of 348 under the heading of FEL TEMP REPARATIO. In a paper published in 1933 Harold Mattingly wrote on the FEL TEMP REPARATIO: 'the use of the labarum was probably acceptable to all the parties.'14 This assertion should be tested, and for this purpose the four FEL TEMP types analyzed by Konrad Kraft should be sufficient.15 The analysis comprises coins of the largest module (AE 2 or maiorina). It includes two types with labarum (Figs. 4–5) and in addition (i) Helmeted soldier leading a small figure from a hut beneath a tree (PL 19, 13), and (ii) Helmeted soldier

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13 The details of Constantius' intervention in ecclesiastical affairs and of the controversies of the imperial brothers are examined in Timothy Barnes' recent book Athanasius and Constantin (Harvard U.P., 1993).
14 H. Mattingly, 'FEL TEMP. REPARATIO.', /NC 1933, pp. 182–202, at p. 191. (1967), pp. 83–90; and also Fig. 4.
VICTORIOUS SIGNS OF CONSTANTINE: A REAPPRAISAL

spearing a fallen horseman (Pl. 19, 12). The labarum-types refer to outstanding feats performed by Constans, the two others to military successes of Constantius. In the light of the carefully selected material Kraft records the obverses for each type, by mint and praefectura (i.e. the administrative unit = western, central or eastern). The summary based on a detailed recording of the individual types is particularly interesting with regard to the labarum-types. The following features should be noted:

(i) No obverses of Constantius are recorded as struck with the galley-type of the eastern mints.

(ii) The obverses of Constans coupled with galley-reverses are very scarce on coins issued by the eastern mints. This suggests that the rebellion of Magnentius had started and that Constans had been killed by the time the coins were struck. When the news of his death reached the East, coining of this type was discontinued.

(iii) The type with labarum and captives appears to have been initiated by Constans at Siscia. The only obverses of Constans known (Fig. 4) for this reverse type were struck at this mint and, in addition, at Alexandria in the East. Obverses of Constantius are not too rare. They were struck at all the mints of the central empire and at all the mints of Constantius, whereas no single coin is known from any Gallic mint. Therefore, shortly after the instructions had been given to the mint of Siscia, Constans had lost control of Gaul – clearly to Magnentius. In the sequel, early in 350, he was killed when trying to escape to Spain. Constantius’ reaction seems to have been to honour his brother, and one way could have been to permit this type to be struck in all the mints of the East. At the same time, the launching of this type was a counterstroke aimed at Magnentius, who himself boasted he was a ruler of the Constantinian kind with the aid of coins in base bullion and aes in Gaul.

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20 Twenty years after Bruck’s book John Kent’s RIC VIII was published. Kent, whose material was based on all the major coin collections, reported two varieties of this type, and three different marks for the mint of Aquileia (nos. 107, 119 and 120); the two former were noted as common, the third, no. 120, as scarce. All obverses were of Constans. Bruck’s statistics (see his p. 14) give 16 coins for Constans at Siscia against 13 for Constantius, and 12 coins struck at Alexandria against 16 obverses for Constantius. Bruck’s graphic drawing verifies that in this particular case Constantius exceptionally permitted the dispersion of the labarum on his coins.

17 Cf. Barnes, Athanasius and Constantius, p. 104.

18 The cognomina Flavius exceptionally appearing as a nomen in a name formula suggests an attempt to attract support from the followers of Constantine and his (second Flavian imperial) dynasty (RIC VII, pp. 25f.). Behind the attempt is the fact that Magnentius had married a young girl, daughter of a certain Iustus (cf. Iustus I, PLRE I, s.v.) by name of Justina. Dr Kent (RIC X, p. 53) assumes that she belonged to a family with Constantinian family connections. Her father Iustus is known as governor (consularis) of Picenum 352/361 (PLRE I, s.v.), i.e. obviously appointed by Magnentius. Iustus had two brothers, Cerealis and Constantianus. The name of the latter is significant. We know that he was military tribune in 363 and tribunus stabuli in 369 under Valentinian I, fighting in Gaul where he was killed (PLRE I, Constantianus). Two years
EAST

When the Christian Church was born, it was not limited to the borders of the Roman Empire. As the gospel spread, the Church grew and multiplied in different parts of the world. The first Church was founded in Rome, and from there it spread throughout the Empire. As the Church grew, it began to take on a life of its own, and the relationship between the Church and the State began to change. The Church became a powerful force in society, and its influence extended to all aspects of life. The Church also played a role in the political and social life of the Empire, and it continued to grow and multiply in different parts of the world. Today, the Church is still a powerful force in society, and it continues to influence the world in which we live.
In the West, after Magnentius' withdrawal from the Balkans, when Constantius usually wintered in Italy, above all in Milan, coins with the labarum were minted sporadically and exceptionally at Aquileia in a GLORIA ROMANORVM reverse showing the city rescued by the emperor (RIC VIII, p. 333, no. 186); at Rome a rare FEL TEMP REPARATIO, Emperor on galley, holding Victory on globe and labarum, obv. of Gallus (Fig. 5), probably refers to the Caesar's crushing of the last Jewish rebellion (RIC VIII, Rome, no. 250) in the summer of 352;23 roughly contemporary are some vota coins for Constantius and Gallus (RIC VIII, Rome nos. 251–3).

The West under the rule of young Julian did not, would not or could not take much interest in the religious symbolism of the day. The labarum reappears with Jovian on light miliarenses and on aes coins of the same description of Arles (RIC VIII, nos. 328 and 335) of the reverse RESTITVTOR REIP. The same applies to Rome (RIC VIII, nos. 469, 471, 474) on bronze medallions.

THE HOUSE OF VALENTINIAN

The coinage of the House of Valentinian, which remained in power almost to the end of the western empire, opened with a massive series of

23 Bruck, Die spätromische Kupferprägung, p. 24 (Fig. 11) records two specimens of this type struck at Rome and 11 at Siscia.
after his death and how competing forces and imperial pretenders referred to him when trying to find support for their causes.

At the Council of Nicaea, Constantine had deprecated Arian and supported Athanasius, but later he changed his mind and Athanasius was banished from his see of Alexandria. A few years later Constantine died, but before that he was baptized by the bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia, who was an Arian. In Hieronymus' (St Jerome) edition of Eusebius (the church historian, bishop of Caesarea) for the year 337 we read: 'Constantinus extremus vitae sua tempore ab Eusebio Nicomediensi episcopo baptizatus in Arrianum dogma declinat. A quo usque in praesens tempus ecclesiariam rapinae et totus orbis est secuta discordia.' Constantine... was baptized by Eusebius of Nicomedia and slipped down into the Arian creed. With this, there followed up to this day the plunder of churches and the discord of all the world. The Arian baptism was, of course, a very serious matter, at least in clerical circles. Church historians therefore avoid going into detail: the name of the bishop is at times left out, in order to obscure the fact that the rite was performed in accordance with the Arian dogma. Only Philostorgius, himself an Arian, mentions it.

St Jerome's words contained a revealing note on the religious policy of the first Christian emperor and at the same time a crushing verdict. Yet, under the new dynasty of Valentinian the labarum appears to have been employed as the normal attribute and insignia of the emperor. With Theodosius II and the fifth century there occurred a momentous change. The labarum did not disappear, but it was surpassed by the Cross, which was employed in an increasing number of symbolic representations, although in other respects the iconography of the reverses did not radically change. The imperial propaganda continued to stress the bravery of the emperor, his victories and the pains he took for the common good. But in one way or another the Cross could take over the functions of the labarum, the sceptre, the trophy and, at times, of the Victory (Pl. 19, 20–22).

Theodosius I had firmly silenced the pagan and the Arian opposition. Confessional disputes were not encouraged. The Christian doctrine, generally speaking, was the only religion accepted by the Roman state. Constantine's fame and reputation rose once more, although for different reasons than before. This was largely due to Theodosius II, who by chance or design did much to reinstate Constantine in the role of the champion of Christendom. The True Cross of Calvary played a distinct and important part in this process, as did the tradition that it had been discovered by Helen, the mother of Constantine.

25 Philostorgius, Hist. Eccl. 2.16 mentions the presence of Eusebius of Nicomedia at Constantine's death-bed, but gives no particulars of the baptismal rite. The negative conclusions of the consequences of the baptism have to be ascribed to Hieronymus.

In a recent monograph Borgehammer reviews the literary evidence relating to the finding of the Cross. His analysis is based on a reconstruction of what he held to be the original and most reliable account of the discovery, that of Gelasius of Caesarea, compiled about 390. Without dwelling on particulars of the story, it should be noted that Theodosius II in a letter of 420 instructed the bishop of Jerusalem to erect a jewelled golden cross on the place where the holy wood (Cross) had been found (Theophanes, i, 86).

Two years later there was a cross on the festal solidus of Theodosius. Kent drew attention to this coin (Pl. 19, 21) in a paper published in 1960 and quoted a passage by St Prosper about the Persian persecutions, the Byzantine victory won by the soldiers with cross-symbols on their armour, concluding his statement thus: 'Unde etiam victor, aureum monetam eodem cum signo ficeri precept, quae in usu totius orbis et maxime Asiae hodieque persistit.' The text was probably written between 450 and 455.

This signified the return of Constantine to the gallery of historical heroes, still champion of Christianity, but not necessarily as the victor of Pons Milius. The Cross emerged as his main attribute with reference to the vision before the battle, and to his mother's discovery of the remnants of the True Cross. None of our primary, i.e. contemporary, sources had testified to a vision of a cross in 312. Eusebius does not speak of a cross in his account of the battle of Pons Milius in his church history (Hist. Eccles. IX.10–11). He employs paraphrases like 'the saving' or the 'wholesome' (σωτηριος or σωτηριδος) with reference to the sign of Constantine's vision. But in the early half of the fifth century the vision of the Cross was common parlance of the ecclesiastical chroniclers.

The conviction that Constantine had seen a cross in a vision sent to him by God increased the emperor's reputation and standing. The imperial couple Marcian and Pulcheria were present at the council of Chalcedon in 451, when the emperor was acclaimed as novus Constantinus, novus Paulus, novus David, a formula henceforth employed at turning points in the history of the orthodox church, e.g. at the second council of Nicaea in 781. The comparison of Constantine with Paulus was based on the heavenly vision, which in both cases (Constantine – St Paul) brought about a conversion. At the same time it made the eastern church as equally prestigious as the western one, described as patrimonium Petri.

26 S. Borgehammer, How the Holy Cross was Found (Stockholm, 1991).
27 J. P. C. Kent, 'Monetam auream... cum signo crucis', NC 1960, pp. 129–32. The citation reads in translation to English: 'As a result indeed the victor (Theodosius) ordered gold coins to be made with this, same symbol and these are still in use today throughout the whole empire, especially Asia.'
Now the course of events in the early 420s appears firmly established by pieces of evidence mutually supporting one another, the most remarkable being the Theodosian solidus described by St Prosper – a fitting end to the story of the Constantinian sign and its vicissitudes up to the final victory of the Cross.

ILLUSTRATIONS IN FIGURES 1–7

Illustrations of the diffusion of certain fourth century bronze coin types. References are to Bruck, Die spätromische Kupferprägung.

Fig. 1, p. 25: GLORIA EXERCITVS (2 standards)
Fig. 2, p. 29: GLORIA EXERCITVS (1 standard)
Fig. 3, p. 11: DV CONSTANTINVS PT AVGG (Four rev. types)
Fig. 4, p. 14: FEL TEMP REPARATIO (labarum and captives)
Fig. 5, p. 24: FEL TEMP REPARATIO (Emp. w. labarum on galley)
Fig. 6, p. 56: RESTITVTORE IMPERVLAEC Emp. w. labarum, Vict. on globe
Fig. 7, p. 35: GLORIA ROMANORVM (Emp. w. labarum, and captive)

The graphic drawings in Bruck’s book, illustrated here, show the dispersion of types and assist us to recognize the common features of the design and the variations in detail. Whereas all the drawings are copied from the book, the layout of the presentation may differ from the originals in order to present particulars relevant for the present enquiry. For Fig. 3, where the common denominator is the obverse of Divus Constantinus, the whole page has been copied in order to show the distribution of reverse types in different parts of the empire, and the refusal of Constans (mints: Aquileia, Rome, Sicilia and Thessalonica) to issue any at all. This aspect is eloquently illustrated by the statistics under Münzstatten. The English text inserted in the drawings is by the author of this paper.

ILLUSTRATIONS ON PLATES 17–19

1. Inscription SICV no. 274.
2. Inscription SICV no. 200.
3. Inscription SICV no. 115.
4. Inscription ICVR no. 39 (AD 331).
5. Mosaic: Weitzmann (see n. 9), pp. 374f., cat. no. 342 (floor mosaics of the Synagogue of Hamat Tiberias, c. AD 300).

Coins

When necessary, the list specifies which side of the coin is shown. References are to RIC, giving volume, mint and serial number, and, in the last column, the source of the coin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Side</th>
<th>Mint</th>
<th>Metal</th>
<th>Emp.</th>
<th>Design details</th>
<th>RIC</th>
<th>Coll.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>obv.</td>
<td>Tic.</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>facing high-crested helmet, Ξ</td>
<td>7, 36</td>
<td>Mun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>rev.</td>
<td>Cple</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>standard topped by Ξ</td>
<td>7, 19</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Aqu.</td>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Cn</td>
<td></td>
<td>emperor with labarum</td>
<td>8, 2</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Aqu.</td>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Cn</td>
<td></td>
<td>emperor with labarum</td>
<td>8, 1A</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sis</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Cn</td>
<td></td>
<td>emperor with labarum</td>
<td>8, 148</td>
<td>D. I. Oaks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
15. Aes coins of this description are mostly classified as rare, but they occur at Siscia with obverses of both Constantius and Vetranio (nos. 272, 275, 278f., 282f.).
22. Kent discusses the frequency of this type in RIC X, p. 91, and on p. 373 records similar coins issued at Constantinople, Nicomedia and Cyzicus in bronze.