

## **COINS AND MEDALLIONS STRUCK FOR THE INAUGURATION OF CONSTANTINOPOLIS 11 MAY 330**

The decision of Constantine the Great to build Constantinopolis, a “new Rome”, on the site of Byzantium profoundly changed the course of history. It is no exaggeration to say that without Constantinopolis, Western civilization would have taken a very different course. The establishment of Constantinopolis de facto prevented the Greco-Roman civilisation from going the same way as the great cultures of the Sumerians, Hittites or Egyptians, just to mention a few. Instead, Constantine’s decision resulted in a continuity from Antiquity through the Byzantine empire, and via Arab scholarship to the Renaissance and the rise of modern Western culture. For good and bad, Constantine’s decision is the foundation for the modern western civilization and with that, for its influence in the present world.

Constantine was well aware that his decision was of paramount importance. This is evident from the large number of special issues of coins and medallions believed to have been minted for the inauguration on 11 May 330. Apart from a large number of gold medallions, there are several silver and bronze “denominations” that were unique for this occasion. Remarkably, the largest silver medallions mirror Hellenistic tetradrachms<sup>1</sup>. Many types are small and often anepigraphic, making dating and interpretation difficult. The event was coordinated with a complete replacement of the entire bronze coinage in the whole empire, with types celebrating Rome, Constantinopolis and the army replacing the existing types. No Roman could avoid to know about the new city and its status.

Taken together, these changes in minting at a single occasion is unparalleled in the entire Roman history. Historical sources may not be clear regarding Constantine’s motivation, but the paired nature of the coinage described here unequivocally shows that Constantine intended the new city Constantinopolis to be exactly what it became: a parallel to Rome and a future centre of the Roman empire.

This paper reviews most of the types thought to have been struck for the occasion, with the exception of gold<sup>2</sup>. It shows the paired nature of many

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<sup>1</sup> Ramskold /Lenski describe all 18 known examples and list the features paralleled in Hellenistic tetradrachms.

<sup>2</sup> RIC VII listed many gold varieties for 330, Constantinople nos. 41-52, and also

types and proposes that this circumstance reflects Constantine's desire to present Constantinopolis as the equal of Rome. The most likely occasion for this presentation would be the inauguration of Constantinopolis, and so the types are here all dated to 330. A new tool for interpretation is introduced: measurement of the diameter across the pearl ring, here called PRD (Pearl Ring Diameter). The PRD shows no or little variation within each type, whereas weight and flan size varies widely. The lack of variation of the PRD makes it possible to differentiate between generally similar types struck at different times.

### *Byzantion becomes Constantinopolis*

In 324, only Licinius remained of Constantine's contenders for imperial power. In the naval battle of the Hellespont, Constantine's eldest son Crispus defeated Licinius' fleet, and on 18 September 324, within sight of Byzantion, Licinius' fate was sealed in the battle at Chrysopolis. It is clear that Constantine began building his new city very soon after the victory. On Sunday 8 Nov 324, about seven weeks after the battle of Chrysopolis, Constantine appointed his son Constantius to the rank of caesar. Some sources<sup>3</sup> say that Constantine also consecrated Byzantion as Constantinopolis on that day.

Constantine had several good reasons to establish the new city (a detailed discussion of these reasons will be given in a forthcoming paper). Comprehensive reviews of important (but not exclusive) factors relating to the foundation have recently been published.<sup>4</sup> It is sufficient here to note that Constantine strained the resources of the empire to the utmost in his endeavour. The building of Constantinopolis drained the economy of the state and one can assume that only the systematic confiscation of temple treasures and other property all over the empire prevented a complete economic collapse. The strained economy notwithstanding, Constantine spent lavishly on the inauguration of his new city. The foremost mint was now the one in Constantinopolis, and it was ordered to strike profusely in gold, silver, brass, and bronze to produce a wide variety of medallions, tokens and coins to commemorate the occasion. Some of the nearby mints assisted, especially with gold commemoratives.

### *The Mint of Constantinopolis*

The mint of Constantinopolis opened in 326, within 18 months after the battle of Chrysopolis. The opening was no later than March 326, as is shown by the anepigraphic dynastic bronze series struck at the new mint (Fig. 1)<sup>5</sup>.

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from other mints. Many additional types have appeared since then, and many others have, in the present author's view, been misdated. A full treatment of the celebration gold issues is outside the scope of this paper.

<sup>3</sup> For example Themistius Or. 4.58b.

<sup>4</sup> Ntantalía 2001, p. 156 ff.; Olbrich 2006.

<sup>5</sup> RIC VII, Constantinople nos. 13-14. In addition, a previously unrecorded coin struck for Constantius II for the same issue is figured here (Fig. 1C).



Fig. 1. The first, extremely rare bronze coins from the mint of Constantinopolis. These dynastic, anepigraphic coins were probably struck during Constantine's visit in March 326. In addition to coins for Constantine I (RIC VII no. 13; A) and Constantine II (RIC VII no. 14; B), a unique example for Constantianus II is now also known (C). It is likely that coins were struck also for Crispus. A: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; B, C: private coll.

Сл. 1. Први, изузетно ретки бронзани новчићи из Цариградске ковнице. Ове династички, анепиграфски новац је вероватно искован током посете Константина, март 326. Поред новчића за Константина I (RIC VII no. 13; A) и Константина II (RIC VII no. 14; B), јединствени пример за Константина II је сада такође познат (C). Вероватно је да се новац такђе ковао и за Криспуса. A: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; B, C: приватна колекција.

Zschucke<sup>6</sup> has convincingly argued that the dynastic issues were struck consecutively in the cities visited by Constantine during his tour from Nicomedia to the vicennial celebrations in Rome. Constantine is known to have stayed in Constantinopolis in March 326,<sup>7</sup> which gives the date for the dynastic issue struck for the visit. Crispus and Fausta were still alive when the mint opened, as is shown by the coins of the earliest bronze issue.<sup>8</sup> The view that Crispus was killed after Constantine's vicennial celebrations in Rome<sup>9</sup> is made problematic by the absence of Crispus from the dynastic series struck during Constantine's stay in Rome 18 July to 27 September<sup>10</sup>. A date before mid July is therefore

<sup>6</sup> Zschucke 2000, pp. 71-79.

<sup>7</sup> Codex Theodosianus ii.10.4, fide RIC VII.

<sup>8</sup> RIC VII, Constantinople no. 8 for Crispus and no. 12 for Fausta.

<sup>9</sup> RIC VII, p. 562 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Dates fide RIC VII, p. 77. The dynastic coins from Rome are fairly common, the author has seen close to one hundred examples, with about 40% struck for Constantine I and 30% each for Constantine II and Constantianus II. The absence of coins struck for Crispus is therefore not coincidental but real.

more likely.<sup>11</sup> Constantine's last known stop before Rome was Ticinum, in June 326.<sup>12</sup> Dynastic coins of Crispus were struck in Ticinum during the visit.<sup>13</sup> Crispus disappeared from the coinage between June and mid July 326, and it is thus possible that he was charged and/or killed just before Constantine arrived in Rome to celebrate his vicennalia.<sup>14</sup>

It has been argued that the mint of Constantinopolis opened with equipment and staff transferred from Aquileia, Sirmium and Ticinum.<sup>15</sup> However, at least for Ticinum, this suggestion conflicts with the evidence from the dynastic series, since Constantinopolis struck already in March and Ticinum, although closing in 326, was still working in June. There is some stylistic indication that gold celators were transferred from Sirmium to Constantinopolis between mid 325 and the opening of the Constantinopolis mint.<sup>16</sup>

The formal dedication of Constantinopolis is variously dated to the autumn of 326 or to 4 November 328 (or 26 November 328). In the latter year, perhaps even in direct connection with the dedication, the current coinage was discontinued and the types struck for Constantine were replaced with a new type created specially for Constantinopolis: the Constantiniana Daphne.

The reverse legend of this type, CONSTANTINIANA DAFNE, has commonly been associated with the known completion in 328 of the fort Daphne on the Donau. However, Olbrich<sup>17</sup> has recently shown that DAFNE in the legend refers to the foundation myth of Byzantium, also giving its name to Constantine's palace in Constantinopolis, the Daphne Palace. The reverse image shows Victory holding, in addition to the palm branch, a laurel branch. Laurel in Greek is "daphne".

The Dafne type was struck only for Constantine. A comprehensive study of the issues showed that the officinae at Constantinopolis not striking for Constantine struck bronze coins for the caesars simultaneously<sup>18</sup>. The latter coins were of a current type common to all of the open mints of the empire, with the legend PROVIDENTIAE CAESS. The Dafne and Providentiae types continued to be struck until they were abruptly and completely replaced by a new set of types in 330. This replacement of all bronze types is not unique in the history of Roman coinage. The uniqueness lies in its coupling with a singular historic event - the inauguration of Constantinopolis - and with the large number of celebratory types issued concomitantly and, above all in the paired nature of both regular coinage and celebration types.

The last issues of Dafne and Providentiae coins are dated to 329, and were struck in seven officinae. To cope with the massive output in connection

<sup>11</sup> An early date was suggested already by Seeck 1898, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> RIC VII, p. 77; Zschucke 2000, p. 74.

<sup>13</sup> Smith 1986; Harlick 2007, fig. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Zosimus 2.29 says that Crispus was killed while Constantine was in Rome, which fits the numismatic evidence.

<sup>15</sup> RIC VII, p. 355, 563; Vagi 1999, vol. 2, p. 145.

<sup>16</sup> Alföldi 1963, p. 97 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Olbrich 2006

<sup>18</sup> Speck and Huston 1992.

with the inauguration, the number of officinae of the mint of Constantinopolis was increased to eleven, making it the largest mint in the empire.<sup>19</sup> Some of the celebration issues were struck in every officina, and must have been produced in huge quantities. We know that the entire capacity of the mint was employed for some of these issues: the large silver medallions are known from all officinae except A and H (but also they probably struck such medallions); the varied (but un-paired) smaller silver coinage described as RIC VII nos. 54-57 also employed all officinae; and so did the small bronze medalettes (see A4 below). In contrast, the gold struck at the Constantinopolis mint for the occasion is mintmarked CONS but lacks officina letters.<sup>20</sup> Most of the celebration issues described below lack both mintmark and officina. It appears possible that in the time span between the cessation of the Dafne and Providentiae coinage and the completed expansion into eleven officinae, existing staff and resources were not idle but could have been used to strike many of the celebration issues described below. Self-evidently, the inauguration date was fixed long in advance, and the special issues needed to be produced before the celebrations would begin in May 330, to be distributed at the occasion.

*The replacement of vota and PROVIDENTIAE coinage with VRBS ROMA, CONSTANTINOPOLIS, and GLORIA EXERCITVS*

Before the replacement in 330, only a small number of bronze types were in production in the empire. Most of these were the types introduced in 325, as the first coinage after Constantine defeated Licinius and the Roman Empire was again unified. Following Bruun,<sup>21</sup> this coinage is here called the PROVIDENTIAE coinage.

After the executions of Crispus and Fausta in 326, the remaining PROVIDENTIAE coinage included the reverse types PROVIDENTIAE AVGG, VIRTVS AVGG, and DN CONSTANTINI MAX AVG / VOT XXX (Rome, Heraclea) for Constantine I, PROVIDENTIAE CAESS and VIRTVS CAESS for Constantine II and Constantius II, and SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE for Helena. In Constantinopolis, the PROVIDENTIAE types for Constantine I were replaced by the specially created CONSTANTINIANA DAFNE.

The complete replacement of the vota and Providentiae types with new celebration issues must have been a well coordinated effort. At every one of the nine mints open in 329/330, production of the old types ceased and the new issues began to be produced<sup>22</sup>. A further three mints were re-opened for the introduction of the new types: Lugdunum, Rome, and Thessalonica.

<sup>19</sup> Only the mint of Antioch, working in ten officinae from 326, was comparable in size.

<sup>20</sup> Also later issues lack officina letters. It is probable that a single officina was responsible for all gold. Silver, on the other hand, was struck in all officinae.

<sup>21</sup> RIC VII, p. 20.

<sup>22</sup> Trier, Arles, Siscia, Heraclea, Constantinople, Nicomedia, Cyzikus, Antioch, Alexandria. Bühl 1995 incorrectly listed also Londinium. Her figured examples (Abb. 2 and 3) are not as stated from Nicomedia but from Antioch and Alexandria.

There was a concurrent change in module size and weight. Coin weights<sup>23</sup> of the PROVIDENTIAE issues average just over 3g.<sup>24</sup> Late PROVIDENTIAE issues appear to weigh slightly less, c. 2.92g.<sup>25</sup> The first celebration issues average 2.35g.<sup>26</sup> That indicates a reduction to 4/5 of the weight standard for the PROVIDENTIAE issues.<sup>27</sup> There is some indication for an intermediate stage in the final issue before the change, since RIC VII Rome nos. 322-324 coins average 2.70g.<sup>28</sup> The method of silver washing remained in use, so just like in the previous issues, the new coins had a silvery look.

The module also decreased in size, but proportionately less so than the weight,<sup>29</sup> meaning that the coins became relatively thinner. The late PROVIDENTIAE coinage has a diameter of 18.5mm (PRD, i.e. as measured across the pearl ring). The first celebration issues have a PRD of 17.3mm. The area is thus 87.4% of PROVIDENTIAE coins, whereas the weight is 80.5% of the same coins.

The smaller module and 20% lower weight would have meant a break in monetary circulation. The heavier PROVIDENTIAE coinage would have been withdrawn from circulation, either by the authorities or by hoarding. Very soon, all the circulating bronze coins would be of the new types.

It is important to note that for over a generation, there had been virtually no gold or silver coins struck for general circulation. Gold was struck almost exclusively at the emperor's court, mainly in the form of donatives. The vast majority of Romans had probably never even seen one of these gold coins. Silver was struck only very occasionally and almost entirely in forms clearly not intended for general circulation.

Bronze, on the other hand, was struck in vast quantities all through the reign of Constantine. All bronze coins were silver washed (the exact technique employed is unknown). Wear is small or absent in the majority of these coins preserved to this day,<sup>30</sup> indicating that most were withdrawn from circulation (through hoarding or recalling) before they became noticeably worn, and to the people at the time, coins in common use looked like silver coins.

The messages of the three new types are restricted and straightforward. GLORIA EXERCITVS emphasizes the glory of the army. Self evidently, Constantine was fully dependent on the loyalty of the army. That loyalty was more crucial than ever before in his long career: he was in open conflict

<sup>23</sup> All coin weights are recorded by the author unless stated otherwise.

<sup>24</sup> Bahrfeldt 1923 recorded an average of 3.05g from 1,930 coins.

<sup>25</sup> Mean of 47 coins: 22 DAFNE mean 2.84g; 13 Cyzikus nos. 55-57 mean 3.01g; 12 Rome nos. 318-320 mean 2.95g.

<sup>26</sup> Mean of 66 coins: 31 Rome nos. 327-334 mean 2.34g; 27 Rome nos. 335-339 mean 2.35g; 8 Constantinopolis nos. 59-63 mean 2.30g. RIC VII p. 497 gave an average weight for Thessalonika first GLORIA series as 2.47g.

<sup>27</sup> Rather than to  $\frac{3}{4}$  as suggested by Bruun in RIC VII, p. 9, based on a theory of carat weights. However, Bruun's carat weights conflict with actual, measured weights.

<sup>28</sup> 18 Rome nos. 322-324 mean 2.70g.

<sup>29</sup> Measurements are by the author.

<sup>30</sup> Only a small proportion of about 5,000 constantinian coins studied by the author show noticeable wear.

Fig 2. Regular bronze coins introduced by Constantine I in 330. A: Rome type (RIC VII Siscia no. 222). B: Constantinopolis type (RIC VII Siscia no. 241). Private coll. See Table 1 for weight and size.

Слика 2. Регуларни бронзани новац који је увео Константин I у 330.: А: Римски тип (RIC VII Siscia no. 222). В: Цариградски тип (RIC VII Siscia no. 241). Приватна колекција. Видети табелу 1 за тежине и величине.



with the senate and nobility in Rome; he had wrecked the state finances by his Constantinopolis project; he had killed his wife and his eldest son; through successive elimination of rivals he had incorporated in his army many legions which had formerly fought against him; and he was questioning the traditional Roman religion and backing an exotic and stubborn religion, Christianity. The message on the coins was surely but one way he used to ensure continued loyalty from his troops.

Two further types were introduced: VRBS ROMA (Fig. 2A), featuring Dea Roma on the obverse, and on the reverse a theme relating to the foundation of Rome, the she-wolf with Romulus and Remus, all beneath the two stars of the Dioscurii.

The second type was CONSTANTINOPOLIS (Fig. 2B), featuring the Tyche of the new city on the obverse. The reverse showed Victory with her foot on a ship's prow, a direct allusion to the naval victory at Chrysopolis. Alföldi has presented a compelling hypothesis that the image is based on the Liburna,<sup>31</sup> the naval victory monument celebrating Crispus' defeat of Licinius' forces.

The paired nature of the VRBS ROMA and CONSTANTINOPOLIS bronze coins is striking. The types were struck in all mints of the empire, in about equal numbers, always accompanied by the GLORIA EXERCITVS type. The message must have been obvious to the people using the coins: There are now two main cities in the empire, Rome and Constantinopolis.

Most importantly, the paired nature of the VRBS ROMA and CONSTANTINOPOLIS coins was paralleled by several local celebration types (Table 1). These will be detailed below.

<sup>31</sup> Alföldi 2004.



Fig. 3. Constantinople type silver medallion struck for the inauguration of Constantinople 11 May 330 (RIC VII Constantinople no. 53). Obv: Diademed head of Constantine I. Rev: the Tyche of Constantinople. Officina E. 17.55g. Private coll. See Table 1 for weight and size.

Сл. 3. Цариградски тип сребрне плакете, искован поводом инаугурације Цариграда 11. маја 330. (RIC VII unlisted). Obv: Глава са дијадемом Константина I Rev: the Tyche of Constantinople. Officina E. 17.55g. Private coll. Видети табелу 1 за тежине и величине.

#### CELEBRATION TYPES OF CONSTANTINOPLE

One would expect the coins and medallions minted for the inauguration of Constantinople to be listed in RIC VII under the Constantinople mint. However, only a rich gold series and a single type of silver medallion were listed as struck for the event. The remaining, varied output discussed in this paper was, at the time, either misdated, misassigned or unknown.

Type	Pair		Weight	PRD	
	Regular bronze coins	Roma	Constantinopolis	2.35g	17.3mm
A1	Large silver medallions	Roma	Constantinopolis	16.2-18.2g	27.5mm
A2	Large bronze medallions	Roma	Constantinopolis	variable	30-31mm
A3	Medium bronze medallions	Roma	Constantinopolis	5.8-6.5g	23mm
A4	Small bronze medalettes	Bridge	Star/wreath	1.0-1.3g	12.2mm
A5	Small brass medallions	Roma	Constantinopolis	1.46-2.56g	14.5mm
A6	Small silver medalettes	Roma	Constantinopolis	0.9-1.1g	10.0mm

Table 1. Paired types struck for the inauguration of Constantinople in 330. The PRD is the diameter across the pearl ring (measured across top of pearls).



Fig. 4. Roma type silver medallion struck for the inauguration of Constantinopolis 11 May 330 (RIC VII unlisted). Obv: Diademed head of Constantine I. Rev: Dea Roma. Officina S. 17.92g. Private coll. See Table 1 for weight and size.

Сл. 4. Римски Цариградски тип сребрне плакете, искован поводом инаугурације Цариграда 11. маја 330. (RIC VII unlisted). Obv: Глава са диадемом Константина I. Rev: Dea Roma. Officina S. 17.92g. Private coll. Видети табелу 1 за тежине и величине.

#### A. PAIRED TYPES

##### A1. Large silver medallions

The large silver medallions commemorating the inauguration of Constantinopolis are well known. A comprehensive study based on all 18 known specimens has recently been completed.<sup>32</sup> For a very long time, only one type of medallion was known, celebrating Constantinopolis (Fig. 3).<sup>33</sup> The first companion piece celebrating Rome appeared in 1995 (Fig. 4).<sup>34</sup> There are now fifteen known examples of the Constantinopolis type and three of the Roma type. The two types share the same anepigraphic obverse featuring the diademed head of Constantine, facing right. The paired nature of the medallions is clearly marked in the reverses. As noted by many authors, both the obverses and the reverses are reminiscent of Hellenistic tetradrachms<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Ramskold / Lenski (in press 2011).

<sup>33</sup> RIC VII Constantinople no. 53.

<sup>34</sup> First described by Dembski 1996.

<sup>35</sup> For example, Toynbee 1947 stated that “It is noteworthy that the new Christian city is here personified according to pure hellenistic tradition, without the slightest trace of Christian symbolism”. Alföldi 1963, pl. 18, figured a silver medallion next to two hellenistic tetradrachms, and described the similarities (1963, p. 116). However, I reject her curious view that the hellenistic design shows merely the antiquarian interest “das antiquarische Interesse”, of the medallion designers, and her idea that all obverses were engraved by a single master engraver is dis-

The Constantinopolis reverse (Fig. 3) shows the Tyche of Constantinopolis, seated on a throne, holding a cornucopia and a branch (certainly not a palm branch, it appears to be laurel<sup>36</sup>), with her feet on a ship's prow. She is surrounded by the legend on three sides: D N CONSTANTINVS on the right, MAX TRIVMF AVG on the left, and MCONSA below.

The Roma reverse (Fig. 4) shows Dea Roma, seated on a throne, holding spear and globe. The legend surrounding her is the same, but mirror-wise: D N CONSTANTINVS is on the left, and MAX TRIVMF AVG on the right.

The paired nature of these medallions is emphasised by the mirrored legend. Presumably, the medallions were distributed in pairs, and when held side by side, the message is unavoidable: Constantinopolis is meant to mirror the city of Rome. It is tempting to think that pairs of these medallions were given out by Constantine himself, or in his presence, on the occasion of the inauguration of Constantinopolis.<sup>37</sup>

#### *A2. Large bronze medallions*

A fairly large number of large bronze medallions figure Rome and Constantinopolis. Already Alföldi stressed the twin nature of the Rome and Constantinopolis types and pointed out “the parallelism of the type, which was of great importance for imperial propaganda”.<sup>38</sup> In a comprehensive study of the medallions, Ntalia concluded that only a small part can be dated as early as 330.<sup>39</sup> She stated that “Sowohl die Constantinopolis- als auch die Kaisermedallions [...], wie auch die Urbs-Roma-Bronzemedallions, wurden ursprünglich zu der Einweihung der neuen Hauptstadt und weiterhin nach 330 n. Chr. aufgrund der Jubiläen der beiden Hauptstädte geprägt”.<sup>40</sup> On stylistic criteria it has been assumed that the large bronze medallions were produced in Rome.<sup>41</sup> Ntalia found no convincing evidence for this, and suggested that they may have been produced in Constantinople.<sup>42</sup> Stylistic criteria indicating Rome may be explained by the move of celators from Rome to Constantinople.

Although most of the large Roma and Constantinopolis type bronze medallions are later, it seems clear that the first issues of these medallions were struck for the inauguration in 330. Following Ntalia, I regard the most likely place of production for these to be Constantinopolis, where they would have been part of the celebration issues.

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proved by the stylistic diversity of the many medallions found since.

<sup>36</sup> Böhl 1995, p. 24 mentions “Lorbeerzweig” but without discussion.

<sup>37</sup> Berk 2008, p. 111: “This is the only specific coin that can be placed in the presence of a historic individual.”

<sup>38</sup> Alföldi 1947, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Ntalia 2001.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>41</sup> Alföldi 1947 argued for Rome entirely on stylistic criteria.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.



Fig. 5. Medium bronze medallions. A. Type of GLORIA EXERCITVS, struck for Constantine II. Weight 5.84g, diameter 25 mm, PRD 23 mm. Private coll. B. VRBS ROMA type. Weight 6.44g, PRD 23 mm. Private coll. C. CONSTANTINOPOLIS type. Weight 6.09g, PRD 23mm. Private Coll.

Сл. 5. Бронзани медаљони средње величине. А. тип GLORIA EXERCITVS, исковани за Константина II. Тежина 5.84g, пречник 25 mm, PRD 23 mm. Private coll. B: VRBS ROMA type. Тежина 6.44g, PRD 23 mm. Private coll. C: CONSTANTINOPOLIS тип, Тежина 6.09g, PRD 23mm. Private Coll.

### A3. Medium bronze medallions

A few exceedingly rare, medium sized bronze medallions figuring Rome and Constantinopolis have recently come to light (Fig. 5). They were unknown when RIC VII was written. They have been thought to be bronze strikes, “pattern multiples”, of dies for gold multiples of 1 1/2 solidi.<sup>43</sup> The unique Constantinopolis specimen is mintmarked CONS and has a weight of 6.09g, and a PRD of 23mm (Fig. 5C).<sup>44</sup> This medallion is remarkable in showing the turreted bust of the Tyche of Constantinopolis on the obverse, and on the reverse the winged Victory holding a palm branch and a wreath but with two shields, not one as in the regular bronze coinage.

A corresponding unique VRBS ROMA “pattern multiple” is known, also mintmarked CONS. (Fig. 5B).<sup>45</sup> Its weight is 6.44g, and the PRD is 23 mm. The obverse carries the bust of Dea Roma indistinguishable from that of the regular bronze coins. The reverse carries the wolf and twins, with the stars of the Dioscurii above.

<sup>43</sup> Vagi 1999, p. 530; Leu 72, 1998, lot 512; NAC 15, 1999, lot 489.

<sup>44</sup> NAC 15, 1999, lot 489; Vagi 1999, no. 3055.

<sup>45</sup> Leu 72, 1998, lot 512; Vagi 1999, no. 3042.

To the Constantinopolis and Urbs Roma medallions can be added a third type clearly belonging to the same issue. It is a unique specimen figuring Constantine II on the obverse, with a GLORIA EXERCITVS reverse and mintmark CONS (Fig. 5A).<sup>46</sup> The medallion is an exact copy of the standard bronze coin listed in RIC VII as no 60, except in size, and in lacking an officina letter. Its weight is 5.84g and the diameter 25 mm with a PRD of 23 mm. Both the weight and the size, notably the PRD of 23 mm, puts it in the same issue as the Constantinopolis and Urbs Roma medallions discussed above. The date is unquestionably 330-335, the time the two-standard type of GLORIA EXERCITVS, and this restricts the date of the Constantinopolis and Urbs Roma medallions to the same interval. The existence of the Constantine II obverse makes it very likely that similar medallions were struck also for Constantine I and Constantius II. The medallions would thus mirror the first issue of the new bronze coinage, introduced in 330. Following the cataloguers of these medallions, I here regard the date for these medallions as 330.

The mintmark CONS, without officina mark, could be taken to indicate that these examples are “pattern multiples” in bronze for gold multiples. However, with three trial strike medallions in bronze, but none in gold, the question must be raised if they are indeed “pattern multiples”, or if they constitute a separate bronze issue. Although there are some known bronze “trial strikes” for gold medallions, there is no parallel to this case (the two purported bronze trial strikes for RIC VII Constantinopolis no. 1 have been proven to be forgeries).<sup>47</sup> In the absence of a single gold example, it appears most unlikely that they were trial strikes. It would perhaps be logical to assume that a series of oversized examples advertising the new coinage to be introduced were distributed to people who would need the information in advance of the introduction. However, the Constantinopolis medallion differs in both obverse and reverse from the regular bronze coins. It appears most probable that the medallion issue is a donative just like so many other of the issues discussed in this paper.

#### *A4. Small bronze medalettes*

When RIC VII was published in 1966, an large issue of small bronze medalettes was left out. The issue was later included in RIC VIII, and there dated to 330<sup>48</sup>. The mint is unquestionably Constantinopolis, since the medalettes carry the mintmark CONS plus officina letter (Fig. 6).

The small bronze medalettes form a pair: both bear the obverse legend POP ROMANVS - the Roman people - and figure the Genius of the Roman people with a cornucopiae. There are two reverse types: one figures a star in wreath, and the other a bridge over a river (Fig. 6). Kent dated them to 330 and stated that “Their typology is probably symbolic of the two chief cities of the

<sup>46</sup> Lanz 135, 2007, lot 953.

<sup>47</sup> New York Sale XX, 2009, lot 455; Gorny & Mosch 181, 2009, lot 2459. The obverse die of the latter “trial strike” is a modern Bulgarian forgery published by Ilya Prokopov in 2004 as Lipanoff Studio #138.

<sup>48</sup> RIC VIII Constantinople nos. 21 and 22.

Empire. Bridge over river: Rome. Star: Constantinople”.<sup>49</sup> Kent considered the medalettes to be donatives for the city’s dedication (inauguration), but their distribution, being especially commonly found in England<sup>50</sup>, indicates that they were distributed also to the far reaches of the empire. They were produced in very large numbers, and the fact that they were struck in all eleven officinae indicates that the entire mint of Constantinopolis was assigned to the production of these medalettes for a period of time, before or after producing the issues used specifically for the inauguration.

Many authors have regarded the bridge as that over the Danube connecting the fortress Dafne with the empire.<sup>51</sup> That idea depended on the interpretation of the CONSTANTINIANA DAFNE issues as celebrating the same fortress, a commonly held view. As indicated above, DAFNE should be interpreted in a completely different sense.

The bridge was no doubt important as its construction was mentioned in ancient sources,<sup>52</sup> and it was possibly even figured on a bronze medallion.<sup>53</sup> If the medallion is authentic,<sup>54</sup> this may have been the only time Constantine figured any of his building projects on a coin.



Fig. 6. Small bronze medalettes mintmarked CONS and officina. A: Star in wreath type (RIC VIII Constantinople no. 22). B: Bridge over river type (RIC VIII Constantinople no. 21). Obv. and rev. of B are different examples. Private coll. See Table 1 for weight and size.

Сл. 6 Мала бронзана плакета са ознаком ковнице CONS and officina. A: Звезда у венцу (RIC VIII Constantinople no. 22). B: Мост преко реке тип (RIC VIII Constantinople no. 21). Obv. and rev. of B are different examples. Private coll. Видети табелу 1 за тежине и величине.

<sup>49</sup> Kent 1981, p. 442.

<sup>50</sup> Based on personal observations of the commercial market.

<sup>51</sup> For example, Bendall 2002 following Brenot 1980. Brenot suggested that the star on the other type represented the planet under which Constantinopolis was founded. Thus the obverse shared by the both types, clearly stated to celebrate the Roman People, would be connected to reverses celebrating a bridge on the limes, and a planet. Brenot’s suggestions are rejected here. Bendall (2002), however, accepted Brenot’s interpretation, but also saw the bridge as symbolically linking east and west, signifying the unification of the empire.

<sup>52</sup> Chronicon Paschale for year 328: “Constantine the pious crossed the Danube very many times, and made a bridge for it in stone”.

<sup>53</sup> RIC VII Rome no. 298; figured by Bastien 1989, Pl. V:21.

<sup>54</sup> There are two examples, both were considered by Bruun in RIC VII, p. 283 to be casts of an original genuine specimen.

The remains of Constantine's Danube bridge are still preserved in the riverbed at ancient Oescus (Bulgaria), across the river from ancient Sucidava (Romania). It was a construction with masonry piers and wooden arches, with a wooden superstructure. The bridge had two abutment piers at each end, serving as gates for the bridge. The bridge was 2437 m in overall length (with less than half the length spanning the riverbed of the Danube). It was the longest bridge built in antiquity, and one of the longest until modern times. It lasted less than 40 years, since ancient sources tell us that in 367, the emperor Valens had to cross the Danube on a pontoon bridge, possibly at the Daphne fortress.<sup>55</sup> Interestingly, there is some uncertainty as to where the Daphne fortress was located. It may have been near Constantine's bridge but that is far from clear.<sup>56</sup>

Of the many Roman bridges preserved today, every one is built on arches (the Wikipedia article on Roman bridges shows photos of 55 Roman bridges still preserved, and they are without exception built on arches). However, the bridge figured on the small bronze medalettes is not an arched bridge. The bridge shown there a single-span bridge with latticework (Fig. 6B). The latticework is not structurally supporting but most probably represents wooden railings similar to those seen on the Rhine bridge figured on the great lead-medallion from Lyons (Bastien 1989). The bridge is straight and horizontal, and rests on two supports, one near each end. The supports protrude along the river and do not look like normal abutments, but could possibly be pontoons. At each end, the bridge carries a gated tower. These towers are similar to the towers shown on Trajan's famous bridge *sestertius* (RIC no. 569), struck circa 104-107, often thought to show an early Danube bridge.

A large, complex structure such as a bridge would necessarily have to be rendered in a very schematic way on the tiny medalettes, but the absence of both piers and arches is likely to reflect reality, since such structures were otherwise faithfully figured when arched bridges were shown on Roman coins. This medalette is, to my knowledge, the only instance in late Roman numismatics where a single-span, non-arched bridge is shown.

The comprimation of a 2 ½-kilometer long bridge into a single span seems unlikely, even if the illustration is symbolic only. Trajan's Danube bridge was half that length, built on 20 pillars, yet coins thought to feature it show only a single span. Several authors have therefore suggested that Trajan's *sestertius* figures a stone bridge in Rome, a suggestion that seems reasonable. Likewise, the Constantinopolis medalette appears to show a short bridge, and not one crossing the wide Danube. The medalette shows streaming water under the bridge, perhaps indicating a strong current or nearby rapids.

The bridge figured on the medalettes may perhaps to be interpreted as a pontoon bridge. Where the bridge was and why it was figured remains unknown, but it is most unlikely to be Constantine's bridge over the Danube.

<sup>55</sup> This was mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus and Procopius from Caesarea, *vide* Wikipedia.

<sup>56</sup> Wikipedia says "The most probable position is at Gradistea at southeast of Ulmeni. Still some historians believe that the Daphne was the new name of the Sucidava."



Fig. 7. Small brass medallions showing Dea Roma (RIC VIII Rome no. 104, but thought here to have been struck in Constantinople in 330). The figure on the reverse carries a necklace and several bracelets indicating a female (Dea Roma or Virtus) and not the emperor. A: example with right breast exposed. B: Example with reverse showing Dea Roma with covered chest. C: Detail of example with right breast exposed. Private coll. See Table 1 for weight and size.

Сл. 7 Мали месингани медаљони приказују Dea Roma (RIC VIII Rome no. 104, али овде се мисли да су исковани у Цариграду 330.). Фигура на наличју носи огрлицу и неколико наруквица указујући на женску особу (Dea Roma или Virtus) а не на цара. А: Пример са изложеном десном дојком. Б: Пример са наличја, показује Dea Roma са покривеним грудима. Ц: Детаљни пример са изложеном десном дојком. Private coll. Видети табелу 1 за тежине и величине.

The paired nature of these medalettes makes me inclined to follow Kent<sup>57</sup> and others and include them in the celebration issues of 330, although (to modern viewers at least) they do not clearly show Rome and Constantinopolis.

#### A5. Small brass medallions

The description of the small medallions in RIC VIII as Rome nos. 104-106 is heavily outdated. Several misconcepts are corrected here:

1. They are not made of bronze but of brass (orichalcum in Roman terminology). When new, they looked very similar to gold (as they do if polished today), nothing like the whitish bronze.

2. The ROMA reverse does not show the emperor, but a woman. Several dies shows her exposing her right breast (Fig 6A, C), and she is thus either Dea Roma or Virtus. The latter goddess was part of the Roman pantheon no longer in favour by Constantine. It is more likely that the person is Dea Roma.

<sup>57</sup> In RIC VIII, p. 442.



Fig. 8. Small brass medallions showing Constantinopolis (RIC VIII Rome no. 106, but thought here to have been struck in Constantinople in 330). Obv: The diademed Tyche of Constantinopolis. Rev: Pax standing, holding branch and sceptre. The marked difference in style between specimens A and B indicates different engravers. Private coll. See Table 1 for weight and size.

Сл. 8 Мали месингани медаљони приказују Константинопољ (RIC VIII Rome no. 106 али овде се мисли да су исковани у Константинопољу 330.). Обв: The diademed Tyche of Constantinopolis. Rev: Пах стоји, држећи жезло и гране. Видљива разлика у стилу између узорака А и Б означава различите гравере. Private coll. Видети табелу 1 за тежине и величине.

This suggestion is supported by the fact that obverse dies showing Dea Roma's breast are coupled with reverse dies also showing a woman's breast, whereas obverse dies showing a covered Dea Roma are coupled with similar reverse dies (Fig. 7B). In my view, they all show Dea Roma on both obverse and reverse, and the differences can be ascribed to individual celators.

3. The variety described in RIC VIII as Rome no. 105, Constantinopolis with laureate head, does not exist. All known dies uniformly show an elaborate pearl diadem (Fig 7A, B).

4. No basis has been given for assigning them to the mint of Rome. The likely interpretation of the letters P R on the reverse as standing for POPVLVS ROMANVS is certainly no indication of the Rome mint. I argue here that they were struck at the mint of Constantinopolis<sup>58</sup>, and that this is indicated by their paired nature, and by being companion pieces to the small silver medalettes - described below - for which the Rome mint has never been suggested but which are ubiquitously assigned to the Constantinopolis mint.

5. They were dated by Kent in RIC VIII to 348 because he suggested that they were struck for the 1100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city. The uncertainty of this suggestion is shown by the fact that the same author had earlier considered them as struck c. 339.<sup>59</sup> In the absence of hoard data, all that is certain is that they were struck at the same time as the small silver medalettes (see A6 below). I agree with Bendall<sup>60</sup> that 330 is a more likely date.

6. Coin ratings in RIC VIII are relative, of course, and by now 30 years old. It is clear the brass medallions are far from as rare as the R4 ratings for both types suggest. I have seen more than two dozen specimens of each type, with worn and holed specimens being quite common.

<sup>58</sup> As did Bendall 2002.

<sup>59</sup> Hill /Kent 1960.

<sup>60</sup> Bendall 2002, p. 142.

With the data updated, it is easier to see the paired nature of these brass medallions and how they fit in with the celebration issues. One type features Rome (Fig. 7), the other Constantinopolis (Fig. 8). They are of the same size, weight range and material, and appear to have been struck in equal numbers. They have parallels in the silver medalettes. I fail to see any reason to assign these to the mint of Rome, but if they were made for the inauguration of Constantinopolis in 330, they were likely produced at the mint of Constantinopolis.

The non-monetary nature of this issue is demonstrated by the lack of a weight standard. The ten best preserved specimens weighed by the author range from 1.460g to 2.560g.<sup>61</sup> The different weights are explained by differences in thickness. All specimens have a PRD (diameter across the pearl ring) of 14.5mm.

#### *A6. Small silver medalettes*

Small silver medalettes of about 10-12mm diameter and a weight of around 1 gram seem to have been produced for many occasions during a period of at least two hundred years, starting with the inauguration of Constantinopolis. Only the earliest types are discussed here. Bendall tried to make sense of the many types,<sup>62</sup> and his seminal 2002 publication is the basis for the present study. Unfortunately, Bendall did not have access to more than a few of the actual specimens and had to rely almost entirely on images and data in sales catalogues. Due to the small size of the specimens and the hopefully soon obsolete tradition of figuring coins at actual size rather than enlarged, many errors were incorporated in the study, both for the small silver medalettes and for the star and wreath types (section B below). The present study is based on actual specimens, including many of those listed by Bendall, which enables a closer look at the types. The discussion below is not in any way complete, and some of Bendall's types are very briefly treated. A fuller treatment must include die links, which is beyond the scope of the present paper.

#### *Bendall Types 2 and 4*

The obverse types of the small brass medallions recur in small silver medalettes. These are absent from RIC in spite of having been described by Sabatier already in 1847, and they were present in the well known Trau collection.<sup>63</sup> The small silver medalettes differ from the brass medallions in lacking an obverse legend, and in the reverses. They were described by Bendall<sup>64</sup> as Type 2, which has the bust of Roma on the obverse and a large P on the reverse (Fig. 9), and Type 4, which has the bust of Constantinopolis on the obverse

<sup>61</sup> Actual weights: 1.460g, 1.484g, 1.632g, 1.744g, 1.806g, 2.068g, 2.098g, 2.104g, 2.246g, 2.560g.

<sup>62</sup> Bendall 2002 and 2008.

<sup>63</sup> The two types were figured in the *Sammlung Franz Trau 1935*, pl. 46, nos. 3982 - "Urbs Roma", and 3995 - "Fausta".

<sup>64</sup> Bendall 2002, p. 140 ff.



Fig. 9. Small silver medalettes of Roma type. Two examples struck from the same obverse die but different reverse dies. The die has undergone substantial wear between the strikes, indicating that a large number of medalettes were produced. Private coll. See Table 1 for weight and size.

Сл. 9 Мала сребрна плакета Римског типа. Два примера искована у калупу са истим лицем, али различитим наличјем. Калуп је претрпео значајно хабање између удараца, што указује на то да је велики број плакета произведен. Private coll. Видети табелу 1 за тежине и величине.

feature shows that at least some dies were used until worn out. This, in turn, indicates a very large number of strikes. In spite of many authors' attempts to calculate the number of coins produced from a die in ancient times, the true number will likely never be known. A reasonable guess at the total number of Roma and Constantinopolis silver medalettes produced could be anywhere between many tens of thousands to many millions. The number of dies used for the silver medalettes is unknown, but a preliminary survey indicates that the number is fairly restricted since the obverse die in Fig. 9 is known from at least four specimens; the obverse die in Fig. 10A from at least two specimen; the obverse die in Fig. 10B from five specimens, and so on.

Die matches are extremely difficult to establish in the small, relatively feature-less reverses. However, a preliminary count - of unambiguous matches only - indicates that there are several die links in the silver medalettes. This circumstance indicates that they were struck in only one or a few officinae. If they were produced in the mint of Constantinopolis, not all eleven officinae

and a large K on the reverse (Fig. 12). The P is usually interpreted as the Greek letter rho, signifying R as in Rome. The K is taken to be the Greek letter kappa, indicating the Greek spelling of Constantinopolis.

These two types of small silver medalettes form a fairly uniform group as regards style, relief, size, and they all have a PRD of 10.0mm (Figs. 9-12). Twelve specimens available to me for measurement (eight of Roma type and four of Constantinopolis) all have a PRD of 10.0mm on both obverse and reverse, with no deviation. The paired nature of these small silver medalettes is unambiguous.

Earlier data indicated that the Rome type could be much more common than the Constantinopolis type.<sup>65</sup> However, an incomplete survey by me of the more recent commercial market yielded 36 Roma and 32 Constantinopolis specimens, indicating that Rome and Constantinopolis specimens were struck in equal numbers.

Some dies known from more than one medalette show progressive wear. One die shows severe deterioration between strikes (Fig. 9). This

<sup>65</sup> Bendall 2002, p. 140.



Fig 10. Small silver medalettes of Roma type. Three examples from different dies. A: Obverse die known from 4 specimens. B: Obverse die known from 5 specimens, this one from a late stage with worn die. C: Only known specimen from this obverse die. The marked stylistic differences between the dies indicate different engravers. A survey of numerous medalettes indicates that each engraver produced several dies with very small differences, and many such dies are known (too many to be figured here). Private coll. See Table 1 for weight and size.

Сл 10 Мале сребрне плакете Римског типа. Три примера из различитих калупа А: супротни калуп познат на основу 4 примерка. В: супротни калуп познат на основу 5 узорака, који припада касној фази са изхабаним калупом. Ц: Једини познати примерак на основу овог калупа наличја. Видљиве стилске разлике између калупа указују на различите гравере. Истраживање бројних плакета указује на то да је сваки гравер производио више калупа са врло малим разликама, и многи такви калупи су познати (превише да би се овде приказали). Private coll. Видети табелу 1 за тежине и величине.

were employed. This does not, however, preclude Constantinopolis as the mint of production, since it may well be that the related small bronze medallions were produced at the same time, and if other celebration issues are taken into account, the eleven officinae could produce a fair number of types simultaneously. A more likely explanation, as hypothesised above, may be that some of the celebration types could have been produced in working officinae during the time span needed to re-organize the mint from seven to eleven officinae.

As noted by Bendall,<sup>66</sup> the bust of Dea Roma is very similar in the brass medallions and the silver medalettes. The bust of Constantinopolis is almost identical in the brass and silver types. Of particular significance is the intricate pearl diadem (Fig. 11). The diadem carries a frontal medallion or gem,<sup>67</sup> flanked by a semicircular, pearled extension. This unique diadem is common to these two issues but is never seen elsewhere.

#### *Bendall Type 5*

Bendall separated a single Constantinopolis specimen in the British Museum from the main type (Bendall Type 4) into a separate variety (Bendall Type 5a), on the grounds of lacking diadem ties. A second specimen, from a

<sup>66</sup> Bendall 2002, p. 142.

<sup>67</sup> Interpreted by Bendall 2008 as “a curl of hair (?)”



Fig. 11. Small silver medalettes of Constantinopolis type. The obverse figures the diademed Tyche of Constantinopolis. The diadem has ties at the back. The frontal jewel is visible in B but not in A. Private coll. See Table 1 for weight and size.

Сл. 11. Мале сребрне плакете Цариградског типа. На лицу се налази фигура Тихе са дијадемом Цариграда. Дијадема има везе на задњој страни. Фронтални драгуљ је видљив у Б, али не и код А. Private coll. Видети табелу 1 за тежине и величине.



Fig. 12. Small silver medalettes. A: Constantinopolis type portrait, lacking ties but with the characteristic, elaborate pearl diadem. At the neck below the ear is a flan flaw. B: Female figure with elaborate coiffure. Note the braid fastened with pins. Private coll. See Table 1 for weight and size.

Сл. 12. Мале сребрне плакете А: Цариград тип, портрет без веза али са карактеристичним, богатим бисерним дијадемама. Б: женска фигура са раскошном фризуром. Обратите пажњу на плетеницу учвршћену иглама. Private coll. Видети табелу 1 за тежине и величине.



different obverse die (but probably the same reverse die), is figured here (Fig. 12A). The bust is less elaborately engraved than the normal type but shows the same type of diadem, and the K of the reverse die is different. A third specimen, probably from the same dies as the British Museum example, was recently offered on the commercial market.<sup>68</sup> It is struck from the same reverse die as the

<sup>68</sup> Helios 5, lot. 446 "Bendall 5a. Ein Exemplar bekannt".

example figured in Fig. 12A. A fourth example, from the Trau Collection, no. 4050, was mis-assigned by Bendall to his Type 5b, characterised by a hatched diadem, but also shows the same diadem type as Fig. 12A here.

The size and weight agrees with the normal type, but it is possible that this type was struck for a different occasion.

Another small silver medalette showing a female bust needs to be discussed here (Fig. 12B). This seemingly unique specimen was included by Bendall in his Type 5b (in his list: Busso Peus auction 345 etc.). It does not, however, show the hatched diadem characterising Bendall's type, and does not belong in either Type 5a or 5b. Actually, the female carries no diadem at all but has an elaborate coiffure. Especially prominent is the thick braid swept around the head and held in place with a series of pins, whose heads are visible. This coiffure is identical to the one exhibited by both Helena and Theodora in small bronze coins minted in the first years after the death of Constantine I. Such coins were struck in three mints only (residential mints for the three reigning sons of Constantine): Trier, Rome, and Constantinople. The ones from Trier has a very different style, whereas those from Rome and Constantinople (see RIC VIII, Pl. 21, figs. 33, 51) resemble the small silver medalette figured here. The specimen is slightly larger than the silver medalettes described above, it has a PRD of 10.8mm (obverse) and 10.3mm (reverse), and the weight is 0.998g.

The female in Fig. 12B cannot easily be interpreted as Constantinopolis, although the large K on the reverse surely stands for that city. Although tempting, I do not see a member of the imperial house in the female. In the large and varied material of small silver medalettes, I see no indication that any member of the imperial family is portrayed. This is in contrast with Bendall, who described an example showing, in his view, an emperor.<sup>69</sup> Unfortunately, Bendall figured an enlargement of the reverse instead of the obverse, and the miniscule illustration of the obverse does not permit either firm confirmation or definite rejection of Bendall's suggestion. There appears to be a fibula on the shoulder, as described by Bendall, which is something not seen in any other specimen known to me. Hopefully this specimen will be refigured so that it can be re-studied.

The connection between the brass medallions (Fig. 8) and the silver medalettes of Fig. 11 can hardly be disputed, and they must all have been produced for the same occasion. I regard this occasion as the inauguration of Constantinopolis on 11 May 330. Like Bendall,<sup>70</sup> I can see no other likely place of production than Constantinopolis. I interpret both types as "Auswurfmünzen", intended for distribution to the general public. Gold coins showing the emperor in a quadriga throwing coins to the public<sup>71</sup> may illustrate how these medalettes were distributed.

<sup>69</sup> Bendall 2008, fig. 2.

<sup>70</sup> Bendall 2002, p. 144.

<sup>71</sup> RIC VII Constantinople nos. 103-106.



Fig. 13. Small silver medalettes, all with Roma on the obverse. A and B: reverse with large K. C and D: reverse with smaller P. Private coll. See Table 1 for weight and size.

Сл. 13. Мале сребрне плакете, све са Римом на лицу. А и Б: наличје са великим К. С и Д: наличје са мањим Р. Private coll. Видети табелу 1 за тежине и величине.

#### *Bendall Types 1 and 3*

A number of other, related silver medalettes are known. Two of these are included here because they constitute the remaining types regarded by Bendall as dating from 330: his Type 1 and Type 3 (Fig. 13). The style could be taken to indicate that Type 1 (Fig. 13A and B) was struck during Constantine's reign, possibly for the inauguration in 330. However, the PRD is larger, (11.2-11.4mm). Bendall's Type 3 (Fig. 13 C and D), known to him from a single example (but now from at least six specimens) is even larger (PRD: 12.4-12.7mm), and the execution of the tiny P on the reverse is not similar to the P on Bendall's Type 2 (Fig. 8). None of Types 1 or 3 appears to be paired (with each other or with other silver medalettes). They do not fit in well with types regarded here as struck in 330, and at least Type 3 may be from a later date.

#### *B. UNPAIRED TYPES WITH STAR AND WREATH*

In addition to the paired types, a number of medalettes of both silver and bronze may be connected with the celebrations of 330. None of these types were included in RIC. Bendall has described several of these types.<sup>72</sup> He recently divided the specimens known to him into two size groups: "coins with star and wreath in two sizes, the larger ones weighing ca. 1.50gm. and the two smaller ca. 1.00gm".<sup>73</sup> As is detailed below, there is no evidence for such grouping. Bendall based his groups on published information as actual specimens were unavailable to him. However, all specimens examined by me, including several

<sup>72</sup> Bendall 2002 and 2008.

<sup>73</sup> Bendall 2008, p. 185.

of those figured by Bendall and many additional ones, have a very small range of values for PRD and star size. Flan sizes and thickness vary, and therefore weights, but the dies were all cut to the same size. I therefore regard all star/wreath types known so far as being of a single size group, struck for a single occasion. There may be one or two aberrant specimens (see “Bronze medalette with star and wreath, anepigraphic” below), but they have not been available to me for examination, and the published data for them needs confirmation.

The star/wreath types show strong similarities to the small bronze medalettes with POP ROMANVS obverse. Most obviously, they share the presence of a wreath and an eight-rayed star. As noted by others,<sup>74</sup> only two other types of coinage compare in this respect: the bronze coins struck in 318-319 for Fausta and Helena in Thessalonika,<sup>75</sup> and the silver coins struck in 351 and 360 for Julian II and Gallus as caesars at several mints (see below). Specific, characteristic features shared between the POP ROMANVS medalettes and the star/wreath types discussed here are:

1. The shape of the letters (what we might call the font). The letters O, C, S, A, and V on the bronze star/wreath types (see examples in Figs. 16, 17) are shaped in the exact same way as the obverse and reverse letters in the POP ROMANVS medalettes (Fig. 6). The letters are compact, wide relative to their height, the position and strength of serifs similar, and the rounded relief is the same. This lettering is reminiscent of the one in the CONSTANTINIANA DAFNE coins, whereas lettering in post-inauguration coinage (e.g. GLORIA EXERCITVS) is often thinner (e.g., the O encloses an actual circular field rather than just a central depression).

2. The wreaths are exceedingly similar, with some exceptions. The only wreath type (described below) in POP ROMANVS medalettes is also the most common type in the star/wreath medalettes, being the only type in the O/C S/C type; present in 2 out of the 3 C/A V/O specimens; and in some silver medalettes (Fig 14C).<sup>76</sup> These wreaths all share the following features:

- 2A. The connecting medallion at the top is small, not extending outside the inner and outer perimeter of the wreath, it is circular (rather than oval), and composed of a pearl border and a single central pearl.

- 2B. The wreath is of even width throughout its length. It is narrow, 1/6 to 1/5 the diameter of the field it encloses. The outer and inner leaves are equally sized, shaped and spaced along the entire length of the wreath. To achieve the even spacing, the celator engraved 13-18 leaves on each inner side and 18-25 on each outer side of the wreath.<sup>77</sup> The central ridge of the wreath is formed by consecutive leaves of similar shape and spacing as the lateral ones.

- 2C. The ties at the lower centre of the wreath are simple. There are four to six vertical bands. The two outer or the two penultimate ones continue into laterally curved bands, ending without decoration or with a single pearl (two pearls in some silver medalettes).

<sup>74</sup> For example, the cataloguer of NAC 33 (2006), lot 598.

<sup>75</sup> RIC VII Thessalonica nos. 48-51.

<sup>76</sup> For example, CNG 67, 2004, lot 1772.

<sup>77</sup> Actual examples in individual wreaths in O/C S/C medalettes: 19/23; 16/23; 13/18; 18/25, 16/21.

Wreaths of the above description are not unique to the medalettes under discussion. Fairly similar wreaths are present in the regular coinage, beginning in 321-322. Early examples are seen in the mint of Rome in year 321, in the final stage<sup>78</sup> of the issues listed as RIC VII nos. 237-244, and also in nos. 245-247. Later wreaths, from 329-330<sup>79</sup> are even more similar. Wreaths in the Rome coins differ in the configuration of the ties. Many contemporary wreaths from other mints are also similar. No regular bronze coins with wreaths were produced after 330, and it took until long after the death of Constantine I before wreaths appeared again on the bronze coinage.

I interpret the detailed similarities between the POP ROMANVS medalettes and the star/wreath medalettes as indicating that they were contemporary issues. With the possible exception of some or all C/A V/O types, the star/wreath medalettes were most likely produced in the same mint as the POP ROMANVS medalettes, meaning that of Constantinople. Like most other researchers I date the POP ROMANVS to the time of Constantine I, which means between 330 (when all 11 officinae began working) and 337. I take the paired nature to support the date 330. Whether this date is correct or not, there can hardly be any doubt that the star/wreath types are inseparable in time from the POP ROMANVS type.

#### *B1. Silver medalette with star and wreath, anepigraphic*

This type (Fig. 14) was described already in 1870 by Misson. I have been unable to find any specimen in the major museum collections in Europe, but due to their uninformative nature, such specimens, if present, may be sorted just about anywhere. However, it is not as rare as usually stated, there are 15 specimens known to me, all from the commercial market. Among these, there are only two reverse die-match pairs, so the number of medalettes originally produced could have been enormous.

There is some variation in the execution, in particular of the reverse (Fig. 14). Wreaths vary from thick to thin, and from small to large. Most wreath ties are simple (Fig. 14C), but a unique specimen shows a pair of dimples below the wreath (Fig. 14B). Two dies show tie loops inside the wreath (Fig. 11A; and NAC 33, 2006, lot 598). Similar loops are seen in one of the C/A V/O specimens (see below).

Cataloguers usually assign these medalettes to the celebrations of 330. The cataloguer of CNG 55 (2000), lot 1448 stated that “This rare coin was probably issued as part of the ceremonies in celebration of the dedication of Constantinople in 330 AD, along with numerous other unusual designs including the P and K type third siliqua. Interestingly, this silver issue shares its obverse die with the Æ tessera of similar type but with O/CS/C in the wreath (see CNG Auction 53, lot 1736)”. That particular die link is, however, incorrect.

Apart from the erroneous die link, I agree with the cataloguer of NAC 33 (2006), lot 598, who stated: “Since this silver piece has no inscription we must

<sup>78</sup> Stage ii d; Bruun 1966, p. 289

<sup>79</sup> RIC VII Rome nos. 318-320 and 322.

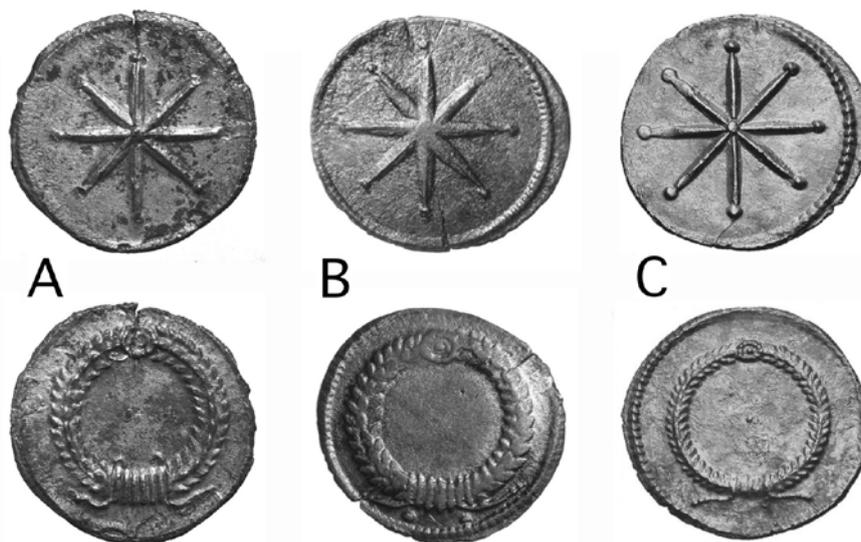


Fig. 14. Silver medalettes with star and wreath. A: Specimen with tie loops inside the wreath. B: specimen with a pair of dimples beneath the wreath. C: specimen with wreath similar to the type in the small POP ROMANVS bronze medalettes. Private coll. See text for weight and size.

Сл. 14. Сребрна плакета са звездом и венцем. А: Примерак са везаном петљом унутар венца. Б узорак са паром набора испод венца. Ц: узорак са венцем сличан типу POP ROMANVS бронзаних плакета Private coll. Погледајте текст за тежине и величине.

rely upon its design, style and fabric for an attribution; in each instance they lead us to the Constantinian Era, even to a specific occasion: the dedication ceremonies for Constantinople in the spring of 330. The obverse depicts an eight-rayed star and the reverse a laurel wreath (the corona triumphalis) adorned with a jewelled medallion. The star and wreath individually make no other appearance on coins of this period except on base metal tesserae that are obverse-die-linked with these silver pieces, and which have the inscription O C S C within the wreath. A star within a wreath occurs on three mainstream coinages of the era: billon nummi of Helena as Nobilissima Femina struck at Thessalonica in 318-319; siliquae of the Caesars Julian II and Gallus struck at various Imperial mints between 351 and 360; and the anonymous bronzes inscribed POP ROMANVS struck for the Constantinople dedication. Since the star-in-wreath motif was not a part of Roman numismatic iconography before the Constantinian Era, or after it, this silver piece must belong here, and among these three coinages the most satisfactory parallel is offered by the POP ROMANVS bronzes.”

Bendall (2002) described this type as Type 6. He listed 6 specimens known at the time and figured two of these.<sup>80</sup> However, one of Bendall’s two figured examples (specimen “e”, Bendall’s Fig. 10) later appeared on the com-

<sup>80</sup> Bendall 2002, fig. 9 and 10; refigured by Bendall 2008, figs. 3 and 6.



Fig. 15. Bronze medalette with star and wreath, anepigraphic. Private coll. See text for weight and size.

Сл. 15. Бронзана плкакете са звездом и венцем, анепиграфски. Private coll. Погледајте текст за тежине и величине.

mercial market, and it is made of bronze, not silver, and is described below.<sup>81</sup> On the other hand, another specimen appearing on the commercial market two years later was described by the cataloguer as  $\text{Æ}$ , but is silver.<sup>82</sup>

Two silver examples have a PRD of 15.3mm (Fig. 14A) and 15.5mm (Fig. 14B; CNG 55, 2000, lot 1448).

### *B2. Bronze medalette with star and wreath, anepigraphic*

This type was described by Bendall (2002) as Type C. It is virtually identical to the silver type, differing only in being struck in bronze. Bendall knew only of a single specimen, of weight 1.00g. That specimen is unavailable to the author. Measurements from Bendall's images (2002 fig. 11; 2008 fig 5) indicate a PRD of c. 14mm. Interestingly, the width of the star is c. 11mm, the same as in most other star/wreath examples.

Another bronze specimen<sup>83</sup> was described by Bendall (2002, specimen "e") as a silver example, but when examined by the author turned out to be a bronze specimen (Fig. 15). It has a weight of 1.49g and its PRD is 15.3 mm on obverse and 15.5mm on reverse. There is thus no size difference between the silver examples and this bronze specimen.

A third bronze star and wreath example was recently seen on the commercial market.<sup>84</sup> The published size indicates a PRD of 19.5-20.0mm and its

<sup>81</sup> Gorny & Mosch Auction 134, 2004, lot 3088; specimen examined by the author.

<sup>82</sup> Gorny & Mosch Auction 147, 2006, lot 2337; specimen examined by the author.

<sup>83</sup> Later offered by Gorny & Mosch, Auction 134, 2004, lot 3088; specimen examined by the author.

<sup>84</sup> Rauch 86, 2010, lot 1222; specimen unavailable to the author.

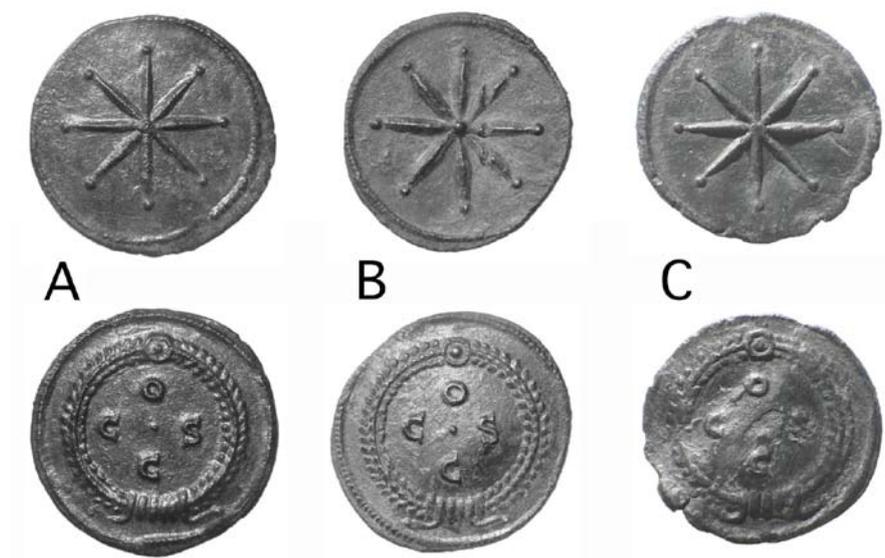


Fig. 16. Bronze medalettes with star and wreath inscribed O/C S/C. A: well preserved example. B: example bent due to a test cut on the right side of the star. C: example bent more than once in ancient times. Private coll. See text for weight and size.

Сл. 16. Бронзана плакета са звездом и венцем, са натписом O/C S/C. А: Добро очуван примерак . Б: Примерак савијен због теста засецањем на десној страни звезде. Ц: Примерак савијан више од једном у прошлости. Private coll. Погледајте текст за тежине и величине.

weight was given as 3.24g . This indicates a much larger specimen than any other star/wreath example (if the data given are correct). Clearly more examples need to come to light before this type can be understood.

### B3. Bronze medalette with star and wreath inscribed O/C S/C

This type (Fig. 16), lacking in RIC but described by Cohen (1892, p. 272:54) and figured by Göbl 1978 (pl. 9, fig. 105), was defined by Bendall (2002) as Type D.

Failmezger (2002, p. 38) suggested that the medalette might be a tessera, possibly celebrating the 5<sup>th</sup> consulship of Constantine II. This was based on the reading of the inscription as COS E. Failmezger's coin is that of CNG 53 (2000) lot 1736. The bottom C in this specimen has a small lump in the lower C making it look a bit like a Greek epsilon. However, the letter is unquestionably a C.

This type was exceedingly rare before year 2000. Perhaps a hoard was found, because more than ten specimens entered the commercial market 2000-2005, and some additional ones have appeared since then. Many specimens are bent (Fig 16C), and one has a test cut (Fig. 16B). The bending and cutting may indicate that people were unfamiliar with these medalettes, and felt a need to

test what material they were made of. Of six specimens examined by the author, all have a thick green and brown patina with sandy deposits, under which the metal appears to be bronze with high copper content.

As discussed below under the C/A V/O type, the weak evidence available indicates that the letters should be read top down, from left to right, thus O/C S/C. The cataloguer of Leu 77 (2000) lot 669 stated that “These letters seem never to have been explained, but it would be quite easy to relate them either to the foundation of the new city as a whole, or to the inauguration of the new senate in Constantinople.” Bendall discussed, and rejected, some suggested readings.<sup>85</sup> The meaning of the inscription remains unknown.

These bronze medalettes have a PRD of 15.8mm, showing no variation. However, the weight varies markedly. Weights of ten well preserved specimens recorded by the author range from 0.79g to 1.44g.<sup>86</sup> The lack of a weight standard shows the non-monetary nature of these medalettes.

#### *B4. Bronze medalette with star and wreath inscribed C/A V/O*

An example of a new type (Fig. 17A) appeared in 2007.<sup>87</sup> The specimen was one of the two new types described by Bendall (2008, fig. 4). The obverse shows an eight-rayed star, and the reverse the letters C/A V/O inside a wreath. In addition, the obverse of this specimen shows the letter H at the tip of one of the rays. It is struck on a small flan, but double the distance from the preserved pearl ring part to the star’s centre pellet yields a PRD of 15.5-16.0mm. Its weight is 1.038g.

Two further star/wreath medalettes inscribed C/A V/O are known to me, both offered on the commercial market. One heavily corroded example (Fig. 17C) is similar to the above specimen but lacks the H on the obverse. However, on the reverse under the wreath are the corroded remains of three letters, tentatively identified here as TSA or TSD, although the identification is far from certain. The specimen is has lost much weight, only 0.862g remains. Its star is 11mm across, thus the same size as other star/wreath types. Incomplete remains of the pearl ring along the edge permit an estimation of the PRD to c. 16mm.

The third C/A V/O specimen (Fig. 17B) has a full flan, and the PRD is 15.8. Its weight is 1.462g. The specimen is battered and corroded, but the letters inside the wreath can all be made out. The specimen shows clearly that the letter at 9 o’clock is an A and not a D. There are no letters under the wreath, and no space for any letter at the tip of a ray because the star is larger than usual being 12.5mm across, leaving too short distance to the pearl ring to accommodate a

<sup>85</sup> Bendall 2002, pp. 146-147. Based on an analogy with the well known OB CIVES SERVATOS coins for Augustus and several subsequent emperors, Bendall discussed the conceivable reading OB CIVES SERVATOS CONSTANTINOPOLITENSES. However, the legend OB CIVES SERVATOS specifically refers to the corona civica surrounding the legend. In the presently discussed medalettes, the wreath - whatever type it is - is not a corona civica, and the reading is in any case mere speculation.

<sup>86</sup> Actual weights: 1.00g, 1.44g, 0.79g, 0.91g, 1.26g, 1.15g, 1.57g, 0.81g, 1.13g, 1.01g.

<sup>87</sup> CNG 75, 2007, lot 1145.

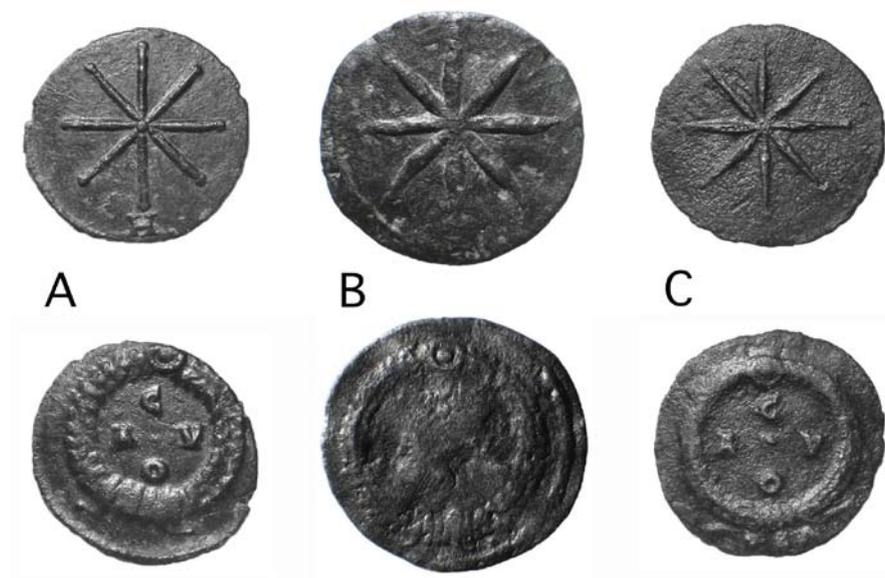


Fig. 17. Bronze medalettes with star and wreath inscribed C/A V/O. All three specimens are figured to the same scale. A: Obverse shows the letter H beneath (or above?) the star. The wreath is small and thick. The ties are simple. B: Obverse anepigraphic. The letters C/A V/O can just be made out. The wreath is large and thin. The ties include two loops inside the wreath, as in one of the silver medalettes in Fig. 11. C: Obverse anepigraphic. The wreath is small and thin, with simple ties. Beneath it are the poorly preserved remains of three signs, possibly the letters TSA, but could be other letters or signs. Private coll. See text for weight and size.

Сл. 17. Бронзана плакета са звездом и венцем и натписом C/A V/O. Сва три узорка су заснована на истој величини: А Лице показује слово Х испод (или изнад?) звезде. Венац је мали и дебео. Везе су једноставне. Б: Лице је анепиграфско. Слова letters C/A V/O се једва могу раззнати. Венац је велики и танак. Везе имају две петље унутар венца, као у једној од сребрних плакета на сл. 11. Ц: Лице је анепиграфско. Венац је мали и танак, са једноставним везама. Испод ње су слабо очувани остаци три знака, вероватно слова TSA, али то могу бити и друга слова или знакови. Private coll. Погледајте текст за тежине и величине.

letter. The wreath ties have two loops on the inner side, similar to the loops in some of the silver medalettes (Fig. 11, left specimen; and NAC 33, 2006, lot. 598).

As is the case with O/C S/C, the meaning of the letters C/A V/O is unknown. Bendall (2008, p. 186) discusses the possibility of the reading “Ab Vrbe COndita”, but recognizes that “it means that they must be read at first horizontally and then vertically”. I propose that the letters were read in the predominant fashion used on other Roman coins: from left to right starting at the top. When letters were to be read clock-wise (or anti-clock-wise), the individual letters were inclined to show the direction. An example is a Trajan Æ18 from Deultum, Thrace, with a reverse showing the forepart of a bull, surrounded by four letters:

C F P D, for Colonia Flavia Pacensis Deultum. The letters are read clock-wise beginning at 9 o'clock, and the P or D are horizontal or inverted (depending on die) to show the direction.

An unexpected parallel to the C/A V/O inscription is found in Byzantine c. 10th Century Æ 19mm tesseræ inscribed TE/TAP/TΩN on one side and +/D V/O on the other.<sup>88</sup> Although the similarity is most likely superficial, the cross (if that is what it is) at the top these tesseræ apparently precedes the three letters, indicating the reading cross - D - V - O, lending some support to the reading C - A - V - O favoured here.

The H on one specimen and the possibility of a mintmark (TSA?) on another could be taken to indicate that these medalettes were struck at other mints than Constantinopolis. More and better preserved examples are needed to evaluate this.

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<sup>88</sup> For example CNG 69, 2005, lot 1871.

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Lars Ramskold  
НОВАЦ И МЕДАЉОНИ ИСКОВАНИ ПОВОДОМ ИНАУГУРАЦИЈЕ  
КОНСТАТИНОПОЛИСА 11. МАЈА 330. ГОДИНЕ

Константин Велики је донео две одлуке од огромног значаја за човечанство: прихватио је хришћанство и основао Цариград. Град и његова инаугурација 11. маја 330. годинесу имали кључну улогу у транзицији од класичне до касне антике. Од тада, центар грчко-римске цивилизације се помера на далеки исток западне Европе. Док је запад стагнирао и улазио у мрачно доба, цивилизација се настављала у византијском свету. Хиљаду година касније, Цариград је и даље био главни град Византије, када су се грчко-римски идеје и утицаји вратили у западну Европу, често преко арапских посредника. Без обзира на све, Константинове одлуке представљају темељ савремене западне цивилизације и имају кључни утицај на савремени свет.

Новчићи и медаљони исковани поводом инаугурације Цариграда, илуструју значај који је Константин придавао догађају. Кованице су се тада готово искључиво сводиле на мале бронзане новчиће и сви стари типови замењени су новим. Нови типови прослављали су војску и два главна града, Рим и Цариград. Поред регуларних новчића, производио се и велик избор разних плакета и медаљона. Они су обухватили бројне златне плакете у свим величинама, велике сребрне плакете по узору на хеленистичке тетрадрахме, затим велике бронзане плакете, као и широк спектар мањих медаљона и плакета у сребру, месингу и бронзи.

Многи типови су ковани у два варијетета, јасно комплетирајући један другом, један је приказивао Рим а други Цариград. Тема прославе Цариграда је вероватно била намењена локалном становништву, али је новац широм царства носио једну неопозиву поруку: Сада постоје два главна града у империји: Рим и Цариград

Константинова одлука о оснивању Цариграда је можда дошла постепено, али када је град био инаугурисан, није било места за оклевање када се радило о значају града. Константинове кованице и медаљони исковани поводом прославе, показују да је његова намера била да од тог тренутка, сваки грађанин у царству има свест о томе да је Цариград једнак Риму. У 330. години, вечни град је био неспорни центар за Римљане већ 1.082 године. Цариград ће бити центар Источног римског света 1.123 године. Када је град коначно пао под Турску власт 1453. године, Западна Европа је већ добила преживеле античке идеје, уметност је доживела препород, и правац модерне цивилизације је постављен. Без Цариграда, свет би био много другачији.

