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CONSTANTINE'S SUCCESSION PLANS AS SEEN IN NUMISMATIC ICONOGRAPHY: THE CREATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL DYNASTIC SUCCESSION

Abstract: This study considers the means by which the Roman emperor Constantine I (306-337) communicated to the public, and especially to powerful officials, military generals, and barbarian chieftains, his plans for the imperial succession. It looks in particular at how Constantine's plans can be seen to have evolved over the course of twenty years as depicted on the coinage. During this period, Constantine promulgated at least six different models involving anywhere from two to four different individuals. Over the course of his long reign he developed a totally new form of constitutional succession, based on the dynastic principal coupled with the support of the army. This method proved to be exceptionally stable, lasting until the final fall of the Roman Empire in 1453 CE.

Keywords: Imperial succession, Dynasty, Civil War, Augustus, Caesar, Constantine I, Medallion, Miliarensis

In the year 337 the emperor Constantine died and was succeeded by his three sons, Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans.¹ (Table 1) Very shortly thereafter, many of his family members were executed, including his two half brothers, and several of his nephews. As a result of all this drama, nearly all of the scholarly discussion of Constantine's succession plans has focused just on the last few years of his reign.² This study will take a longer view, and, in particular, will consider how Constantine advertised his personal succession plans

¹ See R.W. Mathisen, *'The Lion in Winter': Constantine's Succession Plans as Manifested in Numismatic Iconography*, Constantine and the Late Roman World Conference, York, England: July 2006; Robert M Frakes, *The Dynasty of Constantine Down to 363*, in Noel Lenski, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (Cambridge, 2005), 91-107; Heinrich Chantaine, *Die Nachfolgeordnung Constantins des Großen* (Stuttgart 1992); S. Calderone, *Teologia politica, successione dinastica e 'consecratio' nell' eta constantiniana*, in *Le culte des souverains dans l'empire romaine* (Geneva, 1974); P. Cara, *La successione di Costantino*, *Aevum* 67 (1993), 173-180; I. König, *Die Berufung des Constantius Chlorus und des Galerius zu Caesaren*, *Chiron* 4 (1976), 567-576.

² See note 1.



Fig.1. A bronze sesterce of Claudius I (41-54) depicts, on the reverse, the legend "EX S.C." ("By Decree of the Senate"), indicating the power sharing between the Emperor and the Senate. Source: Author's collection.

Сл. 1. Бронзани сестерциј Клаудија I (41–54), на реверсу, натпис "EX S.C." („По декрету Сената“), који указује на поделу моћи између цара и Сената. Извор: Збирка аутора.

on his coinage. But before doing so, let us look briefly at how imperial succession had worked in the past, and at some of the problems that Constantine had to contend with.

The Imperial Succession during the Principate

When Augustus established the Roman Empire, ostensibly in the year 27 BCE, he promoted the idea that his rule was the continuation of the Roman Republic.³ Thus, an emperor's powers were based on the Republican "Proconsular imperium" and "Tribunician power" that were granted by the Senate. To indicate the continued authority of the Senate, copper coins bore the letters „S C“, „Senatus consulto“ („By consultation of the Senate“). (Fig.1) Emperors indicated their intended successors by having the Senate and people assign the same two powers to them. Thus, the powers that made an emperor always were granted by the Senate. Generally, the senior emperor had the title "Augustus" and the designated successor had the title "Caesar." In addition, because political loyalty was inherited, prudent emperors conciliated the army by ensuring that their successor was their son, either by blood or by adoption, thus creating an unofficial form of hereditary succession. Failing to name a successor by these two means risked the outbreak of civil wars, as happened after the deaths of Nero in 68 and Commodus in 192.

The most effective way for emperors to make their intended successors known to both the general public and the army was by using the coinage.⁴ The first emperor to do so on a large scale was Septimius Severus (193-211), a successful usurper who was concerned about establishing his own dynasty.⁵ Thus, his coins bore family portraits showing his sons and intended successors,

³ See, e.g., Andrew Gallia, *Remembering the Roman Republic: Culture, Politics and History under the Principate*, Cambridge, 2012).

⁴ See, e.g., Erika Manders, *Coining Images of Power: Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage, A.D. 193–284* (Leiden, 2012).

⁵ For the Severans, see Anthony R Birley, *The African Emperor*, (Routledge 1999).



Fig. 2. A gold aureus of Septimius Severus (193-211), with Julia Domna on the obverse and their sons Caracalla and Geta on the reverse and the legend "AETER NITATI IMPERI" ("Eternity of the Rule"). Source: CNG Auction 61, lot 1926, (25 September 2002)

Сл. 2. Златни ауреус Септимија Севера (193–211), са Јулијом Домном на аверсу и њиховим синовима Каракалом и Гетом на реверсу и натписом "AETER NITATI IMPERI" („Вечност владавине“). Извор: CNG Аукција 61, лот 1926 (25. септембар 2002)



Fig. 3. A silver antoninianus of Philip II (247-249) depicts him with the title "CAES(ar)" on the obverse and "PRINCIPI IVVENT(utis)" ("To the Prince of the Youth") on the reverse, both indicating his status as designated successor to the throne. Source: Author's collection.

Сл. 3. Сребрни антонинијан Филипа II (247–249) приказује га са титулом "CAES(ar)" на аверсу и "PRINCIPI IVVENT(utis)" („Принцу младости“) на реверсу, што указује на његов статус означеног наследника престола. Извор: Збирка аутора.

Caracalla and Geta. (Fig. 2) At the same time, Severus repurposed the Augustan title "Princeps iuventutis" ("Prince of the Youth"), a designation for youthful leaders of the equestrian order, into a term indicating a youthful designated imperial successor that accompanied the rank of Caesar.⁶

⁶ For the Augustan version of the title, see Marietta Horster, *Princeps Iuventutis*.



Fig. 4. A silvered copper follis of Constantius I (293-305), the father of Constantine I, gives him the title "NOB(ilissimus) C(aesar)" ("Most Noble Caesar"), as the designated successor of the "Augustus." Source: Author's collection.

Сл. 4. Посребрени бакарни фоллис Констанција I (293–305), оца Константина I, даје му титулу "НОВ(ilissimus) C(aesar)" („Најплеменитији Цезар“), као означеног наследника „Августа“. Извор: Збирка аутора.

During the civil wars of the third century, shortlived emperors tried desperately to establish new dynasties and advertised their successors – always their sons – on their coinage, giving them the rank of "Caesar" and the title "Princeps iuventutis," because nearly all of them were children.⁷ Thus, Philip the Arab (244-249) promoted his son Philip II, and Trajan Decius (249-251) promoted both of his sons Herennius Etruscus and Hostilianus. (Fig. 3) During these troubled times, the Senate still granted the powers of an emperor, as seen in 275 when it named Tacitus to succeed Aurelian.⁸

The Imperial Succession during the Tetrarchy

Beginning in 284, the emperor Diocletian brought the civil wars to an end and created the so-called Tetrarchy, or "rule by four emperors," in which the empire was divided into four sections, each governed by its own emperor.⁹ This was new. Only rarely in the past, as in the cases of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (161-169) and Valerian and Gallienus (253-260), had there been multiple emperors ruling different parts of the empire. Using this imperial college, Diocletian devised a new plan for how to choose the next emperor. He removed the Senate from the process, and the Republican abbreviations "SC" and "TRP,"

Concept, Realisation, Representation, in Stéphane Benoist, Christine Hoët-Van Cauwenbergh, Anne Daguet-Gagey, eds., *Figures d'empire, fragments de mémoire pouvoirs et identités dans le monde romain impérial. IIe s. av. n. è.-VIe s. de n. è.*, (Septentrion 2011), 73-103.

⁷ See, e.g., Chr. Witschel, *Krise-Rezession-Stagnation? Der Westen des Römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, (Frankfurt 1999).

⁸ *Hist. Aug. Tac.* 4.2: "Omnis senatus adclamavit: 'Tacite Auguste, di te servant. te diligimus, te principem facimus, tibi curam rei publicae orbisque mandamus.'" ("The entire Senate acclaimed, 'Tacitus Augustus, may the gods preserve you, we choose you, we make you emperor, we entrust to you the care of the Republic and the world'").

⁹ See, e.g., S. Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery* (London, 1985); Jill Harries, *Imperial Rome, AD. 284 to 363: The New Empire* (Edinburgh, 2012).

for "Tribunicia potestas" ("Power of a Tribune"), now no longer appeared on the coins. He also abandoned the unofficial practice of hereditary succession, and appointed as his colleagues not family members but army generals. Each half of the empire had a senior emperor, the "Augustus", and a junior emperor, the "Caesar." (Fig. 4) As in the past, the Caesar was the designated successor of the Augustus and still was given the child's title "Princeps iuventutis," "Prince of the Youth," as seen in the cases of first Maximianus (286-305), who was promoted to Augustus in 293, and the new Caesars, Galerius (293-311) and Constantius (293-306), who were named at the same time.

In 305, the two Augustuses, Diocletian and Maximianus, retired. The two Caesars, Constantius I in the west and Galerius in the east, were promoted to Augustus. As for who the new Caesars would be, the two obvious candidates, Constantine the son of Constantius I and Maxentius the son of Maximianus, were ignored, and two colleagues of Galerius were appointed, Severus II (305-307) in the west and Maximinus II (305-313) in the east. With predictable consequences. When Constantius died a year later in York in Britain, the army, which always loved sons, named Constantine (306-337) as Augustus. In Rome, Maxentius (307-312) likewise was proclaimed Augustus.¹⁰ In 307, an uneasy alliance was formed between Constantine and Maxentius when the former married the latter's sister, Fausta.¹¹

The Tetrarchy collapsed. In 307, Maxentius killed Severus as he attempted to take possession of his western domain. In the next year, Constantine, but not Maxentius, eventually was recognized by the legitimate emperors, but only as Caesar, with the title of "Princeps iuventutis." But having once been Augustus, Constantine was not about to accept a demotion, so on his coins he continued to denote himself Augustus, but also accepted the title of "Princeps iuventutis" bestowed by his new colleagues to attest to his legitimacy. (Fig. 5) Only in 308 was Constantine legally made Augustus. In 310 there were six emperors, but by 313, as a consequence of civil wars, suicides, and untimely deaths, only two were left, Constantine and Licinius (308-324), who married Constantine's half-sister Flavia Julia Constantia when the two met at Milan in 313.¹²

Constantine's Plans for the Imperial Succession

Like Septimius Severus, Constantine was a successful usurper concerned about establishing a dynasty. One of the problems that he confronted was how to arrange for his succession. He did not have any past precedents that actually worked. The granting of imperial powers by the Senate ultimately had failed. Likewise, Diocletian's plan to name successors who were not family members also had failed. So, Constantine was on his own. His response was to try to

¹⁰ See, e.g., T.D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge/London, 1982).

¹¹ See J.W. Drijvers, *Flavia Maxima Fausta: Some Remarks*, *Historia* 41 (1992), 500–506.

¹² In general, see J. Wienand, ed., *Contested Monarchy: Integrating the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century AD*, (Oxford University Press, 2015).



Fig. 5. A copper follis issued at Trier in 307 contradictorily names Constantine “AVG(ustus)” on the obverse but “PRINCEPS IVVENTVTIS” (“Prince of the Youth”), a title hitherto used only for Caesars, on the reverse. Trier mint. Source: Author’s collection.

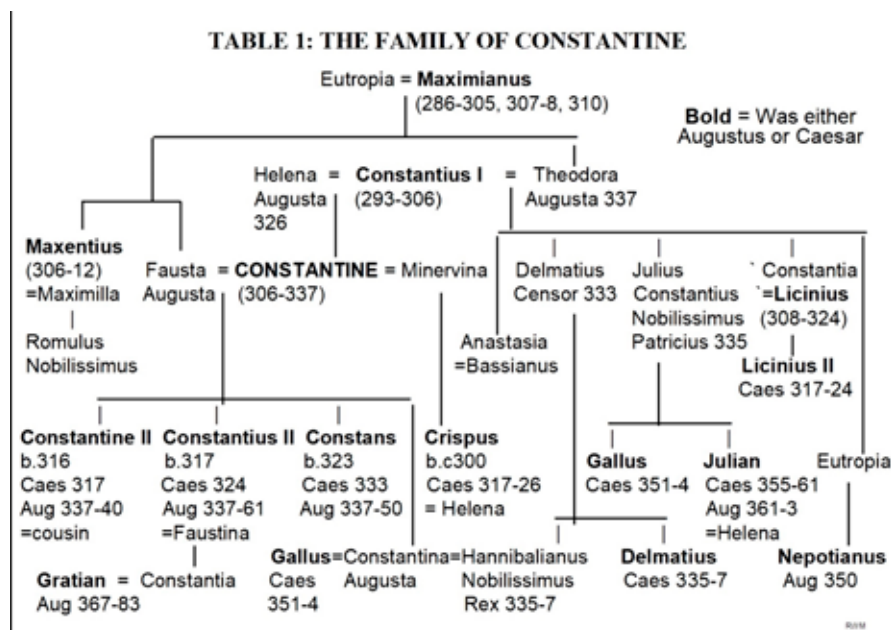
Сл. 5. Бакарни фолис издат у Триру 307. године противречно назива Константина “AVG(ustus)” на аверсу, али “PRINCEPS IVVENTVTIS” („Принцу младости“), титула која је до тада коришћена само за Цезаре, на реверсу. Трирска ковница. Извор: Збирка аутора.



Fig. 6. A copper coin of 317 CE of Crispus, the eldest son of Constantine I, gives him the titles “NOB(ilissimus) CAES(ar)” (“Most Noble Caesar”) on the obverse and “PRINCIPIA IVVENTVTIS” (“Leadership of the Youth”) on the reverse. Rome mint. Source: Author’s collection.

Сл. 6. Бакарни новчић из 317. године најстаријег сина Константина I, Криспа, даје му титуле “NOB(ilissimus) CAES(ar)” („Најплеменитији Цезар“) на аверсу и “PRINCIPIA IVVENTVTIS” („Водство младости“) на реверсу. Римска ковница. Извор: Збирка аутора.

establish some form off dynastic succession, but that was easier said than done, and his plans had several false starts and went through several stages that can be clarified by studying the coinage.



Around 315, Constantine's first attempt to name a colleague, if not a successor, involved not a direct family members but rather a certain Bassianus, the husband of his half-sister Anastasia, whom he proposed to make Caesar in Italy. But after Bassianus was implicated in a plot against Constantine, he was executed.¹³

This would be the only time that Constantine would propose a non-blood relative as a colleague. Two years later, after an inconclusive war, Constantine and Licinius finally made their sons part of their succession plans. On 1 March 317, three Caesars were recognized.¹⁴ Licinius named his 20-month-old son, Licinius II, Constantine's half-nephew, and Constantine promoted two of his sons: Crispus, about 11 years old, the son of Constantine's first wife Minervina, and Constantine II, barely one month old, the son of Constantine's second wife

¹³ *Anon.Val.1.5*: "Constantinus ad Licinium misit, persuadens ut Bassianus Caesar fieret, qui habebat alteram Constantini sororem Anastasiam ... ut ... inter Constantinum et Licinium Bassianus Italiam medius optineret. Et Licinio talia frustrante, per Senicionem Bassiani fratrem, qui Licinio fidus erat, in Constantinum Bassianus armatur. Qui tamen in conatu deprehensus, Constantino iubente convictus et stratus est."

¹⁴ *PLRE I*, 223; *Jer.Chron.s.a.317*, *Cons.Const.s.a. 317*, *Anon.Val.5.19*, *Aur.Vict. Caes.41.6*; *Zosimus, Hist.nov. 2.20.2*: „Constantine conferred the rank and title of Caesar on Crispus, his son by a concubine called Minervina, who was as yet but a youth, and on Constantine, who was born but a few days before at Arelatum. At the same time Licinianus [sic], the son of Licinius, who was twenty years of age, was declared Caesar. Thus ended the second war“; *Epit. de Caes. 41.4*: "Filiumque suum Crispum nomine, ex Minervina concubina susceptum, item Constantinum iisdem diebus natum oppido Arelatensi Licinianumque, Licinii filium, mensium fere viginti, Caesares effect." See K. Kremer, *Laktanz: Erzieher von Konstantins Sohn Crispus zu Trier*, *Kurtrierisches Jahrbuch* 25 (1985), 35-59.



Fig. 7. A miliarense of Constantine I issued ca. 321/324 with the legend "FELICITAS ROMANORVM: ("Felicity of the Romans") depicts Constantine with the Caesars Constantine II to his right and Crispus to his left. Nicomedia mint. Source: Gorny & Mosch Sale 159 (8 October 2007)

Сл. 7. Милиаренсис Константина I издат око 321/324. са натписом "FELICITAS ROMANORVM" („Срећа Римљана“) приказује Константина са Цезарима Константином II десно и Криспом лево. Никомедијска ковница. Извор: Gorny & Mosch Sale 159 (8. октобар 2007).



Fig. 8. A gold solidus in the name of Fausta, the second wife of Constantine, bears the legend "SPES REIPUBLICAE" ("Hope of the Republic") and depicts Fausta holding the children Constantine II and Constantius II. Sirmium mint. Source: Wikimedia (Münzkabinett Berlin), licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license

Сл. 8. Златни солидус у име Фаусте, друге жене Константина, носи натпис "SPES REIPUBLICAE" („Нада Републике“) и приказује Фаусту како држи децу Константина II и Констанција II. Сирмијумска ковница. Извор: Викимедија (Münzkabinett Берлин), лиценцирано под Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported лиценцом.



Fig. 9. A silver miliarensis issued by Constantine I in 325-326 bears the reverse legend, "FELICITAS ROMANORVM" ("Felicity of the Romans") and depicts Constantius II to Constantine's left, and Crispus and Constantine II to his right. Thessalonica mint. Source: Roma Numismatics E-LIVE Auction 3, lot 900 (October 2018).

Сл. 9. Сребрни милиаренсис који је издао Константин I 325–326. године носи реверсни натпис "FELICITAS ROMANORVM" („Срећа Римљана“) и приказује Констанција II лево од Константина, а Криспа и Константина II десно. Солунска ковница. Извор: Рома Нумизматика Е-ЛИВЕ Аукција 3, лот 900 (октобар 2018).



Fig. 10. A one and a half solidus gold medallion of Constantine I depicts, on the reverse, the two Caesars Constantine II and Constantius II with the legend "CONSTANTINVS ET CONSTANTIVS NOBB CAESS" ("Constantine and Constantius Most Noble Caesars"). Issued at Antioch in 326 on the occasion of their joint consulate. Source: Numismatica Ars Classica Auction 24, lot 280 (5 December 2002)

Сл. 10. Један и одломак златног солидуса Константина I приказује на реверсу двојицу Цезара Константина II и Констанција II са натписом "CONSTANTINVS ET CONSTANTIVS NOBB CAESS" („Константин и Констанције Најплеменитији Цезари“). Издат у Антиохији 326. године поводом њиховог заједничког конзулата. Извор: Numismatica Ars Classica Auction 24, лот 280 (5. децембар 2002).

Fausta. (Table 1) Like the child emperors of the third century, not to mention Constantine himself, Constantine's Caesars received the title "Princeps iuventutis," "Prince of the Youth." (Fig. 6)

These dynastic promotions were advertised on silver coins depicting Constantine himself, as Augustus, on the obverse and his two sons, as Caesars, on the reverse.¹⁵ In addition, family portraits with the legend "FELICITAS ROMANORVM" ("The Felicity of the Romans") were issued in the names of all three depicting Constantine II and Crispus standing to the right and left of their father.¹⁶ (Fig. 7) This large silver coin, the *miliarensis*, was not part of the coinage issued for the general public, but was used for the donatives distributed on special occasions to the army and imperial officials. It was to these targeted audiences that Constantine needed to make his succession plans clear.

In 324, a series of coins focused on the role of Constantine's wife Fausta in his plans for the succession. A solidus depicts her holding two children, presumably Constantine II and Constantius II (Fig. 8), and another has her holding a single infant, probably Constantine who had been born the year before; on another, family unity is emphasized by depicting Fausta with her hands on the shoulders of her seven-year-old son Constantine II and her 20-year-old stepson Crispus.¹⁷ One happy family it would seem.

In the same year came another happy occasion for the Constantinian family: the final defeat of Licinius, followed by his execution the following year. This left Constantine in control of the whole Roman world and free to arrange the imperial succession as he saw fit. According to the fourth-century historian Aurelius Victor, "In this way the Republic began to be governed by the authority of one man, with his children receiving the dissimilar titles of Caesars," indicating the recognition that the sons received the lesser rank.¹⁸ Henceforth, only family members would be named emperor and they would be given the rank of Caesar, not of Augustus. On 8 November 324, Constantine revised his succession plan by promoting to Caesar Constantius II, now seven years old and just a year younger than his brother Constantine II; the silver coinage now depicted the three Caesars, conceivably, it has been suggested, indicating a renewed "Tetrarchy."¹⁹ (Fig. 9) The fourth-century historian Eutropius commented, "At

¹⁵ Classical Numismatic Group, Mail Bid Sale 61, Lot 2075 (25 September 2002): <https://auctions.cngcoins.com/lots/view/4-28P0XJ/constantine-i-with-crispus-and-constantine-ii-caesars-ad-307310-337-ar-miliarensis-215mm-409-g-6h-sirmium-mint-struck-ad-320>

¹⁶ For these issues, see L. Ramsköld, G. Gautier, *Constantine's FELICITAS ROMANORVM Donatives: Dynastic Propaganda and the First Miliarensis*, *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* 67 (2017), 1-58.

¹⁷ *RIC* 7.203 no.442 (Trier), with Crispus as consul on obverse and the reverse legend, "FELIX PROGENIES CONSTANTINI AVG" ("The fortunate offspring of the emperor Constantine"), with Fausta between the two Caesars clasping hands; see British Museum, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1896-0608-102.

¹⁸ Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 41.10-11: "Eo modo respublica unius arbitrio geri coepit, liberis Caesarum nomina diversa retinentibus."

¹⁹ As suggested by Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine: Dynasty, Religion, and Power in the Later Roman Empire*, (Chichester, UK 2011), 102.



Fig. 11. A nine-solidus (one eighth of a pound) gold medallion of Constantine struck at Constantinople ca.330-333 reads "FELICITAS PERPETVA AVG ET CAESS NN" ("Perpetual Felicity of the Augustus and Our Caesars") and depicts Constantine with the Caesars Constantine II to his right and Constantius II to his left. Source: Heritage Central States World Coins & Ancient Coins Signature Auction, lot 31036 (24-27 April 2000).

Сл. 11. Деветина солидуса (једна осмина фунте), Константинов златни медаљон искован у Константинопољу око 330–333. носи натпис "FELICITAS PERPETVA AVG ET CAESS NN" („Вечна срећа Августа и наших Цезара“) и приказује Константина са Цезарима Константином II десно и Констанцијем II лево. Извор: Heritage Central States World Coins & Ancient Coins Signature Auction, лот 31036 (24–27. април 2000).

that time the Roman world was under one Augustus and three Caesars, which had never happened before, with the children of Constantine in Gaul, the east, and Italy.²⁰

But if Constantine had expected the succession to remain like that, he soon was disappointed, for in 326 disaster struck. Both Crispus and Fausta were executed under mysterious circumstances, leaving only two Caesars, Constantine II and Constantius II.²¹ In the same year, Constantine's half-nephew little Licinius II, a loose end who had survived his father, also was executed.²² For the immediate future, only legitimate close blood relations of Constantine, his sons,

²⁰ Eutropius, *Brev.* 10.9: "Eo tempore res Romana sub uno Augusto et tribus Caesaribus, quod numquam alias, fuit, cum liberi Constantini Galliae, Orienti Italiaeque praeessent."

²¹ *Epit. de Caes.* 41.11-12: "Constantinus ... Fausta coniuge, ut putant, suggerente Crispum filium necari iubet. Dehinc uxorem suam Faustam in balneas arduas coniectam interemit, cum eum mater Helena dolore nimio nepotis increparet...." ("Constantine ... at the suggestion of his spouse Fausta, as some think, commanded that his son Crispus be killed. Then he killed his wife Fausta, having her thrown into fiery baths because his mother Helena, in too much grief over her grandson, rebuked him"); Eutropius, *Brev.* 10.6: "Egregium virum filium et sororis filium, commodae indolis iuvenem, interfecit, mox uxorem, post numerosos amicos" ("He killed his son [Crispus], a fine man, and also the son of his sister [Licinius II], a youth of an easy disposition, and soon his wife [Fausta] and later numerous friends").

²² *PLRE II*; see Jer. *Chron.* s.a. 325; Eutropius, *Brev.* 10.6; Oros. *Hist.adv.pag.* 7.28.36.



Fig. 12. A nine-solidus gold medallion of Constantine struck at Constantinople ca.330-333 reads "GAVDIVM ROMANORVM" ("Joy of the Romans") and depicts Constantine seated flanked by Constantine II on his right and Constantius II on his left being crowned by the personifications of Rome and Victory. Source: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Römische Goldmünze Gaudium Romanorum.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Römische_Goldmünze_Gaudium_Romanorum.jpg) licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

Сл. 12. Деветина солидуса, Константинов златни медаљон искован у Константинопољу око 330–333. носи натпис "GAVDIVM ROMANORVM" („Радост Римљана“) и приказује Константина како седи, са Константином II десно и Констанцијем II лево, како их крунишу персонификације Рима и Победи. Извор: Музеј историје уметности, Беч, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Römische Goldmünze Gaudium Romanorum.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Römische_Goldmünze_Gaudium_Romanorum.jpg) лиценцирано под Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International лиценцом.



Fig. 13. A nine-solidus medallion of Constantine, with the legend "SECVRITAS PERPETVA" ("Perpetual Security") depicts, from left, Constantius II, Constans, Constantine, and Constantine II. Source: Baldwin's Auctions, New York Sale III, lot 782 (7 December 2000). Photo: Author.

Сл. 13. Деветина солидуса, Константинов медаљон, са натписом "SECVRITAS PERPETVA" („Вечна сигурност“), приказује Констанција II, Констанса, Константина II и Констанса. Извор: Викимедија (Кабинет медаља у Паризу).

Fig. 14. A nine-solidus gold medallion issued at Thessalonica in 335 depicts on the reverse the four Caesars, from left, Constantius II, Constans, Delmatius, and Constantine II, flanking Constantine enthroned, with the legend, "SALVS ET SPES REIPVBLICAE" ("Salvation and Hope of the Republic"). Source: State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.

Сл. 14. Деветина солидни златни медаљон издат у Солуну 335. године приказује на реверсу четири цезара – с лева на десно: Констанција II, Констанса, Делмација и Константина II – како окружују Константина Великог на престолу, са натписом „SALVS ET SPES REIPVBLICAE“ („Спасење и нада Републике“). Извор: Државни музеј Ермитаж, Санкт Петербург.



Fig. 15. In 336, in an effort to add the cachet of ancient legitimacy to his last succession plan, on gold solidi issued in the names of all four Caesars, including the newcomer Delmatius, Constantine revived the ancient designation "PRINCIPI IVVENTVTIS" ("To the Prince of the Youth"). Source: CNG Sale Triton XIX, lot 624 (4 January 2016)

Сл. 15. Године 336, у покушају да свој последњи план за наслеђе учини легитимним позивањем на древну традицију, Константин је на златним солидима издатим у име сва четири цезара, укључујући новопридошлог Делмација, оживео древну титулу „PRINCIPI IVVENTVTIS“ („Принцу младости“). Извор: CNG Sale Triton XIX, lot 624 (4. јануар 2016).

would be admitted into the imperial college. In addition, Constantine clearly had abandoned the Tetrarchy, for had he wanted another Caesar to bring the number of emperors to four, he could have added the infant Constans, but he declined to do so.

Subsequent coinage occasionally depicted the two Caesars. In 326, a one and a half solidus medallion issued at Antioch portrayed Constantine



Fig. 16. A marble inscription dated to ca. 336/337 from the Forum of Trajan in Rome also manifests Constantine's plan for five emperors, listing in order, Constantine, Constantine II, Constantius II, Constans, and Delmatius. In the second line from the end, Delmatius' name was later erased as a result of "damnatio memoriae" ("Damnation of memory") after his murder by the soldiers. Source: Heidelberg Epigraphical Database, <https://edh.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD026938>.

Сл. 16. Мермерни натпис датиран у око 336/337. годину, пронађен на Трајановом форуму у Риму, такође сведочи о Константиновом плану за пет владара, наводећи их редом: Константин, Константин II, Констанције II, Констанс и Делмације. У другој линији од краја, Делмацијево име је касније избрисано као последица „damnatio memoriae“ („осуда сећања“) након што су га војници убили. **Извор:** Хајделбершка епиграфска база података,

II and Constantius II as joint Consuls facing each other and bore the legend "CONSTANTINVS ET CONSTANTIVS NOBB CAESS" ("Constantine and Constantius Most Noble Caesars"). (Fig. 10).

Subsequently, ca. 330-333 and perhaps associated with the founding of Constantinople, came the issue of a series of massive nine-solidus (one eighth of a pound of gold) medallions that were distributed only to very favored individuals, such as high-ranking civil and military officers and barbarian chieftains. One of them depicts Constantine enthroned, with Constantine II to his right and Constantius II to his left and the legend "FELICITAS PERPETVA AVG ET CAESS NN" ("Perpetual Felicity of the Augustus and Our Caesars"). (Fig. 11)

Another, from the Szilágy Somlyó (Hungary) = Șimleu Silvaniei (Romania) Treasure, portrays Constantine standing flanked by Constantine II on his right and Constantius II on his left being crowned by the personifications of Rome and Victory. The reverse legend reads "GAVDIVM ROMANORVM"

(“Joy of the Romans”). (Fig. 12) The significance of these pieces as keepsakes and items of jewelry, as opposed to actual coinage, is demonstrated by the loop hangers attached to them.

By 333, Constantine was at least sixty years old and his succession plans suddenly began to change. On Christmas day, just after a war with the Goths and Sarmatians, the youngest son, Constans, now ten years old, finally was made Caesar.²³ (Table 1) Another nine-solidus medallion, once again with three Caesars, commemorated the revised succession plan. (Fig. 13)²⁴ A new legend, “SECVRITAS PERPETVA” („Perpetual security”), may reflect Constantine’s desire to create a permanent plan for the future.

Eusebius of Caesarea summarized Constantine’s succession plans as he approached the end of his reign, ca.335: „By his thirtieth year, his three sons had been admitted at different times as his colleagues in the empire. The first, Constantinus, who bore his father’s name, obtained this distinction about the tenth year of his reign. Constantius, the second son, so called from his grandfather, was proclaimed Caesar about the twentieth, while Constans, the third, whose name expresses the firmness and stability of his character, was advanced to the same dignity at the thirtieth anniversary of his father’s reign.”²⁵ Eusebius, whose math was a little off, clearly saw some significance in that he perceived as ten-year intervals separating the promotions of the three sons.

But this plan turned out not to be very perpetual at all, for on 18 September 335, just after the celebration of his *Tricennalia*, the thirty-year anniversary of his rule, on July 25, Constantine’s nephew Delmatius also was raised to the rank of Caesar, as portrayed on yet another nine-solidus medallion, this one with four Caesars.²⁶ In this case, the reverse legend read “SALVS ET SPES REIPVBLICAE” (“Salvation and Hope of the Republic”), with Constantine enthroned surrounded by Constantius II, Constans, Delmatius, and Constantine II. (Fig. 14) All of the Caesars also were commemorated on gold coins naming them “Princeps iuventutis,” or designated successor. (Fig. 15)

In addition, Delmatius’ brother Hannibalianus was made „rex regum et ponticarum gentium“, that is, “King of Kings and of the Pontic Nations,” meaning that Constantine now had included five family members in his succession

²³ *Consularia Constantinopolitana* s.a. 337: *Chron.min.* 1.234; *Aur.Vict. Caes.* 41.13 „Et interea Gothorum Sarmatarumque stratae gentes, filiusque cunctorum minor, Constans nomine, Caesar fit.14 Cuius gratia reipublicae permixtionem fore ostentorum mira prodidere; quippe ea nocte, quae commissi imperii diem sequebatur, igni continuo caeli facies coliflavavit“.

²⁴ Source: M&M Numismatics Ltd Sale, 7 December 2000, Lot 782.

²⁵ Eusebius *Vita Constantini* 40.

²⁶ *Cons.Const.* s.a. 335; *Jer. Chron.* s.a. 335; *Aur.Vict. De caes.* 41: „Abhinc con-sumpto fere biennio fratris filium, cui ex patre Dalmatio nomen fit, Caesarem iussit obsistentibus valide militaribus“ (“Thence, after nearly two years, he ordered that the son of his brother, whose name was from his father Dalmatius, be made Caesar, with the soldiers greatly resisting”; *Epit. de Caes.* 41.15: “Cumque liberis filioque fratris Delmatio Caesaribus confirmatis tres et sexaginta annos vixisset” (“And when, with his children and Delmatius, the son of his brother, having been confirmed as Caesar, he had lived sixty-three years”); *Chron.min.* 1.235. The spelling „Dalmatius“ was used only at two mints, and they soon changed to „Delmatius.“



Fig. 17. A gold solidus of Constans of ca.337/340 with the legend "FELICITAS PERPETVA" ("Perpetual Felicity") depicts the three Augusti seated, from left, Constantius II, Constantine II, and Constans. Issued at Siscia (Sisak). Source: Auktionshaus H. D. Rauch GmbH Auction 77, lot 674 (10 April 2006)

Сл. 17. Златни солид Констанса, датован у око 337-340. годину, са натписом „FELICITAS PERPETVA“ („Вечна срећа“), приказује тројицу августа како седе – с лева на десно: Констанције II, Константин II и Констанс. Издао у Сисцији (данашњи Сисак). Извор: Auktionshaus H. D. Rauch GmbH Auction 77, lot 674 (10. април 2006).

plans, although this last promotion was not commemorated on the gold or silver coinage.²⁷ At the same time, Constantine's half-brother Julius Constantius, Delmatius' and Hannibalianus' father, was made patrician and consul, and all three were given the rank of *nobilissimus*, a rank that had not been used for males since the time of Maxentius' son Romulus.²⁸ (Table 1)

The *Anonymus Valesianus* reports regarding this restructuring: "Thus, Constantine Junior governed Gaul; the Caesar Constantius governed the east; Constans governed Illyricum and Italy; and Delmatius oversaw the Gothic riverbank. Then, while Constantine was preparing for war against the Persians, entrusting the Republic thus arranged to his sons, he died soon at an imperial villa near Nicomedia in suburban Constantinople."²⁹ The *Epitoma de Caesaribus*, on

²⁷ *Anon. Val. 6.35*: „Dalmatium filium fratris sui Dalmatii, Caesarem fecit. Eius fratrem Hannibalianum, data ei Constantiana filia sua, regem regum et Ponticarum gentium constituit.”

²⁸ A rank omitted in *PLRE I* for Delmatius but included for Hannibalianus. See Zos. *Hist. nov.* 2.39.2: „After Constantine ... was succeeded by his three sons ... they began by dividing the nations between them. Constantine the eldest and Constans the youngest having for their share all beyond the Alps, together with Italy and Illyricum, the countries bordering on the Euxine Sea, and all that belonged to Carthage in Africa; Constantius obtained all Asia, the east, and Egypt. There were likewise others who shared in the government; Delmatius, whom Constantine made Caesar, Constantius his brother, and Hanaballianus, who all had worn robes of purple embroidered with gold, and were promoted to the order of *Nobilissimates* by Constantine, from respect to their being of his own family.”

²⁹ *Anon. Val. 6.35*: „Itaque Gallias Constantinus minor regebat, Orientem Constantius Caesar, Illyricum et Italiam Constans, ripam Gothicam Delmatius tuebatur. Item Constan-



Fig. 18. A silver miliarensis of Constantius II issued ca. 340-350 depicts the two surviving Augusti, with Constantius II to the left and Constans to the right, and bears the legend “FELICITAS ROMANORVM” (“Felicity of the Romans”). Antioch mint. Source: Heritage Auctions, NYINC World Coins Signature Auction, lot #32275 (6-7 January 2019).

Сл. 18. Сребрни милиаренсиј Констанција II, издат између 340. и 350. године, приказује двојицу преживелих августа – Констанција II (лево) и Констанса (десно), са натписом „FELICITAS ROMANORVM“ („Срећа Римљана“). Кованица из ковнице у Антиохији. **Извор:** Heritage Auctions, NYINC World Coins Signature Auction, lot #32275 (6-7. јануар 2019).

the other hand, summarizes Constantine’s final plan as manifested just before his death thus: „These individuals had these areas to be ruled: Constantine Junior everything beyond the Alps; Constantius, from the straits of the Propontis, Asia and the Orient; Constans, Illyricum, Italy, and Africa; Delmatius, Thrace, Macedonia, and Achaëa; and Hannibalianus, a relative of Delmatius Caesar, Armenia and the neighboring nations.”³⁰ Generally speaking, the *Epitoma* is rather more specific than the *Anonymus*, also assigning Africa to Constans, and allotting to Delmatius three Balkan provinces rather than the vague “Gothic riverbank,” which presumably envisioned the area adjoining the lower Danube.

This latter division looks very much like the geographical organization of Diocletian’s Tetrarchy, in which Constantius I received “everything beyond the Alps”; Maximianus gained “Illyricum, Italy, and Africa”; Diocletian himself governed everything “from the straits of the Propontis”; and Galerius, like Delmatius, was assigned the small Balkan territory, in both cases attesting to the strategic importance of this region. Even though the geographical similarities of Diocletian’s and Constantine’s divisions are remarkable, and the appointment of Delmatius may even have been made in order to bring this four-fold division

tinus cum bellum pararet in Persas, in suburbano Constantinopolitano villa publica iuxta Nicomediam, dispositam bene rem publicam filiis tradens, diem obiit”; *PLRE I*, 226: Zos. *Hist.nov.* 2.39.3, 2.40.2.

³⁰ *Epit. de Caes.* 41.19: “Hi singuli has partes regendas habuerunt: Constantinus iunior cuncta trans Alpes, Constantius a freto Propontidis Asiam atque Orientem, Constans Illyricum Italiamque et Africam, Delmatius Thraciam Macedoniamque et Achaïam, Hannibalianus, Delmatii Caesaris consanguineus, Armeniam nationesque circumsocias.”



Fig. 19. A silver miliarense of Constantius II issued at Aquileia ca. 351-353 depicts the diademed Augustus Constantius to the left and the bare-headed Caesar Constantius Gallus to the right, with the legend "FELICITAS ROMANORVM" ("Felicity of the Romans").
Source: CNG Mail Bid Sale #58, lot 1372 (18 Sept 2001).

Сл. 19. Сребрни милиаренсиј Констанција II, издат у Аквилеји око 351-353. године, приказује дијадемом украшеног августа Констанција (лево) и безкосог цезара Констанција Гала (десно), са натписом „FELICITAS ROMANORVM“ („Срећа Римљана“). Извор: CNG Mail Bid Sale #58, lot 1372 (18. септембар 2001).

to fulfilment, it is clear that Constantine's succession plan was nothing like Diocletian's Tetrarchy, given that Constantine's was purely dynastic and it had five members rather than four: four Caesars plus one Augustus.

Additional information about Constantine's succession plans comes from epigraphy, which along with numismatics also provides detailed information on imperial titulature and the membership in the imperial college. A graphic example of this five-emperor college is seen in an inscription found in the Forum of Trajan in Rome dating to late 336 or early 337 in which Constantine appointed the senator Lucius Aradius Valerius Proculus as Prefect of Rome. (Fig. 16) The text begins by giving the official titulature of the five emperors:

The Emperor Caesar Flavius Constantinus, dutiful, fortunate, victor and triumpher, Augustus, Greatest Priest, Greatest Victor over the Germanic peoples for the fourth time, Greatest Victor over the Sarmatians for the fourth time, Greatest Victor over the Goths for the second time, Greatest Victor over the Dacians, holder of the Tribunician Power for the thirty-third time, Consul for the eighth time, Emperor for the thirty-second time, Father of the Fatherland, Proconsul, and Flavius Claudius Constantinus, Victor over the Alamanni, and Flavius Iulius Constantius and Flavius Iulius Constans and Flavius Iulius Delmatius, most noble Caesars, to the Consuls, Praetors, Tribunes of the Plebs, and their Senate, greetings. If you and your children are well, that is good. We and our armies are well.³¹

³¹ *L'Année épigraphique* (1934), no.158; *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum* 6.40776: "Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus pius felix victor ac triumphator Augustus pontifex maximus Germanicus maximus IIII □ armaticus maximus IIII Gothicus maximus II Dacicus

From this, it would appear that Constantine's final succession plan had a successful implementation. But that was not to be. Subsequently, there was a dramatic alteration to the text of the inscription: the name of Delmatius was erased, a manifestation of the practice of "damnatio memoriae" ("Damnation of memory") signalling that Constantine's last known succession plan had gone badly awry. And that it had, very awry indeed.

On 22 May 337, Constantine died unexpectedly near Nicomedia. Soon thereafter, Delmatius and Hannibalianus, their father, and others were murdered by the soldiers; in the words of the *Epitoma de Caesaribus*, "After Constantine died, Delmatius was violently killed by the soldiers. Thus, the rule of the Roman world was restored to the three sons of Constantine: Constantine and Constantius, and Constans."³² The soldiers apparently felt that collateral relatives, not to mention non-relatives, were expendable. As in the past, for the army, only sons were fully acceptable as successors. At a meeting in Pannonia on 9 September, the three Caesars were acclaimed Augustus by the army,³³ just as Constantine had been in 306 after the death of his own father. In place of the Senate, the army had become the body that made emperors legitimate.

maximus tribunicia potestate XXXIII consuli VIII imperator XXXII pater patriae proconsul et Flavius Claudius Constantinus Alamannicus et Flavius Iulius Constantius et Flavius Iulius Constans [[[et Flavius Iulius Delmatius]]] nobilissimi Caesares quattuor consulibus praetoribus tribunis plebis senatui suo salutem dicunt. Si vos liberique vestri valetis bene est. Nos exercitusque nostri valemus." For the date, see T.D. Barnes, *The Victories of Constantine*, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 20 (1976), 149-155 at 150. For text and image, see Heidelberg Epigraphical Database: <https://edh.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD026938>.

³² *Epit. de Caes.* 41.18-19: "Quo mortuo Delmatius militum vi necatur. ita ad tres orbis Romani redacta dominatio est Constantinum et Constantium ac Constantem filios Constantini"; also Jerome, *Chron.* s.a.338: "Ablabius praefectus praetorio et multi nobilium occisi ... Dalmatius Caesar, quem patruus Constantinus consortem regni filiis dereliquerat, factione Constantii patruelis et tumultu militari interimitur"; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 41.16-22 "Ita anno imperii tricesimo secundoque... Constantinus excessit ... igitur confestim Delmatius, incertum quo suasore, interficitur"; and Julian, *Epist. ad Ath.* 270c; the orator Libanius, *Orat.* 18.10, later referred to it as "the great massacre." See *PLRE I*, 407: R.W. Burgess, "The Summer of Blood: The 'Great Massacre' of 337 and the Promotion of the Sons of Constantine", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 62 (2008), 5-51; Richard Klein, "Die Kämpfe um die Nachfolge nach dem Tode Constantins des Großen," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 6 (1979), 101-50; M. DiMaio, Duane Arnold, "Per Vim, Per Caedem, Per Bellum: A Study of Murder and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Year 337 A.D.," *Byzantion*, 62 (1992), 158-211; X, Lucien-Brun, "Constantine II et le massacre des princes," *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* 4 (1973), 585-602.

³³ *Cons. Constant.* s.a. 337: "Et ipso anno nuncupati sunt tres Augusti Constantinus et Constantius et Constans V idus Septemb(ris)"; Pannonia: Julian, *Orat.* 1.19a; 9 September: *Chr. Min.* 1.235; for the division, see Michael DiMaio, "Smoke in the Wind: Zonaras' use of Philostorgius, Zosimus, John of Antioch, and John of Rhodes in his Narrative on the Neo-Flavian Emperors," *Byzantion* 58 (1988), 230-255.

The Succession Plans of Constantine's Sons and Nephews

During his lifetime and after his death, no less than seven of Constantine's male relatives became wither Augustus or Caesar: his four sons, Crispus, Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans, and three of his nephews, Delmatius, Constantius Gallus, and Julian, not to mention his nephew the short-lived usurper Nepotianus. (See Table 1) Of all of these, only one, Constantine's executed son Crispus, is known to have had, with his otherwise unknown wife Helena, a son who only is attested in a law issued at Rome on 30 October 322 that states, "On account of the son born to Crispus and Helena we grant indulgence to all except for poisoners, murderers, and adulterers."³⁴ Given there is no further reference to this son, he may have died young. The only other one of these male relatives known to have had children is Constantius II, who had a daughter, Constantia, who later married the emperor Gratian (367-383), (Table 1)

Constantine's sons also used the coinage to publicize the legitimate imperial college, in this case their imperial colleagues, as opposed to their successors. Soon after being named Augusti, they issued gold coinage depicting the three of them with the legend "FELICITAS PERPETVA" ("Perpetual Felicity"). (Fig. 17) At some point after 340, when Constantine II was killed in a civil war with Constans, Constantius II made it clear that the imperial college had been reduced to only two Augusti with the issue of a silver *miliarensis* at Antioch bearing the traditional legend "FELICITAS ROMANORVM" ("Felicity of the Romans") and depicting Constantius II, the elder, to the left, and Constans to the right. (Fig. 18).

The last attested issue of this type came ca. 351-353, when the membership in the imperial college changed again after the murder of Constans by the usurper Magnentius (350-353) in 350. Constantius II issued another *miliarensis*, with the same legend as the previous one but depicting himself standing to the left and his newly appointed Caesar, his nephew Constantius Gallus, to the right. The difference in status is indicated by Constantius' wearing of the diadem but Gallus having a bare head. (Fig. 19) By 355, when Constantius' nephew Julian was named Caesar, the "FELICITAS ROMANORVM" coin type seems to have gone out of use.

There is no reason to believe that Constantius II intended Gallus specifically to be his "successor," except perhaps by default, should something happen to Constantius II himself. As for his views on the succession, Constantius was married three times, first to his unnamed cousin, a daughter of Julius Constantius, then, in 353, to Eusebia. Neither of these had any known offspring. In 361, after the death of Eusebia, and after Julian already had been proclaimed Augustus in the west, Constantius married Faustina, perhaps still hoping to have a son to succeed him. If so, the plan came to nought, for he soon died. His only child, a daughter Constantia, was borne posthumously by Faustina later in the year,³⁵ and Julian became his unintended successor. Julian likewise had no male off-

³⁴ *Cod.Theod.* 9.38.1 (322): "Propter Crispi atque Helenae partum omnibus indulgemus praeter veneficos homicidas adulteros."

³⁵ *PLRE I*, "Constantius 8", 226.

spring and had no obvious plans for the succession. He certainly never named a colleague, and in any event he had no remaining relatives who would have been likely candidates. (Table 1). Any plans he might have had died with him after the Battle of Samarra in 363, thus ending the rule of the family of Constantine.

Synthesis

As seen in Table 1, Constantine is the only Roman emperor besides the first emperor Augustus to have had so many potential successors and to have changed his succession plans so very many times.³⁶ He also is the only emperor to have been so concerned about revealing detailed insights into his succession plans on the coinage. But perhaps this should be no surprise, for he was doing something completely unprecedented. The Senate no longer had any role in granting imperial powers. Nor did Constantine use Diocletian's Tetrarchy as a precedent for designing the imperial succession. For one thing, Constantine never named another Augustus -- his model always called for a variable number of Caesars under a single Augustus. In addition, Constantine's plan called for dynastic succession, that is, fathers succeeded by sons or other close relatives, that was based on the support of the army.

Over the course of twenty years, Constantine repeatedly advertised his changing succession plans on the coinage and in doing so he established these principles in the eyes of both the public and, more importantly, the army. The unusually great variety of medallions, which were distributed to influential target populations, demonstrates his concern with communicating his choices to influential state officials, high-ranking army officers, and powerful barbarian chieftains. The resentment of the army when he added a nephew to the imperial college demonstrates how successful he was at establishing a succession based on sons. By the time he died, his principle of dynastic succession under a single Augustus had become fully accepted. And like the first emperor Augustus, one of the contributing factors to his success was simply that he lived so long.

The form of imperial succession established by Constantine, that of dynastic succession in which successors were family members, preferably sons, and were chosen by the existing emperor or emperors with the support of the army, proved to be a very stable form of succession that lasted for over a thousand years, right up until the death of the last emperor Constantine and the final end of the Roman Empire on 29 May 1453.

³⁶ Augustus' planned successors included, in chronological order, his nephew Marcellus, his son-in-law Agrippa, his nephews Gaius and Lucius, and his step-sons Drusus and Tiberius. All pre-deceased him except Tiberius, who was left as the last man standing and only remaining successor in 14 CE.

TABLE 2: CONSTANTINE'S SUCCESSION PLANS (317-337)				
	Period	Number of Successors	Successors (in order of seniority)	Region
Stage 1	317-324	2	Crispus Constantine II	West West
Stage 2	324-326	3	Crispus Constantine II Constantius II	N/A N/A N/A
Stage 3	326-333	2	Constantine II Constantius II	N/A N/A
Stage 4	333-335	3	Constantine II Constantius II Constans	N/A N/A N/A
Stage 5	335-337	5	Constantine II Constantius II Constans Dalmatius Hannibalianus	West East West East East
Stage 6	337	3	Constantine II Constantius II Constans	West East West

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КОНСТАНТИНОВИ ПЛАНОВИ ЗА НАСЛЕЂИВАЊЕ ПРЕСТОЛА ВИЂЕНО КРОЗ
НУМИЗМАТИЧКУ ИКОНОГРАФИЈУ: СТВАРАЊЕ ДИНАСТИЧКОГ НАСЛЕЂА

Римски цар Константин I (306–337) дошао је на власт у време када није постојао јасан метод за утврђивање царског наследства, односно начина за избор нових царева. Првобитни метод, по коме је Сенат додељивао царске моћи, пропао је током грађанских ратова III века нове ере. Тетрархија или „Владавина четворице“, коју је успоставио Диоклецијан (284–305), такође је пропала у грађанском рату. Ова студија говори о средствима којима је цар Константин (306–337) обзнанио своје планове за царско наследство у периоду од 317. до 337. године. Она се првенствено фокусира на ковање новца, који је био намењен за општу употребу, и на новац веће вредности, који је дистрибуиран утицајним појединцима као што су војни генерали и варварски поглавари. Показује се да су Константинови планови за успостављање наследства били наследни по природи, фокусирајући се на његова четири сина. Тек на крају своје владавине укључио је и двојицу својих нећака. Међутим, спровођење ових планова у дело није било лако. Најстарији син је погубљен из непознатих разлога, а након Константинове смрти војска је убила његове нећаке и друге рођаке. Ипак, током времена Константин је успео да успостави веома стабилан поредак царског наследства заснован на династичком принципу, укључујући синове кад год је то било могуће, уз подршку војске, која је трајала све до коначног краја источног римског Царства 1453. године.