Graham Jones

SEEDS OF SANCTITY: CONSTANTINE'S CITY AND CIVIC HONOURING OF HIS MOTHER HELENA

Of cities and citizens in the Byzantine world, Constantinople and its people stand preeminent. A recent remark that the latter 'strove in everything to be worthy of the Mother of God, to Whom the city was dedicated by St Constantine the Great in 330' follows a deeply embedded pious narrative in which state and church intertwine in the city's foundation as well as its subsequent fortunes. Sadly, it perpetuates a flawed reading of the emperor's place in the political and religious landscape. For a more nuanced and considered view we have only to turn to Vasiliki Limberis' masterly account of politico-religious civic transformation from the reign of Constantine to that of Justinian. In the concluding passage of *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christianity*, Limberis reaffirms that 'Constantinople had no strong sectarian Christian tradition. Christianity was new to the city, and it was introduced at the behest of the emperor.' Not only did the civic ceremonies of the imperial cult remain 'an integral part of life in the city, breaking up the monotony of everyday existence'. Hecate, Athena, Demeter and Persephone, and Isis had also enjoyed strong presences in the city, some of their duties and functions merging into those of two protector deities, Tyche Constantinopolis, tutelary guardian of the city and its fortune, and Rhea, Mother of the Gods. These two continued to be 'deeply ingrained in the religious cultural fabric of Byzantium... their statues honored by Constantine himself'.

Examined in the context of traditions and hymns about these goddesses, a 'secret cultural code' embedded in 'the metaphors and language of [hymns to the Virgin]... is broken, and for a moment a world long passed away is conjured up; and the grand civic stature of the Theotokos comes to life. Like bright colored shards in the kaleidoscope, the functions of the goddesses, the imperial identity taken from the court, and the humble maiden of Luke's gospel recombined themselves into a uniquely Constantinopolitan creation, the Theotokos.'[1] Crucially absent from Limberis' glittering cavalcade is Constantine's mother, Helena. Indeed she appears only once in this magisterial volume. Yet she was materially present in her son's civic iconography, and her posthumous sanctity

[1] Vasiliki Limberis, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christianity* (London, Routledge, 1994), pp. 146-47.

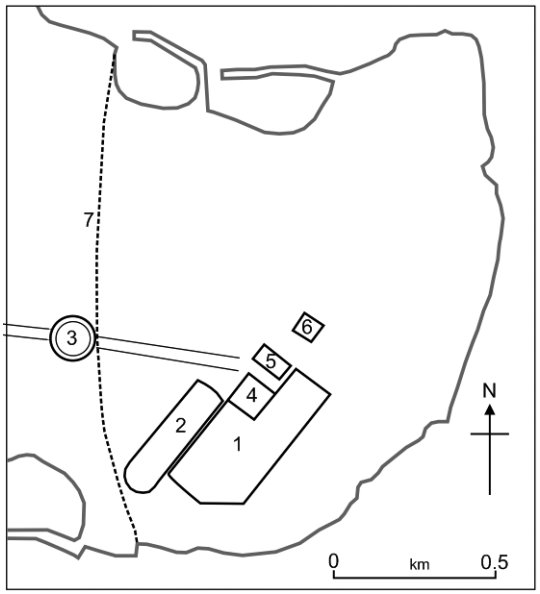

Fig. 1. Monuments in Late Antique Constantinople mentioned in the text: 1 Constantine's imperial palace; 2 Hippodrome; 3 Constantine's forum; 4 Baths of Zeuxippus; 5 Augusteôn; 6 Hagia Sophia; 7 Limit of Byzantium as rebuilt by Severus.

Сл. 1. Споменици позноантичког Цариграда поменути у тексту: 1. Константинова царска палата; 2 Хиподром; 3 Константинов форум; 4 Зеуксипова купатила; 5 Августејон; 6 Црква Св. Софије; 7 Остаци Византиона из времена Севера

far outstripped her son's across most of Christendom. Central to that success was the attribution to Helena of the rediscovery of Christ's Cross. Without a place for Helena in the narrative, an understanding of citizens' religious loyalties in Byzantine cities more widely is incomplete. Moreover, inclusion in the historical narrative is critical for pinning down her significance in civic sensibilities, and consequently for understanding how her political and religious presentation may have consciously and unconciously connected the old world with the new.

Helena, Rhea and Tyche

The civic heart of Constantine's city (Fig. 1) was planned around the customary canon of public buildings and monuments, studded with statuary chosen and positioned so as to embody political aims, religious understandings, and cultural identity. Alongside the royal palace, and connected to it by a processional stairway, lay a hippodrome, its spine monumentalised with devotional structures and statues, including a shrine of the Greek Helen's brothers, the Dioscuri. It has been argued that the shrine was incorporated because as riders the Twins were the patron of Rome's equestrian order, they had a long association with the circus, and the eggs used to count the charioteers' laps were believed to symbolise the egg from which the twins were born.[2] From the northern end of the hippodrome, a double line of porticoes led westward to the forum, which was dominated by a central porphyry column topped by a statue of the emperor himself, shown as Apollo with rays of light on his head.

[2] Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age* (2012), hereafter Bardill, 'Constantine', p. 262, fn 243.

At the foot of the column was placed a monument taken from Old Rome, that city's Palladium. This was a wooden statue of Pallas (identified by the Greeks with Athena and by the Romans with Minerva) which was said to have fallen from heaven in answer to the prayer of Ilus, founder of Troy. Odysseus and Diomedes were said to have looted it from the citadel of Troy, later to be carried to the future site of Rome by Aeneas. There it came to be regarded as one of the *pignora imperii*, sacred tokens or pledges of Roman *imperium*.[3] To the east of the forum and adjoining the public baths of Zeuxippus and the northern end of the palace, an apsidal basilica was built to house the Senate. In front of this was an open, four-sided colonnaded area built by the emperor Septimius Severus which functioned as the food market or agora. Today it lies under part of the forecourt of Hagia Sophia. A dominant column here carried a statue of the sun god Apollo/Helios. At first known as the Tetrastôn because of its four arcades (*stoas*), its eastern part was named the Augusteôn, and here Constantine raised a statue of his mother on a porphyry column.[4] The name's plural form ('place of empresses') is important and we shall return to it later. The column stood near, and perhaps between a shrine or shrines and/or statues of the two deities particularly mentioned in Limberis' devotional panorama, Tyche and Rhea.[5] The large, chora-like dimensions of the Augusteôn suited it for ceremonial public functions, and it remained a place of attraction, natural convergence, and public assembly.[6] Helena – dead shortly after, if not shortly before the remodelled city's inauguration – was here very much in the public eye.

In Limberis' mind, Constantine's planning of the public spaces of his new capital 'introduced the new deity by venerating the old'. In other words, the new religion was being given the clothing of the old. There seems very little of the Christian narrative in how these statues of the ancient deities appear to function. Helena and her son stand in their presence, as much as they stand in theirs.[7] To reach Helena as perceived in the minds of Constantinople's citizens, it is first necessary to be familiar with Tyche and Rhea. Every self-respecting city had its Tyche,[8] though not always known as such, at once the spirit of the place and its protector – Greek Τύχη means 'luck'. The Tyche of Constantinople joined in the Augusteôn by the statue of Helena in fact arrived in the city with the emperor.

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3 The story is to be found in Virgil, *The Aeneid*, and elsewhere.

4 Elizabeth Jeffreys. Michael Jeffreys, Roger Scott and Brian Croke, *The Chronicle of John Malalas* (Melbourne, Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986), hereafter Malalas, 'Chronicle'; Zosimus, 'The building of Constantinople,' II, 30-3

5 Zosimus located them near the Tetrastôn but others placed them in the northwest corner of the porticoed plaza called the Basilica. Bardill, 'Constantine', p. 262, fn 245.

6 G. Fontana-Giusti, 'The urban language of early Constantinople', in (ed.), *Intercultural Transmission in the Medieval Mediterranean* (London, Bloomsbury, 2012), hereafter Fontana-Giusti, 'Urban language', pp. 164-202, p. 170.

7 The significance of Constantine's integration into his new capital of antique statuary from around the empire, including devotional images of deities, is stressed by Sarah Bassett, *The Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004).

8 For a conspectus of *Tychai* see Kathleen J. Shelton, *Imperial Tyches* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1979); G. Bühl, *Constantinopolis und Roma. Stadtpersonifikationen der Spätantike* (Zürich, Kilchnerg, 1995).

Fig. 2. Portrait head of Helena Augusta, Capitoline Museum, Rome, Sala degli Imperatori. Her eyes are raised and her mouth suggests a smile, perhaps intended to convey pious contentment and in line with the 'heavenly gaze' evident on portraits of her son and his caesars and remarked on by Constantine's biographer Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 4.15.1.

Сл. 2. Портрет Јелене Августе, Музеј Капитола, Рим, сала императора. Њене очи су подигнуте, израз лица са благим осмехом, наговештавајући евентуално и рајску атмосферу како је примећено од Константиновог биографа Јевсевија (*Vita Constantini*, 4.15.1).

Her epithet was *Anthousa*, 'In Blossom',[9] expressed as Η ΚΑΛΗ ΑΝΘΟΥΣΑ, 'floral beauty' in the Greek inscription accompanying a plaquette illustration now in the Louvre (see also Fig. 8).[10] Late Antique understanding of the epithet as a reference to Flora, the deity who personified Rome,[11] has been dismissed as so influenced by abstruse antiquarian speculations as to be worthless, with the alternative explanation of Stephen of Byzantium preferred: 'This city is called Anthousa because of its generally flourishing state'.[12] This may all be wordplay, perhaps; other early writers were concerned about the 'pagan' cityscape, including the Tyche Anthousa, and complained about it.[13]

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9 Attributed to Constantine by the author of *Chronicon Paschale* [completed 627], I, 527-30.

10 Paris, Louvre Museum, *Fouilles* H. Henne, AF 10878 and 10879, Coptic, from Egypt, first half of the seventh century CE.

11 For example in the sixth century by John the Lydian, *De Mensibus*, 'On the Months': Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantiae, 29 , ed. B. G. Niebuhr (Bonn, Ed. Weber, 1837), 4.51 (p. 86), at the end of his passage on April: '*Rome Flora (vocatur) et C[onstantino]polis, id est florens*' ['*florens*' in Niebuhr's Latin translation of ὃαν□οϋσα, 'Anthousa' in the Greek text].

12 Alan Cameron, 'Consular diptychs in their social context: new eastern evidence', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 11 (1998), pp. 384-403, p. 395; (2011), p. 612. Stephen of Byzantium, Stephani Byzantii Ethnicorum quae supersunt, ed. Augustus Meineke (Berlin, G. Reimeri, 1849), p. 590.

13 As Malalas, 'Chronicle', 311, and the *Chronicon Paschale*, 277, noticed by Carlos A. Martins de Jesus, 'The statuary collection held at the baths of Zeuxippus (AP 2) and the search for Constantine's museological intentions', *Synthesis* 21 (2014), fn. 43.

Moreover, if it was simply a coincidence that the epithet was bestowed on the day of Constantinople's inauguration, May 11, 330,[14] it was a happy one. Calendar conjunctions appear to have mattered as much as those of divine characters and their functions and attributes, and thus played their part in the process of synchretisation. The sixth-century chronicler John Malalas noted that the date for the inaugural festivities, including the opening of the public bath, the first of what were to be annual race-meetings, and the ceremonial entrance into the hippodrome of a gilded statue of the emperor bearing in his right hand a statue of Tyche-Anthousa, was personally decreed by Constantine and that in 330 May 11 fell in the month Artemisios in the Antiochan calendar. Malalas seems to be implying that the first day of that month, named for Artemis and heralding summer, was specifically chosen.[15] It also coincided with the close of the deity's annual Roman festival, the Floralia.

The key day of Floralia, May 2, came in turn to coincide with the eve of the feast of the Holy Cross ('St Helen's-Day-in-the-Spring' in northern Britain).[16] The Cross was also originally celebrated on September 13, the day in 335 on which Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre was consecrated on the site of Christ's crucifixion and his empty tomb – and the vaunted rediscovery of the Cross by Helena.[17] September 13 became the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, with the Invention on May 3. However, September 13 was already auspicious. It was the date on which Constantine defeated Licinius after his vision of the Cross. The feast of Solomon's dedication of his temple began on the tenth day of Tishri, the day of atonement, and ended with the feast of Tabernacles. In 335 the tenth day of Tishri fell on Saturday September 13. The Martyrium church in Constantinople, Constantine's creation and his burial-place, was described by Eusebius as a New Jerusalem – implying that a new Solomon had arisen.[18] The

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14 According to the Louvre on-line catalogue, <htto://www.louvre.fr/ouevre-notices/tablette-la-tyche>, accessed December 28, 2015, which references M.-H. Rutschowscaya, *La Peinture copte* (Paris, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1992), pp. 30-31, and No. 40, and *L'Egypte ancienne au Louvre* (Paris, Hachette, 1997), pp. 247-48, and M. Rassart-Debergh, 'De l'icône païenne à l'icône chrétienne', *Le Monde Copte* 18 (November, 1990), pp. 57-58, fig. 16.

15 Malalas, 'Chronicle', 50.13: 'He ordered that on the same day as the Anniversary race-meeting this wooden statue should be brought in, escorted by the soldiers wearing cloaks and boots, all holding candles; the carriage should march around the turning post and reach the pit opposite the imperial *kathisma*, and the emperor of the time should rise and make obeisance as he gazed at this statue of Constantine and the *tyche* of the city. This custom has been maintained up to the present day.'

16 Poetic descriptions of Flora and her festival in Ovid, *Fasti*, trs. A. J. Boyle and R. D. Woodard (London, Penguin, 2004), 5. 183ff, 193ff, 229ff.

17 From the eight days of of this celebration was derived the term *encaenia* , literally 'dedication' or 'consecration', for such festivals.

18 Michael A. Fraser, 'Constantine and the Encaenia', *Studia Patristica* 39 (1997), pp. 25-28. Eusebius, 'The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine', trs. and rev. Ernest Cushing Richardson, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace (Edinburgh, repr. Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1955), hereafter Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*.

Fig. 3. Rhea-Cybele rides her lion, 1: Pergamon altar, *circa* 170BCE, Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

Сл. 3. Реја- Кибела на лаву, 1: Пергамски олтар, *circa* 170 п.н.е, Државни музеји (Берлин).

half-year twin of the Roman Flora was Feronia, whose own November festival was celebrated with fire-walking.[19] Here is another coincidence, for the bounds of the new Byzantium were set on November 8, 324.[20]

Though the Tyche Anthousa, 'Flora', was understood to have arrived from Old Rome with Constantine, she had first been Hellenic, for her Latin name derived from that of Chlôris, a nymph of the Isles of the Blessed, wife of Zephyrus, goddess of flowers, and mother of Karpos ('Fruit').[21] Moreover, divine guardianship of Byzantium's fortunes was already well-understand by the populace, and the identity of the deity to whom the role was assigned appears prone to change. According to one tradition Byzas, king of Thrace, the city's eponymous founder, had marked the completion of his works by honouring Rhea, mother of the Gods, as Tyche of the city and queen in the Basilica.[22] Daughter of the earth deity Gaia and the sky god Uranus, Rhea was sister and wife of Cronus.[23] The author of the *Patria* and Dionysus of Byzantium both claimed that Rhea was Tyche Poliade, 'queen of the city'.[24] Numismatic evidence supports this.[25] It would follow, therefore, that Constantine's civic iconography separated Rhea

19 Graham Jones, 'Earth, fire, and water: Constantine and Helena in the ritual heritage of Europe and its neighbourhood', *Niš and Byzantium, Eleventh Symposium, Niš, 3-5 June 2012, The Collection of Scientific Works XI*, ed. Miša Rakocija (Niš, University of Niš, 2013), pp. 385-408, pp. 394-98.

20 *Chronicon Paschale*, I, 527-30.

21 Ovid, *Fasti*, trs. James G. Frazer, rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 253 (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1931), 5.195 (May 2).

22 Hesychius of Miletus, *Historia Rhomaike te kai pantodape*, or *Kronike Historia* [A history of the world beginning with the Assyrian Bel kingdom up to the death of Anastasios, 518], in Theodor Preger, *Scriptores Origines Constantinopolitanarum* (Leipzig, 1901-1907), hereafter Hesychius, 'Historia'.

23 Limberis, 'Heiress', p. 72. Noel Lenski, 'Constantine and the Tyche of Constantinople', in Johannes Wienand (ed.), *Contested Monarchy: Integrating the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century AD* (2014), hereafter Lenski, 'Monarchy', p. 347, cites the sixth-century Pseudo-Hesychius 15 (Preger, in Hesychius, 'Historia', p. 6) as reporting this tradition.

24 Limberis, 'Heiress', p. 123.

25 Limberis, 'Heiress', p. 73.

from that rôle. Another foundation legend, meanwhile, told that Byzas' mother Keroessa, that is 'the Horned', became the Tyche. Myth had it that Keroessa was born on the banks of the Golden Horn by the altar of the nymph Semestra. Her mother was Io, made pregnant by Zeus and chased in the shape of a heifer on behalf of the jealous Hera. Reared by Semestra, Keroessa had intercourse with her uncle Poseidon and gave birth to Byzas.[26] John Malalas understood that Byzantium's Tyche was named Keroe and had been set up by Phidalia, daughter of the existing settlement's toparch Barbysios and subsequently wife to Byzas.[27] Constantine's promotion of his mother was not the first such mother-son relationship in Byzantium's state narrative.

Fig. 4. Rhea-Cybele rides her lion, 2: Attic red-figure vase, late fifth-century BCE, kylix fragment, Boston, Mass., Museum of Fine Arts, 10.187

Сл. 4. Реја – Кибела на лаву, 2: Атичка црвенофигурална ваза, касни 5.в.п.н.е, фрагмент киликса, Бостон, Музеј лепих уметности, 10.187

Regardless of the antecedents of Constantine's Tyche, some scholars are cautious of accepting Zosimus' statement that Constantine erected either the statue of Tyche or that of Rhea.[28] They prefer Hesychius' assertion that Rhea's statue was the work of Byzas and was known to the people as a Tychaion.[29] Zosimus' story was that Constantine acquired Rhea's statue from Cyzicus in Anatolia, where the Argonauts had long ago brought it to sit on Mount Didymus, overlooking the city. Zosimus complained that Constantine changed the statue by removing the lions which previously flanked the deity, and changing her hands so that she now looked 'as if she were praying, and looking at the city as if she were guarding it'.[30] It has been pointed out that if Rhea came from Cyzicus, she would indeed have borne the typically Anatolian attributes of Cybele-Magna Mater, whose devotion provided that city's principal cult and whose functions were fused with those of Rhea.[31] Those attributes included her lions.

Whatever their statues' true origin, Constantine's honouring of Tyche and Rhea, each with their own temples opposite each other in the Tetrastôn, 'preserved [Rhea's] ancient status as "mother of the gods" amongst the Byzantines

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26 Hesychius, 'Historia'; Carl and Theodor Muller (eds), *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* (Paris, Ambrose Firmin Didot, 1841), 4, p. 147.

27 Malalas, 'Chronicle', Bk 13.

28 Bardill, 'Constantine', p. 262, fn 246.

29 Bardill, 'Constantine', p. 262, fns 247.

30 Limberis, 'Heiress', p. 123.

31 Lenski, 'Monarchy', p. 347.

[while] *Tyche Constantinopolis* (shown on medallions for the inauguration of the new city[32]) assumed Rhea's position as guardian and protector of his New Rome.' Moreover – and this is the key to the present thesis – Limberis notes that 'Constantine reinforced Rhea's "mother of the gods" function when he set up a statue of his mother in the Tetrastôn.'[33] Of course, the honour worked both ways. Moreover, the tradition which said that the original Tyche was not Rhea but Byzas' mother, Keroessa, puts even further emphasis on Constantine's promotion of Helena.

It also underlines Constantine's vision of his city as a third Troy after Rome. The new capital was sited close to ancient Troy, 'saturated with the myths of Aeneas and the narratives of the Graeco-Roman past' – including the story of the Greek Helen – so that the bringing back of the Palladium 'opens up a space for the hypothesis that Constantine was not simply going east, but *returning* to the East.'[34] Helena's own Bithynian origins in the city of Drepanum could only have helped in this propaganda strategy, and the more associations and understandings which could be set up, the stronger the likelihood of the message being positively received. In Antiquity, Frances Yates has argued, memory was understood as the guardian of all knowledge. It was the treasure house of inventions and its overall keeper.[35] Statues addressed people's knowledge of the world and of themselves. They mattered because they were able to make a link to the perceptive and associative knowledge which formed the ancient human psyche. They were a link to the knowledge of the past, and 'it was probably still possible and meaningful at the time to try to reach out towards the statues' hidden voices'.[36]

It is impossible to understand the greatest son of Niš, or his mother, without engaging with a world in transition. Foundations of belief were in flux. Christianity was the coming religion, but polytheism remained strong. Historians may argue over Constantine's state of mind and his attitude to religion. It remains unavoidable that when he set up statues of himself and his mother in the company of those deities most closely connected with the citizens' sense of civic identity, his action was deliberate, political, and implicitly respectful of ancient presumptions. In assessing the significance of his mother's statue, it is important to remember once more that at the time of Constantinople's consecration, Helena may have been recently dead. Arguably it matters little that there is no record of Constantine promulgating her divinity. Her statue's presence was enough to suggest it in what Theodosius II a century later called 'the hearts and

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32 *Roman Imperial Coinage* [RIC], *7, Constantine to Licinius* [313-337], ed. P. M. Bruun (London, Spink, 1966, repr. 1984), Constantinople no. 53.

33 Limberis, 'Heiress', p. 19, and fn 74, p. 62, citing the anonymous chronicle of *circa* 630, *Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD*, trs. Michael and Mary Whitby (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1989). See also Olga Katsaveli, 'Augustaion', Encyclopedia of the Hellenic World [<http://www.ehw.gr>], Constantinople, November 7, 2007.

34 Fontana-Giusti, 'Urban language', p. 174.

35 Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1966), p. 1, cited by Fontana-Giusti, 'Urban language', p. .

36 Fontana-Giusti, 'Urban language', p. 181.

the secret places of the minds' of the people;[37] those wedded or receptive to accepted readings of the supernatural. Moreover, if Helena had joined the ranks of the deities, it was, again arguably, a small step in devout minds which accepted such things to ponder her relationship with her namesake, the Greek Helen. The ancient world had long to go before it parted company with what has been described as 'a system of cross-referencing and associations'.[38]

One can not repeat too often that our understanding of events subsequent to the Council of Nicaea has been shaped by writers concerned to interpret matters through the prism of Christianity. The church felt it had triumphed and it set out to mould the historical record. Would that look different if viewed from the side of those who clung to the old religions? The answer is very probably yes. *Pace* Jonathan Bardill,[39] it can hardly have mattered one way or another to the mass of Byzantines whether or not Constantine's provision of statues of Tyche and Rhea were meant to be acceptable to the Christians. The former might well have been an abstraction in Christian minds, but she was still called Tyche and Anthousa (that is, Flora). Even if removal of Rhea-Cybele's lions and remodelling her hands as if in prayer and looking to protect the city was indeed intended to 'divest the goddess of her divine aspect', she remained Rhea and people knew her story.[40] Also, when portrayed as patroness of cities, Cybele wore the turreted crown typical of Tychai.[41] Constantinopolitan coins of Tyche-Cybele show a helmeted figure similar to the Tyche of Rome, or a woman, sometimes winged, holding a horn of plenty, wearing a turreted crown, and seated on a high-backed throne with her feet on a ship's prow (Figs. 10, 11). The latter was used on silver medallions to celebrate the city's consecration. As Noel Lenski has recently observed, 'the inhabitants of Constantinople did not regard these statues as lifeless artworks or contemptible objects of scorn. They became, indeed they always had been, powerful receptacles of supernatural energy scattered across the city like so many wraiths'.[42]

Constantine and the Imperial Cult

An important element of the old religion was the inclusion of rulers in the pantheon. Julius Caesar had elevated this to new levels with the introduction to the Roman empire of the imperial cult. The deifying of members of the imperial family became so central to the religious underpinnings of the state that in

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37 See below, fn. 88.

38 Bettina Bergmann and Wendy M. Watson, *The Moon and the Stars: Afterlife of a Roman Empress* (South Hadley, Massachusetts, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, 1999), hereafter 'Bergmann and Watson', p. 14.

39 Jonathan Bardill, 'Constantine', p. 262, fn. 249.

40 Bardill, 'Constantine', p. 262, citing Zosimus (fn. 250).

41 Bardill, 'Constantine', p. 262, citing (fn. 252).

42 Lenski, 'Monarchy', p. 351, referring (fn. 75), on the divine power attributed to Constantinople's statues by its Byzantine citizens, esp. citing Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin (eds), *Constantinople in the Eighth Century: The* Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1984), pp. 31-34.

Fig. 5. Cybele *Turrita*, identified with Rhea, wearing a mural crown: *circa* 60BCE, Glypotek Museum, Copenhagen, no. 1617. Cf. Fig. 6.

Сл. 5. Кибела Турита, идентификована као Реа са назубљеном круном: *circa* 60 г.п.н.е, Глиптотека у Копенхагену, бр. 1617. Cf. Сл. 6.

Fig. 6. Cybele with her attributes: in her left hand a frame drum, in her right an ancestor of the tambourine, at her side a lion. Illustration from *Meyers Konversations-Lexikon* (Leipzig, Bibliographisches Institut, 1888).

Сл. 6. Кибела са њеним атрибутима: у левој руци држи кружну посуду, у десној руци држи тимпанон, са стране је лав. Илустрација преузета из: *Meyers Konversations-Lexikon* (Leipzig, Bibliographisches Institut, 1888).

Rome itself a shrine to the Augusti was built at no fewer than 265 crossroads. Constantine's baptism on his death-bed has been interpreted from the Christian side as normal procedure. From another perspective it might be thought to reveal an unwillingness to commit up to that point. The sense of such an interpretation is revealed when it is realised that Constantine did nothing, as far as we know, to end Rome's ancient cult of the Emperor and the imperial family. Yes, he built churches and patronised bishops. At the same time he left no evidence that the veneration of his image, or that of his closest relatives, was to cease. On the contrary there is good evidence to the contrary – and not restricted to the case of the statues in Constantinople which showed the emperor and his sons defeating the Python.

Julian the Apostate twitted the memory of Constantine, saying he had joined the ranks of the undeified emperors by flinging himself at the last into the arms of Jesus. That seems at odds with two later witnesses. Theodoret,

bishop of Cyrus in Syria, born about 393 and died *circa* 457, having described how Constantine's body was allowed to remain in his palace until the arrival of his sons, and that high honours were rendered to it, added that 'these details require no description here, as a full account has been given by other writers. From their works, which are easy of access, may be learned how greatly the Ruler of all honours His faithful servants. If any one should be tempted to unbelief, *let him look at what occurs now near the tomb and the statue of Constantine* [present writer's italics], and then he must admit the truth of what God has said in the Scriptures, "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed [1 Samuel, 2.30]".'[43] Second, and more specifically, the historian Philostorgius (368-433), writing 425x33, reported that Christians offered sacrifices to an image of Constantine placed upon a column of porphyry, and honoured it with lighted lamps and incense, offering vows to it as to God, and making supplications to it to ward off calamities.[44] As a member of the Anomoeian party who questioned the doctrine of the Trinity, Philostorgius was treated with anathema by Catholics, so it comes as no surprise that his report was dismissed by the ninth-century editor of his *Ecclesiastical History*, Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople. He called it an 'impious accusation'. However, a nineteenth-century editor of the *History*, while accepting Photius' opinion, was nevertheless obliged to admit that it was probable, 'as Valesius [Henri de Valois, editor of Eusebius' *History*[45]] observed, and as asserted by Theodoret, that lamps and wax candles were lit before the statue, and prayers offered there for the healing of diseases'.

Julian may have treated Constantine as an outcast from the list of deified emperors, but what Theodoret and Philostorgius described is similar to recorded behaviour by devotees of previous rulers. Julian's rhetoric also flies in the face of the coins issued under Constantine's sons, which show him as deified.[46] As Hans Pohlsander has pointed out, 'although other pagan iconographic features of consecration coins, such as the funeral pyre or the eagle, have been omitted, there is no break here with the pagan tradition: the emperor has become *divus*.

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43 Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, trs. Blomfield Jackson, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, ed Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, 3 (Buffalo, New York, Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1892), 1.34. Rev.and ed. Kevin Knight for New Advent at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/27021.htm>, accessed November 7, 2013.

44 Philostorgius, Ecclesiastical History: *Epitome of the Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius, compiled by Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople*, trs. Edward Walford (London, Henry G. Bohn, London, 1854), 2, 17.

45 Henri Valesius (de Valois) published his first edition of the Greek text, with a new Latin translation and with copious critical and explanatory notes, at Paris in 1659. In 1720 his edition of Eusebius, with his edition of Socrates, Sozomen, and other Greek historians, was republished at Cambridge by William Reading in three folio volumes. This is accounted the best edition of Valesius, the commentary being supplemented by ms. notes left among his papers, and increased by large additions from other writers under the head of *Variorum*. Migne's edition (*Opera*, II. 45–906) is a reprint of Valesius' edition of 1659.

46 e.g. RIC 46 (VIII, Cyzicus), LRBC 1304, a bronze AE4 piece, minted at Cyzicus, 347-48. The obverse is inscribed DVCONSTANTINVSPTAVGG, and has a veiled head facing right. On the reverse, Constantine is shown standing, facing right; the mint mark SMKB is inscribed, together with VN MR across the fields.

On the reverse Constantine, dressed in a cloak, has right hand stretched out, is ascending to heaven on a quadriga, while the right hand of God (common enough in later Christian art) reaches out to meet him.'[47]

Nor was there a break in the customary honour from the Roman Senate, which marked his demise on the day of Pentecost, May 22, 337, by deifying him, naming him *divus* like so many preceding emperors and issuing coins with his deified image (Fig. 2). Michael Grant has thought it 'curious' that 'his adoption of the Christian faith did not prevent this pagan custom from being retained'[48] At the end of each reign, the worship culminated in the funeral pomp which followed the senatorial decree conferring apotheosis or *consecratio*, a ritual dating back to the death of Augustus. The great bodies of the state, the people and the army, took part, with a parade of cavalry around the pyre. Over the first two centuries of the empire, the funeral rites became more complicated and cremation gave way to burial.[49]

Constantine himself had respected the traditions of the imperial cult. He deified Claudius II Gothicus (268-70), Maximian, and his own father, Constantius, marking this with commemorative coins minted in 317-18.[50] In this he was continuing a practice of the imperial cult which had been instituted under the Republic, with the intention, it has been argued, of sanctifying the power necessary for the exercise of authority. The emperor 'was a god because he was the emperor'.[51] If the *imperium* was consecrated by the auspices and thus by Jupiter, so the reasoning went, tribunician power rendered the tribunes themselves sacrosanct. Already chief priest, 'as imperator he was always victorious and very quickly tended to monopolise the personal qualities that almost turned the triumphant victor into a Jupiter for the day. Lastly, the posthumous deification of Julius Caesar made his heir the son of a god, destined for the same apotheosis. The emperor belonged to a family of *divi*'[52] with its cult centre at Bovillae, ten miles out of Rome on the Appian Way.[53]

However grotesque, however uncomfortably familiar, Caesar's worship as a god in his own lifetime may seem, it began the series of imperial 'consecrations' that turned the dead ruler into a *divus*, a divine being or demi-god.[54] Octavian called himself *Divi filius* and after he became *August*, meaning 'consecrated' by the gods, Ovid wrote that the palace had 'three eternal gods' – Apollo, Octavian's patron, Vesta, goddess of the hearth, invoked in a palatine chapel, and the emperor. In time, Aurelian and Carus had themselves described

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47 Hans A. Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine* ([1996] 2nd edn, Abingdon, Routledge, 2004), p. 80.

48 Michael Grant, *The Emperor Constantine* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993).

49 Turcan, 'Gods', p. 139.

50 RIC 43. See Gert Boersema, 'The Constantinian Commemorative issues of 217/18', *The Celator* 19:10 (October, 2005).

51 Turcan, 'Gods', pp. 134-35, citing Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité antique* (Paris, 1864, numerous re-editions).

52 Turcan, 'Gods', p. 135.

53 Scheid, 'Religion', p. 145.

54 Turcan, 'Gods', p. 135, Scheid, 'Religion', pp. 159-60.

unambiguously as *deus et dominus*.[55] Oaths had long been sworn by the *genius* of the master, and the honour of the *paterfamilias* in domestic lararia was a natural precedent for the worship in private chapels of the *Genius* of Augustus.[56] Often crudely painted portraits and sculpted busts of the emperor decorated shops and taverns, while the ploughman ritually shared his meal with the emperor 'in image', prayed to him as he poured his wine and combined his name with that of the Lares.[57]

Fig. 7. Chlôris/Flora (left) shown with Tyche/Fortuna. The latter holds her double rudder, one side that of the lucky, the other of the unlucky; and her cornucopia. In front of the double rudder is the ball of fortune, which rolls like a dice. Illustration from Alexander S[tuart] Murray, *Manual of Mythology: Greek and Roman, Norse, and Old German, Hindoo and Egyptian Mythology* (2nd edn rev., repr. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), Plate XXI, facing p. 155; pp. 182-83.

Сл. 7. Цлорис / Флора (лево) са Тихе / Фортуна. Овде је реч о типичном приказивању божанстава са рогом изобиља. Илустрација је преузета из: Alexander S[tuart] Murray, *Manual of Mythology: Greek and Roman, Norse, and Old German, Hindoo and Egyptian Mythology* (2nd edn rev., repr. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), табла XXI, страна 155; стране. 182-83.

Not only was the ruler's birthday celebrated, as the master's always had been, but also his mother's, and that of the empress and their children. House doors were garlanded with laurel on the emperor's accession anniversary, lamps were lit, people drank and ate; the city 'was transformed into a tavern'.[58] However, this was a religious celebration, for the combination of the emperor's *genius* and *numen* gave him almost superhuman qualities. Statuettes of the emperor and his family brought their presence, and their power to aid, into the homes and chapels of his subjects[59] – just as the images of Christian saints would do. In some places shrines brought together the whole imperial family or all the deified emperors.[60] Vespasian was specifically invoked as a saviour and healing god. To this worship was added the *adoratio* of behaviour at court, which would become official in the late Empire. Furthermore, the divine rulers and their close relatives were particularly venerated in an imperial temple,

55 Turcan, 'Gods', pp. 136, 143.

56 Scheid, 'Religion', p. 162.

57 Fronto, *Letters to Marcus Aurelius Caesar*, 4, 12, 4; Horace, *Odes*, 4, 5, 30ff. Cited by Turcan, 'Gods', p. 136.

58 Turcan, 'Gods', p. 137.

59 Turcan, 'Gods', p. 137.

60 Schied, 'Religion', p. 162.

Fig. 8. A Tyche wearing flowers: Depiction of a Tyche (perhaps personifying Constantinople, though Zaccagnino prefers Carthage) holding flowers and wearing a floral version of a turreted crown. Margin of a presentation dish photographed by G. Bevan and A. Gabov for C. Zaccagnino, 'The missorium of Ardaburius Aspar: new considerations in its archaeological and historical contexts', *Archaeologia Classica* 63 (2012), pp. 419-54, p. 427, Fig. 7.

Сл. 8. Тихе са цвећем: Представа Тихе (можда као персонификација Цариграда, иако је Заканињо идентификовао Картагину) како држи цвеће и носи круну украшену цвећем Илустрација преузета из: G. Bevan and A. Gabov for C. Zaccagnino, 'The missorium of Ardaburius Aspar: new considerations in its archaeological and historical contexts', *Archaeologia Classica* 63 (2012), стране. 419-54, страна. 427, Сл. 7.

where the anniversaries of their birth, death, and consecration were celebrated.[61] Vows for the wellbeing of the imperial family were offered on January 3, following similar vows for Rome on January 1.[62] As Turcan as noted, even in the fourth century, 'in the heart of the Christian empire', the *natales* of the eighteen deified emperors were celebrated at Rome. The list of them up to Severus Alexander (reigned 208-235) partially matched that of the *divi* glorified in the coinage of Decius Trajan.[63]

The choice of sites where the deified emperors could be venerated points to popular, rather than official devotion. In Rome, its 265 crossroads sanctuaries were provided with altars, perhaps in front of statue-niches of the Lares Augusti (lares were spirits of the neighbourhood) and the *genius* of Augustus. Elsewhere – and the cult of the *divi* was celebrated throughout the Western provinces[64] – many such places were marked by isolated altars, or altars placed before a niche containing the statue of a *divus*, a deified emperor, or the emperor's *genius*.[65] Indeed, it has been shown that rather than being solely imposed from the top, the empire-wide cult of the imperial family often originated among the people in cities and provinces. Social prestige could accompany appontment in the provinces to the priesthood of the imperial cult. In architecture it became 'a new arena for competition by the provincial upper classes'. In Britain candidates

61 Turcan, 'Gods', pp. 138-39.

62 Scheid, 'Religion', p. 164.

63 Turcan, 'Gods', p. 140.

64 John Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion*, trs. Janet Lloyd (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2003) [first published in French as *La Religion des Romans* (Paris, Armand Colin/Masson, 1998)], hereafter Scheid, 'Religion', pp. 161, 63. The number is Pliny's.

65 Scheid, 'Religion', pp. 66, 70. As an example of an isolated altar, Scheid gives the so-called altar of the three Gauls at Lyons.

were rumoured to have 'poured out whole fortunes'.[66] The people of Mytilene were unsure whether to offer black or white cattle to the cult, and ended up offering spotted.[67]

The cult offered a way of 'conceptualising the growth and success of a new type of political power'. The exceptional power gathered into the hands of the emperor could be understood and thought of as the epithany of a divine power in the hands of a mortal.[68] The emperors were agents of unpredictable power and benefaction. People in Ephesus in the reign of Claudius organised auctions of priesthoods in order to celebrate the imperial family 'on the slightest pretence of good news from Rome'.[69]

This perception of emperors as in some sense divine, worthy of welcome 'as saviours, benefactors and lords', played out in the ceremony of *adventus*, when subjects hailed the arrival of a ruler in their city or district. 'An *adventus* could on the one hand be a perfectly mundane – if splendid – affair, in which people fulfilled their duties as subjects by expressing due enthusiasm; on the other hand, it cold be an event with some religious overtones.'[70] Robin Lane-Fox has pointed out an oration to Diocletian and his fellow emperor in 291 which compared their crossing of the Alps to a divine epiphany in which 'all Italy was bathed in a glowing light'. It was 'glorious rhetoric, but it also attached the emperors to the living belief that gods, in a show of power, might visit men. Its orator did not believe a word of it, but can we be so sure that all the spectators had been equally down-to-earth? That God could visit man was the least novel feature of Christian teaching in a pagan's eyes.'[71] Not only male members of the imperial family received this adoration. The divine pomp of *adventus* may well have attended Helena's progress through the East, the apparently official tour in the course of which she visited Jerusalem.[72]

It is important to be aware that *posthumous* veneration on its own was restricted to the Western provinces. In the Greek world, honours equivalent to those of the gods were paid to the *living* emperor also,[73] and had been since the age of Alexander the Great.[74] Mark Antony paraded as Dionysus and Sextus Pompey claimed to be the son of Neptune.[75] However, it was the cult of the sun with which the Augusti were most closely identified. Horace told Augustus to

66 Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (Harmondsworth, Viking, 1986; New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), pp. 39-40.

67 Fox, 'Pagans and Christians', p. 90, citing Horaces, *Odes,* 4.2.

68 Scheid, 'Religion', pp. 164-65.

69 Fox, 'Pagans and Christians', p. 40.

70 S. MacCormack, 'Change and continuity in Late Antiquity: The ceremony of *adventus*', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte, 21.4* (4th qtr, 1972), pp. 721-52, p. 721. See also MacCormack (1981), pp. 17-89, and Halfmann (1986), pp. 146-54.

71 Fox, 'Pagans and Christians', p. 141, citing Pan. Lat. 3.10.4-5.

72 On this aspect of the tour, see Kenneth G. Hohum, 'Hadrian and St. Helena : imperial travel and the origins of Christian Holy Land pilgrimage', in Robert Ousterhout (ed.), *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1990), pp. 66-81, at pp. 74-76.

73 Scheid, 'Religion', p. 161.

74 Fox, 'Pagans and Christians', p. 40.

75 Turcan, 'Gods', p. 136.

Figs. 9 and 10. Two, rather different, versions of the Tyche of Constantinopolis on medallions struck to commemorate the dedication of Constantinople on May 11, 330. On the first she is turreted (or turreted and veiled), with a foot on a stool (or prow), holding a branch (or short sceptre) in her right hand and her cornucopia in her left. On the other she is more military, holding orb and sceptre with a shield beside her throne. AR medallions, 30mm, R[oman]I[mperial]C[oinage] VII, Constantinople, 53, and, unlisted, after 53. See Lars Ramskold and Noel Lenski, 'Constantinople's dedication medallions and the maintenance of civic traditions', *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 2012, no. 119, pp. 31-58.

Сл. 9 и 10. Две различите верзије Тихе из Цариграда на медаљонима израђеним поводом освећивања Цариграда 11.маја, 330.г. На првој је представа са велом, са стопалом на постољу и кратком гранчицом или скиптром, док у левој руци држи рог изобиља. На другој представи више је реч овојној иконографији, држи глобус и скиптар са штитом поред њеног трона. Аверс и реверс медаљона, 30mm, R[oman]I[mperial]C[oinage] VII, Constantinople, 53. В. Lars Ramskold - Noel Lenski, 'Constantinople's dedication medallions and the maintenance of civic traditions', *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 2012, no. 119, стране 31-58.

'Restore light to your country' and Seneca called Nero – who identified himself with Helios-Apollo – 'You are a rising sun'. From the time of Nero, the emperor's effigy on certain coins wore a crown with radiating points. The coins themselves were initially minted in an alloy with a golden appearance.[76] The sun was the visible image of invisible Good, the emperor the incarnation of the life-imparting Daystar who, by handing him the globe of the world on the reverse of coins, made his his vicar and a kind of co-regent. Franz Cumont observed 'consubstantiality' in their images side-by-side on coins from the third century into the reign of Constantine. Caracalla displayed himself in a chariot 'like the Sun', Gallienus had his hair dusted with gold. Aurelian, flushed with victory over Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, by the aid of the Sun god of Emesa, consecrated the cult of Sol Invictus in a gigantic temple. Its design followed an eastern tradition, with its dome or *tholos* in the centre of an enclosed courtyard. Robert Turcan was reminded by this rotunda of the temple of Sebadius or Sabazius in Thrace, lit by an *oculus* (like Hadrian's Pantheon) at the top of its vault 'to show that the sun lights everything with its rays from the height of the sky'.[77]

Inclusion of female members of the family in the imperial cult also persisted. After the deification of Caligula's sister Drusilla another twelve became *divae*. Like *divi*, *divae* were given a temple, a *flamen*, *sodales*, and a public cult celebrated on the anniversary of the dedication of their temple, some great act, or their birthday.[78] Statues of deified empresses showed them as *matronae*, carrying a cornucopia, horn of plenty.[79] The last *diva* mentioned on the inscriptions of the Arval Brethren, the priests who carried out official annual propitiatory rituals, is Julia Domna (170-217), wife of Septimius Severus, though it is thought likely that the honour was made also to Julia Maesa, her older sister.[80] The empress who gave a Caesar to the reigning Augustus was likened to the Mother of the Gods, the successor having, like his father, a vocation for apotheosis.[81] Moreover, the later rayed crown of the emperors on coinage was matched for

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[76] Turcan, 'Gods', p. 141, citing Horace, *Odes*, 4, 5, 5ff, and Seneca the Philosopher, Susanna Braund (ed. and trs.), *Seneca,* De clementia (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011) 1, 8, 4.

[77] Turcan, 'Gods', p. 142. For Caracalla, *Dio Cassius, Roman History*, trs. Earnest Cary, Loeb Classical Library (9 vols, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1914-1927), 77.10.3; for Gallienus, *The* Scriptores Historiae Augustae, 3, trs. David Magie, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1932, repr. 1998), *Gallieni duo*, 16.4; for the temple of Sebadius or Sabazius, Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, ed. and trs. Robert A. Kaster, Loeb Classical Library (2 vols, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2011), 1.18.11.

[78] Schied, 'Religion', pp. 161.

[79] Scheid, 'Religion', p. 162.

[80] Acta Fratrum Arvalium quae supersunt, ed. Wilhelm Henzen (Berlin, Georg Reimeri, 1874), no. 231, p. 99. See also Schied, 'Religion', pp. 160-61.

[81] Turcan, 'Gods', p. 140.

the empresses by a crescent moon, 'the curve of which contained their likeness. The two luminaries, indeed, symbolised cyclical eternity; and this iconography capitalised a veritable cosmic theology of the reigning couple'.[82]

Emperors and empresses alike were ascribed the attributes of the gods by the populace. Livia was represented as Venus *Genitrix* or Cybele, Hadrian's Sabina as Venus, Julia Domna as Juno, Isis or Demeter. Though Muse-like figures like 'Peace', 'Security', and 'Piety' might appear on their coinage, it was politically and theologically important for Roman empresses to be associated with major deities. Thus Faustina the Elder, wife of Antoninus Pius and Augusta from 138 to 140, when at her funeral she was awarded the title *diva*, was assimilated after her death to a number of deities. One was Ceres/Demeter, mother goddess of agriculture and fertility. Faustina was herself worshipped at the ancient Greek sanctuary of Demeter in Eleusis, while outside Rome on the Appian Way, Herodes Atticus created a private precinct imitating Eleusis which included a temple of Faustina as the 'new Demeter'. At Sardis, she was worshipped in a joint cult of Artemis/Diana. At Cyrene, Faustina was associated with Isis. Faustina's maternal role was reinforced by Cybele, the Asiatic goddess called the Great Mother, whose cult was revived under Antoninus and Faustina and persisted until the early fifth centiury when its rites were adapted to the worship of the Virgin Mary. Elsewhere, Faustina plays Juno to Antoninus' Jupiter on public monumental statuary, appears on coins with Venus, divine ancestress of Rome, and was worshipped in her temple located alongside the circular shrine of Vesta housing Rome's eternal fire.[83] That temple survived as the church of San Lorenzo in Miranda.

It is difficult to generalise from the case of Faustina. As others have pointed out, 'unlike any empress before or after, her status as a new imperial deity was continuously and widely celebrated and not resigned, after the initial ceremonies in public, to the care of a special group. Suddenly her likeness appeared not just in bronze and marble sculpture, paintings and precious stones, but on millions of coins that flooded the empire for twenty years after her death'.[84] Aspects of Faustina's divinity and celebration were indeed unique. Even so, her posthumous role of exemplifying ideal Roman womanhood through her elevation to the status of the divine,[85] chimes well with that of Helena, exemplifying ideal Christian queenship. Between the two lies Julia Domna, whose own divinity has a special significance in the case of Helena's statue in Constantinople. The square in which that statue was raised bears the name Augusteôn, meaning, as noted earlier in this essay, 'place of the empresses', plural. The name may have followed the erection of a statue of Eudoxia (died 404), wife of the emperor Arcadius; equally it may have been applied because Helena's statue was not the first. A very strong possibility is that a statue of Julia Domna herself,

82 Turcan, 'Gods', p. 142.

83 Bergmann and Watson, p. 14.

84 Bergmann and Watson, p. 6.

85 Bergmann and Watson, p. 6.

genetrix of emperors, stood there, since it was her husband Septimius Severus who rebuilt the city in 203.[86] The arrival of Helena's statue would have made a very strong statement about Helena's claims to be regarded on equal terms.

The imperial cult by which Julia and other imperial matrons were objects of veneration was by no means extinguished by Constantine, nor by any of his successors for at least a century. Apotheosis continued to be granted to rulers whose memory escaped *damnatio* right down to Theodosius I.[87] In 425 portraits and statues of the emperors were still a sign of their worship. In that year Theodosius II decreed that 'If at any time, whether on festal days, as is usual, or on ordinary days, statues or images of Us are erected, the judge shall be present without employing the vainglorious heights of adoration, but so that he may show that his presence has graced the day, the place, and Our memory. Likewise, if Our images are shown at plays or games, they shall demonstrate that Our divinity and glory live only in the hearts and the secret places of the minds of those who attend. A worship in exceess of human dignity shall be reserved for the Supernal Divinity.'[88] Paradoxically, the veneration of Constantine as reported in 425, in some ways so like medieval devotion to a saint, exceeded the honours paid to deified emperors, which excluded the offerings and vows due to gods.[89]

At the very least we can confident that Helena was lauded in imperial propaganda as *Nobilissima Femina* and, for the last few years of her life from 325, *Augusta*. She was thus the only imperial partner and matron who was both qualified to receive the honours of the sacred imperial cult and accorded veneration as a saint. Some historians are keen to speculate that Helena became a Christian at an early stage in her life. However, it might be thought equally likely that early or late, her Christianity, like that of her son, was ambiguous to the point of passive acceptance of her own veneration, from the point at which she became Augusta to the time of her death. That the semantic and religious

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86 My thanks to the Livius project team at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden, for pointing out the possible presence of one or more Severan empresses.

87 Schied, 'Religion', p. 162.

88 *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, trs. and ed. Clyde Pharr with Theresa Sherrer Davidson and Mary Brown Pharr, introduction by C. Dickerman Williams (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 432. For the text see also Theodosian Code, *CodexTheodosianus*, ed. Theodor Mommsen and Paul Meyer (3 vols, Berlin, 1905, repr. facsimile Hildesheim, Olms-Weidmann, 2011), Ch.15.4.1, (following 15.4.0, 'De imaginibus imperialibus'):
Imp. Theodosius a. et Valentinianus caes. Aetio praefecto praetorio. Si quando nostrae statuae vel imagines eriguntur seu diebus, ut adsolet, festis sive communibus, adsit iudex sine adorationis ambitioso fastigio, ut ornamentum diei vel loco et nostrae recordationi sui probet accessisse praesentiam. (425 mai. 5).
Ludis quoque simulacra proposita tantum in animis concurrentum mentisque secretis nostrum numen et laudes vigere demonstrent; excedens cultura hominum dignitatem superno numini reservetur. Dat. III non. mai. Theodosio a. XI et Valentiniano caes. conss. (425 mai. 5).
Emperor Theodosius Augustus and Valentinian Casear to Aetius, Praetorian Prefect. Given on the third day before the nones of May in the year of the eleventh consulship of Theodosius Augustus and the consulship of Valentinian Caesar (May 5, 425).

89 For the exclusion, Fox, 'Pagans and Christians', p. 40.

meaning of divine 'consecration' in the titles Augustus and Augusta was transferred overnight from the old gods to the Christian God in the popular mind as well as state doctrine is hard to imagine. It may have been intended by the newly influential church leaders. Convincing the people while the statues of the emperor and his mother kept company with those of the ancient deities, and shared much of their character, was a different matter. It is equally difficult to imagine that the progress of Constantine in the popular mind from a venerated *divus* whose statue was adorned with ex-voto gifts a century after his death to a saint of the Christian church, was not replicated in the case of his mother. It may be significant that emergence in Christian propaganda of the pious matron St Helena, endowed with divine grace in her discovery of the Cross and her triumph over the Jews, occurs around the same time as the reports of adornment of Constantine's statue. At the least it sparks further questions. If Helena's Christian sainthood could be explained as the transfiguration of pre-Christian patterns of imperial cult encourages, in what material form, apart from statuary, might membership of the divine imperial pantheon have exhibited itself? With which celestial role-model might Helena have chosen, or allowed herself to be associated? By the fifth century, she and her son were understood as archetypes of Christian monarchy, and moreover that they consciously fulfilled Hebrew prophecy. By the sixth it was possible to write that 'When he had finished everything Constantine celebrated a race-meeting. He was the first to watch the spectacle there (at the Hippodrome) and he wore then for the first time on his head a diadem set with pearls and precious stones, since he wished to fulfill the prophetic words which said, "You placed on his head a crown of precious stone" [*Psalm* 20.4]; none of the previous emperors had ever worn such a thing.'[90] The risk of anachronism is clear in these Late Antique and Early Medieval readings, and remains today. The questions posed, and others flowing from them, demand answers from those who present Constantine and Helena as Christian champions pure and simple.

Грејем Џонс

СЕМЕ СВЕТОСТИ: КОНСТАНТИНОВ ГРАД И ГРАЂАНСКЕ ПОЧАСТИ ЊЕГОВОЈ МАЈЦИ ЈЕЛЕНИ

Цариград и његови становници имали су посебан положај у византијском свету, но њихова христијанизација се није догодила одмах по оснивању. Реч је о процесу који се одвијао у етапама. Наиме, Константин и Јелена су преобликовали град и градске зоне тако да је постојало својеврсно балансирање између двеју вера. Царски култ је ипак континуирано постојао за време владавине Константина. Питање је да ли се кроз сина (Константина) могу анализирати појединости у вези са култом његове мајке?Да ли је почасна позиција статуе Јелене Августе постојала упоредо са грађанским божанствима Рејом и Тихе и да ли постоје извесне везе између њихових култова? Да ли је поштовање култа почело готово истог тренутка или је то тек успостављено проналажењем Часног Крста?

[90] Malalas, 'Chronicle', 13.8.